

INSPECTION REPORT

EASTLEA COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Canning Town, London

LEA area: London Borough of Newham

Unique reference number: 102784

Headteacher: Ms Linda Powell

Reporting inspector: Bill Stoneham
27407

Dates of inspection: 9th – 12th December 2002

Inspection number: 252516

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Specialist Technology College

School category: Community comprehensive

Age range of students: 11-16 years

Gender of students: Mixed

School address: Hilda Road
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London

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Richard Benton

Date of previous inspection: November 2000

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1249	Joseph Edge	Team inspector	Science	
8682	Martin Trevor	Team inspector	Design and technology	
32230	William Alexander	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
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15406	Jennifer Adey	Team inspector	Art and design	
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10759	Lynn Bappa	Team inspector	Religious education	
4486	Michael Weller	Team inspector	English as an additional language	
3643	Derek Jones	Team inspector	Leisure and tourism	

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INTRODUCTION

The school's curriculum is arranged under five learning areas. The school defines a learning area as 'an administrative grouping of subjects that are linked to each other'. This report makes frequent references to the learning areas and the subjects of the curriculum, which are covered in Part D below, and listed under the appropriate learning area. Moreover, the school does not have a departmental structure based on subjects. Instead, within each learning area, there are subject areas. In section D the subject areas are listed under their parent learning area. Throughout the report, efforts have been made to minimise the use of shorthand notations, although some have been used. Throughout the report, the notation **ICT** refers to information and communication technology and **EAZ** refers to Education Action Zone. **EAL** is used to denote students for whom English is an additional language.

The school was last inspected in November 2000. This inspection was undertaken by HMI. Their report made little reference to specific subjects. Thus, in this present report, no subject specific references have been made to improvements since the last inspection, as no valid comparisons are possible.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Eastlea Community School is a mixed comprehensive school for students aged 11 to 16 years. There are 1124 students on roll, the majority of whom live locally. The areas from which the students come are associated with high levels of social and economic disadvantage. Some 55 per cent of students are entitled to free school meals, compared to a national average of 15.3 per cent. There is an above average number of students with special educational needs; 21.1 per cent compared to a national average of 19.5 per cent and those with a Statement of Special Educational Needs are likewise well above average at 5.9 per cent compared to 2.5 per cent nationally. The student population is rich in cultural and linguistic diversity. Sixty-three languages, in addition to English, are spoken with students hailing from some 80 different countries. Five hundred and seventeen students have English as a second language, of which 150 are at an early stage of English acquisition. The school's population also includes seven travellers and 189 refugees. Student mobility is high; during the last academic year 121 students joined the school, with 57 leaving. Attainment on entry is way below average; indeed, many students enter the school with no records of prior attainment. Eastlea is the only secondary school involved with the local EAZ and the school was designated as a technology college at the start of the 2001/02 academic year. The school is fully staffed and in order to achieve this, senior staff and governors have adopted a range of flexible strategies, including overseas-qualified teachers.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Overall, this is a very good school. The excellent leadership of the headteacher and the very good leadership and management offered by many staff and the governors have contributed to improving academic results and good behaviour by the vast majority of the students. The school's monitoring and evaluation procedures are detailed and thorough and are reflected in the good, and frequently very good, teaching and learning observed during the inspection. Staff work hard to ensure that all students are offered very good opportunities for academic and personal development. Although many students enter the school in Year 7 with levels of attainment that are way below the national average, by the end of Year 11 academic results are in line with national averages. Students in this school achieve well. The basic skills of literacy, numeracy and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) are developed well, but attendance to lessons is unsatisfactory and staff approaches to tackling this issue are inconsistent. Many parents are very supportive of the school's work and they are keen to see their offspring do well. The governing body is an eclectic group offering strong support to the headteacher and her staff. They have a very good understanding of the school's context and the issues facing it. The school's finances are managed very well. The principles of best value are thoroughly understood; their application is excellent and the value for money provided by the school is very good.

What the school does well

- The excellent leadership of the headteacher in ensuring the improvement of the school and shaping its future direction.
- The very good leadership and management offered by the governing body and the many staff who have management responsibilities.
- The attitudes of students and the very good relationship between students, and between students and staff.
- The very good quality of teaching in many lessons and the impact that this has on the quality of learning for all students.
- The very good curriculum, including the range of extra-curricular activities and the beneficial impact that this has on standards.
- The very good improvement the school has made since its 'fresh start' in 1999.

What could be improved

- The quality of provision for design and technology.
- The rigorous monitoring and evaluation of whole-school provision for students with special educational needs.
- Attendance to lessons by ensuring that procedures are applied consistently.
- Reduce the gap in attainment between boys and girls in English and modern foreign languages.
- Ensure full and easy access to all school buildings for all students.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. The school was inspected under Section 10 of the School Inspection Act 1996 in November 1996, when it was deemed to be failing to offer an acceptable standard of education and was made subject to special measures. A further inspection was undertaken by HMI in November 2000, when it was concluded that the school was providing 'an acceptable standard of education' and no longer warranted special measures. The school is appreciative of the support provided by the local education authority, especially during the period when it was in special measures. In September 1999 the school was part of a 'fresh start' initiative, which included a new headteacher and significant changes to the teaching personnel, especially those with management responsibility. The changes made in 1999, and which were favourably received by HMI in November 2000, are continuing to have a positive and significant impact on the school's work. Despite the plethora of adverse contextual problems that face the school, considerable progress has been made in all but one of the key issues identified by HMI. Standards have continued to rise; students' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT continue to improve; the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures are effective and teaching and learning are now at least good and staff apply the school's policies on marking and presentation with consistency. Although recent improvements have been recorded, work still needs to be done to ensure better attendance at school and lessons. The school sets stringent targets, which it meets. Standards in English, mathematics and science all show improvement and the school successfully participates in a range of initiatives, such as the EAZ. Such participation promotes improvements in standards as well as securing additional funding for the school. Such additional funding is allocated effectively and helps to raise standards by offering students new and different opportunities.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
GCSE examinations	E	D	E	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

The overall trend in National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 9 in English, mathematics and science for the period 1998 to 2001 has been constant. When compared to all schools nationally, results overall have remained in the lowest five per cent, but results rise to below average when compared to similar schools. In making these judgements, the school's context must be borne in mind. Many students enter the school at the start of Year 7, and at other times, with very poor levels of prior attainment. Many have, at best, only a rudimentary understanding of English and some students have had their earlier education severely disrupted. National test results for 2001 show that the performance in English is in the lowest five per cent when compared to all schools, but when compared to similar schools, standards are below average. The 2001 results in mathematics are an improvement on those recorded in Year 2000, but are well below average when compared to schools nationally, but standards

are average when compared to similar schools. National test results in science have constantly been in the lowest five per cent nationally, but are below average when compared to similar schools. For present students in Year 9, standards in all three subjects are well below average. The achievement of present Year 9 students, however, is good, as their standards of work are better than expected given their levels of attainment when they entered the school in Year 7. At the end of Year 11, GCSE results are improving, especially if the results of refugee children are discounted. In terms of average points scored, results are below average, but are well above average when compared to similar schools. On other measures of GCSE performance, such as the percentage of students gaining five or more GCSE grades at A* to G, or one GCSE grade at A* to G, the schools results when compared to similar schools are in the top five per cent nationally. Indeed, on the measure of one A* to G grade, the school's results are in the top five per cent nationally compared to all schools. Standards of work recorded by present Year 11 students are below average overall. They are below average in mathematics, but are average in English and science, although in the latter, the level of entry is reduced. Students in Year 11 are recording good achievement, as their standards of work are better than those expected, based on their results at the end of Year 9. The school is rigorous in its monitoring of standards; challenging targets for academic improvement are set and are being met.

Based on an analysis of average points scored in the 2001 GCSE examinations, standards in mathematics, science (double award) and design and technology were above average. They were below average in art and design, French, humanities, religious education and physical education and were broadly average in all other subjects.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The vast majority of students have positive attitudes to school. They are keen to learn and appreciative of the opportunities offered.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Students behave well and the school is an orderly community.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships between students and between students and adults are very good and make a major contribution to learning.
Attendance	Satisfactory. There are inconsistencies in the school's approach to monitoring attendance, especially to lessons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching is good overall, but it is very good in Years 10 and 11. It was good, or better, in three out of every four lessons, with only a minimum of unsatisfactory teaching. Learning is also good overall. Teaching of English and literacy are both good. This enables students, including the high numbers with English as an additional language and special educational needs, to make significant language gains and become confident in reading and articulate in expression. The teaching of mathematics is similarly good, with satisfactory teaching of numeracy; there is a need for a greater level of co-ordination of this work across all subjects of the curriculum. Good teaching is a feature of science in all years, although there is some inconsistency in Year 7, in particular, when less experienced teachers are used. Teaching is satisfactory in design and technology. It is good in all other subjects, except leisure and tourism,

where it is excellent. Teaching meets the learning needs of the diverse range of students, including the high numbers with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. Gifted and talented students are also catered for well. Many strengths of teaching and learning are identifiable and the overall quality has improved since the last inspection because of the rigour of the school's monitoring and evaluation policies. There are no obvious weaknesses in teaching and learning, although parents would appreciate more consistency in the setting of homework.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is broad and balanced and makes very good provision for extra-curricular activities, personal, social and health education and careers education and guidance.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Good. Effective procedures and systems are in place to support those students identified as having special educational needs and, as a result, they make good progress.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Very good. The school's adoption of a more flexible curriculum is particularly beneficial to EAL students because it enables the school to focus more on their language needs.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The provision for spiritual development is good and it is very good for moral, social and cultural development. The provision for citizenship is good, making an effective contribution to the personal development of all students.
How well the school cares for its students	Good. The school is caring and inclusive, offering good social and academic support to its students. Assessment procedures are very good.

There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities that enhance learning. The provision for careers education and guidance is also very good. Partnerships with the local community are very good and have been developed through the EAZ. Statutory requirements for the provision of ICT across the curriculum are met. A daily act of collective worship does not take place, although assemblies are of a good quality. The school's partnership with its parents is continually improving and is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The leadership offered by the headteacher is excellent and has been instrumental in the process of school improvement. Senior staff have offered very good support, including leadership and management of the school's five curriculum learning areas.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. They are very supportive and have a very good understanding of the strengths of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school is very thorough in its processes for monitoring, evaluating and improving its performance.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The budget is managed very well and specific grants are used appropriately. The governors have an excellent understanding of best value and the principles are applied with rigour. Planning for the school's

	future is very strong.
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The level of learning resources available is good. Accommodation, although plentiful in supply, is of a satisfactory quality overall with some weaknesses in access and suitability requiring urgent attention. Staffing is satisfactory. Some staffing recruitment problems have been encountered and the school's management has been creative in successfully addressing these issues.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The progress made by their children. • The standards of behaviour. • The quality of teaching. • The approachability and helpfulness of the school. • Expectations that students will work hard and record good results. • That the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater consistency in the setting and marking of homework.

The inspection team agree with parents about what the school does well. They also agree that improvements in the consistency with which homework is set will help to improve standards further.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

1. This section should be read in conjunction with the summary report where comments on; for example, trends in results, are made. Standards in literacy and numeracy are described at the end of the sections on English and mathematics and each subject report includes detailed information about the standards currently being recorded by students.
2. Results in Year 9 National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science over recent years suggest that results are on a plateau that is well below the national average. Indeed, when compared to all schools nationally, the school's results for the percentage of students gaining Level 5, or better, are in the bottom five per cent nationally. When these students entered Year 7, their standards in the National Curriculum tests sat in primary school were also at a very low level. Indeed, for many students, regularly amounting to something like one third of the year group, no results are available. Given that a significant number of students have English as an additional language, allied to the considerable student turbulence affecting the school, the results gained indicate good achievement. That is, most students gained results in Year 9 national tests that are better than predicted by their earlier levels of attainment. When these results are compared to similar schools, they are below average.
3. When the results for boys and girls are analysed, especially in terms of the attainment of the higher grades at Level 5, or better, data indicates that girls are doing significantly better than boys, particularly in mathematics. Moreover, in English, mathematics and science the extent to which girls do better than boys, is greater than the national differences in results. No simple explanation for these outcomes can be offered, but it is something that each learning area should continue to consider in its planning for improvements.
4. For present students in Year 9, there are indications that standards are rising, but that they remain well below average. The rise in standards reflects the emphasis that the school places on improving the quality of teaching and learning through its monitoring procedures and the emphasis that is being placed on improving literacy and numeracy skills. However, many factors continue to conspire against the school in its drive to higher standards; not least is the fact that many students enter the school with extremely low prior attainment, characterised by poor literacy skills. Student turbulence is another contributory factor. A significant minority of students in Year 9 were not on the school's roll at the start of Year 7. The case also remains that many students, when they enter the school, have no prior educational records.
5. At GCSE, results for the percentage of candidates gaining five, or more, grades at A* to C has been on a rising trend since the last report. The percentage rate has increased from 18 per cent in Year 2000 to 36 per cent in 2002. These increases are faster than the improvement nationally and, in each of these three years, the school has exceeded its own, challenging targets. The trend in the attainment of five, or more, A* to G grades has also been upwards, but the attainment of one A* to G grade has remained constant. Virtually every student in the school over the last three years has gained at least one public examination pass grade.
6. The school's results in terms of five, or more, A* to C grades, although improving, is below average when compared to all schools nationally. When compared to similar schools, the results are well above average in 2001. No comparative data is available for 2002, but the outcome is likely to be the same. Attainment for five, or more, grades at A* to G and for one grade at A* to G is well above average when compared to all schools nationally. Indeed, for one A* to G grade, the school's results are in the top five per cent nationally. When compared to similar schools, the results for both measures place the school in the top five per cent. These outcomes represent very good achievement, with the students gaining far better results than predicted based on their performance in National Curriculum tests two years earlier. These outcomes reflect the hard work and dedication of the teaching staff and the efforts that the school has invested in improving the

quality of teaching and learning. The results also show that girls do better than boys, especially in the attainment of the highest grades, and the school undertakes detailed analysis of all examination results paying particular attention to ethnicity and gender. Standards recorded by present Year 11 students suggest that the rising trend will be continued and that the school will again outperform its targets.

7. In terms of individual subject areas at GCSE, most recorded standards in 2001 were either average, or below, although in physical education they were well below. If 2002 results are compared to national averages for 2001; the standards in most subjects at GCSE were below average, although in science, where the entry is skewed to higher attainers, they were above average. Physical education results improved to at least average because of a change in examination syllabus. For present Year 11 students, standards overall remain below average in most subjects, but are average in science, drama and physical education. They are above average in the leisure and tourism vocational course, reflecting the excellent quality of teaching and learning offered in that subject area. The vast majority of present Year 11 students are achieving very well. This too reflects the very good teaching they receive.
8. The achievements of gifted and talented students are similar to that of their peers. In some subjects, such as modern foreign languages, their achievements are especially good and they study for additional examinations. Talented students in subjects such as art, music and physical education are offered additional opportunities via clubs and societies, or by gaining representative honours at district or county level.
9. Learning co-ordinators within each learning area provide subject teachers with information on the students with special educational needs. This contributes successfully to the ethos of care, support and inclusion of all in subject areas. As a result of this, students with special educational needs make good progress in lessons and learn appropriately well in English, mathematics, science, humanities, music and physical education. In Years 10 and 11 they make good progress in religious education and very good progress in English.
10. The school's analysis of end of Year 9 tests in English, mathematics and science, shows that pupils with special educational needs achieve best, in terms of attaining Level 5 or above, in science. In their 2002 GCSEs all students at stages 3 to 5 on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs achieved 5 A* to G grade passes.
11. For EAL students, attainment in national tests in Year 9 is well below average. GCSE results are also below average. However, there is a rapidly rising trend of improvement and the achievement of students with English as an additional language is at least good, sometimes very good, when considering prior attainment. There are also examples of EAL students achieving very highly. There are a number of students in Years 10 and 11 who have already achieved A* or A grades in their first language, such as Spanish, and are now following AS-level courses.
12. The school has made its own detailed analysis of examination results at the end of Year 9 and for GCSE by ethnicity. At the end of Year 9 in 2002, black African girls are the highest achievers in English. White British boys are the highest achievers in mathematics. Black African girls are the highest achievers in science. Black African boys are the highest achievers in ICT.
13. In Year 9 there were 49 refugees. Twenty-two achieved at least Level 4 in all core subjects. Nine achieved Level 5 or above in all core subjects. Twelve students arrived after the start of Year 8 from abroad needing EAL support. As might be expected none of these achieved Level 4 or above in core subjects.
14. In GCSE examinations in 2002, black African students have much higher levels of attainment than white British. White British boys are the lowest attaining. In Year 11 in 2002 there were 31 refugee students. Twenty-six achieved five or more A* to G grades; four achieved one or more A* to G grades. Only one attained no grades. Four students achieved five or more A* to C grades.

