

INSPECTION REPORT

THE CHARTER SCHOOL

London

LEA area: Southwark

Unique reference number: 131812

Headteacher: Mrs P Bowmaker OBE

Reporting inspector: Mr R Passant
2728

Dates of inspection: 10 - 12 February 2003

Inspection number: 253804

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 18 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Red Post Hill
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr David Gallie

Date of previous inspection: N/A

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11041	Marvyn Moore	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
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23880	Olivia Hall	Team inspector	Special educational needs Art and design	
14490	Susan Jackson	Team inspector	History	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Charter School is a new 11 to 18 mixed comprehensive school, opened two and a half years ago as a result of a determined campaign by Southwark residents to establish a school to serve the local neighbourhood. The school is growing year by year and is gradually moving into new buildings. There are currently 541 pupils on roll in Years 7 to 9, with about 100 more boys than girls. Approximately half the school are of White UK heritage- the other half are a rich diversity of ethnicity with Black British - Caribbean, and African heritage forming the largest of the identified groups. The school is heavily over-subscribed. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is twice the national average. The percentage of pupils whose mother tongue is not believed to be English (5 per cent) is higher than in most schools. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average and the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need is well above the national average (7.8 per cent as against 2.4 per cent nationally). The overall attainment of pupils on entry to the school is improving in recent years but for Year 7 is just below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The Charter School is a very good school. Features which are at least very good and often excellent are already established, and more are developing. Leadership across the school is of very high quality, particularly that provided by the headteacher. All members of staff are committed to providing a very good education to all pupils. They have created a secure, and well organised school with a focus on achievement. The headteacher has a very clear vision based upon the principles on which the school was established. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching, a rich curriculum and a positive ethos, which encourages and motivates pupils. At the time of the inspection the school had not reached the stage of National Curriculum tests or examinations. Inspection evidence and school data indicate that pupils attain at or above national expectations in all subjects. When compared to schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, pupils' standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils have very good attitudes and behave well for most of the time. Provision for special educational needs, although overall satisfactory, requires attention. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Excellent leadership by the headteacher, the governing body and key staff.
- Good teaching, high expectations and good progress in lessons lead to achievement that is good - and for some pupils very good.
- The school provides a very broad and relevant curriculum, with many enrichment opportunities.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in the school: they know what they have to do and where they should go if they have a problem. Care and relationships are very good.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and have a mature understanding of their own learning.

What could be improved

- The provision for pupils with special educational needs requires review. This should focus particularly upon strategic whole-school management, the monitoring of pupils' progress and staff training in the new Code of Practice.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is the first time the school has been inspected.

STANDARDS

Because the school has not yet taken GCSE examinations or Year 9 National Curriculum tests, the table indicating standards at GCSE or National Curriculum test results, normally included in the Ofsted summary to parents, has not been included.

Results of Year 8 National Curriculum voluntary tests in English and mathematics indicate standards above the national average in the percentage of pupils achieving level 5 or above. On the basis of inspection evidence, standards in Year 9 in English and science are above national expectations. In mathematics, standards are above expectations in Years 7 and 8 but are at around national expectations in Year 9. In all three subjects a significant number of pupils attain above expectations.

The school sets challenging targets, which are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. The school is confident that it will exceed these targets.

Standards in information and communications technology (ICT) are well above National Curriculum expectations and a strength of the school. Standards are above national expectations in French, history and music. In religious education standards are above those of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in art, design and technology, geography physical education and drama are in line with expectations.

Pupils achieve well and make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Higher attaining pupils and those identified as gifted and talented make good progress. Black British pupils and those from other ethnic heritage make similar progress to their peers within the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are very keen to learn, want to do well and are very committed. They feel that they are stakeholders in their school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall behaviour is good and often very good. The majority of pupils behave very well for most of the time. There is very occasional unsatisfactory behaviour in class but this is followed up well by the school management team.
Personal development and relationships	The very good quality of relationships among pupils and between staff and pupils is a significant feature of the school.
Attendance	Good. In the last full year well above average.

The school is a very well ordered community in which pupils feel safe and secure.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9
Quality of teaching	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.

Pupils' learning in lessons is good and they make good progress over time. Whilst there are a number of factors that contribute to this good and, for some pupils, very good progress, the major factor is the consistently high quality teaching they receive.

In the lessons seen teaching was often very good, sometimes excellent and very seldom less than satisfactory. Good teaching was seen in all subjects across the school. Teaching is good in English and science and satisfactory in mathematics. It is excellent in music, very good in art, ICT, and modern languages. It is good in all other subjects.

There is a very clear structure for the learning. Pupils are motivated by the target-setting process and are encouraged by it so that they develop over time a maturity about their own learning. Literacy and numeracy are taught well in subjects across the curriculum. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Whilst teacher planning does much to encourage pupils who are having difficulties it does not necessarily address the specificity of their need.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school has developed a broad and very rich curriculum in Years 7-9 that includes a number of innovative features.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Overall the provision is satisfactory but aspects require attention.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Overall the provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is satisfactory. Currently there are no pupils who are at an early stage of language acquisition.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The overall provision is very good. The ethos of the school is one in which pupils can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected. Moral, social and cultural development is very good. Spiritual development, fostering of pupils' sense of self-esteem in particular, is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils extremely well and offers good support to them. The school has excellent procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare. The assessment system is very effective in raising pupils' expectations and standards.

The parents' views of the school are positive and they feel that the school is helping their children become mature and responsible. The contribution by parents to children's learning at home, together with the good quality of information provided for parents and the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school, have a very positive effect on the progress that pupils make.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Overall there is excellent leadership by the governing body, headteacher and key staff. Management is very good, although whole-school management of special educational needs requires improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very committed to supporting the school yet provides it with the degree of challenge. They have a clear understanding of their non-executive role. They fulfil all their statutory duties extremely well, with the exception of ensuring a daily act of worship.
The school's evaluation of	The school evaluates its performance very well through the use of internal

its performance	data and voluntary testing.
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The strategic use of resources	The school makes very good use of its resources although teacher assistants are not always used to best advantage. Some departments could make better use of ICT.
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The match of staff to the curriculum is very good. Resources are currently very good. Accommodation is good. Refurbishment of physical education changing facilities is needed along with access to the playing fields. The sports hall floor requires repair in some places. Some rooms are cramped. Pupils respond very well to the new buildings and the spaciousness of the atrium. The school applies the principles of best value very well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children liked school. • Their children were making good progress in school and the school is helping their children become mature and responsible. • Teaching is good, the school is well led and managed. • They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They were not kept well informed about how their children were getting on. • The school does not work closely with parents. • Behaviour at the school is not good. • They were not happy with the amount of homework.

The inspection findings confirm the positive views of the parents and disagree with the negative views expressed. Homework is good, extends the learning in class and is set regularly. Pupils' behaviour is good and often very good. Very seldom was there unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons. The school works hard to keep parents informed and develop an active partnership with parents. Current school policy is to develop the role of the form tutor rather than have meetings with subject staff. Parents with concerns about a subject can meet with the subject teacher outside the normal meeting schedule.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are just below average. They make good and, for some pupils, very good progress to attain standards which are at or above national expectations in all subjects. In ICT pupils reach standards that are well above expectations. Overall pupils achieve well.
2. These judgements accord well with parents' views. Ninety-two per cent of parents thought their child was making good progress and 95 per cent thought the school expected their child to work hard and achieve his or her best. Ninety per cent thought that the school was helping their child become mature and responsible.
3. Developing the achievement of pupils is the central focus to the school's work and at the heart of the school's basic principles. The school has put in place a range of structures to ensure that pupils achieve their best. These aspects are developed in more detail throughout the report, nevertheless factors such as:
 - high levels of attendance (pupils are at school more often);
 - a long school day which means that pupils are getting a lot of teaching with the result that they are getting through a lot of work;
 - good quality teaching so that pupils make good and often very good progress in lessons;
 - clear targets and the knowledge of what they have to do in order to improve;
 - very explicit use of assessment to accelerate learning;
 - ICT being used very well to reinforce learning in many subjects;
 - enrichment activities which broaden pupils' interests;
 - a work ethic in the school that encourages pupils to bring their own energies into play;
 - coherent policies regarding behaviour management so that there is generally a consistent work ethic and, overall, pupils have very good attitudes to learning;
 - a developing and real partnership with parents to support pupils' progress;
 - high quality care and support for pupils.

all combine to ensure that pupils achieve and want to achieve well.

4. That said, it also needs to be stressed that the school is, of necessity, developing rapidly. A third of the members of staff were new to the school in September 2002 and the school would readily admit that systems in place are undergoing continuous refinement and sharpening.
5. In most subjects the quality of provision¹ is at least good and in some the overall provision was very good. In the lessons observed pupils' learning was good or better in over three-quarters of lessons and it was very seldom less than satisfactory. Although the statistical base is small, this good quality of learning is reflected in overall improvement in attainment seen in the lessons in Years 8 and 9 and reflects good progress over time.
6. Inspection evidence, assessments carried out within school, and the voluntary National Curriculum tests in Year 8 indicate that attainment in English is on course to be above the national average by the end of Year 9. All pupils write in sentences that are correctly structured with correct punctuation, and higher attaining pupils develop a mature flowing style. Generally pupils have a limited vocabulary although there is good emphasis across the school to developing

¹ This judgement is a summative judgement made on the quality and range of curriculum provided within the subject: the way the subject is organised, the quality of teaching and learning, the achievement of pupils and the resource provision. These judgements are specific to the subject. Whilst it is appropriate to use this judgement to compare the provision for a specific subject between different schools, it is inappropriate to use this judgement to make relative comparisons between subjects within the same school because like is not being compared to like.

their technical language. In the work on *Twelfth Night* pupils show a good understanding of plot and characters and show a developing critical appreciation of the way Shakespeare uses language. Across the school very effective use is made of discussion and questioning to extend pupils' thinking. There is good provision for developing pupils' literacy skills across the subjects of the curriculum.

7. In mathematics, the attainment seen in lessons and analysis of pupils' work confirms the optional test results which show that Year 8 pupils are attaining above the national average for all schools and well above for similar schools. In Year 9, pupils are generally attaining at the expected standard, although some pupils are attaining at a high level. The overall quality of provision is satisfactory, a restricted range of teaching styles and some repetition in the curriculum meant that overall pupils' progress slowed in Year 9 from the earlier very good progress - although most pupils continued to make good progress.
8. The provision and systems for establishing numeracy across the school are good. Number skills used by the pupils are good and support their learning both within mathematics and in other subjects. Pupils are able to apply their mathematics well in computation where it is required and present data in graph work.
9. The evidence in science indicates that pupils are attaining above average. These results compared to similar schools are well above average. Pupils enter the school with science results below the national average and so the progress made through years 7 to 9 is very good.
10. In Southwark, boys and girls perform similarly at Key Stage 2 in mathematics and science but there is a gap in performance of boys in English. Boys' attainment is slightly below that of girls when they enter the school- mainly because of differences in the English test. School data indicate that by Year 9 there remains a slight difference between boys' performance in English but equal performance in mathematics and science. There was no evidence that boys were performing significantly differently from girls within lessons. Nevertheless, given that 60 per cent of the Year 9 cohort is boys, this may be a factor in the more conservative teacher assessments in English than in mathematics and science.
11. Overall attainment of black pupils is slightly below national average on entry to the school mainly because of the Key Stage 2 English tests. By Year 9 there is a slight difference in performance in English but only marginal difference in mathematics and science. In Southwark, overall, it is English, Scottish and Welsh and Black British Caribbean pupils who perform significantly below average at GCSE. There was no inspection evidence of underachievement by specific ethnic groups and the school appears successful in keeping these particular groups of potentially underachieving pupils on track.
12. Pupils with special education needs make satisfactory progress overall in mainstream lessons in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils are making good progress where planning and presentation skills are being systematically developed. Some very good examples of this was seen in music folders where the quality of handwriting, note-taking and descriptive writing was making an effective impact on achievement. Progress is also good where teacher support is effective, such as in mathematics and ICT. In withdrawn lessons, pupils with low-level reading and comprehension skills are making satisfactory progress in reading, spelling and *Successmaker*² programmes, however, systematic progress is inconsistently tracked and reading age information is not detailed on statements and on individual education plans so that targets can be checked. Overall, the whole-school management of special educational needs is unsatisfactory because the monitoring of the impact of teaching and the support programmes on pupils' progress lacks rigour.
13. All pupils are encouraged to choose which level they wish to work at through an effective 'tiered' target system in mainstream lessons which is effective in raising pupils' self esteem and confidence, including those pupils with special educational needs. The devolvement of

² *Successmaker* is an ICT based programme to develop literacy and numeracy skills.

management roles to senior teaching assistants and the commitment of staff to pupils' integration into mainstream groups is effective in promoting a caring and positive environment where pupils are made feel secure. Teacher assistants keep detailed notes on those pupils they support, however, progress towards targets are inconsistently recorded. The expertise of staff within the department is appropriate and supports the well above average number of pupils with statements in the school. However, there is a lack of formal meetings between staff to share expertise, induction, training and to comment on individual pupils. Governors have been successfully trained in the new Code of Practice although teachers and support staff have yet to receive formal training.