15. The attainment of EAL students in speaking and listening is good with those, even at the early stages of learning English, achieving well. Due to the support given by teachers and other children, students who have only been in the country for a few months are willing to try to express themselves. Those who have been in the school for a longer period of time speak clearly and confidently, listen well to the teacher and other students and can follow instructions with little difficulty. In a Year 7 communications lesson, EAL students were able to participate in a group presentation about their interests. In a Year 8 humanities lesson looking at 16th-century crime and punishment, a recently arrived student was prepared to try to explain why his group had decided on a particular punishment. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson, EAL students were able to use the appropriate vocabulary to describe the geometrical models they were making. Reading attainment is more varied. However, Year 10 students in English were able to select information so that they could compare the differences between modern and Elizabethan theatres. As is to be expected, attainment in writing is well below average for students at the early stages of learning English, but they clearly benefit from the writing frames and other structures given to support them. For example, in a Year 11 science lesson, EAL students were able to write a simple account of an experiment and their findings using the frame provided.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Students' attitudes to school are good and make a positive contribution to their learning. They behave well and the school is an orderly community as a result. Students' personal development and the quality of their relationships are both very good. Attendance to lessons, however, is unsatisfactory. Parents think that the school successfully helps students to become more sensible and responsible. They also think that behaviour is good and has improved immensely in recent years.
17. Students enjoy a positive relationship with the school. They are proud to be members of Eastlea Community School and are very loyal. For example, during the inspection they were very anxious that inspectors should have a good opinion of the school and often asked, 'Are we doing well?'. Students have good attitudes to learning. They like the majority of their lessons and find the teaching interesting. They regard schoolwork as important and say that they work as hard as they can. Students of all ages, backgrounds and levels of attainment are keen to learn and to do well. The school strongly and effectively promotes equality of opportunity. No groups of students fail to make progress because they feel disaffected or alienated from the school. A few individuals in some classes have unsatisfactory attitudes to learning. They lack motivation, are easily distracted from their work and are reluctant to complete their homework properly. Usually, these students are white British boys. In general, however, attitudes are determined by the quality of teaching rather than gender or ethnic group. Good teaching produces good responses from the vast majority of students. Where teachers have appropriately high expectations, students settle quickly, listen attentively and follow instructions. They enjoy lessons that are well planned, contain challenging tasks and have a good pace. They show interest in the subject, concentrate on their tasks and work constructively. The impact of excellent teaching on attitudes was evident in a Year 7 science lesson. The teacher set varied and interesting tasks and asked challenging questions. This inspired students to concentrate hard and sustain their effort throughout the lesson. Even the immature boys in the class contained their excitement, complied with instructions and worked well. Students enjoyed the lesson and expressed pride in their achievements. The quality of the learning of the whole class was excellent.
18. The behaviour of students is good overall. In lessons it closely matches attitudes to learning. It is very good where the teaching is very good and is at least good in the majority of lessons. Behaviour, therefore, enhances attainment and progress overall. Students also behave well when they are out and about around the site. The majority are good-natured, polite and very friendly. They show consideration to visitors; for instance, by opening doors and offering to show them the way to classrooms. They are orderly and self-disciplined when queuing for lunch and wait patiently until it is their turn to go into the canteen. Students can be very noisy when excited and some boys get boisterous, but animosity and aggression are uncommon. There is some bullying, but both students and their parents say that it is uncommon and not a typical feature of life in the school. A few individuals are occasionally involved in unacceptable behaviour, such as fighting,

disruption and rudeness to staff. There have been eight exclusions in the autumn term 2002, which represents a major improvement on the recent past. For example, in the Year 2000/01 there were on average 24 exclusions per term. The improvement in standards of behaviour is the result of the school's very good system of discipline and its very good provision for students' moral education.

19. In lessons the behaviour and attitudes of students with special educational needs is usually positive and often very good. They respond well to the help and support they receive and are keen to make progress in both normal lessons and withdrawal lessons in the resource area. Where students with special educational needs receive extra support from teaching assistants in lessons this is accepted by other students and they benefit from the extra help available. Year 11 students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs said that they were appreciative of the extra help and support they had received since joining the school. Some, however, felt that their mobility needs were not being fully addressed and that they were not always listened to in this respect. They felt, for instance, that some access doors to some of the buildings were difficult to negotiate and damaged their wheelchairs. They added that some of the access buttons to some of the doors were too difficult to reach; the result is that on occasions they have to wait in the rain until someone is available to open the door for them.
20. The quality of relationships is very good overall. Relationships between students and adults in the school are very good and make a major contribution to learning. The vast majority of students respect and like members of staff. They work hard and try their best in lessons because they want to earn praise from their teachers. Academic progress also benefits from constructive relationships between students. In class students are co-operative, work productively with one another, in pairs and in small groups, and are mutually supportive. Boys and girls who have recently arrived in this country, and do not speak fluent English, receive help from their colleagues. Students with EAL have very positive attitudes to learning and are highly motivated to learn. The school strongly believes that these students learn most effectively from fluent, English speaking peers. Other students are very supportive. This ethos of mutual support is a strength of the school. Overall, the very good quality of relationships significantly enhances equality of opportunity in the school. Students of different ages, levels of attainment and ethnic backgrounds get on very well with one another. No one is isolated or prevented from learning because he or she belongs to a minority group, and sexism and racism are rare. This reflects the very good quality of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
21. Personal development is very good. Most students are willing and able to take responsibility for their learning when this is expected of them. For example, they complete homework on time and successfully organise their coursework. Students get wide-ranging opportunities to exercise responsibility and use their initiative outside the classroom. The student forum has the power to influence the running of the school in a major way. Its members take part in interviewing candidates for staff appointments and they discuss the school's attendance rates and academic results. Students in all year groups have the chance to take part in school trips and extra-curricular activities that widen their horizons. Drama productions and residential visits, such as the week that three talented art students spent in Anglesey, enrich their experience and deepen their understanding of spiritual values and ideas. Students also receive, and respond positively to, very good opportunities to serve the community, and these enhance their social development. Sometimes this involves service to the community outside the school. For example, during the previous academic year, students in Year 7 visited an old people's home and entertained the residents. In other cases, students serve the school community, as when Year 9 take it in turns to do reception duty and help to organise the breakfast clubs. In 2001/02, students in Year 9 also acted as numeracy mentors to Year 7. Personal development is promoted very effectively by the school's comprehensive programme of work experience. This takes place at the start of Year 11 and enables all students in the year group to get a taste of the world of work.
22. The rate of attendance is average for secondary schools and has improved significantly in recent years. It has risen from 86.8 per cent in 1995/96 to 91.2 per cent in 2001/02, thanks to initiatives such as a full-time education welfare officer for the school. There are no major variations between different age groups; the attendance rates of male and female students do not differ significantly. Students for whom English is an additional language have good attendance, but a high proportion

of students with special educational needs are among the poorest attenders. However, some of the latter group miss school for unavoidable medical reasons. There are significant differences in the attendance rates of different ethnic groups, with white students of British origin having the worst record overall. There were many absentees from lessons during the week of the inspection. For example, in one Year 9 art class only 17 out of 26 students were present. In some cases, the numbers were affected by withdrawals for extra reading, the Access project and the Community Links scheme. Seasonal illness and the aftermath of Eid also had a temporary affect on attendance. The school's approach to monitoring attendance, especially in lessons, was shown to be inconsistent. For further improvements to take place, all staff must ensure that the school's electronic registration system is used consistently. In ordinary circumstances most students come to school regularly and attend all their lessons. However, there is a small, but significant minority that is often absent, sometimes for long periods. The learning of these students, who are mainly from white British families, is seriously impaired by their poor attendance. As a result, they do not make the progress that they should and fail to achieve their full potential.

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

23. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching and learning are good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. The previous inspection report concluded that teaching and learning were satisfactory and, although some strengths could be identified, some inconsistencies existed, including ineffective planning and classroom management. Teaching and learning have clearly improved since the last inspection. There is now far less unsatisfactory teaching; indeed, in many lessons teaching and learning are either very good or excellent. This reflects the emphasis that the school's development planning has placed on improving standards; there is a culture of seeking to refine and improve provision. The careful and thorough monitoring and evaluation of classroom practice is proving to be beneficial. During the inspection 146 lessons were observed, with only four being graded as less than satisfactory; whereas 57 lessons were deemed to be very good or excellent. Overall, 109 lessons were good or better. Teaching and learning were stronger in Years 10 and 11. Staff tended to be more confident when teaching the older students; the set tasks were more challenging and a greater variety of successful strategies were used. When teaching many of the younger students, staff were mindful that the students frequently had poor levels of prior attainment and the emphasis was on ensuring that basic subject knowledge and understanding were understood. This perfectly rational response by staff was characterised by much highly competent and effective teaching, rather than exciting and innovative classroom practice. In all years, the quality of teaching is helping students to learn and is making a major contribution to the good level of achievements recorded. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in design and technology and it is good in all other subjects except in leisure and tourism, where it is excellent.

24. Many strengths of teaching and learning are identifiable. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects is invariably good and this has a very strong impact on learning. Another key strength is the effectiveness of planning for lessons. The thoughtful range of tasks and challenges set, plus the variety of methods that are used in the most effective lessons, serve to engage students and ensure that lessons proceed at an appropriate pace. This contributes significantly to students acquiring new skills, new knowledge and an improved understanding of the subject matter being studied. For example, in an excellent Year 9 religious education lesson on the theme of 'Why Christians Celebrate Christmas' the lesson started at a lively pace. The students, who were a mixed group of different heritages, languages and abilities, including ten with special educational needs, initially worked on a thought map where they identified key Christian beliefs associated with Christmas. All students were responsive, with the teacher taking great care to ensure that all participated in the lesson. All students showed knowledge and understanding. The teacher extended the challenge. The knowledge and understanding of students was extended by asking them questions such as, 'Where was Jesus born?' and 'Who was present at the birth?'. The teacher then required the students to move to a more evaluative stage in their learning by asking, 'What possible importance did the birth of Jesus have?'. The lesson offered significant opportunities for all students to hone their literacy skills; there were opportunities for reading, listening, discussion and writing. A further excellent feature was that the teacher had translated some key sentences into other languages to help some students for whom English is an

additional language. On another occasion, the teacher spoke to some students in French. This was an excellent approach that enabled these students to participate fully in the lesson. Pace, challenge, variety, excellent planning and sensitivity enabled all students to become involved in the lesson. All participated and the learning for all was excellent.

25. Similar excellence was seen in a Year 11 GNVQ leisure and tourism lesson on marketing. The lesson was purposeful and very well structured with different tasks having been prepared for the range of students in the class. The lesson commenced at pace with an excellent question and answer session on the '4Ps' of marketing. The students knew these terms and could apply them. Other key words, such as 'segmentation' and 'brands' were identified and used in context. Indeed, the contribution in the lesson to developing business literacy was excellent, with words such as 'novice' and 'launch', which do not tend to feature in the students' daily vocabulary, being explained well. The students then had to incorporate these terms into relevant sentences of their own, ensuring that their responses were related to either leisure or tourism. This was done very well and with much humour, encouragement and praise. The students then moved on to small group and individual exercises that required them to research topics for themselves and work on written reports. An excellent feature of this part of the lesson, was the unhurried stance of the teacher. The class were excellently managed, with the teacher finding time to undertake informal discussions with all members of the group. In these discussions, the teacher constantly challenged the students' assumptions and their knowledge and understanding, with the result that all made excellent progress in the lesson. Another excellent feature was that the teacher listed a series of Internet sites that the student might use for their research. The teacher had researched these sites for herself before recommending them and had ensured that each site conformed to the school's policy on Internet safety. Excellent planning, presentation and delivery resulted in excellent learning in an appropriate vocational setting.
26. On the rare occasions when teaching is ineffective, learning suffers because lessons are less well planned, the interest of the students is not seized by the subject matter or its delivery and restlessness results, which disturbs the learning for all. For example, in an unsatisfactory Year 11 ICT lesson on databases, learning was unsatisfactory because the lesson was inadequately planned and the set tasks were of a far too mundane nature that did not engage, or challenge, the students. Most students spent much of the lesson simply entering data on their computers with no explanation of why the task was important, or how the data could be used. A learning support assistant did offer some help to some individuals, and their progress during the lesson was good, but the teacher was insensitive to the feeling of the rest of the group and showed inflexibility. When it became clear that some students were becoming restless and disenchanted, the teacher was unable to change the pace of the lesson, or offer more challenging or interesting tasks for the group to tackle. Learning suffered. Restlessness manifested itself in various ways, including some students donning headsets and listening to music. Teaching was unsatisfactory because planning lacked depth, expectations were low and there was insufficient pace. Learning was unsatisfactory because the students lacked interest and concentration, skill acquisition was not extended and little intellectual effort was needed in order to undertake the tasks set.
27. The teaching and learning of students with special educational needs is good. Such students are taught in targeted withdrawal groups as well as normal lessons. They are supported by teacher assistants, learning support teachers and behaviour support teachers who are attached to each learning area. The school also has a local education authority designated unit, known as the 'resource centre', with 13 places for students with physical and medical needs. These students are taught in both targeted withdrawal groups as well as normal lessons. In both cases they are well supported by the teaching assistants and specialist staff.
28. The overall quality of teaching that was observed in the resource centre is good. In a Year 7 small-group withdrawal lesson, the teacher had planned a structured variety of activities designed to keep the students on task throughout. This enabled them to build up their vocabulary through word building and sentence making tasks. However, in a Year 9 small-group withdrawal lesson, the teacher did not make clear the rationale for the choice of words beginning with 'sp', 'st' and 'sh'. Consequently, some students started to suggest the names of countries as well as verbs, adjectives and common nouns, for instance. Further confusion was added as the teacher wrote up

all the suggested words on the board beginning with capital letters. In all the withdrawal sessions observed, there was a positive learning atmosphere and all students were keen to make progress and do well. This was also the case in a very good withdrawal session for a group of students with physical and medical needs. As a result of challenging, yet patient, one-to-one support from the senior learning co-ordinator (SEN) and four teaching assistants, all five students were engaged in both a sensory activity as well as a speech and communication activity. Smiling faces and positive facial expressions were indicative of the students' enjoyment of the activities.

29. Students identified with special educational needs in relation to their behaviour and possible disaffection with school can be referred to the access project for part of their timetable. They follow the same curriculum as all other students in the school. In one lesson, Year 9 students were receiving support in basic literacy and numeracy skills. One student was keen, interested and responding well to the activities; the other, however, was uninterested and generally lacking in motivation. Nevertheless, the quality of teaching and learning was good and resulted in good progress being made.
30. The quality of support in lessons from teaching assistants and support teachers is effective. For example, in a Year 7 mathematics lesson, a student with significant behavioural difficulties received effective one-to-one support and, as a result, the learning of other students was not disrupted. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson, in the lowest set, students made good progress because of the quality of support they received. However, in some modern foreign language lessons, teaching assistants are simply asked to help students with special educational needs; planning for support not being shared with the teacher and the teaching assistant. In a Year 7 art lesson, a student with behavioural difficulties received ineffective support from a teaching assistant; consequently, he disturbed the learning of other students. Where teaching assistants set boundaries for behaviour and work closely with the teachers, students with special educational needs are very well integrated and make good progress.
31. The overall quality of teaching and learning of students with English as an additional language is good. From observations of lessons it ranges from satisfactory to good in Years 7 to 9; and is very good in Years 10 and 11. A strength of the teaching lies in the range of methods employed to ensure that students beginning to learn English, understand. Very good use is made of visual aids. For example, in a history lesson the teacher used 'PowerPoint' to show graphic examples of punishments in the past. In a Year 11 mathematics lesson the teacher made excellent use of an interactive whiteboard, models and diagrams to reinforce geometrical concepts. In a challenging Year 10 English lesson the teacher wanted students to understand the Elizabethan 'malcontent' and 'Machiavellian villain' in Shakespeare's 'Othello'. He used modern parallels like Victor Meldrew, an illustration of a flower with a snake entwined beneath it and a pre-agreed role play where he slandered a student behind his back, to demonstrate the concepts. Students were also encouraged to use bilingual dictionaries to decide which words best described a 'malcontent' or a 'machiavel'. Consequently, all students were helped to understand difficult language and concepts.
32. In the most effective lessons teachers constantly emphasise key vocabulary through discussion, labels and display. In a Year 11 science lesson, key scientific vocabulary was reinforced through a very effective short starter activity where EAL students had to fill in the gaps in sentences to revise aspects of enzymes and fermentation. The teacher also insisted that students repeated key terms until they were able to pronounce them correctly. Where a support teacher is employed, individual or small groups of students benefit from a dialogue where the support teacher is able to encourage them to extend their speaking and to draw out their ideas, helping with vocabulary where necessary. When a support teacher is not available, teachers ensure that students identified for focused language support are grouped with articulate peers who can provide good models of language use. Another strength of teaching allowing good access to learning is the number of teachers speaking in the first language of developing bilingual students, or providing first language translations of worksheets or other texts.
33. Where teaching is less effective, important vocabulary is not reinforced as well and opportunities are missed to display words and help to fix them in the memory. The use by some less experienced teachers of inappropriate colloquial English only serves to confuse developing

bilingual learners. Some reading and writing tasks need more detailed explanation and demonstration if all students are to succeed in them.