14. These judgements need to be put into a context. Firstly the school is committed to inclusive education. This is evident in the attitudes of pupils towards each other and the strong sense of community within the school. Secondly, it recognises that, as a new school designed to be fully accessible, it is likely to have significantly more pupils with statements than the 'average' secondary school. Thirdly, it sees itself as a neighbourhood comprehensive serving the local community.
15. Currently the school has double the national average on the register of special educational needs. Of these pupils the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is three times above the national average. Admission procedures for parents whose child has a statement of special educational needs differ from normal procedures in that parents can nominate any school, including those in other authorities. Clearly the school did not anticipate the numbers seeking admission when it was making its initial planning. The issue lies not with numbers and percentages but the fact that it has reached these numbers within three years. It is the rapidity of growth and the fact that the school is still reacting to that growth and still developing the effective systems the numbers require which causes some problems. The school appointed a specialist special educational needs co-ordinator in September 2002 who is addressing the issues to ensure that pupils' specific needs are met.
16. There are about 60 pupils in the school for whom English is not their first language. None of these pupils however is at the early stages of language acquisition and so they are making good progress in their learning. These pupils are on a register, which is circulated to all staff, and so support for them is available in the classroom context if and when it is necessary.
17. Initiatives are underway to plan for the support of pupils at the earlier stages of language learning who might arrive at the school at a later date.
18. Higher attaining pupils and those identified as being gifted and talented³ make good and often very good progress. The features described in paragraph three provide all pupils, including this specific group with a structure in which they can develop well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Pupils' behaviour at the school is good and they display very good attitudes to their learning. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good. Attendance is good. The school is a very well ordered community in which pupils feel safe and secure.

19. Pupils display very good attitudes to the school and their learning. The school is an orderly community where pupils feel safe and secure. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good and pupils enjoy coming to school, display enthusiasm in lessons, show interest and maturity in their work and enjoy their learning. The majority of pupils in school work very hard, have good relationships with each other and enjoy the company of visitors. The inspection team

³ 'Excellence in the Cities' is a government initiative designed to raise achievement in participating schools. One strand of this is the 'gifted and talented programme'. This encourages schools to identify 10 per cent of each year group who are higher attaining pupils. These pupils are then supported by a programme of enrichment and extension activities. The purpose is to create a critical mass of pupils in a school who want to try to succeed in GCSE examinations and go onto further and higher education and thus help to raise the expectations of all pupils.

was impressed by the courtesy shown to them by pupils who were keen to show them around the school, discuss their achievements and their positive views of the school building and staff.

20. Pupils with special educational needs display good attitudes to work in mainstream and withdrawn sessions. They are attentive, make the appropriate responses and listen well in one-to-one support teaching. Examples of positive attitudes were observed in art and mathematics where pupils value the expertise of the teacher and in turn make good progress. Pupils respond well to positive behaviour support and form very good relationships with mentors and teachers.
21. Pupils have a mature perception of their own and others' learning needs, which develops over time through the negotiated target setting process. This maturity is reflected in the fact that pupils with special educational needs, or indeed pupils with particular skills and expertise are not isolated and are included in activities. There is, for example, no evidence of an anti 'boffin' culture. The school has very successfully structured an ethos where the majority of pupils want to improve their work and most make the effort to do so.
22. During the inspection week pupils demonstrated good behaviour both in and out of the classrooms and at lunchtimes and breaks pupils often displayed very good standards of behaviour. Pupils were observed being helpful and friendly to one another with many instances of pupils assisting one another and pupils demonstrating their respect for school property. Computers, books, school equipment and other people's property are treated with respect and the school has no graffiti and very little litter. The behaviour policy is usually consistently applied by staff and understood by pupils. Pupils have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and respect one another's views and opinions.
23. In lessons, pupils behave well or very well and behaviour is almost never less than satisfactory. Behaviour was very good in half the lessons seen and satisfactory or better in well over nine out of ten lessons. In almost all lessons the very positive attitudes that pupils have mean that teachers can get on with the tasks in hand and little time is wasted. There is no evidence that ethnic heritage groups behave differently from their classmates. Lesson observation indicates a qualitative improvement in the behaviour and attitudes of Years 8 and 9 over Year 7- indicating that pupils settle into the school routines and expectations. On the very odd occasions where a teacher had difficulties senior management were quick to follow up the problem. The rearrangement of Year 9 into groups set by attainment has changed the dynamic of one or two classes.
24. The school does have some pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties and there are some who can challenge and be difficult and there are occasional incidents. Ten pupils, for example caused 50 per cent of the temporary exclusions in the last year. The short sharp shock of temporary exclusion seems to work with most pupils in that they do not re-offend. The school is planning for an alternative structure to reduce the number of temporary exclusions. The school has had only one permanent exclusion in the last year. Such exclusions are only given for good reason after the school makes exhaustive attempts to correct pupils' behaviour and procedures are always strictly followed. The school is a very well ordered community and tutors quickly address any disruption or anti-social behaviour in an appropriate manner.
25. Personal development and relationships with pupils are very good. For example, in a very good citizenship lesson observed during the inspection week, pupils were able to discuss together, in a mature manner, their views and opinions of the attributes that a good citizen should have. They spoke with fluency and confidence. In a very good Year 8 Geography lesson, pupils demonstrated very good knowledge and understanding of how human activity affects the environment and how a lack of natural resources can affect the environment and human life.
26. Pupils are given good opportunity to display personal responsibility and initiative. The School Council is a lively body where pupils discuss matters of school interest and communicate their ideas to the school management team. The agendas for school meetings are formulated from the input of class members. Successes of the Council so far have been the purchase of drinking

water coolers, getting additional bench seating for the central courtyard area and the agreement to have games available in the central courtyard and lines painted onto the floor. However, not all pupils spoken to informally had knowledge of who their representative was, and the effectiveness of the council.

27. Year 8 pupils are trained as 'buddies' and their role is to be a critical friend offering support and advice to new pupils in areas of interest or concern. Year 7 pupils meet with their Year 8 'buddies' once per week for the first module, gradually fading out over time as the Year 7 pupils find their feet and settle in. Pupils in all classes and year groups act as informal monitors and are given additional responsibilities, for example, showing visitors around the school. A significant number of pupils in each year group have been trained by outside consultants to act as 'peer mediators'.
28. Attendance at 95 per cent is good and is above the national average. This is largely because of the school's very pro-active approach to monitoring and promoting of registration. Pupils demonstrate maturity in using the systems.
29. Pupils are extremely proud of their school, the facilities that it offers and feel that they have a stake in its future.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

Pupils' learning in lessons is good and they make good progress over time. Whilst there are a number of factors that contribute to this good and, for some pupils, very good progress, the major factor is the consistent high quality teaching they receive.

30. The quality of teaching is good. In the lessons seen it was often very good, sometimes excellent and very seldom less than satisfactory. Good teaching was seen in all subjects across the school.
31. Teaching is good in English and science and satisfactory in mathematics. It is excellent in music, very good in art, ICT, and modern languages. It is good in all other subjects.
32. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, they plan carefully and they interact with pupils effectively. They have high expectations and are clear about what they are looking for and share this with pupils. As a result pupils are clear what a particular lesson is about, how it fits into a sequence of lessons and what it is they have to achieve to reach or surpass the expected level. There is a very clear structure for the learning. Pupils are motivated by the target setting process and are encouraged by it so that they develop over time a maturity about their own learning and become active rather than simply passive participants in the learning process.
33. The fact that the curriculum is structured into self-contained modules also provides pupils with a spur because of the opportunities for a fresh start implicit within the system. A subject does not simply start in Year 7 and stretch on and on over the five years of compulsory schooling- it is broken down into convenient 'chunks' and if a pupil is not totally successful at this 'chunk' of, for example, English, there is a fresh opportunity to work at the next module. Pupils are also very clear how successful they have been in tackling a particular module of work because of the end of module assessments, which in turn feed back into the target setting process for the next module of work.
34. Assessment effectively promotes learning by raising pupils' sights and providing them with secure knowledge on which to make a realistic appraisal of what they have to do in order to improve. The result is that pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and a very positive mature work ethic is established where 'trying to improve' and 'doing your best' is recognised as being the norm by other pupils. This in turn produces a virtuous spiral and rising standards.

35. The bedrock of the good teaching is the very good relationships that exist between staff and pupils. Teachers know the pupils well and afford them appropriate respect in that they value their ideas and contributions. Teachers listen to pupils well. They work hard to develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem whilst at the same time reinforcing their literacy and oral skills and the ability and confidence to express themselves. Subjects develop literacy and numeracy skills well. The extended school day (the working week is one of the longest in the country) is demanding on staff and pupils but does mean that pupils get a lot of teaching and get through a lot of work. Lessons are interesting, activities varied so that usually time is used well and pupils work with interest and enthusiasm. Time was not used so well and pupil concentration weakened towards the end of the 60-minute session when there was only one dominant activity as in, for example, mathematics. Overall, homework is good and extends the learning seen in class.
36. Unsatisfactory learning was very rarely seen. It tended to occur where a small but significant number of pupils, usually boys, were particularly challenging and the teacher lacked the necessary behaviour management skills to cope.
37. Provision for the teaching of literacy skills is good. There is a school policy for literacy and all staff have received recent training in this. There is in addition a programme of on-going support for staff who require it. Nearly all subjects plan for the teaching of literacy in their schemes of work and their planning of individual lessons and there is good emphasis on the use and correct spelling of subject-specific vocabulary. A wide range of subjects offers pupils the opportunity to record their knowledge and understanding in written form. For example, in science pupils write up their investigations in correct scientific style and in religious education pupils have wide opportunities for extended personal writing. In music, the use of open questions encourages pupils to write detailed answers.
38. The provision and systems for establishing numeracy across the school are good. All subjects have reviewed their use of number and mathematics and a school action plan has been produced which has been shared by all teachers. For example, science teachers have responded by re-ordering some of their curriculum to coincide better with the mathematics programme.
39. Within the context of good overall teaching, there are two general aspects that require further thought and development. The first is linked to ongoing assessment and marking and the second aspect, to the teaching of pupils with special educational needs.
40. The overall effectiveness of the assessment system in raising standards has been stressed. However, ongoing teacher assessment and marking are more variable. At its best, marking of work gives the pupil a clear idea of how to improve the work submitted, focusing sharply on the specifics of the skills needed and reinforcing the pupils' targets. Some marking, however, although generally supportive, is more bland.
41. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Some good teaching was observed in learning support where questioning was used to good effect to stimulate and motivate pupils to increase their vocabulary and help them feel confident. The clarity of lesson structure and curriculum planning, along with the very positive relationships and the inclusive nature of classrooms which stem from pupils' mature attitudes to learning, support pupils with special educational needs well. Teachers also know pupils who have additional needs well. However, whilst the pitch of the lessons into four levels provides the clarity of target setting and outcome detailed above, the way the work is structured in lessons is inconsistently linked to the specifics of pupils' individual education plans. The 'booster' level does much to encourage pupils who are having difficulties but does not necessarily address the specificity of their need. Teachers and assistants have very good relationships with special needs pupils that encourage integration and confidence but assistants are not always made best use of, for example, through joint planning. In withdrawn '*successmaker*' lessons and one-to-one withdrawn sessions pupils are involved in purposeful and enjoyable activities, such as 'Scrabble' that keeps the pace lively so that they concentrate on the tasks and feel successful in achieving their spelling targets.