34. The teaching and learning of gifted and talented students is also good. In some subjects, such as mathematics and modern foreign languages, students have opportunities to attend extra lessons. The school develops the strong linguistic skills of some of its students by entering them early for GCSE examinations in their home language and offering classes at Advanced level. There is a group of Year 10 students, for example, who have already gained high GCSE grades in Spanish and who are now studying the language at Advanced level. In physical education, talented students are encouraged to further their skills by playing for district and representative teams, and talented musicians are offered opportunities to perform in specialist bands, choirs and orchestra etc. The school's provision for gifted and talented students is good and it allows students from across the ethnic spectrum to excel.
35. Much emphasis is placed on monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and these procedures are undoubtedly having an impact on standards and help to account for the improvements since the previous inspection. Teaching methods are closely monitored with staff being encouraged to share good practice. Suitable systems exist to identify where good practice occurs in lessons and to ensure that these practices are shared within each learning area and across learning areas. The use of examination has also improved. Every student is now issued with grade targets, and performance against these targets is regularly reviewed and reported. The improved use of examination data, allied to the thorough monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, have been instrumental in helping the school to improve its examination results, especially at GCSE.
36. Some refinements are still needed. Although teaching and learning are good overall, there are some inconsistencies in the use of homework and parents would appreciate clearer guidance on this and a more consistent approach towards the setting of homework from all staff. The school is well aware of the issues surrounding the achievement of boys in many subjects, and the evaluation of teaching needs to ensure that sufficient regard is made to the requirements of boys without disadvantaging girls.
37. The strategies for teaching literacy skills are good and are satisfactory for the teaching of numeracy skills. The use of ICT across the curriculum is good. Teachers use ICT resources, including interactive whiteboards, well to enhance their teaching. The ratio of students to PCs, 3:1, is higher than the national average. Students are offered suitable opportunities to use ICT to improve their learning in many subjects across the curriculum. The provision for the teaching of the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT, which was a key issue in the previous inspection report, has improved and has contributed to the improved standards being recorded.

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

38. The school offers a very good, broad and balanced curriculum, planned to give its students the widest and most appropriate choice of subjects. As part of an EAZ the school is allowed to suspend the National Curriculum and, in some degree, it has done so. The curriculum is delivered through five 'Learning Areas' rather than individual subject areas. In Years 10 and 11 the main alteration to the National Curriculum has made science an option, allowing the school to offer a greater range of technical subjects to its students. Fifty per cent of students still take either a double science GCSE, or a double applied science course, which corresponds to 20 per cent of curriculum time. Through the facility for commissioning courses run by external providers, the school has been able to increase the range of more specialist technical courses available to students. Eighteen students, for example, are studying a GNVQ science course in which classes are divided between the school and the local further education college. In addition to the core subjects of English, mathematics, religious education and physical education, there are the usual option subjects. In addition there is a range of GNVQ and other vocational courses including ICT, leisure and tourism, CISCO, vocational science and courses run by the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship (NFTE). The Newham College Access Diploma (NEWCAD) is also available. Only in design and technology and physical education are concerns expressed about

the curriculum. In design and technology the curriculum is regarded as inappropriate, displaying a lack of balance, particularly between practical and written work. In physical education the range and balance of opportunities is limited because of the poor quality of accommodation. In Years 10 and 11 humanities is offered as a GCSE instead of separate geography, history and religious education. This is a response to the disappointing results when the single subjects were being run.

39. The curriculum is reviewed carefully every year. It is regarded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) as a model curriculum for a school in an EAZ. The school's aim to build on excellence while offering as much choice as possible is borne out by the much improved results gained by its students.
40. Literacy is a strong element of the curriculum. There is a pragmatic policy that expects literacy to be promoted beyond the simple acquisition of basic skills. There is a literacy tutor in each learning area and the head of literacy has been invited to join the local education authority's literacy steering group. Lessons contain many good ideas for improving writing styles and extending the vocabulary of students. The development of numeracy is at an earlier stage than literacy, but there is a comprehensive draft policy that is awaiting amendment by the school's numeracy steering group and ratification by the governors. Co-ordinators have been appointed to each learning area and a training day has been held for staff during which a training video was produced. The policy defines numeracy, and lists what Eastlea students should be able to do in order to be considered numerate.
41. Extra-curricular provision is very good and is a strength of the school, offering many opportunities to many different groups of students. Study clubs operate for all year groups, but in particular cater for Year 11 students and operate after school until 5.00 p.m. Clubs include provision for homework, coursework and general support in many subjects. On any one day as many as 14 clubs will be running, including a breakfast club. The provision of so many study opportunities does sometimes lead to students having to make choices about the use of their time and some clubs are not always well attended.
42. In addition to the study clubs there are many other activities available to students. There is a beginners' class for students for whom English is a second language, a peer education group looking at racial awareness and, as an example of how all groups of students in the school are given opportunities to express themselves, there are meetings for all years of the 'Free Your Life Disability Rights Group'. Each learning area offers numerous extra-curricular opportunities. The English learning area takes students to France to visit First World War battlefields when studying war poets. In physical education in the last year 79 per cent of boys and 53 per cent of girls attended a very good range of extra-curricular activities including inter-school fixtures. Modern foreign languages runs a French language cine club for Year 7 students and extra-curricular opportunities in the learning area are described as excellent, generating great excitement and enthusiasm.
43. In music there is a great variety of instrumental clubs, including steel pan groups, a rock group, recorder club and brass group. Visits are made to recording studios and theatre productions. Again, extra-curricular provision is reported as excellent. In a recent report to governors the number of activities in which students participated filled ten pages and covered events from cross-country championships, transforming the surroundings of the school, membership of the National Youth Theatre and attendance at an Oxford University Access Programme. Eastlea provides something for everyone and a great deal for most.
44. A strong programme of work-based learning has been established since the last inspection. All students undertake two weeks work experience at the beginning of Year 11. Preparation for this is made in Year 10. Students undertake mock interviews and learn how to write CVs and understand health and safety at work. An off-timetable day is given over to the 'World of Work'. Job placements are arranged effectively through the Trident organisation and these placements include five students working in France. A careers adviser works with students in Years 9 to 11. In Year 9 the work is mainly about choices on entry to Year 10, stressing the need to look ahead. In Year

11 those students unlikely to achieve five A* to C grades at GCSE are a target group for support. Eighty per cent of Year 11 students are interviewed individually. There is a partnership between the school and London East Connexions with the common aim of helping students to 'get the picture' on careers. More able students are expected to carry out their own research on databases to help to make Post 16 decisions. Students for whom English is an additional language experience no problems in using the services of Trident and Connexions. Provision for careers education and guidance has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now very well organised. There are good plans to help the service to expand and improve further. Delivery needs to be formally monitored and the adviser would like to see discrete careers lessons delivered rather than the current cross-curricular theme offered mainly in the humanities learning area. The school receives very good support from outside agencies regarding careers education and guidance, but there is a question mark as to whether every student receives their full entitlement via the cross-curricular delivery. Future monitoring will help to determine this.

45. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is integrated throughout the curriculum rather than being taught in discrete lessons. The school presents logical reasons for this approach, including the use of subject specialist teachers for presenting complex topics, avoiding marginalising a non-examination subject and utilising to the best advantage the content already to be found in many subject syllabuses.
46. The ICT and social and environment learning area has the responsibility for developing PSHE, not least because much of the programme can be delivered through religious education. Extra time is allowed to humanities in Years 7 to 9 in order to accommodate the extra provision. Some aspects of the subject, such as drugs, sex and health education are taught by outside agencies and programmes commissioned by the school. Visiting speakers include priests, police officers and nurses. In addition, the other learning areas make valuable contributions to the delivery of the ten PSHE themes. The school has the flexibility to sometimes suspend the timetable in order to deliver PSHE better through focused events. Discussion with the police liaison officer confirms the very good planning behind the provision of PSHE and the success it is having in cementing links with the community. Eastlea has produced a large number of very good police recruits and some of the training for recruits is carried out on the school's premises. The very good quality of the PSHE programme is further proof of the high quality curriculum offered.
47. Students identified as having special educational needs have access to the full curriculum on offer. There are, though, other ways in which their needs are met, such as education in other settings, including college placements. Where this is organised for students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs, their statements are modified, thus ensuring that correct procedures are followed. Where appropriate, the school organises special arrangements in examinations to help to support those students with special educational needs.
48. Extra-curricular provision, both at lunchtimes and after school, extends learning opportunities for all students. There is, though, no formal or specific extra-curricular provision for students with special educational needs. This means that they have few opportunities to ask for, and receive, any extra special curricular support and guidance that they feel they might need.
49. Overall, provision for students with special educational needs is good. The named special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) has ensured the introduction of the new Code of Practice for special educational needs. The special educational needs team shows an excellent commitment to promoting an inclusive education and works very hard to ensure equality of access and opportunity for all students. As a result of this, students with special educational needs receive effective support and are enabled to access the full curriculum on offer.
50. The school's adoption of a more flexible curriculum is particularly beneficial to EAL students because it enables the school to focus more on their language needs. Induction programmes and additional language and literacy support ensure that students have as full access to the curriculum as possible. Breakfast clubs, after-school clubs and supported reading during registration periods all help to accelerate students' language competence. High attaining students with EAL are encouraged to take GCSE examinations early in their first languages and, those who do well, are

encouraged to study for AS/A levels in their first language. The school values its ethnic diversity and many opportunities are provided to celebrate the diversity of languages, ethnicity and cultures represented.

51. Some students relatively recently arrived at the school and to Britain, and at the very early stages of learning English, are not entered for the national assessment tasks in Year 9, but are still given a school-devised examination so that they feel included. Similarly in Year 11, some students receive a Certificate of Achievement in addition to GCSE English.

SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

52. Provision for students' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. The school has audited provision and recently reviewed this aspect of the curriculum.
53. Provision for spiritual development is good. There is a strong spiritual element in many assemblies and in other areas of the curriculum including music and English. Students have the opportunity to reflect on the value of creativity and the wonders of the natural world. They also consider the worship element of Christianity and other faiths in religious education. During the inspection students were considering the meaning of respect for others and themselves in assembly and discussions during tutor time, and this approach made a good contribution to spiritual development. However, students do not have a daily act of collective worship, as year assemblies cannot be held every day because of lack of space. Although a prayer room is available for students, opportunities for prayer or reflection during tutor time are not always used effectively.
54. Students are encouraged to develop a strong moral awareness and there are clear codes of behaviour in the school. Provision for moral development is very good and students are encouraged to think about everyday morality and major issues, such as care for the environment and the threat of war in the modern world. In Year 9, students show an impressive awareness of a variety of moral issues and a real compassion for those who are the victims of war or oppression. Displays around the school and the class and conduct rules carry a clear, moral message. Teachers clearly have high expectations of their students. In English and drama there is a strong moral content in many of the classroom activities and in history students study crime and punishment and explore issues such as child labour. In physical education teamwork, co-operation and fair play are all given prominence in planning activities. Behaviour around the school, in particular the absence of litter and graffiti, reflects the quality of provision for moral education.
55. Provision for social development is very good. Students make really useful contributions in the classroom and take real responsibility around the school. The school council ensures that they understand what it means to work with adults on behalf of their school. Their influence can be seen in improvements in sanitary facilities and in the planned provision of a drinks machine that will sell water and fruit juice. The opportunity to join clubs and compete against others is available to all students and they can share in a very wide range of activities. Residential visits are particularly valuable in developing teamwork and social skills. Students go on many local visits and are involved in fund-raising activities that contribute well to their social development and to real awareness of what it means to be a good citizen. They are considered by staff to be excellent ambassadors for their school and they wear its uniform with pride. The teaching and other staff provide valuable role models for students in the school.
56. Cultural development is promoted very well. Students are introduced to many kinds of music and many forms of art and literature. A particular feature of a visit to the school is the sound of steel band music that brings sunshine to the dullest winter day. Participation in a range of creative activities in art, music, dance and poetry is open to all. Drama and music are used effectively in assembly. Talented members of Year 10 provided an inspiring and entertaining assembly for other year groups during the inspection. Students are made very well aware of the range of cultures within the school and local area. They understand that they belong to a rich and harmonious community and they value its great variety. The newly refurbished library has only a limited choice of books on art and music and history as yet, but students are aware of how they might find out more by using the Internet, which is a major window on to the world of culture for them all. They

are made aware of non-European culture because they read about it in English and study other parts of the world in humanities. The European dimension is equally strong. It is promoted through the languages taught in the school and in the variety of exchanges and visits that provide many students with an insight into life in different communities. The EAZ provides valuable links with business culture, and students are well placed to participate in the variety of business and commercial activities that are revitalising their part of London.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

57. Overall, the procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of students are good. The school gives its students very good educational and personal support. Members of staff monitor students' achievements carefully. They take account of their individual needs and provide guidance that helps them to make further progress. The school fosters students' self-esteem through its very good systems of support. This in turn raises aspirations, improves behaviour and enhances standards of attainment. In general, the school provides a safe working environment for students and members of staff. It makes very good arrangements to protect some very vulnerable individuals and to promote the welfare of all its students. However, the school needs to address some aspects of its arrangements for health and safety.
58. The school has good arrangements for dealing with child protection. Key personnel have received appropriate training and there is a comprehensive formal policy. This is included in the staff handbook and gives clear guidelines to all members of staff. There are also good arrangements for monitoring the welfare and progress of the 'looked after' students in the school. The daily breakfast club is another strength of the school's provision for the welfare of its students. It gives everyone the opportunity to have a proper breakfast before the start of the school day.
59. There are good formal policies on health and safety and many of the school's practical procedures are effective. Arrangements for first aid are good, for example, and equipment is regularly checked in accordance with legal requirements. On the other hand, there are certain matters that give cause for concern. These include: defects in the surfaces of paths and parking areas, the poor condition of fire exit doors in the sports hall and inadequate boundary fences. The poor state of the fencing allows the public to have access to the site and, as a result, there is much unsightly and hazardous rubbish lying on or near the sports pitches. These matters have been drawn to the attention of the school and are being addressed.
60. Students receive very good support during their induction into the school. For example, there are several very informative guidance booklets that explain the curriculum and school routines. Many students, including those who have only recently arrived in this country, are admitted mid-year. The school has put in place very good procedures to support them, such as allocating a 'buddy' to each newcomer. In the case of students who are not English speakers, the school takes care to find 'buddies' who speak their language. 'Mid-phase induction' as it is known, is very well organised and the relevant outside agencies are fully involved in the process. For example, there is good liaison with the local education authority's refugee support teacher. As a result, new students, including those who speak English as an additional language, get the help that they need and make good progress.
61. The school is committed to its mid-phase induction programme whereby children from refugee and asylum seeking families are welcomed to the school. The quality of care provided through this programme is very good. Students arrive who are disoriented and distressed; often ten new arrivals per week. Some have moved homes more than five times in a year. It is a measure of the success of the induction that these students settle so quickly.
62. Students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs are reviewed annually. The review draws on a wide range of professional opinion and consultation with parents or carers and students and informs the updating of students' records on a regular basis.
63. Individual education plans (IEPs) are in place for all relevant students. IEPs are reviewed on a regular basis and targets are subsequently modified or changed. Targets set are generally clear,

concise and challenging, yet attainable. IEPs are informative in that they detail how students can achieve these targets, thus helping teaching staff to plan their lessons to meet the range of needs of the students concerned.

64. The special educational needs team is able to draw upon a range of assessment data in order to enable identification of those students who need support and place them appropriately on the school's list of special educational needs. The recent introduction and use of ICT is helping data collation. However, there is, as yet, insufficient analysis of this data to enable the special educational needs staff to determine whether special educational needs students are making adequate progress. There is also, for example, no breakdown of the special educational needs register in terms of either gender or ethnicity.
65. The progress of EAL students is monitored carefully within each learning area. The curriculum has also been modified to meet perceived language needs. National examination results are analysed very thoroughly to compare the achievement of different ethnic groups. All class teachers have information on the different languages that students speak. EAL teachers use individual programmes for students at the earliest stages of learning English and these are shared where there is support or partnership teaching. However, the amount of support teaching is limited and less experienced teachers would benefit from receiving more detailed and specific individual language programmes if they are to teach EAL students without support staff. For this reason the use of assessment for EAL students is only satisfactory.
66. All students benefit from very good educational support and guidance and the help that they receive enhances their standards of attainment. They get plenty of information and advice at important times, such as when they are considering their GCSE option choices in Year 9. They also get very good ongoing and informal guidance from members of staff. Students say that teachers constantly encourage them through praise for hard work and good achievement. The school has established very good formal procedures for monitoring students' progress. Form tutors have access to a system of central records of attainment, and this provides them with a very effective means of tracking students' academic attainment and effort across all subjects of the curriculum. They are able to identify both individuals who are doing well and those who are having problems. All students get very good support through a system of academic review days. They meet their tutors on these days, on a one-to-one basis, in order to discuss progress and set targets for improvement. The system gives them a better understanding of their own achievements and provides them with good guidance on how to improve. The school also has several mentoring programmes, which effectively promote the academic progress of selected students; for example, underachievers in Year 11.
67. The school's partnerships with external agencies also benefit students with special educational needs and enhance their educational opportunities. Moreover, transitional and annual reviews are effective and support students with a Statement of Special Educational Needs as they move through the school. The school meets fully the curricular requirements as outlined in students' Statements of Special Educational Needs.
68. Monitoring and support of personal progress is very good. The curriculum makes very valuable contribution to personal development. It gives students a wide range of opportunities to exercise responsibility and to take part enrichment activities. It also makes good provision for careers education and guidance and work experience. The quality of individual support is similarly very good. Students know that there are many members of staff to whom they can turn for help, including tutors, directors of learning, subject teachers and support assistants. In addition, there are three student support officers who are able to give expert help and guidance to students who have serious problems. They play an important part in removing barriers to the learning and personal progress of some very troubled and vulnerable individuals. The school has good, formal routines for promoting personal development. Tutors have oversight of the students in their form groups and monitor and support their general progress effectively via central achievement records and academic review days. Due to the way that the school is organised, personal support is inseparable from academic support; the one underpins and complements the other. Directors of learning are also heads of year, and their form tutors are also subject teachers in the same

learning area. The system gives members of staff an excellent picture of students' overall progress. Tutors also get to know their tutees as individuals through form time, in which they make checks of student planners and record the merits and sanctions awarded to members of the form. However, they do not use form time for personal and social education, or for developing the themes introduced in assemblies.

69. The school has created very good strategies for promoting good behaviour, and these have been very effective in raising standards. It has high expectations and both students and members of staff are aware of this. Students understand what is required of them and usually do their best to respect the 'code of conduct'. Members of staff act as good role models and set high standards regarding conduct. Most teachers manage behaviour very effectively and have few problems with behaviour in lessons. However, the school has good arrangements for dealing with the relatively few cases of serious indiscipline that do occur. Students who cause problems are temporarily withdrawn from the classroom in order that their actions do not disrupt the learning of the whole class. The school is extremely thorough in recording and monitoring behaviour and identifying individuals and groups who have behavioural problems. It keeps detailed information on students who have been temporarily excluded, or subject to 'internal discipline', and analyses the records by gender, ethnic origins and special educational need. The outcomes are reported regularly to the governing body. There are good routines for supporting students who cause problems and for modifying their behaviour. They may be put on report or, in the case of the minority who have serious problems with self-control, referred to the student support officers, the school counsellor, or the Access project. These students receive help that meets their needs; for example, they are given courses in anger management. Exclusion from school is only used as a last resort to deal with instances of really poor behaviour
70. There are very good procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour. Senior members of staff are out and about during breaks and lunch hours, reminding students of the rules and dealing quickly with any unsatisfactory conduct. Experienced lunchtime supervisors offer strong support. The school is diligent in addressing the issues of bullying and racism. It has a special box that allows students to report bullying in confidence and carries out surveys on the issue. Members of staff deal promptly and effectively with all cases that are reported to them. Incidents that contravene the school's policy on equal opportunities are formally recorded and reported to the governing body.
71. Monitoring and recording attendance are satisfactory overall. Some aspects of the school's arrangements are very effective in promoting good attendance. For example, an administrative assistant telephones home in the morning if a student fails to arrive for registration. Another strength is the system for identifying and addressing the problem of students who frequently miss school. Deputy directors of learning and the education welfare officer closely monitor attendance and punctuality in each year group and inform the parents of persistent absenteeism. The education welfare officer, who works full-time for the school, the home/school liaison officer and the student support officers, provide very good support for these students and their families. They play an important part in raising levels of attendance by coaxing 'school refusers' back into lessons. The main weaknesses in the school's procedures relate to arrangements for recording attendance in lessons. Teachers are required to register students' presence using an electronic and computerised system. However, the application of set processes is inconsistent; a significant number of staff do not use the system in every lesson. In other cases teachers record attendance, but do not check the absentees against form registers. Sometimes they are uncertain as to who should be in their lesson. During the inspection there were occasions when teachers were unaware that certain students had been transferred to another class, or had been assigned to reception duty on that particular day. These lapses give students the opportunity to play truant from lessons without being detected. These inconsistencies render the school's strategies for ensuring good attendance at lessons unsatisfactory.
72. Assessment and monitoring of students' work are very good. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting students' academic progress are effective in raising academic standards. There are very good systems in place, at both learning area level and whole-school level. In Years 7 to 9, learning areas assess and record students' attainment against National Curriculum criteria. In Years 10 to 11 students are assessed against criteria linked to external

examinations. Assessment criteria for all years is displayed in classrooms and students are familiar with the process. Students are set individual targets, recorded in their daily planners, based upon prior attainment and effort. These targets are monitored regularly in order to identify underachievement. This enables students to focus on academic improvement and achievement. The aim of the monitoring process is to raise standards and to ensure that students receive the necessary support to achieve their best performance. This is a very good system that achieves its objectives.

73. The school has for some time collected data to provide baseline information about students. Appropriate use has been made of national and standardised test information to analyse the attainment of different year groups on entry to the school. Learning areas make very good use of the data to inform their curriculum planning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

74. The school has a good partnership with parents and carers. It has worked very hard and successfully to create strong links with students' families. It has fully restored parents' confidence in its ability to provide their children with a good standard of education. The responses to the parental questionnaire show this very clearly; parents and carers are very appreciative of the school. They are satisfied with aspects of its work. Almost all parents are pleased with the progress their children make and the way in which the school encourages students to work hard and do their best. They have a high opinion of the quality of teaching and learning and they find staff approachable and helpful. One in ten parents is unhappy with the amount of work that their children do at home. This issue produced the greatest number of negative responses of all the questions in the survey. Students say that some supply teachers do not set homework, which may be the reason why there is a small, but significant minority of dissatisfied parents. The level of response to the survey was good, making it a representative sample of parents' views.
75. Information for parents is very good overall. It helps to strengthen home/school links and encourages parental support for students' learning. Weekly newsletters keep parents up to date with school events and students' successes. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are well presented, informative and user-friendly. The school supplies parents with extensive information on the curriculum. It organises curriculum evenings and produces excellent curriculum handbooks for all year groups. These outline the curriculum for each subject and also give parents and carers very good guidance on how to help students with their learning. For example, they contain details of useful websites, lists of relevant textbooks and teachers' expectations regarding homework. Student planners are another good source of information on what students are learning. The majority of students use them properly to record homework tasks and merits, and tutors check and sign them regularly. If parents wish, they can use student planners as a day-to-day line of communication with teachers; some make good use of this opportunity. The school has very good procedures for informing parents promptly of any concerns and requesting their co-operation in solving problems regarding attendance, behaviour and progress. For example, the education welfare officer sends letters to the homes of students whose attendance falls below 93 per cent. She also sends a standard letter to the parents of new students, emphasising the importance of good attendance and punctuality and offering guidance and support.
76. The school provides very good information on students' progress. Parents and carers receive achievement profiles every term. These are good snapshots of students' progress and attainment, expressed in the form of effort grades and National Curriculum Levels. Parents get the chance to discuss the profiles and targets for improvement with their child's tutors at academic review days. The school is in the process of changing from reporting on progress via consultation evenings to a system of twice-yearly, academic review days. Parents like the new arrangements. Attendance at a recent academic review day was significantly higher than at the old style parents' evenings. Annual written reports are satisfactory and meet statutory requirements on information for parents. However, they are weak in respect of targets for improvement. Many of the targets are too vague to be helpful. For instance, one report on progress in drama says to the student and her parents, 'Excellent work. Keep it up'. Parents and carers of students with special educational needs are

invited to and attend the annual reviews. Their views are recorded, hence they are fully involved and informed as to their child's progress towards the targets set out as part of the review process. Students and parents/carers are now also involved in the IEP review process.

77. Every attempt is made to communicate with, and to support families, whose first language is not English. A part-time refugee support teacher works in the school and with additional individual caseworkers assigned to family support. The school provides welcome booklets for parents, at present in eight languages, but to be extended to eighteen. A range of languages are spoken by teachers and other staff at the school, but if there is a need to communicate with parents in another language LEA translators are employed. Most other booklets and handbooks are available only in English. However, the school again makes satisfactory arrangements to communicate with families who do not speak English. If necessary it uses the services of interpreters in discussions between teachers and parents.
78. Parents' involvement in the life of the school and their children's learning is satisfactory. In general they support members of staff over attendance and discipline, although a minority condone truancy. The school has put into place very good measures to enhance co-operation with parents. It has a home/school liaison worker and a full-time education welfare officer. Both make home visits to families who have problems, offering help and guidance. The school has good procedures for consulting parents. It carries out surveys of their views, acting on the findings, as in the case of reporting on progress. As a result, parents' interest in their child's learning is increasing. More than eight out of ten parents attended the recent academic review day and over 200 came to the annual general meeting of the school's governing body. School plays and concerts are very well supported. A group of parents recently started a parent teacher association, known the 'Parents and Friends of Eastlea', but it has not yet had time to make an impact on school life. The level of parental involvement with learning is satisfactory. Students say that their parents give them good support and encouragement, and help them with homework. It is apparent from student planners that most parents are interested in what their children are learning. On the other hand, a minority of parents are unsupportive and, in extreme cases, are antagonistic towards education. A significant number do not read or bother to sign their child's planners. However, in general, parental support for learning, and for the work of the school, makes a positive contribution to students' attainment and progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

79. The quality of leadership and management offered by the headteacher and the many staff with managerial responsibilities is very good. It has continued to improve since the last inspection and has been responsible for the significant progress made by the school since its 'fresh start' in September 1999. The leadership of the headteacher is simply excellent. She has a strong vision for the school. She works tirelessly, and with great sensitivity, to ensure that the school functions with considerable success and that it provides a safe, happy and vibrant environment for the students. In this desire she is given strong and unequivocal support from an eclectic governing body, who themselves have many strengths and who function as a very good and effective critical friend of the school.
80. The management structure of the school is significantly different to the norm. It comprises five learning areas; each led by directors and deputy directors of learning, who also function as heads of year. There is a further director and deputy director of learning who are responsible for commissioning. This is the development of partnership with colleges and community organisations, in order to provide additional learning opportunities for students. These arrangements are successful because they are underpinned by a series of clear policies. Each learning area has its own policies, which feed into the main school development plan. This document has been carefully and thoughtfully crafted and provides an effective route for improvement. The school's senior managers are strongly committed to monitoring and evaluating performance against the school development plan and are good at taking action when it is required. The success of this approach is evidenced by the school's improving examination results at GCSE. Teaching and learning, for example, are thoroughly monitored. Good practice is shared

and the quality of teaching and learning has continued to improve on the standards reported in the previous inspection.

81. A further strength of the management structure is the role played by the governors. They are a very well led and united team who are strongly committed to the school. Their overwhelming desire is to see the school continue to improve, both in terms of standards recorded and the commitment to inclusion. They have been responsible for overseeing the many changes that have taken place since the 'fresh start' in 1999 and the good improvements since the inspection in November 2000 by HMI, including designation as a technology college in September 2001. A key strength of the governing body is their excellent application of the principles of best value. They not only have an excellent understanding of the principles of competition, challenge, consultation and comparison as they apply in an educational context; they have added a fifth principle – quality of life – which, given the context of the school and its underlying philosophy, is an astute addition. The governors' are committed to seeing the school improve further and they closely, but sensitively, monitor and evaluate the work of the headteacher, senior staff and all other staff. In doing so they are applying the principles of best value by challenging the staff to account for their strategies and explain their outcomes. Benchmarking against other schools, both locally and nationally, is done for reasons of comparisons and there are strong processes of consultation, including using students on interview panels for new staff. Competition is witnessed in numerous ways, including the way in which resources are purchased and allocated. The governors, some of whom have lived in the immediate area of the school for many years, are fully conversant with the issues of deprivation and despair that face many students of the school, their parents and carers. For this reason, the governors and the staff seek to ensure that any decisions made will have a beneficial impact on the lives of the students, or others, who will be affected by the actions taken. This is a further challenge to the school's managers, but one that they face with enthusiasm and apply with considerable success. In short, the senior managers and the governors, working in conjunction, have succeeded in establishing a school that is improving, inclusive, offers very good education and which is increasingly appreciated by the local community.
82. Financial management is also very good. The school's finances are complex. The school is able to access finances from a plethora of sources, some of which are designed to help the school to address social and economic deprivation. Other additional funding is available because of the demands made on the school through the high numbers of students with special educational needs, or who have English as an additional language. Extra funding is also provided via competitive bids, such as the school's recent designation as a specialist technology college. The strategic use of resources, including specific grants and other funding is very good. The school has appointed a highly proficient and competent corporate services manager, who manages the resources very well and who is a full member of the school's leadership team. The allocation of resources, including funding, is very well managed, monitored and evaluated. The principles of best value are again stringently applied, with a desire that any decision made should be linked to educational priorities and have a quantifiable impact on standards, including the quality of life.
83. The governing body are also successful in discharging most of their statutory duties. There is a very good policy to ensure the safe use of the Internet by students and this was applied in lessons observed during the inspection. There is also an explicit statement on promoting racial equality. Indeed, this desire underpins virtually every action taken by the school. The areas where the governing body need to tighten procedures relate to the provision of a daily act of worship and the monitoring of attendance. The latter has improved, but during the inspection variable practices in monitoring attendance at lessons by staff were encountered, and the governors and senior staff need to ensure that procedures are consistent and rigorous and that the investment in an electronic registration system results in acceptable levels of improvement.
84. Other key areas of management are good. The leadership of special educational needs is good. The school pays due regard to the new Code of Practice for special educational needs. However, the present draft policy for special educational needs requires refinement to ensure that it meets fully the new statutory requirements for the information it includes, and some of the documentation still uses the terminology of the old Code of Practice. Individual support teachers and teaching assistants are effectively deployed across the five learning areas and also work in the resource

area in withdrawal sessions. This helps to provide the breadth and level of support required for those students who are on the school's register of special educational needs. The school uses funding for special educational needs as it should. Administrative support ensures that support staff are able to concentrate on support and teaching, rather than spending too much time on routine administrative tasks. There needs, though, to be a more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the overall effectiveness of special educational needs provision throughout the school.