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

The school has developed a broad and very rich curriculum in Years 7-9 that includes a number of innovative features. There are significant curriculum strengths in most areas though arrangements for pupils with special educational needs, whilst satisfactory, do not reflect the very good overall curriculum provision.

42. The school operate a longer school day that consists of roughly six hour-long lessons. This creates sufficient time to enable all National Curriculum subjects to cover their learning programmes as well as create opportunities for pupils to pursue a wide range of extension activities and benefit from teacher-supported independent study sessions. It also means, of course, that pupils, particularly in Year 9, get a lot of teaching and as a consequence get through a lot of work. Whilst straightforward comparison is difficult because of the inclusion of enrichment opportunities within the taught time, nevertheless the pupils' working week is one of the longest in the country.
43. The school demonstrates its very strong commitment to ICT through its development of excellent facilities and higher than average curriculum time that enables pupils to cover the National Curriculum programme and work towards completion of the GNVQ full award. ICT is also being used with increasing effectiveness in most other subjects and in general makes a positive contribution to pupils' developing literacy and presentation skills and their capacity for independent study. All pupils have the benefit of independent study sessions within the timetabled curriculum. These sessions provide teacher supported access to ICT facilities and are well used by most pupils to complete GNVQ ICT or other subjects' homework. A minority need closer supervision to use the time effectively. Literacy and numeracy skills are supported well in all subjects.
44. An innovative feature of the Years 7 and 8 curriculum is the opportunity for pupils in the first two years to use the last lesson of each day to pursue an extension subject or activity of their choice. Combined with the after school activities, residential visits and other school trips, this has the effect of providing an excellent range of curriculum enrichment. This includes opportunities for further study in a chosen subject such as design and technology as well as taking additional languages including Spanish, German and Latin that can be pursued later at GCSE level. Pupils also have worthwhile opportunities to develop their confidence and speaking skills in extension classes on organising campaigns and in formal debating. There is also a wide range of sports activities and significant investment in provision of good swimming facilities for the current year groups. A key factor in many of these arrangements is the opportunity for pupils to work together across the age groups. A developing range of extra curricular activities extends the 'timetabled' enrichment opportunities further. Inevitably at this stage of the school's development, given the number of staff, the finite pool of energy and the demands on staff for curriculum preparation, these activities are still developing.
45. The school is working towards creating a more coherent approach to the Performing Arts. Even so, there is much very good practice, particularly in the extension lessons and extra-curricular activities. Dance classes benefit from the support of a local dance theatre while some pupils are involved in radio production and link with outside radio stations. Music is a further strength of the school and there is strong participation in the school orchestra.
46. The provision for careers and vocational education is good. A service level agreement with Connexions is in place and an officer attends review meetings of those on statements of educational needs. A module of work on making choices related to the world of work is planned for Year 9 citizenship. The school is rapidly building a network of contacts with local providers in planning for work experience for 14 to 16 year-olds. There is a vision to provide a radical curriculum at 14-18, which would include a range of vocational courses within school alongside AS level courses started early.

47. The school has made an excellent beginning to developing links within the local community. Links include a number of faith groups and particularly the Anglican Church, its feeder primary schools, its business providers, the police, a wide range of social services and the political community. The governors provide strong support through their public relations and publicity committee, particularly in their awareness of the use of the media, relationships with personalities celebrated by the media and its relationships with the political community. The school contributes strongly to summer schools. A lettings policy is already in place, though all the buildings are not yet complete. The school provides a number of community sports classes which are, in part, self-financing. The basketball provision is particularly successful in reaching out to include younger pupils in the local primaries and older pupils in the community, which has resulted in a Friday League. There are training links in hockey with a strong local sports club. Local faith communities, active local special needs groups and adult groups use the premises. There is a commitment to life-long learning by the school, though no clear view yet of how to fund and implement policy in this area. Self-financing holiday events for special interest groups provide, for example, a dance school and courses for other gifted and talented pupils. There are links with the Southwark Summer University. The school makes good use of local and London-wide galleries, museums and other resources: for example, all pupils recently attended a performance of Twelfth Night at the Southwark Playhouse as part of their preparation for National Curriculum tests in English.
48. Links with partner institutions are very good overall and those developing within the family of feeder primary schools as well as further afield are excellent. From sending their pupils to a very wide range of schools over a wide area, the six main feeder primary schools now send sixty-five per cent of their pupils to The Charter School. One of the first requirements of the governors - for the school to serve its immediate community - is beginning to be achieved.
49. Links for the 14-18 curriculum are currently developing and preparation is very good. The school contributes to the Southwark 14 to 18 curriculum forum and is developing an innovative approach to the 14 to 18 curriculum.
50. The overall provision for developing pupils' personal development, particularly spiritual, moral social and cultural development is very good. The ethos of the school is one in which pupils can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected. The school recognises and values the diverse cultures that make up its community and works to foster that sense of 'community'. The school works hard to develop pupils' sense of self worth. Relationships across the school support this. A significant number of pupils in each year group are trained to help mediate problems amongst class-mates when relationships are strained over a particular issue. Teachers listen to pupils in lessons and in tutor time and value their contribution. Teachers are good role models. There is a clear code of behaviour and consistently high expectations across the school. Pupils know what is expected of them. It is a 'safe' environment and pupils are encouraged across the subjects of the curriculum to explore moral concepts and values and to express their views, giving them not only the time and space to state them but also the structures and framework to sharpen the debate. For example, in geography, the issue-based curriculum not only raises questions about world citizenship but carefully structures pupils' thinking to recognise the complexity of issues. The school assessment system implicitly encourages pupils to take responsibility for their actions and their learning. In the recognition of their own learning needs, there is also the recognition of the needs of others. Pupils recognise that all are likely to need support and help at some time. Through events in history or literature they reflect on the decisions other people have made. The consequence is that, for the most part, it is a very inclusive community. Pupils are not stigmatised because they want to do well or have a learning difficulty. Pupils have very good opportunities to work co-operatively with others and through assemblies, team activities, sports and residential experiences the school develops corporate experiences. The arts are valued and the school provides very good opportunities for pupils to participate in literature, drama, music and art and design and there are very good links to extend pupils' cultural awareness outside school.
51. The citizenship programme supports the very good provision for personal development. The provision for citizenship is good and the subject incorporates elements of personal, social and

health education. Aspects covered include: health education, citizenship, drug awareness, 'The World Around Us' and relationships. Each module is well constructed.

52. Curriculum provision for pupils with special needs overall is satisfactory, although the scheme of work for the literacy support of pupils withdrawn for additional work is limited and lacks a coherent and rigorous focus to progress pupils' reading, writing and comprehension skills. Pupils with special needs are well integrated and an inclusive education in mainstream lessons is meeting the needs of most pupils. Individual education plans to target the pupils' progress at School Action⁴ Plus, as distinct from the whole school target provision, are not sufficiently detailed and monitored. Behaviour support plans are good and all have individual targets effectively related to key skills. The Learning Mentor effectively works with key staff and pupils to provide effective behaviour support. A good selection of multicultural reading and ICT effectively supports pupils' learning.
53. Overall the provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is satisfactory. The provision is still in the early stages of organisation and has not yet fully formalised its affairs. A development plan has just been completed. Initiatives are underway to plan for the support of pupils at the earlier stages of language learning who might arrive at the school at a later date.
54. The overall curriculum provision for pupils identified as being gifted and talented is very good. The way the school is organised and structured provides rich opportunities for pupils to extend, enrich and work at demanding levels.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

The school cares for its pupils extremely well and offers good support to them. The school has excellent procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare. The assessment system is very effective in raising pupils' expectations and standards.

55. The ethos provided by the school is extremely caring and supportive. All pupils at the school are well known to teachers and non-teaching staff and receive a very high level of support and care from them. Because members of staff display a deep care and concern for pupils, they have very positive attitudes and make good progress during their life at school. Pupils thrive in the climate for learning that has been established.
56. The school has excellent procedures for the promotion of child protection. The school has appointed two child protection officers (the Headteacher and her Deputy) and, in addition, has appointed a number of deputy child protection officers. They are all fully aware of their responsibilities and have received adequate and appropriate training. All other members of the staff receive training in early recognition of potential problems. The child protection policy is very comprehensive, accurately reflects current protocol and procedures and links in very well to the local authority's code of practice. Child protection records are excellent, with the school keeping concise and precise information about referrals to the local authority on child protection issues, pupils on the 'At Risk' register and 'Looked After' children.
57. The school has a large number of first-aiders, all of whom have received appropriate, up-to-date training. The school has a very well equipped first aid room. Excellent records of accidents are kept.
58. The school has arranged for regular health and safety audits to be carried out by the local authority and, in addition, each department carries out concise risk assessment procedures that are well recorded. The school's site manager also carries out informal checks of the building at

⁴ The code of practice for pupils with special educational needs indicates a graduated approach for those pupils on the register for special educational needs through School Action and School Action Plus. Pupils on School Action Plus involves provision from outside school.

regular intervals and addresses any items of concern. He keeps excellent records and fire alarm tests are regularly carried together with fire drills.

59. The school has excellent procedures for the monitoring and recording of attendance and absences. The school uses an electronic system of registration and each pupil has a personal 'swipe card' which is used to record attendance on a twice-daily basis and at each lesson. There are also back up systems to manage when the system breaks down. As a result, the school has precise knowledge of each pupil's whereabouts at all times. The designated school attendance officer follows up absences on a first day basis and appropriate action is taken to inform parents of the school's concern about lack of attendance. The school does not have the benefit of liaison with the Education Welfare Officer as the Local Education Authority has not yet allocated one to them and this is a matter of concern to the school. Regular good attendance is rewarded by 'Charter Points' and pupils are very anxious to attend regularly to receive them. The excellent pro-active approach taken by the school has resulted in attendance being above the national average and this has a very positive effect on the progress that pupils make.
60. The swipe card is also used as a 'key' to gain entrance to buildings and, as a consequence, the school is very secure. The card is also used to pay for breakfast and lunches in the restaurant. Apart from being very efficient it also provides a sensitive way of managing those pupils who are on free school meals.
61. The school gives very good personal support and educational guidance to pupils. Members of staff know pupils very well indeed and are able to relate to them. Pupils know who to go to for support and guidance. Staff identify pupils needs at an early stage and parents and external agencies are notified and involved as required. The school pastoral system of small tutor groups supported by a Form Tutor, who remains with the same group of pupils throughout their stay at school, works extremely well and pupils feel safe and secure in the school environment. Pupils interviewed during the inspection week confirm that they felt that the school offers a very high level of care and support to them and they felt confident about approaching tutors and other members of staff for help, guidance and advice.
62. The school has very good procedures for the monitoring and promoting of good behaviour and the elimination of oppressive behaviour. The school rules, which are based on reward and sanction, are prominently displayed in classrooms and in the main reception area. They are understood by all pupils and consistently applied by all members of staff. Staff members deal with rare incidents of bullying or challenging behaviour extremely quickly in an appropriate manner and good records are kept. Pupils spoken to during the inspection week, confirm that they thought that bullying was rare and well addressed by staff and that all members of the staff were helpful, kind and approachable. Supervision at both break and lunch times is of a very high standard, with teaching assistants working well together with teachers to ensure that pupils' welfare is addressed and that the school is a safe environment. Pupils who experience personal or behavioural difficulties are referred to counsellors from The Children's Society's Genesis Project who come into school on a regular basis to offer counselling, help and advice to this group of pupils. Their work is much appreciated by pupils and the school.
63. The quality of assessment, care and welfare for pupils with special needs is satisfactory as indicated in paragraphs 12, 13, and 41. Pupils are identified appropriately, although monitoring across the new Code of Practice levels lacks rigour. Counselling support for pupils with education behaviour difficulties is good. Annual reviews meet requirements, although the quality of support for literacy development is variable and assessment is inconsistent. Parents and outside specialists are appropriately involved in assessments and reviews; however, parents did not, until very recently, receive annual review reports within the recommended period of time.
64. The school is using a very good innovative system of assessment of pupils' attainment and progress that is common to each department in the school. The system of module assessments based on national curricula criteria and the subject-based target setting for the level of the work associated with it mean that pupils are clear about the level of work that they are undertaking and, in conjunction with their tutors and parents, negotiate the level they are aspiring to. The school

keeps a careful record of the assessments and parents get regular feedback about the pupils' progress. The school also analyses the data from teacher assessment and voluntary National Curriculum tests very carefully in order to identify specific groups of pupils or indeed subject areas where there might be underachievement.