85. The leadership and management of support for students with EAL is good, both by the director of learning for the language and literacy learning area and by the EAL co-ordinator, who is deployed as an additional language co-ordinator. They both have a clear overview of the teaching and learning in the school. A significant initiative taken by the school is the appointment of literacy tutors within each curriculum learning area. These have all received additional training to support students' literacy development, including in English as an additional language. The tutors sharing and dissemination of good practice are already beginning to make an impact. There is a clear and detailed EAL improvement plan that identifies appropriate areas and actions for development.
86. The standard of accommodation is satisfactory overall. The programme of refurbishment and alteration started in 1999 is continuing and the school environment has seen significant improvements. In addition to the refurbished ICT, social and environment learning area already in use at the time of the last inspection, the refurbishment of the mathematics and numeracy and languages and literacy learning areas are now complete. Most of the teaching rooms in these areas are now spacious, well decorated and furnished, with attractive displays. Some provide integrated computer facilities. However, in other areas, such as performing arts, physical education and design and technology, accommodation is unsatisfactory as the working environment adversely affects standards of work. Performing arts has access to good teaching space, but it is in need of improvement. Indoor physical education facilities are due for refurbishment. The sports hall is in poor decorative order. The floor markings are barely visible and this adversely affects teaching and learning. Outdoor facilities pose problems. Although the playing fields provide an extensive area on which a good range of winter and summer activities can take place, litter and access to the general public, often accompanied by dogs, is a health and safety issue. The changing facilities for both the hall and the gymnasium are inadequate and do little for students' self-esteem, or standards of personal hygiene. The design and technology area is also in need of urgent attention to improve health and safety.
87. Disabled access to most parts of the school is satisfactory, although full and easy access to all school buildings for all students is not always possible. Covered walkways across this widespread site remain a priority. The resource area (the designated LEA unit) provides a very pleasant learning environment, including ample resources, to support those students with physical and medical difficulties, including first-aid and physiotherapy rooms. There is, however, no 'sensory' room; an important facility for some of the students who are allocated to the resource area.
88. The provision of resources for learning is good. Specific grants are well used and most learning areas have good, up-to-date equipment. Facilities for ICT are excellent. ICT rooms are very well equipped and the ratio of one computer to every three students is very high. Good use is made of ICT facilities by mathematics, English, science and modern foreign languages. In other learning areas, resources are at least good. Music, for example, has a good selection of instruments and recording equipment. Students studying English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are well provided for with a good supply of reading books. Resources in history, art and design and physical education are satisfactory. More apparatus is needed for physical education and there is a lack of art books in art and design. History makes good use of the local area as a resource for visits.
89. Resources to support bilingual learning are good and continue to be developed. There is a good collection of appropriate fiction and non-fiction books for EAL students to borrow, which they do regularly. Teachers of all subjects also use bilingual resources from the local teachers' centre and public library. The school is also encouraging bilingual learners to become more self-supporting; for example, by using bilingual dictionaries and interactive ICT programs, such as grammar quizzes.

90. There is a good match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum in almost all subjects. In English, ICT and music the staffing is very good. In science there have been difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff in the past and this has adversely affected work in Years 7 to 9.
91. Teachers undertake a wide range of staff development activities and this keeps them in touch with new developments. All staff new to the school are given help to settle in. Newly qualified teachers follow an effective support programme and have designated mentors with whom they consult on a regular basis. Performance management procedures are in place and the school has a strong system of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, which has been a prime contributor to school improvement.
92. All teaching and teaching support staff have received in-service training in teaching English as an additional language. Certain curriculum areas have been identified for and receive support through partnership teaching and advice on preparing resources. Some inexperienced teachers continue to need guidance. The school has used existing EAL support teachers and other agencies well. For example, specialists have been loaned from the local education authority's central team. However, there are no specialist bilingual support assistants and there are times when the one full-time and one part-time support teacher are over-stretched. The school would benefit from additional EAL support staff.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) Improve the quality of provision for design and technology; in particular the curriculum and the opportunities students have for practical work. (paragraphs 38, 124, 126 127)
- (2) The rigorous monitoring and evaluation of whole-school provision for students with special educational needs. (paragraphs 19, 30, 48, 64, 84 87)
- (3) A range of health and safety issues need addressing. (paragraphs 19, 57, 59, 86 87)
- (4) Improve attendance to lessons by ensuring that all members of staff implement monitoring procedures correctly and consistently. (paragraphs 22, 71, 83. 114, 145 149)
- (5) Reduce the gap in attainment between boys and girls in both English and modern foreign languages. (paragraphs 3, 22, 93, 95, 96 105)

In addition to the main issues for improvement listed above, the governors and the school should consider addressing the following minor issues in their development plan:

- provide a daily act of collective worship; (paragraphs 53 83)
- ensure greater consistency in the setting of homework. (paragraphs 36, 74, 155, 156, 164 172)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	146
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	56

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	9	48	52	33	4	0	0
Percentage	6.3	32.8	35.6	22.6	2.7	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of students on the school's roll	1124
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	594

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	79
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	412

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	517

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	121
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	57

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	90.4
National comparative data	90.9

School data	3.9
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage (Year 9)

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	119	112	231

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	17	39	19
	Girls	46	57	33
	Total	63	96	52
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	27 [33]	42 [36]	23 [22]
	National	64 [63]	66 [65]	66 [59]
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	8 [8]	14 [15]	6 [5]
	National	31 [28]	43 [42]	34 [30]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	10	25	20
	Girls	26	60	35
	Total	36	85	55
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	16 [33]	37 [37]	24 [30]
	National	65 [64]	68 [66]	64 [62]
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	3 [7]	15 [10]	6 [9]
	National	31 [31]	42 [39]	33 [29]

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

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

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	73	101	174

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	20	68	73
	Girls	37	99	99
	Total	57	167	172
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	33 [21]	96 [100]	99 [100]
	National	48 [47])	91 [91]	96 [96]

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	31.6 [32.5]
	National	39.0 [38.4]

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those students who achieved all those they studied	School	0
	National	N/A

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	459	25	1
White – Irish			
White – any other White background	80	3	
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean			
Mixed – White and Black African			
Mixed – White and Asian			
Mixed – any other mixed background		7	
Asian or Asian British - Indian	26		
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	30		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	39	1	
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background		1	
Black or Black British – Caribbean	68	15	
Black or Black British – African	287	17	1
Black or Black British – any other Black background	27	1	
Chinese	5		
Any other ethnic group	103		
No ethnic group recorded			

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y 2001 – Y2002**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	70.5
Number of students per qualified teacher	15.9

Education support staff: Y2001 – Y2002

Total number of education support staff	30
Total aggregate hours worked per week	1065

Deployment of teachers: Y2001 – Y2002

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.5
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Average teaching group size: Y2001 – Y2002

Key Stage 3	26.6
Key Stage 4	23.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	23
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	39.8

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	7.4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	5,051,092
Total expenditure	4,635,183
Expenditure per pupil	4,218
Balance brought forward from previous year	-7,390
Balance carried forward to next year	408,519

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1100
Number of questionnaires returned	400

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	32	2	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	59	39	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	34	4	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	54	35	7	3	1
The teaching is good.	53	40	2	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	35	6	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	31	3	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	22	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	56	35	5	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	55	37	2	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	38	2	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	35	4	3	7

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

LEARNING AREA 1 – LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Students make very good progress and achieve well.
- The predominantly good and, at times, very good, teaching is the main factor in how well students achieve.
- The excellent range of extra-curricular provision.
- The very good leadership and management of this learning area have resulted in significant improvements in recent years.

Areas for improvement

- Boys are not reaching the standards expected of them.
- Students are not developing a sufficiently wide range of non-fiction written styles.

93. The proportion of students attaining a grade in the A* to C range in the 2001 English Language GCSE examinations was well below average. Nearly every student in the year was entered for the subject, with most gaining at least a minimum pass grade. This represented good achievement given the students' low levels of attainment at the end of Year 9. The results were a significant improvement on what was attained in 1999 and Year 2000. This improving trend was maintained in 2002 when the results in the A* to C grade range were broadly in line with national averages. Achievement was, therefore, very good. Girls attained higher standards than the boys. Students with special educational needs recorded very good achievement, as did those who have English as an additional language.
94. The results in English Literature in the 2001 GCSE examinations were similar to what was attained in English Language. A significantly higher proportion of the cohort was entered for the subject than was the case nationally and the pass rate was high. Standards were well below average in terms of the proportion of students attaining in the A* to C grade range, but the levels of achievement were good in relation to prior attainment at the end of Year 9. The improving trend in standards from 1999 was maintained in 2002 when results in the A* to C grade band were better than in 2001 and, as a result, levels of achievement became very good. This was the case for boys and girls and students with special educational needs and with English as an additional language.
95. Results in the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 9 were low and were below average compared to similar schools. The results represent good achievement, however, given the students' very low levels of attainment on entry to the school. They were similar to what was attained in science, but below the standards obtained in mathematics. The boys' results were significantly lower than those of the girls and well below the standards they attained in mathematics and science. Students with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, made good progress, however. The 2001 results were below those attained in 1999 and Year 2000 in terms of the proportion of students attaining at Level 5. Results improved in 2002, but the publication of national comparison information is likely to show that standards are still well below average.
96. The standards of written work seen in Year 9 are well below average, but achievement is good when account is taken of the attainment levels on entry to the school. All groups achieved well, including students of low competency and those from different ethnic backgrounds. The one group not attaining as expected is boys, many of whom have poor writing skills. Writing standards overall are well below average. Students are not writing in a range of non-fiction styles, which are adapted

to various audiences, and the extended writing of many boys lacks fluency and accuracy. Most students have difficulty using paragraphs and a significant minority struggle with spelling, punctuation and sentence grammar. Students can, however, write interesting, imaginative prose and poetry and they also make significant gains in vocabulary by the end of Year 9. Standards of writing are in line with national averages by the end of Year 11 and this represents very good achievement given the well below attainment levels at the end of Year 9. This is the case for all groups. Students are still not writing in a range of styles, however, but the perceptive quality of analytical work on what they read is good. Year 11 students showed understanding of the context of a 17th-century poem and could comment on its distinctive poetic conventions. Students are also making good use of computers for drafting and presenting their work and for research purposes. The quality of work seen in media studies is in line with expectations and students make good progress. In a Year 10 lesson, for example, they were able to identify the main features of successful photography and then evaluate a series of still images produced in school.

97. Many students enter the school with very low reading skills, but progress well and by the end of Year 11 have attained standards that are in line with national averages. This represents very good achievement for all students and they are, therefore, able to appreciate a range of increasingly difficult texts. Listening skills are also well developed and are of an expected standard. By the end of Year 11 the majority of students are confident and articulate when speaking, and engage readily in group and whole-class discussion. Their standards in this skill meet national expectations. There are a few students with limited reading and speaking skills because they have joined the school late and are at an early stage of language acquisition. They are being well supported and are gaining in confidence.
98. Students achieve well because of the quality of the teaching, which is predominantly good and at times very good. Teachers know their subject well and they adapt their planning to meet the needs of all groups. This inclusive approach to their work is also seen in the way they deploy the learning assistants and target support in lessons to meet the needs of those students with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. It is also evident in the way resources are used and adapted to ensure that those students who are at an early stage of language acquisition can follow the curriculum and make progress. This commitment to include and engage all students in the learning process is a strength of the teaching and was seen in media studies as well as English. Teachers have developed very good relationships with students and are rewarded with their charges' very positive attitudes to the subject. Very good use is made of questioning techniques, not only to check understanding, but also to extend students' thinking through the use of sequences of increasingly challenging questions. Considerable time and effort has been spent on making the English suite of rooms an interesting and stimulating learning environment and the students appreciate and respect what has been provided for them, and the quality of their learning is enhanced. All these factors go towards making the pace and range of that learning good and often very good. The teaching in the mixed ability classes in Years 7, 8 and 9 could be improved still further if techniques, in addition to rigorous questioning, were developed to extend the most competent students. Opportunities are missed to provide them with learning resources to broaden and challenge their understanding of the subject.
99. The quality of the leadership and management of the subject are very good. The director of the learning area provides a clear direction to the work of his colleagues and leads an united and committed team of able teachers. He is supported by the learning co-ordinators whose work is of a high standard. The team is committed to the school's values and embody them in its work. In addition to the very good progress that students of all competencies and backgrounds make, the subject has made a significant contribution to improving their standards of literacy through implementing the literacy strand of the national initiative for Years 7, 8 and 9. Students' progress is rigorously monitored and evaluated to ensure that all are learning as they should and, as a result, they know how well they are doing and what they must do to improve. The evaluations are also used to develop teaching methods and to plan the curriculum. Formal and informal methods are in place to share and develop teaching expertise and there is a culture of seeking to refine and improve provision. Teachers new to the subject are well supported and all are committed to continuing professional development. The excellent range of extra-curricular provision enables students to extend their understanding and enjoyment of the subject. The use of computer

technology in teaching is well established. Students are now progressing well because of the considerable improvements, which have been made in recent years in the effectiveness of teaching methods, the monitoring and evaluation of students' work and the quality and range of resources.

100. The subject has the capacity to sustain the improving trend and raise standards further because the teachers are self-critical, but supportive of each other. They constantly seek ways to improve the quality of their work and they are committed to ensuring that students of all backgrounds and competencies progress well.

Literacy

101. The strategies for teaching literacy skills are good. The school has developed a framework to enable all members of staff to make the teaching of literacy skills a part of their routine classroom practice, and this whole-school approach is raising standards of literacy. The policy for cross-curricular provision is in place and literacy tutors attached to the learning areas have been trained in the strategies to be adopted. Each of the five learning areas has integrated the teaching of one aspect of literacy into its schemes of work for Years 7, 8 and 9. Once that approach has become routine practice the aspects are rotated across the learning areas over time until all five become embedded in the school's teaching and learning strategies. This will be monitored and evaluated by the literacy tutors.
102. The result of this provision is that students are making good progress in managing group talk, reading for information, developing note taking and listening skills and in spelling. Group talk is adopted as a strategy to promote the understanding of mathematical concepts, for example, and in science, emphasis is placed on the understanding of key words to raise reading standards. This approach has been very successful in this latter subject in enabling those students with English as an additional language to progress well. Instances were seen in many lessons of teachers' anticipating students' language needs and meeting them through the provision of appropriate vocabulary. This resulted in students in humanities' lessons being able to use extended and imaginative writing in letters, essays and brochures.
103. Standards of literacy are in line with national averages and progress in developing literacy skills is very good when account is taken of students' low levels of competency on entry to the school. The proportion of students with English as an additional language is high, as is the number with special educational needs. The strategies in place, however, enable them to make significant language gains and, apart from those who join the school in later years, they become confident in reading and articulate in expression.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Teaching methods that encourage students to communicate in the target language.
- Imaginative use of a variety of resources including ICT.
- Thorough lesson planning that enables all students to make progress.
- Effective assessment procedures.
- A wide range of well-attended extra-curricular activities.
- Leadership and management are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11.
- The achievement of boys.
- Students' numeracy skills.

104. In 2002, teacher assessments in French at the end of Year 9 indicate that although the percentage of students achieving Level 5 and above has risen considerably in the last two years, standards remain well below average. Spanish was not studied by students in Year 9 and so was not assessed. GCSE Spanish was taken by a small number of native Spanish speaking students

in 2002, all of whom achieved either A or A* grades. In French, GCSE results at grades A* to C rose by 75 per cent to 39 per cent in 2002, but remain below average. Nevertheless, although fewer students were entered than in 2001, this represents an improvement for the second consecutive year. The achievements of students in Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11 are good as they are attaining standards in their work that are higher than those predicted when they start their courses.

105. Overall, standards in the lessons and other work of students currently in Year 9 are below the national average. However, this represents good achievement, since when these students entered the school their attainment, as measured in English tests, was well below average. In lessons, most students in Years 7 to 9 listen carefully to the teacher and are able to follow instructions about classroom procedures and can ask for help, or explanation, in the foreign language. High attaining students are attaining standards close to the national average and can write about events in the past, although they find discussing future plans more difficult. With support, average and lower attaining students write brief descriptions of; for example, their family and school, and can express simple opinions on school subjects. In Year 9, Spanish is currently studied by a small group of beginners as part of a pilot scheme to see if they will opt to continue at GCSE level. The attainment of students in Year 8, in their second year of studying Spanish, is consistent with national expectations. High attaining students can understand and use present tense regular verbs and write accurately about their parents' occupations. In a very good Year 8 lesson, for example, students responded well to the energetic activities involving mime and repetition to increase their knowledge of regular verbs and were able to describe their daily routine. Average attaining students' work is less accurate and lower attaining students need support in order to use more than single words. In Year 9 girls perform better than boys, particularly at the higher levels. Boys also underachieve in French in Year 11, although this reflects the national picture.
106. In Year 11, the standards reached by most students in work seen during the inspection, remain below average in both languages. However, higher attaining students reach average standards of attainment. Given their standards on starting the GCSE course this represents good achievement. Higher attaining students develop their writing skills well and can produce; for instance, in French, an extended account of a particularly bad day in the past, using a variety of structures and appropriate tenses. In Spanish, Year 11 students, in only their second year of learning the language, can converse about the types of shop in their town, but most find it difficult to extend their utterances. Higher attaining students can produce extended written work, but find the manipulation of tenses difficult. Average and lower attaining students rely on the careful support and guidance they receive from their teachers for classwork and examination coursework.
107. Students with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in both languages. This is because their teachers set appropriate tasks and provide worksheets, which offer them the additional help they need. In Spanish, well-targeted support from the foreign language assistant is also effective. Because English is rarely heard in the modern foreign language classrooms, students with English as an additional language find themselves at no disadvantage and make satisfactory progress as a result. The standard of students' ICT and literacy skills in modern foreign languages is good, but students' numeracy skills are underdeveloped.
108. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 11 is good and frequently very good. All teachers have excellent subject knowledge and use the target language throughout lessons, thus providing a consistent and accurate model for students. As a result, most students understand the target language spoken at normal speed and have good pronunciation and intonation when they use the target language themselves. Students are accustomed to the target language, so they make an effort to use it in order to communicate, often spontaneously. Lessons are well planned, with clear learning objectives and a logical sequence of activities, which enable all students to make progress. Effective use of the overhead projector, props and other resources including ICT, focuses students' attention. In a Year 11 French lesson, for example, particularly good use was made of ICT by the teacher in the form of a 'PowerPoint' presentation on car breakdowns and by the students, through consolidation of the new language, on computers afterwards. The kinaesthetic approach adopted by the subject area, whereby actions accompany the target language, is helping students' recall and boys in particular, respond well. Entertaining activities, a brisk pace

and good relationships encourage students to communicate in the target language. For example, in a Year 7 French lesson an improvised song motivated students to practise new language and increased their understanding of subject rooms vocabulary. Grammar is taught in context and reinforced through games, such as in a Year 9 lesson where students competed to use the past tense accurately in a game of 'noughts and crosses'. Effective teaching incorporated an element of challenge, as was observed in an after-school French club, where students battled to construct the longest sentence so that their team could be the first to reach the top of an inflatable Eiffel Tower!