65. The tutor led target-setting focussing on key skills is good but more variable. In the best cases there is a specific action plan. However, pupils often do not have their targets recorded in their planners and, of those that do, the target is usually based on developing the pupil's attitudes rather than a skill-based target with a specific date for achievement. The school recognises the need to support tutors in this aspect. For example, the support for tutors to target named gifted and talented pupils gives them a range of approaches to challenge pupils' thinking without resorting to a target which expects them to 'write more'.
66. The impact of this assessment system is to set high pupil expectations and provide a challenge to the pupils to which they rise. In the process of negotiation, over time, pupils are gaining a mature attitude to their own learning. Standards are being raised by the system.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

The parents' views of the school are positive and they feel that the school is helping their children become mature and responsible. The contribution by parents to children's learning at home, together with the good quality of information provided by parents and the impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school, have a very positive effect on the progress that pupils make.

67. Parents have very positive views of the school and the school is oversubscribed. A large number of parents (34 per cent) responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire thought: their children like school, their children are making good progress in school, teaching is good, they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem, the school is well led and managed and the school is helping their children become mature and responsible. A significant minority of parents thought that they were not kept well informed about how their children were getting on, the school does not work closely with parents and behaviour at the school is not good. The inspection findings confirm the positive views of the parents and generally disagree with the negative views expressed.
68. The school works extremely hard to develop a strong relationship with parents and to involve them in every aspect of their children's education. The school has helpful, positive links with parents and goes to great lengths to ensure that they are fully informed about their children's progress and the work undertaken at the school. The school sends five interim reports to parents per annum, one at the end of each module and, in addition, sends a fully detailed report at the end of the school year. These reports are of good quality and the annual report gives detailed information on a subject-by-subject basis of pupils' progress with an overall view of what has been studied and pupils' attainment grades plus an explanation of grades achieved. In addition, pupils are asked to add their own observations and discuss targets with staff, which are fully reported.
69. The school publishes brief information about the curriculum that their child is studying for Years 7 and 8 and it is planned to publish further information about the Year 9 curriculum when it has been reviewed. This information is available on the school's web site.
70. The school arranges for three academic day meetings per year, which are held after Modules 1, 3 and 5, where parents are able to meet personal tutors for timed appointments. These meetings are held during the day and parents are able to receive via form tutors subject teacher's comments on pupils' attainment. The major reason why the significant minority of parents felt that they were not getting enough information about pupils' progress stems from the fact that they do not have regular opportunities to see the subject teacher. Currently this is not school policy, although opportunities do exist before making subject choices for Key Stage 4. The school values the role of the tutor as being the one who has the overall picture of the pupil and wants to develop that role. The school likens the role of the tutor to that of the General Practitioner within the health service. Parents are given the opportunity to meet subject teachers on an individual basis if they have any concerns on progress being made. Individual subject teachers are also encouraged to make contact with parents if they have concerns. The school contacts parents if the school has any concerns for individual pupils or if they have any positive comments to pass on regarding pupils' progress.
71. The school held an information evening for the parents of Year 9 pupils entering Key Stage 4 and a further information evening is planned for these parents to give them GCSE option guidance. The school has produced a very good brochure, which is parent-friendly, extremely well presented and gives valuable information to parents about the curriculum, various school policies and ethos of the school. In addition, the Headteacher produces a weekly letter giving full information about events and activities being promoted by the school, staff changes and school developments. The school is planning a series of workshops for all parents to inform them of developments in education.

72. In most cases induction procedures are very detailed and work extremely well. Once parents have accepted a place at the school they are contacted and sent a welcome letter inviting them and their child, to come to school for a personal interview with a senior member of staff. The school arranges separate Year 6 'taster days' for boys and girls who come into school to look around the building and meet the staff. In July a further induction day is held where pupils come into school, are formed into tutor groups and have 'taster' lessons. The special educational needs co-ordinator and Key Stage 3 co-ordinator visit all the feeder primary schools to talk to pupils and their teachers prior to their admittance.
73. There are difficulties, however, in the induction arrangements, particularly for pupils with special educational needs when the results from appeals for admissions are late. The local authority is currently working with neighbouring authorities to ensure that the appeal process is concluded in time for pupils to have a proper induction to the school.
74. There are satisfactory links with parents and the community for special needs pupils through initiatives such as Connexions. Individual education plans do not have a parent signature although targets are shared in pupils' planners and at transitional and annual reviews. Whilst the majority of parents attend the annual reviews, a few do not.
75. The 'Friends of Charter School' to which every parent belongs, has a nucleus of approximately 20 parents who arrange school social events such as barbecues, music concerts, welcome evenings etc. and raise a significant amount for school funds. Their work is greatly appreciated by the school. A large number of parents help in school by bringing in their personal skills, speaking to pupils, helping with Drama productions, and by helping with reading and sports coaching. Parents contribute to the home-school diary well and it acts as an important two-way communication between the school and home.
76. The contribution by parents to children's learning at home, together with the good quality of information provided by the school for parents and the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school, has a very positive effect on progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

The high standards achieved, both academic and in pupils' attitudes and behaviour, the overall good and often very good progress that pupils make, stemming from high quality teaching, the rich nature of the curriculum and the high quality care of pupils start from the overall excellent leadership by the governing body, headteacher, and key staff. Management is very good. Whole school management of special educational needs requires improvement. The school provides very good value for money.

77. Central to the school's concerns are the pupils and their on-going achievement. The school has established very effectively a work ethos where pupils try and want to improve. This stems from the fact that all staff work very hard but to a common purpose. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and pupils, in turn aspire to match those expectations. Equally there are high expectations placed on all staff. It is a demanding school, expecting commitment, rigour of approach and reflection on best practice. Yet the upshot is an excellent capacity to succeed and for further improvement. The school is clear about its aims and the principles it was founded on and, above all, there is clarity of purpose reflected in corridors and classrooms. In the absence of national data, the school makes excellent use of internal data, lesson observations and informal methods to monitor the work of the school.
78. The governing body has in its membership very considerable professional and personal expertise. They are very clear about the aims of the school and what they want from it. They are very committed to supporting the school yet provide it with the degree of challenge. They have a clear understanding of their non-executive role: not necessarily easy to adjust to given their commitment in establishing the school. They fulfil all their statutory duties extremely well with the exception of ensuring a daily act of worship.

79. Management is very effective, although the strategic management of special educational needs improvement as indicated in paragraph 12, 13 and 41. The school has the professional atmosphere in the reception block of a successful business. The school operates very effectively on a day-to-day basis. Systems and procedures are in place which, for the most part, support individual pupils effectively. The school management team is very effective overall and brings together successfully the workings of the school in a tight-knit group that engages with issues that take the school forward. These managers, acting as faculty heads, lead specific subjects and represent other subjects at senior level. The emerging leadership role of subject leaders within faculties and how they are trained, actively engaged in and contribute to the overall leadership and management of the school within the current structure requires some further thought. Particularly, their role, in the context of rapid expansion, of ensuring that the school's core values are shared across the department. That said, subject leadership across the school is at least good.
80. Very effective systems of performance management are securely in place. A cycle for the annual review of the performance of all staff, including the headteacher, has been established. Objectives have been set, and monitoring arrangements specified, together with target review dates. Objectives include those related to whole school improvement and to personal professional development. These arrangements follow nationally agreed guidance, adapted to meet the school's specific needs, and underpinned by a clear structure of line management.
81. The school has secure financial systems that enable the headteacher and governors to have current and accurate knowledge of the state of the school's finances. The financial management systems allow for appropriate levels of discretionary spending by curriculum and other managers and ensure satisfactory controls of spending and receipts of goods. The school has a system of inventory for new acquisitions, and this is being further developed to make it still more convenient and efficient. Because this is a new school and is growing in size year-on-year, it experiences a cash flow problem which is not recognised in the way the formula for funding schools in the LEA works. Consequently the school has to manage a system that appears to generate a deficit when in fact the budget balances. This also impacts upon the calculation of the unit costs of the school, as it is currently funded for some 80 fewer pupils than there are on roll. Further, although this is a new school, it was funded as a 'Fresh Start' school and this will restrict the amount of money for the development of Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.
82. The governors and headteacher ensure that the money designated for pupils with special educational needs is directed to meeting the needs of these pupils. Funding for these pupils in arrears currently exacerbates the cash flow problems. The local education authority is addressing this aspect for the future.
83. The headteacher and senior staff are managing the finances of the school and ensuring best value very well. Unit costs are high because of the fact that the school is currently small but is being set up for a much larger size. However, when the standards pupils achieve are taken into account and considered against the basic budget that the school receives, the school is providing very good value for money.
84. Resources are developing but are overall, very good. It was not really possible to make a judgement about the library and it was in the process of transition from one space to another. The current ratio of pupils to computer at two to one is very high but will drop somewhat as more years join the school. Some departments are not making effective use of the computers in their rooms.
85. Accommodation is good. Pupils respond very positively to the spaciousness of the atrium and the attractiveness of the new buildings. Some rooms are cramped and active approaches can be limited. In some rooms re-siting of some ICT facilities may be required to open up the space. Accommodation for special educational needs has some shortcomings in that the co-ordinator and administration office spaces are shared with pupils' work areas. This is having a detrimental effect on the confidentiality of documents and their storage and the quality and amount of work

the administrative assistant can sustain in these circumstances. Shower and

changing facilities require refurbishment in physical education. Lack of access to playing fields, and floor areas in the sports hall that need repair, are a limitation in developing aspects of the physical education curriculum.

86. The match of teaching and support staff to the curriculum is very good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

87. In order to build on the many strengths of the school and to address the relative weakness of the special educational needs provision, the headteacher, senior leadership team and the governing body should:

- (1) Ensure that all pupils on School Action Plus have individual education plans.
- (2) Provide training for all staff in the New Code of Practice.
- (3) Ensure that teachers are aware of pupils' individual education plans and work is matched to address their needs.
- (4) Improve the quality of planning for literacy support to meet the needs of all pupils who are withdrawn.
- (5) Monitor more rigorously the progress of pupils who are on the special educational needs register at School Action, School Action Plus and those pupils with Statements, modifying their programmes as appropriate.
- (6) Ensure that the best use is made of teacher assistants' time in classrooms by developing closer working partnerships with teaching staff and joint planning.

(paragraphs 12, 13, 41)

In addition, as an important but more minor matter;

- (1) improve further the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that, overall, marking is not only supportive but identifies wherever possible specifically what the pupil needs to do in order to improve the work, linked to pupils' targets.

(paragraphs: 40 and subject reports)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	84
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	47

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	7	20	41	14	2	0	0
Percentage	8	24	49	17	2	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y9
Number of pupils on the school's roll	541
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	157

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y9
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	42
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	210

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	59

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.8

National comparative data	7.8
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National comparative data	1.2
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Within this data section of school inspection reports it is normal to include analysis tables giving the results of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests and indeed GCSE results. Because at the time of the inspection the school had not participated in National Curriculum tests the tables are not included.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	253	7	1
White – Irish	0	2	0
White – any other White background	34	2	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	4	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	4	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	10	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	54	11	0
Black or Black British – African	45	8	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	58	0	0
Chinese	6	0	0
Any other ethnic group	70	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	8	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y9

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	33.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

Education support staff: Y7 – Y9

Total number of education support staff	38
Total aggregate hours worked per week	1259

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y9

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y9

Key Stage 3	26.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-02
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The capital funding makes it very difficult to disaggregate the funding to give a realistic picture. This is particularly the case when funding in 2001-02 was based on 286 pupils.

	£
Total income	1,805,032
Total expenditure	1,866,201
Income* per pupil (Average weighted pupil unit)	2,415
Balance brought forward from previous year	68,537
Balance carried forward to next year	7,368

***Normally in this table expenditure per pupil is shown. Because of the unusual circumstances the income per pupil is shown. This is the amount per pupil which is used to formulate the basic budget.**

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	17.4

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	541
Number of questionnaires returned	185

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	43	5	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	41	4	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	49	14	4	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	49	15	10	4
The teaching is good.	44	45	4	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	31	14	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	33	8	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	30	4	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	43	38	14	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	58	32	3	2	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	38	5	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	41	14	3	6

Figures may not add up to 100 due to rounding. Not every respondent answered all the questions.

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Pupils are making good progress and are on course for attainment to be above the national average at the end of Year 9.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good.
- There are effective procedures in place for raising attainment.
- There are good procedures for assessment and for using the information this provides.
- There are very thorough schemes of work.

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient use is made of the good ICT facilities and there are no firm plans to enhance their use.
- Insufficient planning has been put into making the best use of the financial resources allocated to the department.

88. No test results are available to make comparisons with national attainment. Judgements on the attainment of pupils who are still some months away from the end of Year 9 are based on evidence gained during the course of the inspection from a scrutiny of the work produced by pupils from across the age and attainment range and from observations of a full range of lessons.
89. This evidence indicates that by the time pupils reach the end of Year 9 attainment is likely to be just above the national average and well above the average for schools in similar circumstances. Assessments carried out both within the school and also by means of voluntary national curriculum testing at the end of Year 8 also indicate that attainment is on course to be above the national average by the end of Year 9.
90. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with attainment in English that is below the national average and achievement during Years 7 to 9 is good to reach attainment levels that are on course to be just above the national average. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is a foreign language is also good in response to the good support that is offered by learning support assistants. Pupils in Year 9 are currently making good progress in response to teaching that provides strong preparation to meet the demands of national curriculum testing at the end of Year 9. They are making particularly good progress in their response to the study of "Twelfth Night" which forms a challenging part of the tests and pupils across the attainment range show good understanding of the plot and the characters and are beginning to understand and respond to the way in which Shakespeare uses language in order to make an effect on his audiences.
91. All pupils can write in sentences which are correctly structured and in which the basic punctuation is correct, while higher attaining pupils develop a mature and flowing style. Pupils make good progress in using paragraphs to add coherence and a sense of structure to what they write and their work shows evidence of thought and planning. The progress of pupils at all levels of attainment is hampered by their having a generally limited vocabulary, although they make good progress in using the specialised vocabulary of the subject.
92. The quality of teaching is good overall. All teaching seen was at least good and about a third was very good. Teachers plan lessons in good detail, including planning to meet the needs of pupils across a broad range of attainment and to maintain concentration. This is a strength of the department and enables pupils across the attainment range to make good progress. Teachers make effective use of discussion with individual pupils in order to decide at which level of challenge they should be working. Teachers plan a good range of tasks and activities to meet the needs of all pupils. The good use that teachers make of discussion and questioning in order to

check progress and extend pupils thinking is enhanced by the good relationships that exist between teachers and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves. Teachers and learning support assistants offer good support, especially to those pupils who lack confidence and are daunted by writing tasks. Teachers make good use of an appropriate and realistic level of challenge and pupils respond well to this by working hard and wanting to do well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' effort and behaviour and employ effective methods of behaviour management, placing a strong emphasis on the need to behave in a way that shows respect and consideration to others. Although marking is regular and supportive, there is some evidence of teachers missing opportunities within their marking to offer specific advice on what pupils need to do to improve their work. This is an unfortunate inconsistency in a department that places strong emphasis on pupils' understanding of their own progress.

93. Overall, the leadership and management of the department are good with some emerging strengths. The recently appointed head of department has quickly identified areas for development, which are directed towards raising attainment and which have been successfully put into place. In particular, the introduction of setting in Year 9 immediately before the final preparation for national curriculum testing has enabled pupils at all attainment levels to make good progress at this important time. There are very detailed schemes of work and lesson plans which teachers make effective use of by adapting them to meet a range of needs. The procedures for assessment are good, are carried out consistently and are used to monitor pupils' progress. Very good use is made of national curriculum levels to motivate and involve pupils in their own progress. There are effective arrangements in place to identify and offer additional support to pupils who are in need of this. Good use is made of visits out of school, for example to the theatre, and of visitors into school to enrich pupils' experience of the study of English. Although there are good facilities for the use of ICT to enhance and support learning, insufficient and limited use is made of these. Not all teachers have received the training necessary to make full use of the facilities and there are no firm plans for this to take place. There is insufficient use of forward planning in order to make the best use of the financial resources made available to the department.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- The detailed collective planning within the department.
- The high expectations.
- The monitoring of pupils' attainment.
- The quality of relationships in lessons.
- The use of different levels of working to set targets for pupils.

Areas for improvement

- The range of teaching and learning styles used in lessons.
- The effective use of the hour lesson to maximise learning.
- Procedures for leading and managing the teaching and learning in a developing school.
- A scheme of work based upon defined learning outcomes that supports high expectations and removes repetition.

94. There are no external data available with which to compare the attainments of pupils. The attainment seen in lessons and the analysis of pupils' work confirm the results of the optional National Curriculum test results that in mathematics in Year 8 pupils are attaining above the national norm for all schools and well above for similar schools. In Year 9 pupils are generally attaining at the national average for all schools and above average for similar schools. Some pupils are attaining at a high level.

95. As the average attainment of pupils at entry to the school is below the national average this represents good progress in mathematics. The attainment of girls is comparable to that of boys and there is no identifiable difference in levels of attainment between pupils of different ethnic origin. In Years 7 to 9 pupils with special needs make satisfactory progress, especially when supported by classroom assistants.
96. In Year 7, pupils know the angle sum of a triangle, on a straight line and around a point. Higher attaining pupils can calculate missing angles and draw accurately with a protractor. They can construct triangles using compass and ruler. Lower attaining pupils can recognise acute, obtuse and reflex angles, and measure them with a protractor. Low attaining pupils can describe probabilities as fractions, understand place value and can identify polygons, do a two-stage calculation and understand symmetry. High attaining pupils can use index numbers and expand brackets and the highest attainers can transpose formulae involving square roots. This represents attainment at Level 8 of the National Curriculum. They can also find the n th term of a sequence.
97. There is clear progression from Year 7 to Year 8 where, for example, pupils are able to identify and calculate angles related to parallel lines and more complex polygons, and extend their understanding of probability to the use of sample spaces. Lower attaining pupils are able to calculate a fraction of a whole number where the answer is a whole number. Middle attaining groups can calculate percentages of number, and convert between percentages and decimals. They are familiar with and can calculate with, negative numbers. This is work at level 5 of the National Curriculum.
98. However the very good progress seen in Years 7 and 8 slows in Year 9, even though most pupils are still making good progress. There is some repetition of work from previous years, and this is also a feature that appears in Year 8, for example, work of sample spaces and work on co-ordinates. This contributes to the slower rate of progress.
99. In Year 9, higher attaining pupils are working at Level 6, with some above that level. These pupils were not always extending their work, for example in work on cumulative frequency, seeing how different forms of frequency analysis can give new understandings of sets of data. In lower attaining sets, even though the work is targeted at level 6, the pupils are working at Level 4 or 5. An example of this is in work on frequencies where lower attaining pupils were struggling with the concepts.
100. Despite there being written departmental requirements on how pupils should present their work, in most groups the standard of presentation of many pupils is not as good as it should be. Examples are where working-out was generally not put down in a clear and logical way, with some pupils preferring to calculate on scrap paper and write only the answers in their exercise book. Diagrams were drawn in ink, sometimes without using a ruler, and not carefully set out on the page. The quality of writing is too often low and pupils were insufficiently careful to distinguish between the letter x and a multiplication sign which made some written work very difficult to follow. These practices inhibit progress towards high-level attainment. Marking by teachers is not consistent with the best practice to be found in the department, both in how often the books are marked and the way in which errors are picked up and encouragement given.
101. Levels of numeracy in all three years are appropriate to support other aspects of mathematics.
102. Overall the teaching seen was satisfactory. The teachers have high expectations of their pupils and a strength of the teaching is the detailed collective planning which leads to consistent approaches and teachers having clear intentions in every lesson. A good working ethos is established through good relationships between teacher and pupil, and among pupils, combined with shared high expectations and commitment to high attainment. The regular testing and targeting of pupils to multiple tiers of working, combined with an element of pupil negotiation and easy transference between tiers is very motivating. This also gives teachers a clear understanding of the attainment levels of all pupils who are also aware of their own level of working and their targets.

103. In all lessons seen the teachers used a similar teaching style with a starter activity followed by an extended period of individual work where the teacher circulated to give support. Pupils were generally working appropriately to the standard at which they were targeted, but there were few opportunities created for pupils to talk to each other about their learning where concept development could take place. Consequently, although pupils became secure through practice in a method of developing an answer, they were not experiencing the notions of alternatives or ambiguity in mathematics. Nor were they actively involved in identifying and solving problems. In most lessons pupils targeted at the highest tier were working in a solitary way except when they sought help from the teacher. Further, although the hour-long lessons provide a valuable opportunity for pupils to spend an extended time working at mathematics, with a long period on one activity pupil concentration weakened and the last fifteen minutes in most lessons became far less productive.
104. In most lessons there was no identifiable plenary session at the end of the lesson where the key learning points were reinforced either by the teacher or the pupils themselves. This aspect of the Key Stage 3 Strategy is identified by the school as an area of development.
105. Pupils are given a detailed programme for each unit of five lessons, and this contributes to a shared approach to learning. All the elements of planning, high expectations, monitoring, target setting, and consistency have contributed to the success achieved by pupils in Years 7 and 8. However, the quality of learning is being inhibited, particularly in Year 9 and, for higher attaining pupils, towards the end of Year 8 by the lack of progression in the curriculum in terms of learning outcomes, the restricted teaching and learning style and the unsatisfactory use of time.
106. The department provides good support for pupils, for example through the advanced class for high attaining pupils in Year 8, and support sessions outside the timetable. The curriculum is well supported with teaching resources including Information Communication Technology, but computers are not yet fully used in mathematics teaching, and this is an area of development. Some rooms, although well decorated and equipped, were quite crowded even though group sizes were not excessive.
107. The Head of Department has provided effective leadership to bring the department the successes achieved this far. However, the procedures are not yet in place through which effective leadership and management can be exercised to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is developed both to meet the needs of all pupils now and as the school grows.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Consistent good teaching leading to good attainment and very good achievement.
- The emphasis on scientific investigation techniques combined with the use of technical terminology.
- The relationships between pupils and staff and very good pupil attitudes to the subject that create a pleasant environment in which effective learning takes place.
- The leadership and management of the department.

Areas for improvement

- Develop the marking of pupils' work to ensure that comments on how the level of the work may be raised are followed up.
- The time allocated to specific work to ensure all pupils complete the necessary work to move on to the next step.

108. Pupils have not yet taken the end of Year 9 National Curriculum tests and so there are no data against which to make a statistical comparison, although the evidence seen during the inspection

would indicate that pupils are attaining above average. These results compared to similar schools are well above average. Pupils enter the school with science results below the national average and so the progress made through years 7 to 9 is very good.