109. Assessment procedures are detailed and 'student-friendly'. Books are marked regularly and personal profiles record each student's progress and targets. This, along with effective plenary sessions conducted in the target language at the end of each lesson, results in students with a good understanding of their own learning. The teaching of modern foreign languages makes a good contribution to the development of students' social skills through its emphasis on communication and the use of pair and group work. The presence of two French and one Spanish native speaker in the subject area, as well as both French and Spanish foreign language assistants, benefits students' cultural awareness. In addition, the extra-curricular activities on offer, which range from a French film club to exchange trips to France and Spain, enriches the students' experience of the foreign language and culture. Students' ICT skills are well developed through their language learning, with access to the Internet as well as a variety of appropriate software. Plans to set up a video conferencing link with the exchange schools in France and Spain should further increase students' motivation to communicate in the foreign language and, thereby, improve both their linguistic and ICT skills.
110. The leadership and management of the subject area are very good. The subject co-ordinator has a strong vision for the subject area and inspires a team of committed colleagues. Roles and responsibilities are well delegated and teaching is monitored. Both accommodation and resources have improved considerably in recent years. Language rooms are bright and carpeted, with attractive displays, which reinforce the target language, and new course books provide colourful and up-to-date stimulus materials.

LEARNING AREA 2 - MATHEMATICS AND NUMERACY

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

Strengths

- Students throughout the school make good progress and achieve well.
- Good teaching and learning.
- Very good use of information and communication technology.
- Good management of the learning area.

Areas for improvement

- The attendance of students in several classes.
- The punctuality to lessons of some students.

111. Attainment of students by the end of Year 9 is well below average. However, since the majority of students enter the school with very low levels of attainment their achievement between the ages of 11 and 14, is good. Students with special educational needs and those who speak English as a second language also make good progress during this stage. In 2002 the proportion of students reaching the expected level in the national tests was well below the average when compared to all schools. However, the proportion reaching the expected level in 2002 was average when compared with schools that recruit students from similar social backgrounds. Although national test results declined from 2001 to 2002 the overall trend in the results is upwards. Girls perform better than boys at this stage.
112. Attainment of students by the age of 16 is below average. The achievement of the majority of students between the ages of 14 and 16 is good. The achievement of students with special educational needs and those who speak English as a second language is also good. In 2002 the

percentage of students attaining grades in the range A* to C was more than ten per cent below the national average for all schools. However, when compared to schools recruiting students from similar social backgrounds, the proportion gaining grades in the range A* to C was well above average. The proportion of students gaining grades in the range A* to G has been above the national average in each of the last two years. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls at this stage.

113. Standards of work seen confirm that the attainment of the majority of students by the age 14 is well below average. However, since these students entered the school with very low levels of attainment they are making good progress. For example, students in a top set in Year 9 were undertaking work involving the use of specialist software to locate mirror lines between reflected lines and shapes. Work then progressed on to location of centres of rotation. In the lesson good and effective use was being made of the computer to support both teaching and learning. Although several students required further support, others were able to make good progress with the examples set, largely without further support from the teacher. Although this was a top set in the year the work being carried out was broadly at the expected level. Standards of work seen indicate that the attainment of students by the age of 16 is below average. However, the majority of students are achieving well between the ages of 14 and 16 years. For example, students in an average-attaining, Year 11 class were undertaking examples on multiples and factors. During individual work several students required significant support from the teacher in order to satisfactorily complete the examples. The students were working towards the Foundation level for the GCSE and attainment of the majority was below the expected level. A greater emphasis particularly between the ages of 11 and 14 on mental and written arithmetic is beginning to lead to improved standards of numeracy. Students are also generally confident when using a computer to support their mathematical work. Standards in other aspects of the work, including those for algebra, continue to be low and generally either below, or well below, average.
114. Teaching and learning in mathematics are good throughout the school. All teaching is at least satisfactory and, for a number of lessons, it is very good. All lessons are well planned. Each has clear learning objectives and these are shared with the students. During Years 7, 8 and 9, in particular, there has been effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy with good use of three-part lessons including mental starter activities. Group work involves significant questioning of the students to test their level of understanding and to consolidate their learning. Teachers make significant and very effective use of ICT, including interactive whiteboards to support both teaching and learning. Specialist mathematical software is also well used to support aspects of the work. There is a good range of learning approaches in lessons. Most teachers encourage students to work collaboratively in small groups to discuss the mathematical work. Good support is provided for students when they are working on an individual basis, sometimes by several teachers. Homework is regularly set, marked and returned to students. Marking is accurately carried out and, where appropriate, includes supportive comments and an indication of how the student might improve the work. A few students in a number of classes do not make satisfactory responses to the homework set. Teachers keep detailed records of students' progress and they know individual student's strengths and weaknesses well. Good relationships are developed both between students and with the member of staff. Although in most lessons the pace with which the work is undertaken is appropriate, in a few, progress is impeded by the need for the teacher to ensure that acceptable levels of discipline are maintained. The lack of directed questions in a few lessons leads to aspects of the group work being dominated by a few students. Most students are well motivated when in classes. They remain on task and make good progress with the work being undertaken, but there are a relatively high number of students absent from most mathematics lessons. During the inspection the overall attendance at the classes visited was 80 per cent. This clearly has an adverse effect on the continuity of learning for those students who are absent. Additionally, in a number of classes students arrive late. The start of several mathematics classes has to be delayed, sometimes by up to ten minutes, because of the late arrival of large numbers of students.
115. Leadership and management of the learning area are good. At the time of the inspection the director of the mathematics and numeracy learning area was on maternity leave. However, effective temporary arrangements are in place with a member of staff from the local authority taking

responsibility. The staff work well as a team. They meet on a regular basis to discuss and resolve relevant issues. Detailed and appropriate schemes of work have been developed and agreed. There are also detailed and effective monitoring and evaluation procedures in place. These include frequent observations of teaching and learning of all mathematics staff. Test and examination results are reviewed. There is an appropriate balance of younger and more experienced teachers across the staff team. There is a very good range of learning materials available to support the work. These include interactive whiteboards in all the specialist rooms, a large range of specialist mathematical software and good quality textbooks. Much of the accommodation in use for the teaching of mathematics is of very good quality. The specialist rooms are well decorated and furnished and good use is made of display materials. The learning area has priority use of a room containing high quality computer resources. Overall, these resources support both teaching and learning well. However, group work cannot be effectively carried out in this environment.

Numeracy

116. The school is in the process of implementing the National Numeracy Strategy particularly during Years 7, 8 and 9. Schemes of work and lesson plans for mathematics lessons in these years have appropriately placed greater emphasis on the further development of the skills and confidence of the students. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and are both enhanced by the effective use of ICT, including specialist mathematical software. Mathematics lessons, particularly in the early years in the school, begin with a mental starter activity, which is invariably enjoyed by the students. Use of numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory in almost all subjects. Until recently, greater emphasis has been paid to the development and support of students' literacy skills across subjects. Whilst in a number of subjects appropriate use is made of aspects of numeracy, the co-ordination, further development and use of numeracy across subjects has not been a high priority for the school. There is appropriate use of number in; for example, ICT, with students able to manipulate data in spreadsheets and invoices. In art and design, use is made in scaling and proportion. Students use statistics as part of their work in geography and for religious education. However, the school recognises that there is a need for a greater level of co-ordination of this work and opportunities for further use.

LEARNING AREA 3 – SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Overall success in terms of standards, starting from a very low standard on entry to strong and improving results at GCSE.
- Good learning for all students, including those with special educational needs, and for students for whom English is an additional language.
- Very good leadership and an effective team of staff so that many steps are taken that improve performance.

Areas for improvement

- The inconsistencies in teaching and learning, especially for Year 7.

117. Standards attained in recent years in the national tests at the end of Year 9 are very low, compared to national averages. The standards in science are lower than the standards in mathematics, but similar to English, for the same students. The unconfirmed results for science for 2002 are better, although low. The trend in attainment by the end of Year 9 is a slow rise. However, the school is not yet meeting its own targets for attainment, in science. One reason for the low attainment by Year 9 is that levels of attainment of students, as they join the school, are very low. Also during each of Years 7, 8 and 9, substantial numbers of new students join the school, many lacking significant experience of science and with poor literacy skills. Overall, the

achievement of students during Years 7, 8 and 9 is good. Even so, not enough is done to give students a good start during Year 7.

118. During Years 10 and 11 about one half of the students study science. Their attainment, in 2001, as measured by average point scores, is above the national average. This is because relatively few students are awarded the lowest grades of E, F, G or U, whilst better than average numbers are awarded B and C grades. The attainments in 2001 are a major improvement on those recorded in the two previous years. The results for 2002 are somewhat better than those for 2001. The results attained are higher than the usual expectations based on the attainment in national tests in Year 2000, especially so as significant numbers of additional students joined during Years 10 and 11, some with substantial gaps in their previous experiences of science. The achievement of students who choose science during Years 10 and 11 is very good.
119. Current standards are in line with those of recent years. The work of students in both Years 10 and 11 shows all completing plenty of work, with most taking good care about presentation and accuracy. Some higher attaining students have notes of exemplary quality and they regularly reach top GCSE grades - such as their knowledge and understanding about the periodic table, energy changes during reactions and the structures of compounds. Lower attaining students can explain how genes combine to develop the characteristics of offspring; this is a good achievement in terms of their previous learning. The standard of work of students in Years 7, 8 and 9 is too mixed. In Year 7 some higher attaining students are not set sufficiently challenging tasks, so a ceiling is set for their learning. Also some lower attaining students are not overcoming weaknesses in basic literacy well enough, so they do not understand parts of their lessons. In contrast, some work of Year 7 students is of a high standard and their learning is good. The work of Year 9 students is more consistent. Overall, higher attaining students record above average standards and lower attaining students, almost all have some work, which is close to the average standard, although still with significant gaps in overall knowledge and understanding. A main reason for the more consistent and higher standards with Years 10 and 11, compared with Years 7 and 8, is that the school has taken great care to secure good quality teaching and a carefully chosen syllabus for these students, both currently and over recent years. Students with special educational needs generally achieve well, as do students with English as an additional language. For both groups achievement is more secure in Years 9, 10 and 11. The current standards of attainment of boys and girls are similar. In recent years girls have attained somewhat better, especially during Years 7, 8 and 9.
120. The qualities of both teaching and learning are good. The teaching for Years 10 and 11 is at least good and sometimes very good. The provision for Years 7, 8 and 9 is too inconsistent, varying from unsatisfactory to excellent. Overall learning is limited because few students gain more than satisfactory understanding about how to manage their own learning. Teachers differ most markedly, from unsatisfactory to excellent, in the extent that they challenge and inspire the higher attaining students. In general, students almost always concentrate well on their work. This is because teachers offer the key words and lesson objectives from the start of the lesson and insist that students think about them. This structure benefits all students, especially the significant numbers with special educational needs, those with weaknesses in basic literacy and those for whom English is an additional language. Most teachers plan work so that variety promotes interest and so that the diverse range of needs amongst students are met. Most teachers frequently assess the extent of learning in their lessons, giving clear feedback, which helps students to progress well. In general students make clear gains in knowledge and understanding in each lesson. The infrequent, unsatisfactory teaching is where, despite satisfactory planning, the assessment of learning is weak and students' interest and behaviour becomes unsatisfactory. An example of excellent practice was with Year 7 in a lesson on particle theory. Each phase of the lesson was very different; a video plus a question sheet, group discussion, individual writing about the theory, a quick-fire revision with every student contributing and, finally, a set of very tough questions mainly aimed at the higher attaining students. During and after each phase, the teacher checked if students understood and told them how to improve. Students with special educational needs learnt well because the teacher provided them with some different work. Students with English as an additional language were given support and time, just for themselves. Some

immature boys were kept on task, whilst a group of keen and able girls were given extra responsibility. Every student gained substantial new understanding.

121. Other factors have a bearing on standards. Overall leadership of a cohesive team is very good. The curriculum and schemes of work meet students' needs well. There is ample support for revision and study. A new applied science course has been started, to extend the range of options for Years 10 and 11. ICT is used well and good investment has been made to buy resources and train staff. Almost all staff have clear managerial duties, focusing effectively on the elements that enhance learning; special educational needs, literacy, numeracy and ICT. There are very good systems for assessment. Full and accurate information is used well to group students and to decide the targets to set for each student. The work of the subject area is thoroughly monitored and then steps are taken to improve provision.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The attitude and behaviour of the students towards their work is very positive.
- Good development of a learning culture over the past few years.

Areas for improvement

- A reduction of the curriculum imbalance between designing and making.
- Review assessment procedures so that attainment is assessed more accurately.
- The overall improvement of basic skills involved in making artefacts.
- The use of ICT in designing and making.

122. A very large majority of the students entering the school in Year 7 have very low skills in design and technology. In the tests taken at the end of Year 9 in 2002 the school reported from teacher assessments that the students are above the national average. Girls were reported to have attained higher grades than boys by some margin. In evidence from the inspection, it was found that students were not working at these indicated levels and both boys and girls are working below the national average. Significant achievement has been made, however, from entry at Year 7 to the end of Year 9. In part, this is because of the very positive attitudes of the students towards their work. Girls remain ahead of the boys and this follows the national trend.

123. The GCSE examination results in recent years show a trend that is generally upwards from its low base of 13 per cent grades between A* to C in 1998. This progressive increase was at its height in 2001 when 35 per cent of students recorded this level of attainment. This improvement is clear to see, yet the results still fell well short of the national average. A decision to allow only lower attaining students to take the subject stopped this steadily increasing progression of results in 2002. Only one half of the students in the Year 11 cohort completed a course in 2002; this is way below the national average. When taken overall, 15 per cent of students gained A* to C grades in 2002. Students who studied textiles achieved the best results with 26 per cent recording A* to C grades; 15 per cent of students who studied food technology achieved this level. The results in graphics and resistant materials were very low, with only eight per cent gaining grades A* and C. The policy of restricting entry to the subject by ability has been rescinded and students across the whole ability range are now taught design and technology in Years 10 and 11. This should have a positive effect on results in future years.

124. Teaching and learning vary from satisfactory to good in Years 7 to 9 and are satisfactory overall. In Years 10 and 11 the range is similar and again is satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good, teachers demonstrate effective skills in presentation, expectations are made clear and good subject knowledge is evident. Planning for individual lessons is very detailed and covers all major points. Teachers plan different tasks for students of varying ability and this practice is effective. During the course of the inspection, virtually no practical work involving making was observed. This is highly unusual. In consequence, the judgments made about teaching relate mainly to activities

involving designing and not towards making where the evidence of good quality work being regularly produced is not secure. The school has had significant problems in the recruitment and retention of permanent specialist staff. Too few of those teaching design and technology are qualified subject specialists employed on a permanent basis. This fact becomes noticeable in the scrutiny of students' work where the teaching of some basic skills is not reinforced sufficiently. The teaching of practical work in resistant materials needs particular attention. Some of the best teaching was seen in textiles where standards are better, and some good project work was seen from students in Years 10 and 11. The use of computers as aids for designing is noticeably absent and this is affecting the overall quality of the work being produced. Very little teaching using computers or involving students in their use was observed. Students with special educational needs generally receive good support in classes. This is also true for those students for whom English is an additional language.