109. Evidence from the inspection shows that by the time pupils are 14, attainment is above average. Pupils of all abilities learn new skills, increase their knowledge of scientific facts and apply their understanding of scientific concepts. During the inspection a group of Year 9 higher-attaining pupils were showing a good understanding of forces and levers and other higher-attaining pupils showed a clear understanding of kinetic energy that they applied to insulation properties of materials, whilst middle and lower attaining pupils could identify particle models. A high attaining Year 7 enrichment class was carrying out practical work normally undertaken by pupils at a much older age. A particular strength is the pupils' ability to make predictions in a variety of practical situations. Pupils are able to write an experimental plan and can carry out that plan using the concept of a 'fair' experiment. This emphasis on the pupils' scientific investigation along with the emphasis on the use of the correct technical terminology means that scientific concepts are used when looking at a variety of topics. Pupils are confident in handling apparatus and apply safety procedures appropriately. However they show varying skills in interpreting information they collect in experiments.
110. The literacy levels of pupils vary and generally pupils are stronger orally than in written answers. Mathematical skills are used in a variety of situations and are planned into aspects of the curriculum and the pupils' mathematical skills are adequate for the work being undertaken. In all years pupils with special educational needs receive specific one to one or general class support relevant to their need and pupils with English as a additional language are not at an early stage of language acquisition. Extension activities are available for gifted and talented pupils. This means that all groups of pupils progress and achieve at a similar, very good, rate.
111. Teaching is consistently good with a number of very good aspects and no unsatisfactory teaching being seen. Strengths within teaching are the very good teacher pupil relationships and the management of the pupils, these enable learning to take place in a purposeful environment. The behaviour and attitudes of pupils to science are very good, and in all lessons seen the pupils were self motivated and worked with a high level of concentration, pupils work well as individuals, in pairs and in groups. The very good behaviour and attitudes makes a positive contribution to pupils' good progress within lessons. Throughout the work there is an emphasis on the use of technical terminology. The best lessons have a good level of challenge for all pupils, maintain a very good pace link the work to everyday examples and provide suitable work in time required allocated for all pupils. Opportunities are also constantly being given to develop predictive and planning skills by including the pupils in a wider range of experimental work. Relatively weaker aspects within lessons are when the teacher gives too much description of how to carry out an experiment, a tendency to fill in the answers rather than developing the pupil understanding by further questioning and the time allocated to activities which means that the weaker pupils are moving on to new activities without completing the previous task and without the necessary understanding.
112. Pupils' books are marked carefully with constructive comments about areas that need to be improved or added to; however these comments are not always followed up and so opportunities for consolidation and clarification of understanding are missed. The use of homework is good with the work either following on from, and developing the work of the lesson or being preparation work for the next lesson. This consistently good teaching and learning on a lesson-to-lesson basis is leading to very good achievement over a longer period of time.
113. The system of assessment contributes positively to the progress being made by the pupils. There is good use of regular assessments and the results of these are related to the national curriculum levels. The pupils are clear about their target levels and, in consultation with home, they contribute to these. The curriculum offered to the pupils in years 7 to 9 fulfils the requirements of the national curriculum and is supplemented by booster activities, visits and special school events. ICT provision is a strength in the department and pupils frequently make use of the Internet and areas, such as data logging, are included.

114. The management of the department is very good. The head of department has established this new department and has a clear vision of way forward. Newly qualified teachers receive regular lesson observations and all members of staff are well supported and, in this expanding department, they all share the commitment to continual improvement. The science technicians provide very good support to the work of the teachers. The new science laboratories provide a bright, light working environment that encourages a positive attitude but the small size of the laboratories causes some difficulties with organising practical work.
115. This is the first time that the school has been inspected and the department has an excellent base on which to develop further.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Leadership and management of the department.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- Teaching and learning.
- The quality and range of learning activities including ICT, provided for pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Extending the quality of independent learning opportunities for Year 9 pupils through open-ended projects in preparation for GCSE study.
- Improve drawing skills for lower attaining pupils.

116. The results of the 2002 teacher assessments for pupils at the end of Year 9 were broadly similar to those reported nationally. The standard of work produced by pupils currently in Year 9 is in line with expectations. When pupils enter the school their attainment is below the standard expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress in Year 7 and good progress in Years 8 and 9. A significant proportion of pupils in Years 8 and 9 show above average attainment in some aspects of their coursework studies.
117. Pupils in Year 9 have a good working knowledge of different media including three-dimensional materials. Drawing and painting skills are average for most pupils. They are doing well as a result of clearly focused interactive teaching where planning includes links with artists and the lesson structure and activities clearly focus their learning. As a result, Year 9 pupils are keen to attempt a design for printing, based on a still life drawing of mechanical parts. They know how to select shapes, patterns and spaces from their drawings and plan a symmetrical or rotating pattern. A few high attaining pupils make good use of their previous knowledge and understanding of line and positive and negative space to achieve good standards. Many pupils show increasingly competent technical knowledge and skill in observing and recording from direct observation. Year 9 pencil portrait studies show a good understanding of tone. The monotone paintings by Year 8 show good levels of mixing and controlling paint and the illustrative lettering by Year 7 based on medieval text shows basic understanding of colour theory principles. ICT standards are good. Pupils have the opportunity to work in the ICT suite. The individual support and opportunities for pupils to comment on their improvement provided by the teacher is an important factor in raising expectations for many average and low attaining pupils.
118. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress where teachers and assistants explain and demonstrate tasks clearly and help them to plan their drawings and designs. They show increased awareness of how to improve and are gaining confidence in painting and cutting out symmetrical shapes. However, a high proportion of pupils in Years 7 and 8 working at lower levels find it hard to refine their drawing techniques because they do not have enough practice at the homework stage. Presentation of written evaluations in sketchbooks is good. Pupils are encouraged to annotate work in Year 7 and standards of planning and recording of key words and art vocabulary show good improvement in developing extended evaluative writing in Year 9.
119. The qualities of teaching and learning are very good overall. A characteristic of the teaching is the quality of interactive experiences for the pupils. Clear learning objectives are shared with pupils and high expectations of what pupils can do, such as providing opportunities for pupils to negotiate the level they wish to work at through the different approaches planned for them, are effectively raising their self-esteem and confidence at all attainment levels. Teachers support and encourage independent learning through purposeful activities. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons contribute to their very good achievement overall. They work well together and the positive ethos is evident in their keen, well-motivated approach to their studies. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and their effective relationships with pupils through well-planned, varied activities with timed tasks have a positive effect on learning and achievement in the

lessons. In the best lessons, sufficient time at the end of the lesson is planned to consolidate and review learning. Teachers' use of pupil assessments and standards achieved to plan the next steps of their learning is inconsistent and there is some lack of development of systematic drawing skills to help lower attaining pupils improve their drawing skills. All teachers use question and answer effectively to encourage pupils to use art language when they respond to questions. Standards of oral presentation overall are satisfactory in all years; however, there is scope for giving Year 9 pupils further opportunities to develop independent learning opportunities through open-ended projects to prepare them for GCSE. Homework is inconsistently assessed as a group activity to help pupils improve their standard the next time round. As a result, the level of personal investigation and research at home does not match that seen in lessons for some pupils.

120. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Monitoring of teaching, the implementation of policies, attainment, pupils' effort and work rate are effective. Teachers share an enthusiasm and commitment to improve, providing an effective learning environment through impressive displays of pupils' work in the classrooms. Visits to galleries, creative arts activities and opportunities to access computers are making a good impact on standards. The range of picture resource art books and reference materials for independent study in the department is very good and makes a good contribution to pupils' multicultural study while the school library is being developed. There is scope for more art displays around the school to celebrate the good standard of work in the department.

CITIZENSHIP

Overall the quality of provision in this subject is **good**.

Strengths

- Attitudes of pupils.
- The use of varied activities and approaches in lessons.
- Effective leadership of the subject.
- The overall good teaching in the subject.

Areas for improvement

- Systems for monitoring and assessing pupils' progress.

121. The school has developed an effective programme for citizenship. It is delivered well by an effective team of teachers in the good citizenship lessons that are provided for all pupils. The lessons incorporate the personal, social and health education programme, although the whole school ethos also contributes to pupils' understanding of the role of, and expectations associated with, being a good citizen.
122. All pupils make good progress. Most pupils react positively, and willingly become involved in the various practical activities and the discussion opportunities on offer in lessons. At this point in Year 9 most pupils are working at the expected national levels. In Year 7 the pupils consider issues such as the nature of bullying. Study skills are explored, although the opportunity to explore how the pupils best learn is under-developed. Their knowledge is extended in Year 8 when they examine the wider issues of rights and responsibilities. They investigate and produce a case study describing the abuse of human rights. In a Year 9 lesson pupils were invited to consider the issues surrounding communication difficulties. The pupils are also asked to consider more difficult concepts such as what are shared values, and how individuals contribute to a community. Resources are overall good, with very good use made of interactive whiteboards and computer research activities. There is a need, however, for the subject to consider the further development of resources that help low attainers to access and understand such difficult concepts such as shared values, that they are asked to tackle.

123. Teaching is good overall, with strong and positive relationships existing in class. Trust and mutual respect exist, and this, in turn, enables pupils to feel safe when expressing their views on the issues they examine. Teachers plan well to ensure that there is a good and interesting range of work, where thinking skills are emphasised. Teachers have good subject knowledge, allowing them to pose some challenging questions. They support pupils as they attempt to master some difficult concepts such as the role of personal values and beliefs.
124. Overall pupils show very good attitudes to the subject. They particularly enjoy practical activities, and the opportunity to discuss at length issues that help them understand the world around them. They show a willingness to learn about the lives and concerns of others. They accept responsibilities well. They vote for form representatives to the school council, but not all pupils had knowledge of who their representative was, and the effectiveness of the council. They enjoy the opportunity to organise charity events.
125. The subject is well led. Schemes of work have been developed for years 7 and 8, while Year 9 schemes are currently being developed. The main areas of the National Curriculum for citizenship are covered, although further development is required for the first, year 7 module. The school has not yet implemented a system for assessing pupils' on-going progress, and all subjects have yet to formally identify where they support the delivery of citizenship.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well in relation to their knowledge and skills on entry to the school.
- Teaching is good in its commitment to raising standards.
- Pupils have a varied learning experience that includes regular use of ICT.
- Subject leadership has been effective in setting up the learning programmes in the new school.

Areas for improvement

- End of module assessment is good but ongoing assessment is less effective in showing pupils how they can improve their work.
- Staff absence and a developing team has meant that some of the coherent approach to the subject has been weakened.
- Resources and accommodation while adequate for immediate needs, are more limited to cope with future course requirements.

126. Pupils come to the school with knowledge and skills below national average and make sufficiently good progress to reach standards broadly in line with those nationally at the end of Year 9.
127. In work and lessons seen, pupils have a secure background understanding of mechanical, pneumatic and electronic systems as well as some aspects of control technology. This is gained through their experiences in using a computer based learning programme that also satisfies the control aspects of the ICT scheme of work. Pupils' appreciation of a design process in food, textiles and different resistant materials is less well developed. However, where those opportunities arise, as in a Year 9 mechanical grab project, pupils show an understanding of functional design and higher attaining pupils show their graphical and ICT skills well to present their design ideas. Pupils demonstrate sound making skills in the different practical projects, though the limited electronics and computer aided manufacture facilities limit the standard of work in those areas. Folder work showing pupils' understanding of materials and processes, as well as design development, is variable in care and detail though most have secure literacy skills. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in most lessons though are less able to develop and evaluate their work independently.

128. Pupils like design and technology activities and a number choose to pursue them further in the extension classes in Years 7 and 8. Behaviour is satisfactory though, on occasion, some pupils with special educational needs have problems focusing on the learning activity particularly when class management is less strong.
129. The overall standard of teaching is good. The growing team of specialists are very dedicated and lessons are carefully planned in ways, which enable pupils to understand and meet the learning outcomes. The well-informed teacher support helps pupils develop their understanding and practical skills. Good use is made of ICT to help pupils investigate systems and control and presentation and accuracy in written folder work. Most teachers manage the large teaching groups well and ensure that pupils work safely and with sufficient pace. However, on occasion, less assertive management of a few challenging pupils results in unsatisfactory learning.
130. The subject leadership has been effective in developing and initially teaching new schemes of work as the school has developed. More recently, staff absence and the necessary expansion of differently skilled specialists have weakened the original subject coherence so requiring a more deliberate sharing of a common design and make process.
131. Assessment practice is good in the way it monitors and records pupils' progress at the end of each module. Less strong is the use of marking to show pupils how they can improve their standard in each module.
132. Resources and accommodation are sufficient for immediate needs and there are strengths in ICT equipment. However, the large teaching groups stretch the facilities, and those limitations will inhibit the school's efforts to meet the demands of the 14-19 curriculum. Even so, the school has done well to provide the breadth of experience in the last three years so enabling pupils to make good progress.

DRAMA

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good.
- A firm foundation has been established for the subject.
- Pupils make good progress.

Areas for improvement

- Refining and developing the assessment system.

133. A firm foundation has been established for drama in a relatively short space of time. Pupils are making good progress in the subject and undertaking the kind and quality of work to be expected particularly in Years 7 and 8. Because the subject was not taught when Year 9 started the school they lack the reservoir of dramatic experience upon which to draw and they are still learning to manage the disciplines of the subject.
134. Pupils work with energy and enthusiasm with good levels of cooperation. They are able to construct shape and refine a piece of dramatic work. They have good social skills and there is an inclusive atmosphere so that all pupils are equally engaged in the work and they work together in mixed groups. All pupils feel confident to contribute to the learning and evaluation of group working in a constructive fashion is clearly encouraged. Pupils evidently gain a sense of success from most lessons and enjoy the subject. In the one lesson seen where pupils' attitudes were less positive, not helped by a long gap between lessons, the teacher re-established the ground rules for the subject effectively.

135. The learning is managed well by confident teaching. Planning is detailed and lessons structured well. Teachers have high energy levels matched with a courteous yet assertive approach so that a secure ethos is established. Class management is very good. Teachers have very secure subject knowledge and consequently high expectations. Assessment criteria are shared and pupils know what it is they have to do to aspire to a particular level. Teachers have very positive relationships with pupils so that lessons are conducted in a pleasant atmosphere with pupils enjoying the fun and excitement of the lessons, albeit within established parameters so that they do not lose sight of the aims of the exercise.
136. The curriculum is planned well. There is a strong sense of common entitlement across year groups. The department ensures a good balance between the various elements of investigation, planning evaluating and performing. There is a good input of skills as well as opportunities to develop the skills through improvised 'performance'.
137. The department has established clear criteria for each module of work and for each level and with a little more refinement and synthesis will be able to use this thinking to develop the drama equivalent of the National Curriculum levels of attainment, linking these to the National Curriculum levels for speaking and listening as appropriate, in order that the subject fits into the overall school assessment scheme effectively.⁵
138. The department is clear about what needs to be done in preparation for GCSE and to take the department forward. Good use is made of video technology for assessment purposes. Resources are developing. Accommodation currently lacks blackout –although this is on its way. The drama space is a pleasant, although slightly idiosyncratic space, which will take a little time to determine how to make it work effectively. The theatre, recently handed over, is equipped very well.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Progress is good overall and pupils of higher prior attainment make very good progress.
- Teaching and learning are good and pupils learn geography of a high quality.
- Expectations of pupils are high as are pupils' expectations of their teachers.
- The constant requirement to think exposes pupils constantly to the higher levels of the National Curriculum.
- Pupils are enabled to work at their own level and pace and are skilfully involved in the means of their own improvement.
- The environment for learning is very good.

Areas for improvement

- Develop programmes of study below booster level to provide curriculum access to some pupils with special educational needs.
- Continue the skilful socialisation, particularly of some Year 7 boys, into good learning habits and ensure the engagement of all in their learning.
- Continue to develop assessment to take into account all of the work done throughout each module.

139. Pupils make good progress overall and achieve well. Standards of work observed in lessons, and in the scrutiny of pupils' previous work are broadly in line with national expectations and improving. Higher attaining pupils make very good progress. Some pupils with special needs make good progress towards their targets, although work to give pupils access to the curriculum below the lowest level normally provided in class is not yet well enough developed for all pupils with special needs.

⁵ Because drama is not a specified National Curriculum subject – although all pupils are expected to have dramatic experience- the subject does not have specified attainment targets or National Curriculum levels.

140. Teaching is good and is sometimes very good. The geographical content of lessons is of high quality. Both teachers are well-qualified, enthusiastic subject specialists whose good subject knowledge is displayed in the planning, organisation and delivery of good lessons. Teachers value their pupils and relationships are very good. Pupils expect to be well taught.
141. Teachers' expectations of their pupils are high and these are skilfully given firm structure in well-prepared teaching materials, which are set at four different levels of difficulty in each lesson. Pupils are therefore enabled to work at an appropriate level and pace through a hierarchy of tasks. Pupils know how these levels relate to themselves and to national standards. They are given the means of their own improvement in lessons and can choose to work at a higher level. This powerful driver provides a constant focus on improvement consequently progress is accelerating.
142. In all lessons pupils are required to think all the time and to use what they know and understand how to answer questions. They learn to solve problems because each module of work contains one carefully constructed geographical enquiry, such as, for example, "Who killed the Rhine?" or, the work observed on the causes and effects of the floods in Mozambique in 2000. Consequently pupils are constantly exposed to the higher levels of the National Curriculum. This provides additional strong impetus to progress.
143. The use of the interactive white board in every lesson gives a sharp edge to lesson planning as well as a powerful window on the world. This delivers riveting images of for example the River Usk or the flooding in Mozambique right into the heart of lessons and enables pupils to empathise strongly with the condition of others. The department makes a very good contribution to the teaching and learning of world citizenship.
144. Basic geographical skills such as the interpretation and annotation of photographs, the use of weather symbols, the conventional signs of the Ordnance Survey and the accurate use of scale and distance are taught well so that pupils learn geography of an increasingly good quality as they themselves become more skilful. The use of numeracy is good in lessons and books. The development of pupils' literacy skills through geography is good. Pupils are taught that when they make a point they must give an example and then offer an explanation; consequently many habitually speak in good extended sentences. They are helped to write these down by well-structured word frames that give shape to answers. Writing is intelligible and pupils write freely in sentences and paragraphs. They also write frequently in extended form, particularly for reports into their enquiries. This in turn makes work accessible for the teacher to mark thoroughly. Helpful written comments both encourage pupils and show them how to improve.
145. The department is unusually well provided with computers. Though lessons observed include their good use, teachers are correct to plan to increase the frequency and variety of use. Pupils use computers habitually in their geography homework and similarly teachers communicate with each other by e-mail rather than on paper. The school knows who does not have a computer at home but teachers do not, so while there is easy access for all in school, these pupils cannot be positively supported because they are not positively identified.
146. Most pupils are skilfully socialised into good learning habits early in Year 7 as teachers show them how to organise their paper and their desktops. Good behaviour is well achieved through increasing involvement in interesting work. Most quickly become good listeners and follow instructions carefully but there are a few boys in Year 7 with poor listening skills who do not relish the thinking involved in most exercises and who are teacher-dependent. They wait to be told answers, under-achieve in comparison with the rest and slow the progress of others through off-task talk. There are a very few pupils, mostly boys, in later years who similarly do not address their work.
147. Homework is set at the beginning of lessons and generally complements and develops learning in the classroom. This is a good strong model.

148. The department is well and sensitively managed. Preparation for the introduction of GCSE is moving ahead and apart from the absence of obligatory fieldwork, the work delivered between the ages of 11 and 14 forms a very good preparation for GCSE courses. The environment for learning is very good: it falls short of excellence only in the shortage of display boards and in the narrowness of the rooms, which limits the teacher's movement. Teachers spend much more time in front of classes than the school average but they maintain well the higher requirement of marking and assessment, though time for development work and contribution to the policies of the growing school is reduced. Assessment is accurate and teachers' knowledge of the complex Levels of Attainment of the National Curriculum in geography is sharp. Teachers are correct to continue to refine the accuracy of end-of-module assessment so that all of the work done throughout each module is taken into account. Teachers operate strongly as a mutually supportive team. They are highly committed to the values of the school and have a very good capacity for further improvement.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- There is a clear commitment to maximise standards of attainment and monitor progress.
- Teachers have positive expectations of their pupils' ability to succeed.

Areas for improvement

- A standardised marking and correction policy which places greater emphasis on the improvement of literacy.
- Students are not making enough use of ICT.

149. Inspection evidence shows that students are attaining standards which are above those expected nationally by the end of Year 9. This represents good achievement considering their levels of attainment when they enter the school. Students have a basic knowledge and understanding of the major historical events and personalities they are studying. They appreciate that history is based on evidence. All, including those with special educational needs, can extract information from a variety of written and pictorial sources. The majority of students recognise bias and can give reasons for differences in historical interpretations. Overall, students demonstrate good levels of recall.
150. Oral and listening skills range from satisfactory to very good; writing skills show greater variation. Lower attaining students can write in simple sentences to describe historical events but their work is frequently flawed by poor sentence construction and spelling errors. Higher attaining students write more extensively and with fluency, showing good levels of analytical ability and the ability to synthesise an argument from a diverse range of source material. Standards of presentation are generally good. The majority of students possess a sense of chronology and can use historical terms appropriately.
151. Students arrive at the school with below average skills in history. They are making good progress in lessons, largely due to the focused teaching of basic historical skills. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, including English as an additional language, generally make similar rates of progress as their peers. Higher attaining pupils, including the gifted and talented, are well served by the school's tiered approach to lesson outcomes, and achieve well.
152. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subject and are purposeful in their approach. Learning objectives are outlined at the start of carefully structured lessons. Good quality resources are used to stimulate interest and to help understanding; as was seen in a Year 8 lesson, where students analysed paintings depicting the '*Storming of the Bastille*' from a historical perspective. The department intends to work towards the production of a greater variety of differentiated teaching materials to reflect the special educational needs of a growing proportion of pupils joining the school.
153. Teachers insist on full participation and high standards of behaviour in class. They have positive expectations and work hard to raise the performance of all their pupils. Such expectations are implicit in the way they encourage pupils to think critically and to evaluate evidence.
154. The department acknowledges the importance of skills development in lesson planning. Programmes of study provide good opportunities for the development of literacy and, to a lesser extent, numeracy. Teachers actively promote the use of different strategies to develop an interest in language. They encourage pupils to read aloud in class, and to write at length for a range of audiences. However, some opportunities are lost to underpin progress as many errors in literacy are overlooked in class and homework. As yet ICT is not widely used to support learning in history, but it is anticipated that the department will soon take advantage of the rich technological facilities at the school by integrating ICT in lesson planning.

155. A new subject leader has managed the department since September 2002. In the early stages, leadership has been effective. There is a drive to heighten the profile of the subject in the school, which is reflected in a positive ethos, and in the large number of students opting to study history at GCSE level. The second history specialist also joined the school in September 2002. Both teachers are ambitious for their pupils and committed to their subject. They are instilling a sense of achievement and confidence in their pupils. Appropriate priorities are being set for the future. The subject leader has re-written the schemes of work for Key Stage 3, and those for Key Stage 4 are under construction. Taking a formative approach to assessment, it is intended that diagnostic feedback should provide students with all the necessary indicators for improvement. Assessment practices are to be revised to eliminate inconsistencies.
156. The department makes good use of school data, including performance in assessments, which are held five times a year. Students have a good understanding of National Curriculum levels and are well informed as to their own level of attainment. Regular target setting enables them to identify their strengths and weaknesses, in order to improve their performance. A broad and balanced curriculum reflects the multicultural background of the pupils. The humanities area is very well equipped in terms of technology and teaching resources. However, some history teaching rooms are too compact to facilitate group work; teachers find difficulty in circulating and their overview of written work can be restricted. The teaching rooms have appropriate displays, although more could be done to celebrate pupil achievement. For the future there are plans to enrich the curriculum and develop cultural understanding by means of a programme of visits. The department already contributes to the extra-curricular life of the school through a range of history clubs, which take place during the extended day. Topics of study help towards the development of moral and social understanding.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Pupils make very good progress and attain standards above national average.
- The challenging teaching is very good in the way it develops and assesses pupils' knowledge and skills.
- ICT use is strong throughout most of the school and considerably enhances pupils' learning.
- The level of ICT resources is excellent and the networked facilities are very well organised and maintained.
- The management of ICT across the school and within the specialist courses is excellent.