125. The attitude of students towards learning is at least satisfactory and often good in the majority of lessons. This is a positive factor that helps the ambiance of classes. Learning follows a similar pattern to teaching where better quality learning follows that of teaching in all years. The practice of lesson objectives being written on the board at the start of the lesson is good and helps to focus the attention of the students on the work in hand. Teachers form good relationships with the students and lessons have a quality of partnership about them. There is good evidence to show that where key words of the lesson are identified and made known to students, they are understood. This practice is beneficial. Students have sound understanding of their progress in learning and understand where they are in terms of the National Curriculum in Years 7 to 9. The learning of students with special educational needs and English as an Additional Language is good. The additional support, as well as individual help from teachers, is responsible for this. Staff have worked hard in recent years to develop a good environment for learning.
126. The way in which the curriculum for design and technology is planned currently shows a large imbalance that places too great an emphasis on design and evaluation at the expense of making. The imbalance towards designing and evaluation and the diminution of making is philosophically flawed and leads to students being ill-equipped in practical capability. This hinders the development of standards in the subject and helps to explain why test and examination results are as they are. This curriculum focus does not allow students to learn the basic skills and processes satisfactorily and the curriculum is currently impoverished. There are also areas of the curriculum that are not being taught such as structures in Years 7 to 9. These shortcomings need to be addressed.
127. Some positive developments in managerial terms have been achieved. The development of the learning culture has had a beneficial effect overall and this has been brought about by improved managerial practices. There are good plans for the development of the accommodation. This will be a major advance in bringing all aspects of the subject together and will help the delivery of some of the tenets of the 'Technology College' status the school holds. However, in view of the strategic issues of leadership and management not ensuring the subject is covered fully and appropriately, the management is considered to be unsatisfactory at the present time.

LEARNING AREA 4 – ICT, SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENT

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- The range of community activities offered to students in Year 11.
- The introduction of citizenship as a National Curriculum subject has been planned and resourced well.
- Management is very good.
- The student forum is effective.

Areas for improvement

- Further training to ensure that all teachers feel confident in teaching the subject.
- Assessment procedures are not fully developed.

128. Students in Years 9 and 11 are reaching above average standards in knowledge about becoming informed citizens and in developing skills of enquiry and communication. They are enthusiastic and take real interest in the citizenship related aspects of lessons. Year 11 participate in challenging activities; for example, work with London Transport that was so successful that students from the school are now featured in the information issued to the public. All students questioned are very clear about our ethical responsibilities; for example, in safeguarding the environment and understanding that this has a local as well as a worldwide importance. Year 9 students are able to discuss a range of issues in a mature way and higher attaining students showed an impressive level of knowledge about equal rights. However, some individuals are unclear about the different parts of Britain and how they are governed, and they are not all clear about the role of parliament. Most have a good knowledge of current affairs because they are encouraged to watch news programmes so that they can contribute regular 'news flash' items to work in humanities.
129. Citizenship, as a subject, is new in the school, but students have a real awareness of their rights and responsibilities in a democratic society because of the ethos of the school, which is about care, equality and participation. Their school provides very clear messages and models for them concerning their rights and duties in the wider world. It contributes to a range of charities and local community projects. During the inspection there was specific reference in assembly to International Human Rights Day. Students know that they cannot take their liberty for granted and understand why it is important that everyone should use their vote. The Student Forum is very successful. It has been consulted on key issues and makes a real contribution in improving the life of the school, while providing students with a model of the democratic process.
130. Teaching and learning are good. Aspects of citizenship are taught in all subjects, but coverage is planned as part of specific PSE and citizenship sessions within humanities. In the lessons observed, planning was effective and very good use was made of experts from outside the school. A theme of 'changing relationships' was developed well because of the extra dimension provided by the facilitator who was clearly expert in developing group work and role play. On other themes and issues the school uses available local expertise very well; for example, the police liaison team. It is clear that many teachers have good knowledge, manage students well and encourage lively debates, although others are less confident and would benefit from extra support.
131. The citizenship curriculum is well developed throughout the school and it meets statutory requirements. Management is very good and the well-planned citizenship programme is making a real contribution to raising standards in all aspects of school life. The newly refurbished library has a range of useful books including biographies of leaders like Nelson Mandela. New textbooks are available for use in class. Plans are in place for assessment and reporting procedures and citizenship objectives are shared consistently with students so that they are aware of how they can be good citizens of the 21st century.

HUMANITIES

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

Strengths

- Teaching, learning and use of resources.
- Leadership, management, especially in the use of assessment.
- Growing use of ICT.

Areas for improvement

- Further in-service training and support for non-specialist teachers.
- Continue to improve standards.

132. Standards at the end of Year 9 are below the national average and in Year 11 they are also below the national average. Year 2002 teacher assessments show that the proportion of students attaining Level 5, or above, is well below average. Inspection evidence shows that, although overall standards are below the national average, in some lessons, students' attainment is in line with the average. Students' attainment on entry to the school is very low, so the overall standards at the end of Year 9 represent good achievement. From work seen during the inspection and the high level of literacy skills teaching in humanities, an improvement in the number of students attaining Level 5 and above is to be expected in the future.
133. Standards in the current Year 11 are below the national average. In 2001 students failed to achieve the target set for A* to C grades, but exceeded the school and the national average in A* to G grades. Given the level at which these students started the course in Year 10, their results indicate good achievement. However, the average points score for girls at 3.1 was well below the national average, whereas boys were only one half a point behind the national average. Both boys and girls are performing less well in humanities than in the other subjects they took. In part, this can be ascribed to creating a new course for which there were initially inadequate resources available. In 2002, although A* to C grades are still well below the national average, they are nearly double the target set by the school. Programmes of study and schemes of work are fully in place and girls are now outperforming boys in the attainment of grades A* to C and A* to G, although those failing to gain a grade outnumber boys. There are very good procedures in place covering lesson planning, teaching and monitoring students' progress and it is expected that grades for all levels of attainers will continue to improve.
134. In Year 7 students learn basic numeracy skills and are able to measure angle and length in work on maps and plans. They are also able to use coordinates. From often low levels of literacy, students improve their writing skills in a variety of styles. Note taking is good and students' extended writing is helped by the use of good writing frames and worksheets. In Year 7 students have created interesting brochures on 'Is homework good for you?', and in Year 9 letter-writing is seen in 'My life in New York'. Literacy skills are further developed by the focus on reading and discussion and the development of a strong vocabulary through the learning of key words in every lesson. This was seen to advantage in a lesson on St. Luke's 'Christmas Story' in which students made good use of dictionaries and discussed the meanings of words. Students use the very good ICT resources very well in research, as seen in a Year 8 lesson on Tudor England. By Year 9 students' knowledge and understanding have grown considerably and they are able to grasp the relationships between geographical processes and patterns, seen in work on different types of production. They also demonstrate understanding of the Industrial Revolution and compare entrepreneurs of the present with those of the past, such as Josiah Wedgwood.
135. Humanities cater well for all groups of students. Suitable materials are meticulously prepared for those with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and those identified as gifted or talented. The majority are able to learn well and make good progress. In Years 10 and 11 students develop the ability to hypothesise, gather data, analyse it and reach conclusions. This is seen in coursework that covers a great range of topics and interests, such as

recycling, racism, abortion and discrimination, and helps to make the students aware of moral issues and gives them insight into their own and other societies.

136. In the geography and religious education elements of the course, students gain a clear understanding of the skills and themes contained in the National Curriculum, but in history, research tasks are found difficult and it is not clear how these are to be developed.
137. Teaching and learning are good and are reflected in the good achievement of students. Lesson preparation is very thorough, with particular attention to content, timing and provision for different groups of students. Expectation is high of both work and behaviour and lesson objectives are challenging, requiring students to stay on task and concentrate. They are fully involved in the work. Good question and answer sessions help to test and consolidate knowledge and the teachers require students to think for themselves. Interest is maintained through the use of a variety of activities and resources, including computer presentations. Enthusiastic delivery of lessons, including a good measure of humour, helps all groups of students to relate to the subject.
138. Assessment of students' work and attainment is of a high standard. Marking, constructive comments, long-term assessment and the use of National Curriculum Levels in Years 7 to 9, all ensure that students know how well they are doing and allows teachers to track progress and highlight potential underachievement. Homework is regularly set and relates closely to classwork, consequently, making a considerable contribution to progress.
139. Leadership and management of this area are very good, with provision being regularly reviewed and improved. Leadership is clear and good support comes from a united team that has the will to develop the subject further. This will be assisted by ensuring that non-specialist teachers continue to improve cross-curricular knowledge through appropriate training.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good and lessons are very well planned.
- The discrete ICT course in Years 7 to 9 provides appropriate learning opportunities for students.
- The ICT courses in Years 10 to 11 offer appropriate challenge for all students.
- The learning area is managed very well.

Areas for improvement

- Identify gifted and talented ICT students, particularly in Years 7 to 9 to ensure that they receive appropriate challenge.
- Reduce the number of students not gaining an ICT qualification.

140. In 2002, teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 indicate students' attainment is well below the national average. At the end of Year 11, GNVQ results are below average because of a number of students failing to gain any qualification. The introduction of the new GNVQ course now caters for students of all abilities. On entry to the school, students' ICT capability varies widely, but it is generally well below national expectation. Students learn quickly how to use the school network, logging on and organising their files. The students become confident users of ICT and actively use a variety of software. The achievement of students in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory, but in Years 10 and 11 it is good as their results, although below average, are better than predicted based on their standards in ICT when they commence the course.
141. The standard of work of present for students in Year 9 is below average. In Year 7 students are able to use appropriate software, save and retrieve work. In Year 8 students researched genetically modified food products and they displayed their findings using presentation software. They were able to design, link slides using hyperlinks and incorporate photographs into their slide presentation to emphasise their research. By the end of Year 9 students are achieving well and

they understand how to create, sort and search databases. In a Year 9 lesson focusing on databases, students were able to demonstrate and explain how they created a database and the relationship within the structure. Students are confident users of presentational software. By Year 11, higher attaining students are confident in using a variety of techniques and can critically evaluate their work in order to make improvements. Standards in Year 11 were higher than examination results indicate and are broadly in line with national expectations. In a Year 11 GNVQ lesson, higher attaining students were able to construct linked web pages and change and improve the layout by using appropriate HTML codes. This too represents good achievement given the standards of attainment when the students commenced this course of study.

142. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good with some very good and excellent features, particularly in Year 11. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this is used effectively in order to aid students' understanding of ICT terms and applying their knowledge. Very good planning ensures that lessons have good pace and that students are clearly focused on their work in order to maximise their potential. Teachers also challenge and encourage students to develop their skills. This was evident in a Year 11 GNVQ lesson on web page design, where the teacher planned for a variety of activities allowing individual support and guidance to students to further their understanding of the use of HTML code to make changes to web pages. The support for students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, allows all students to further their understanding of business documents and to use appropriate layouts.
143. Teachers share the objectives of the lessons with the students informing them of expectations and the outcomes. This provides a clear structure to the lessons giving students guidance to enable them to perform tasks independently. The use of key words is a feature of all ICT lessons. In a Year 10 GNVQ lesson, focusing on the design of business documents, the key words were used to good effect as an introduction to the requirements for the designing of a ticket for a theme park. Teachers use resources with good effect for demonstrations and to highlight important features of the lesson. Teachers use questions to test the understanding and knowledge of students. However, in a Year 11 lesson boys dominated the questions asked and girls were not given the opportunity to demonstrate their ICT knowledge.
144. The leadership and management of this learning area are very good. The discrete ICT course in Years 7 to 9 is well planned and is having an impact on achievement. The courses in Years 10 to 11 cater for all students, with the CISCO course providing challenge and rigour for gifted and talented students. Gifted and talented students are not identified in earlier years and this issue needs addressing. Thought should be given to ensure that such students are challenged from an early stage. Standards of work are closely monitored and classroom observation is frequent and supportive of sharing of good practice. Students speak highly of the opportunities offered and they attend ICT sessions at the end of the school day in order to complete homework and improve upon their coursework. Homework is a key feature as it provides students with the opportunity to further their understanding of ICT and to undertake research in preparation for their work in class.

LEISURE AND TOURISM

Overall, the quality of provision in leisure and tourism is **very good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is excellent and standards are rising as a result.
- Marking of students' work is excellent, ensuring that students know what they have to do to improve.
- Planning of lessons is excellent which, combined with the excellent teaching methods, keeps all students on task so that they achieve well.

Areas for improvement

- The levels of attendance at lessons.

145. Leisure and tourism is a GNVQ course offered to students in Years 10 and 11 at Foundation and Intermediate levels, equivalent to four GCSEs at grade C and above for the most successful

candidates. The subject was examined for the first time in the 2001 GNVQ examinations with results below the national average for all schools. Girls performed better than boys. Standards rose significantly in 2002 as staffing difficulties eased and the underachievement of boys was addressed. In the work seen in the inspection attainment has improved further and is now above the average for all schools. Students can define the terms, 'marketing' and 'market research', for example. They can explain well the different ways in which market research can be carried out. All students know the five ways in which organisations profile their customers and are learning to segment them further. Standards reach Distinction level in the case of the gifted and talented students and all students achieve well because the excellent teaching matches their needs. Standards of literacy are continually addressed in the teaching, providing good support for students with special educational needs; for example, in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Students for whom English is an additional language also achieve well. The unsatisfactory attendance of some students limits their overall attainment at the end of the course. Standards of ICT and numeracy are as expected for this course.

146. The quality of teaching and learning is excellent. The excellent planning of lessons includes tasks written in different ways to match the individual needs of the wide variety of students in the class. There is time for individual support, of the students who need help in reading and for those with fluent writing skills, for example. The variety of students' activities in lessons demonstrates excellent teaching methods that continually maintain students' concentration and attention, promoting a very good rate of learning by all students. The progress they make is maximised. The challenge to students' learning is maintained through a constant stream of questions according to students' needs, and is very good because it underscores the learning throughout the lesson. The marking of students' work is excellent, students receiving specific and very good advice on note-taking, learning, writing and basic definitions. They know their standard through the regular tests set throughout the course. Folders of students' work show good progress as the course develops. Students are left in no doubt about what they have to do to improve, as targets are set. Students chose this course because it was different from other subjects. The majority like it and see a career for themselves in it after they leave school. They have very good attitudes to their work overall. The shorter, sharper form of coursework being introduced to promote boys' attainment is under review.
147. The introduction of this course is an excellent response to the need for curriculum change following the last inspection. The quality of the leadership and management is very good, responding excellently to the disappointing results of 2001. There is good continuity to this course Post 16 and the students on this course will be well prepared for it.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good; lessons are enthusiastically taught and enable students to learn effectively.
- Good relationships, attitudes and behaviour result in a positive working environment.
- The subject is well managed.

Areas for improvement

- The degree of challenge presented to higher attaining students.
- Non-specialist teachers would benefit from more training.
- A significant minority of students show poor attendance patterns.

148. Religious education is taught as a separate subject only in Years 10 and 11. Standards of attainment in the GCSE course, taken by all students, are well below average in terms of grades A* to C and below average in terms of grades A* to G. Work seen during the inspection confirms these standards, but also show that, in the context of their prior attainment, students achieve well. Students show a basic knowledge of major religions and some of their distinctive features. They develop what they have learned in their humanities course in Years 7 to 9 by exploring Christian

and Muslim perspectives on issues such as abortion, the environment and marriage. Students' writing shows a range of styles, although literacy levels are generally below average and they often show a greater depth of knowledge and thought in their oral than in their written work. Teachers, however, are working hard to improve literacy skills and students are beginning to use specialist vocabulary with growing confidence.

149. The achievement of students in both years is good. Students with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, make similar rates of progress to those of their peers. Students are led to realise that religious education has a practical application to everyday life and are enabled to consider their own beliefs and values about a wide range of moral and ethical issues. This was evident, for example, in a Year 10 lesson where students considered the sanctity of life in the context of abortion. They are forming their own ideas on issues and are applying their knowledge to current situations. Students in religious education are enthusiastic, eager to learn and tolerant of each other's beliefs. Classroom relationships are positive. Behaviour in lessons is good. Most students take care with their work and show pride in it. Students respond well to difficult challenges and, in so doing, explore ways in which different faiths approach moral and ethical issues. Some students, however, have poor attendance patterns and this adversely affects their attainment.
150. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers, most of whom are non-specialists, are sufficiently knowledgeable about what they teach. However, although work is generally well matched to students' abilities, some lessons do not stretch the higher attaining students sufficiently. Lessons are very well planned with clear objectives so that students understand what they need to do and why. Activities are well structured to enable students to maintain levels of concentration and to feel more confident about their work. Students in Year 11, for example, have researched the Internet to find out about nuclear protest movements. Contemporary examples, or shared experiences, are used to show how belief affects people's lives and actions. Students in Year 10, for example, write marriage guidance leaflets and debate whether people should live together before marriage. Key vocabulary is introduced systematically. Students' work is marked carefully and with comments that show them how to improve their work. It would be useful to develop this good practice by making more use of marking to GCSE levels as well as to grades. Teachers work hard to establish clear expectations of how to behave and work. The atmosphere in classrooms is positive and teachers are good role models for the subject.
151. The subject, as part of a wide learning area, is managed well. Teachers work well as a team and as members of the ICT, social and environment learning area. There is a clear commitment to raising standards and to ensure that students benefit from their course in religious education. Classrooms are cheerful and pleasant places in which to learn and students respond accordingly. The subject makes a significant contribution to citizenship and to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Non-specialist teachers would benefit from further training on teaching exam-level religious education.

LEARNING AREA 5 – PERSONAL, CREATIVE AND EXPRESSIVE

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Work in ceramics.
- Students achieve well as a result of the good teaching and organisation.
- Positive relationships and generally good behaviour support learning.
- Good, well-planned curriculum.

Areas for improvement

- Further develop planned use of ICT.
- Further develop drawing and painting from observation.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure consistency of expectation.

152. Overall standards are below average. Standards are well below national scores at the end of Year 9. Teacher assessments at the end of year in 2001 show much lower results in relation to Newham and the national average. Although national scores have not yet been published for 2002 the teacher assessments for this year suggest that standards remain low. Standards at the end of Year 11 are below average. The GCSE point scores in 2001 show that standards were well below average, and the GCSE results for 2002 do not show an improvement.
153. Present standards seen on inspection are below average, but achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good. A project in Year 8 called 'groundwork', in which students, supported by visitors from the project, design and model improvements to the school grounds, is good. Students develop a range of skills in three-dimensional design. Achievement is not consistent across all classes; in some groups the pace is too slow for achievement to be good. At times there is an over reliance on copying from secondary sources. There is some good work on contextual studies in Year 9 and some excellent work in ceramics, but drawing skills, including drawing from observation, are weak.
154. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 remains good. Students experiment with a wider range of materials and scale and create individual and decorative work inspired by artists, such as Gustav Klimt and Georgia O'Keefe. At this stage they are expected to take more responsibility for their work. This works well with self-motivated students, but others, particularly boys, need more structure and direction. Some sketchbooks are developed to a high level and are well annotated; a good foundation for future studies in art, although there is considerable variation. One boy in Year 10 has written in detail about the various art movements, but this is unusual. Most students know the names of one or two artists, but are not able to put them into the context of time or place. Standards in ceramic work are very good and in line with national expectations, but work at this stage needs to be supported by stronger skills in drawing and painting.
155. Overall, teaching and learning are good. In lessons seen teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to excellent. Teaching and learning are good where there are high expectations of work and behaviour and students are clear about what is expected of them. In the best lessons there is a variety of teaching methods and activities that not only keep students interested, but help them to develop skills. In lessons where teaching is less satisfactory, there is a tendency for too much teacher talk, resources are not well organised and students have to wait for their work. This has a negative effect on the quality of learning. Although good homework was seen in all years, it is not consistent and homework and sketchbooks are an area for development.
156. Generally behaviour is good. Most students have a positive attitude to their work and are keen to talk about what they are doing and participate in the lesson. In other lessons a minority of students are disruptive, chatter and, in the worst cases, prevent others from working. Behaviour is good when teaching is good. Key words are emphasised and students are starting to use art-specific language, but much of this remains at a very simple level and could be more demanding. Students with special educational needs, including special medical needs, achieve well, as do students for whom English is an additional language. The subject area has identified gifted and talented students; they are encouraged to come to an art study club. Assessment procedures are good. Students know their levels of attainment and how well they are doing. Homework is also marked regularly, although not always with a comment that explains how the work could be improved.
157. Art and design is well managed. The subject co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure that subject rooms are suitably arranged and there is a good curriculum in place. These improvements are having a positive impact on standards. Resources are adequate, although there are no art reference books and ICT in the art area is not linked to the Internet. This means that it is difficult for students to carry out research. This is a good subject area with some very good features.

DRAMA

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

Strengths

- Students' levels of achievement are very good.
- The consistently good and often very good teaching accounts for the students' high levels of achievement.
- The very good leadership and management of the subject.

Areas for improvement

- Students in Year 10 are not producing written work of a sufficiently high standard.

158. The proportion of students attaining a GCSE grade in the A* to C range in the 2001 drama examinations was broadly in line with national averages. More students were entered for the subject than was the case nationally and all attained at least a grade G. Levels of achievement were, therefore, very good when account is taken of students' low standards on entry to the school. Results in 2002 improved significantly. All students who were entered for the subject obtained a grade, and levels of achievement remain very good.
159. The standards of work seen during the course of the inspection in Years 10 and 11 are average and this was so for all groups, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Their levels of achievement are very good. Students showed understanding of sensitive issues and had the ability to communicate those perceptions clearly and with feeling in a variety of forms. This was seen in a Year 11 lesson where students explored class differences using body language, posture, gesture and expression. They were confident in their use of such techniques and were perceptive in their evaluations of each other's performances. As a result, they made significant learning gains. The one area for development is the standard of the written records in the Year 10 folders. Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 show good achievement. They were confident and articulate and able to work effectively in role. Students with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language contributed well in group work and in presentations and were making progress in line with their peers. Students in a Year 8 lesson, for example, devised and performed scenes using non-verbal communication and so learnt how to convey messages clearly. The drama curriculum contributes significantly to students' personal and social development because they explore a wide range of moral, social and cultural issues.
160. Students achieve well and learning is good in drama because of the quality of the teaching, which is consistently good or very good. Teachers are well qualified and their lessons are carefully planned and taught in a lively, stimulating way. There is a good balance between teacher exposition, group work, presentations and evaluations and, as a result, students are exposed to a progressively challenging sequence of activities. Students in a Year 10 lesson had to understand how the writer could move between different time frames and how the technique impacted on dramatic tension. This was a difficult concept for them to come to terms with, but because of the quality of the teaching and their positive attitudes to the work, all students made good progress. Teachers challenge students in their teaching and convey enthusiasm for the subject. Class management is very good because it is rooted in respect for the students.
161. The leadership and management provided by the deputy director of learning are very good and he is well supported by committed and able colleagues. Progress has been made in recent years in improving the quality of teaching and raising standards. This is because the schemes of work have been reviewed and updated and they now include arrangements for assessment and target setting. Procedures are in place for monitoring and evaluating student progress and teachers work closely to develop and share teaching techniques. The wide range of extra-curricular provision provides students with excellent opportunities to broaden their understanding and enjoyment of the subject and many take advantage of these opportunities. The subject has access to plenty of teaching

space, but accommodation and resources are in need of improvement. The subject is well placed to improve further because of the commitment of the staff and the energetic leadership of the deputy director of learning.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- The teachers' very good subject knowledge improves students' learning.
- The rising numbers at GCSE.
- There are good relationships between teachers and students.
- Excellent opportunities exist for students to make music together.

Areas for improvement

- Continue to improve standards for students in Years 7 to 9.
- ICT opportunities are being missed in Years 7 to 9 through lack of equipment.

162. Although the 2002 teacher assessments of students at the end of Year 9 show that attainment is in line with the national average, inspection evidence indicates that this judgement is generous and that attainment is below average. The attainment of Year 11 students in their GCSE examinations is also below average, however, one half of the students gained A* to C grades. As this was the first national music examination for students in this 'fresh start' school good progress over time has been made for all students including those of a rich linguistic and cultural background and those with special educational needs. Girls tend to do better than boys.
163. From the work seen during this inspection standards are below average in Years 7 to 9, but they are showing improvement because of the very good subject knowledge of the teachers. This represents good achievement overall considering that students enter Year 7 from widely differing backgrounds and from a variety of primary schools, where opportunities to study music have been restricted. Standards for students in Year 11 are average and this good achievement is because of the stimulating teaching taking place, which motivates students and increases their understanding of musical concepts. Gifted and talented students make good progress overall because of good planning and high expectations and take part in the many extra-curricular activities run by the subject area. Five students are also working for the AS-level music technology examination.
164. The teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 is good overall because the teachers plan lessons well with the aims and objectives clearly stated so that students know what they have to do to meet their targets. In the most successful lessons students are interested, motivated and show pleasure in doing the work. This was seen in a Year 7 lesson where the brisk pace coupled with varied activities improved learning and created good relationships and co-operation. Due to much reinforcement, Year 8 students know how to use musical language to evaluate their group improvisations. Confident teaching in Year 9 enables higher attaining students to improve their keyboard performances of 'Blue Moon'; talented students show that they can extend their work by decorating the melody. Lower attaining students struggle with keyboard fingering; they lack co-ordination and need more support from the teacher to get their melodies and chord patterns established. Students of all abilities are well catered for and appear to enjoy their music lessons. This confirms the inclusive nature of the work taking place and the harmonious relationships that are being developed. Homework is rarely given.
165. Students have limited access to information and communication technology in Years 7 to 9 and this is holding back standards particularly in composition techniques. Work is assessed regularly and performances are recorded. There is good support for literacy with lesson objectives being written down, flash cards being used and dictionary work being done in some lessons; key words and assessment levels are used and displayed in the music rooms.

166. Many more students are now choosing music in Years 10 and 11 and from observing lessons and looking at their work, very good teaching and learning are taking place overall. This is because of the high expectations of the teachers and a willingness to succeed, which leads to a gradual improvement for students of all abilities. Year 10 students improve their learning about musical terms and conventions because of the lively teaching being done. Quiz questions are written in larger type and read out aloud, which helps those students who have English as an additional language. Year 11 students have a short 'true or false quiz' to remind them of musical terms and they use this knowledge to answer questions on Tchaikowsky's 'Dance of the Reed Pipes'. Very good teaching and technical support enables students to compose using 'cubase' software and write up commentaries showing how their work has been developed. Compositions are recorded on compact disc and copies are available for students to take home. Each performance is appraised and this helps students to improve their critical listening. The system of assessment in Years 10 and 11 is done effectively.
167. Many students enjoy playing the steel pans and there are a number of steel pan bands including a band for primary students, which reach a high standard of performance. Students with special educational needs play steel pans; their band is held in high esteem and includes learning assistants and helpers as well. Extra-curricular activities include clubs for keyboard, percussion, theory and recorder as well as a brass group, woodwind group and rock bands. Students have visited London theatres to see 'Fame' and Mozart's 'Marriage of Figaro'. There have been jazz, percussion and live rap workshops and there are experiments with lunchtime concerts in addition to those held in the evening. Students take part in community activities such as 'Party in the Park' and 'Black History Month'. All these things make an excellent contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
168. There is very good leadership and management of music by the director of learning who understands students very well; she captures their interest and imagination in lessons and in the many extra-curricular activities that take place. Formal monitoring of teaching has taken place and the level of teaching and support staff for music is very good. The scheme of work is comprehensive and the development plan has targets that can be achieved. Facilities for ICT are inadequate to allow routine access for all students and particularly those in Years 7 to 9. The accommodation is very good and there is a wide selection of learning resources.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good, and results in effective learning and good progress in lessons by all groups of students.
- Students achieve well by the end of Years 9 and 11 in the common course, and the average points score of those taking the GCSE course in 2002 has almost doubled since the previous year.
- Very good extra-curricular provision extends learning opportunities for students and contributes very well to their personal development.
- The very good leadership and management of the recently appointed learning co-ordinator provides a clear educational direction for the subject.

Areas for improvement

- The consistency in the quality of marking of students' GCSE theory work.
- The pace of the long double lessons in the common course often flags as a result of only one activity being taught.
- The lack of sufficiently visible lines in the sports hall impedes the quality of progress students make in many sports.

169. In lessons seen, standards are below average by the end of Year 9 for the great majority of girls. This is as a result of their lack of prior experience and inconsistent curricular delivery in the past. In association football, for example, a few of the more physically capable have secure individual

skills and techniques, but the majority have limited understanding of tactical and positional play. No boys' lessons were observed in Year 9, but very good assessment procedures show that the majority of boys are working at levels expected for their age and are on course to attain Level 5 or above at the end of the year. As a result of good teaching and learning, this represents good achievement since standards on entry in Year 7 for all groups of students were well below average. All groups of students continue to develop their skills and techniques throughout Years 10 and 11 and, by the end of Year 11, standards in the common course are as expected. In association football, for example, most boys have good close control and passing skills and are adept at using the long-ball pass. In small-sided games, however, the tactical awareness and positional play of the less physically capable could be better. In basketball, most girls dribble and pass securely, but, for many, their understanding of the travel rule and the use of signalling, could be improved. The more physically capable have a good level of individual skills, including effective use of the lay-up shot. Achievement by the end of Year 11 is good.

170. Across all years students have a secure grasp of the principles and procedures for warm-up activity; they often lead this themselves and many can name the muscle groups being stretched. Students with physical and/or medical needs receive effective additional help in lessons from teacher assistants. All students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well supported and integrated. As a result of this they too make good progress. Physically talented students achieve well in lessons and are provided with further opportunities through extra-curricular activities and by taking part in school and district teams.
171. GCSE physical education is a popular option for many. The average points score of students in 2001 was well below the national average. In relation to their prior attainment at the end of Year 9, this represented underachievement. Results in 2002 were, however, much improved with the average points almost doubling with students achieving well. This improvement owed much to a change of examination syllabus. The small number of girls taking the course does not make it possible to comment on gender differences. There were no significant differences in the attainment of different ethnic groups. Present Year 11 students are learning well and making good progress. There is, for example, some very good use of ICT by students to present their research findings to the rest of the class on the effects that drugs have on sporting performance. The quality of their written work is satisfactory. In their practical lessons, Year 11 students are successfully developing their knowledge and understanding of the analysis of performance through small-group coaching and evaluation of each other.
172. The quality of teaching and learning is good. This results in good progress in lessons by all groups of students. Detailed lesson planning provides for a variety of structured and progressive activities and helps to ensure that students remain motivated. Lessons start promptly and efficiently, which results in all being quickly involved. There is also very good use of the board to highlight learning objectives and key terminology. Students respond well to this, which helps to promote a positive learning atmosphere in lessons. In a Year 7 gymnastics lesson, for example, all worked well as pairs and showed clear respect for the capabilities of one another whilst planning and performing balances as part of their sequence work. Students also responded well to the high expectations of the teacher, which resulted in very good quality learning and improvement of their confidence in evaluating the work of their peers. Higher level tasks challenged the more physically capable. In some association football lessons, however, there could be more opportunities for evaluation - this would deepen further students' knowledge and understanding. Teachers' demonstration and breakdown of the skills and techniques are very effective and indicative of their very good knowledge of the subject. In a Year 9 girls' association football lesson, for example, this made students aware of how to refine and improve their own skills and techniques of use of the thigh for close control. Students are made aware of their capabilities because teachers circulate well offering constructive praise and criticism. In a Year 10 girls' badminton lesson; for example, effective questioning and observation enabled the teacher to assess what students knew and understood and also enhanced their speaking and listening skills. In badminton lessons, however, the lack of sufficiently visible lines makes it very difficult for students to judge where to place their shots. At the end of lessons, students are fully involved in considering what they have learned; this consolidates further their knowledge and understanding of the activity being taught. However, because there is only one activity being taught, the pace of the long double lessons in the

common course often flags. Homework is set for GCSE groups and extends students' learning. The consistency of the quality of marking of work is variable; comments are not always followed up about missing work and students are not always being given guidance as to what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.

173. A very good range of extra-curricular provision continues to extend opportunities for students and contributes very well to their personal development. These include matches against other schools, tournaments and recreational activities. As a result of the continuing enthusiasm of teachers, individuals have achieved borough and county representative honours, one girl has achieved regional honours at hockey and another is a member of the Great Britain cheerleading squad. Individuals have also had success in disability events at London and county level. Under-14 and under-16 boys and girls' teams have been successful in borough competitions. Since his recent appointment, the learning co-ordinator has provided very good leadership and management; this has resulted in improved standards of attainment and quality of provision in the subject.