Areas for improvement

- A few subject areas have not fully developed ICT within their teaching and learning.
- Although most pupils respond well to the challenging standards in lessons, on occasion the needs of the lower attaining, including those with special educational needs, are less well met.

157. All pupils follow a challenging learning programme in years 7 to 9 that covers the main aspects of the National Curriculum and additionally enables them to work towards the GNVQ Intermediate qualification, equivalent to four GCSEs with grades A* to C. At the end of Year 9 pupils attain standards above national average. This represents very good achievement given that most come to the school with below average ICT skills. The very good rate of progress is evident in all years and is directly the result of teachers' high expectations, effective use of their specialist knowledge and skills and greater overall time for ICT use in taught lessons and independent study sessions. In Year 7 pupils quickly learn keyboard skills through a structured programme and begin to learn the main software applications. For example, in one lesson pupils used spreadsheets confidently to carry out simple investigations with higher attaining pupils using spreadsheets to model ideas. Year 8 pupils can organise and present a variety of text and picture information to produce their own web page design of varying sophistication. In Year 9, pupils have sufficient knowledge and

skills to use relational spreadsheets as part of their investigations with the higher attaining developing short cut buttons that carry out sets of

instructions and/or calculations. Pupils with special educational needs struggle to meet the targets set despite additional learning support. Even so, these pupils demonstrate a sound ICT capability that considerably enhances the development of their literacy skills.

158. ICT is a very strong feature of this well resourced school and pupils display a high level of commitment to the subject. The great majority of pupils are sufficiently well organised and competent to make effective use of ICT in their independent study sessions to complete their GNVQ assignments and other homework although some of the lower attaining need firmer guidance and target setting.
159. The overall quality of teaching is very good. The large classes are mostly very well managed with well-structured lessons that sustain considerable pace. Pupils make considerable effort and behave well because of the very high expectations teachers have and the clear learning targets set. The available resources are used very well including the ICT competent teacher assistants as well as the visual aids such as the interactive whiteboard that sustains interest and focus. Teachers use their specialist knowledge well to anticipate and resolve pupils' learning problems though where that support is not prioritised, staff struggle to get round the large groups. Pupils have a good picture of their progress both in terms of National Curriculum levels and against GNVQ criteria and are given clear guidance as to how they can improve.
160. The deputy headteacher and head of ICT work closely together in the development and management of ICT and provide excellent leadership. This leadership includes the effective training of established and new staff in using ICT in their teaching. They are well supported by very good network management and technician support. The overall level of resources is excellent, with one computer for every two pupils. The network manager and technicians maintain the school systems very well. The monitoring and development of ICT across other subjects is well advanced and subjects such as science and design and technology make specific contributions to the delivery of the ICT programme of study in terms of measurement and control. Most other subjects use ICT effectively to enhance delivery of their curriculum areas, though a few been slow in making use of the small clusters of workstations in their classrooms. The recent introduction of networked notebook computers is helping provide more flexible whole class use.
161. Overall, ICT provision is a major strength and is having a positive impact throughout the school.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Pupils learn well, make good progress and reach standards which are above expectations.
- Teaching is very good.
- Subject leadership is very good.
- Resources are excellent.

Areas for improvement

- In marking, the provision of specific advice for improvement, and the subsequent checking of whether this advice has been followed.
- In lessons, the involvement of pupils in the evaluation of their own learning.
- Planning which includes the input of teaching assistants when provided.

French

162. When pupils enter the school, attainment is below national standards, particularly in literacy. This means that their word handling skills at first do not meet the challenge of a new language. Good progress is made, however, and by the time of the inspection - half way through the school year - the majority in Year 7 were seen attaining in line with what might be expected for

pupils of that age. This good progress is maintained through Years 8 and 9, with the result that a significant majority in Year 9 attain standards above national expectations, with a small number reaching standards well above.

163. In Year 7, pupils rapidly learn to handle simple greetings, and to conduct basic exchanges in French. They can put words together given a clear framework to follow, making a meaningful phrase or sentence. They are beginning to understand some of the grammar of number and gender, and how words may change to agree with each other. By Year 8, they have developed a good reserve of remembered and common expressions, and know some regular verb forms, and those of the commonest irregular verbs. In an outstanding lesson, pupils were observed producing (by gap filling in a given text) poems for St. Valentine's Day. All were able to produce convincing brief drafts, and the faster learners were making lively efforts to match interesting adjectives to imaginatively chosen nouns. In Year 9, they can read brief passages of a familiar text with above average accuracy. They can apply "effective guesses" when asked to work out meanings, and these are usually successful because they are well informed. They understand how auxiliary verbs are used, and know why a past tense is called the "passé composé". Writing freely within a prescribed pattern, they can produce brief narratives of 100 words or more.
164. The good progress that leads to these standards has been achieved as a result of two main influences: highly effective teaching and pupils' own powerful motivation. The quality of learning is good: pupils enjoy French. They want to succeed, both for their own satisfaction and to please their teachers, with whom relationships are very good. Their behaviour is almost always good; they stay on task for one-hour periods, which, for language learning, are often quite long. The way in which the school promotes personal development means that pupils have confidence and, while they start a little hesitantly, by the time they are well settled they are not afraid to "have a go" - a very significant advantage to their learning. This applies also to pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, who make good progress with their peers. There is ample provision of extension work for those who show particular gifts or talents for language, and they make good and often very good progress.
165. The strongest influence upon the good quality of learning and pupils' progress is the teaching. All lessons observed were at least very good, and one was excellent. A large amount of teaching is in French, and this means that everything is learnt in a meaningful context rather than as a list of unconnected words and expressions. Teachers use spoken French well: all have good fluency and knowledge of the colloquial language. They adapt it to pupils' needs very skilfully, and this compensates for the occasional inaccuracy in grammar and pronunciation very effectively. A considerable strength is in teachers' planning, which results in a course that follows a strong developmental pattern, and in lessons that have structure and pace. Pupil management is firm and unfussy - and in any case, lesson content is so packed and delivered at such a pace that there is little opportunity to go off task. Teachers know their pupils well, and are able to target work in lessons and homework so that all are included according to their different abilities, and are challenged to improve by well adapted and appropriately stimulating questioning. Resources, such as flash cards, pictures, videos and sound tapes, the electronic white board, overhead projectors, and the good course book - are all used well. The additional support provision in some classes by teaching assistants is not, however, built into the planning, and this may mean that this valuable resource is not efficiently used, for example when the teacher is occupying the attention of the whole class.
166. Assessment is regular and effective in plotting progress through the end of unit or module tests. Marking is careful, regular and thorough. However, specific advice on ways to improve is not common, and even when such advice is given, there is no subsequent checking that this advice has been followed. There is some checking of learning in the plenary sessions at the ends of

lessons, but pupils are not often involved in evaluating their own success on these occasions. French clubs and visits to France enhance the provision in modern foreign languages, and it is planned to increase these as the school expands. German and Spanish are currently on offer as part of the school's enrichment programmed, and this is a very useful way to enabling pupils to making informed choices when it comes to selecting a possible second foreign language.

167. An able and well-qualified teacher, who provides both example and precept of high quality to her colleagues, leads the subject of modern foreign languages very well. In her very good subject documentation, an extremely effective scheme of work (based upon national guidance) is set out. She has invested a considerable amount of time, thought and care in setting up her subject area since the school opened, ensuring that only the best and most appropriate resources are provided: for example, she selected the course book only after trialling it in another school. Her vision for the future of languages in the school is strong, based upon the continuous improvement of provision and standards, and she is very sensitive and responsive to new ideas.
168. Teaching accommodation is good, and teachers have made their classrooms welcoming and supportive, with displays of key words, patterns and expressions, and of pupils' work. Other rooms and spaces have yet to be developed in use, but they will provide good facilities for individuals and small groups, particularly for speaking and listening. Resources are excellent, with a range of information and communications technology approaches, a plentiful supply of course books, and a good library of support materials in the target languages - particularly well chosen books and magazines.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is excellent.
- The majority of pupils achieve standards above expectations in Year 9.
- The department is very well-led and Schemes of Work are comprehensive with good lesson planning and target-setting.
- The range of learning opportunities is very broad and balanced.
- Resources are excellent.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment procedures are in place but on-going assessment is not yet fully implemented.

169. Pupils join the school with skills which are sometimes below national expectations in music. Teacher assessment shows that by the end of Year 9 the musical skills of pupils are slightly above expectations. This was confirmed by work seen and heard during the inspection in all year groups. When pupils perform, improvise and compose they show good understanding of musical processes and a sense of performance. They show good listening and appraising skills and they are familiar with a good range of technical terms and use them accurately. They are also able to appraise each other's performances and compositions well, showing understanding of the musical processes involved. There was no opportunity to hear pupils sing in the course of the inspection.
170. Pupils respond to music very well. They work with concentration and listen attentively to the teachers and to each other's music. They move quickly from one activity to another and clearly enjoy the variety of carefully planned practical work.
171. Teaching is excellent and teachers have excellent subject knowledge. Lessons are well planned, with a good mixture of group and whole class activity, which maintains pupil interest. Teachers have high expectations and pupils are set challenging targets. The pace of lessons is very good and keeps pupils involved and interested.
172. Tasks are matched to pupil abilities through careful target setting at four levels for both classwork and homework. As a result all pupils are challenged appropriately, including those who are musically gifted and talented. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are given good support and produce work in line with others in the class.

173. The department is very well led and managed. Schemes of Work are thorough and demonstrate a good breadth and balance within the music curriculum. The amount of time allocated to music meets statutory requirements. Assessment occurs regularly and, although on-going assessment is not yet fully implemented, summative assessment at the end of each module is thorough and in place.
174. At the time of the inspection 159 pupils are taking instrumental lessons, taught by a team of 9 visiting instrumental tutors, well above the national average. School policy states that all pupils should have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument and this policy is being put into practice efficiently. There are also opportunities for pupils to participate in a wide range of enhanced or extra-curricular music ensembles, ranging from additional keyboard lessons for Year 7 pupils to steel band. The music department is making a significant contribution to the rich variety of learning experiences within the school.
175. Resources are excellent and there is sufficient accommodation, with two classrooms, four practice rooms and a small space for ICT equipment. There is some noise pollution with the drama department since none of the rooms is soundproofed, but no evidence that pupils' learning is currently being affected.
176. The school has careful plans for expanding provision for the Creative and Performing Arts. The music department is on target to make a significant contribution to these developments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The standard of overall provision in physical education is **good**.

Strengths

- Skill development in areas such as swimming.
- The quality of the curriculum including extension work and extra-curricular activities.
- The subject knowledge of teachers.
- Very good pupil attitudes.

Areas for improvement

- Accommodation issues.
- Development of more precise learning objectives.
- Clear reinforcement of objectives and key words in lessons.
- Opportunities for pupil evaluation of performances.

177. Overall, pupils entering the school in year 7 have under-developed skills in areas such as gymnastics, swimming and racket sports. Their depth of knowledge of tactics and composition are similarly below the national average. However, by the end of year 9 standards are in line with the national average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, and English as an additional language make good progress in lessons, and achieve well over time.
178. Nowhere is this more evident than in the swimming programme for all pupils, in which the school has invested considerable resources. The progress of many pupils who were originally non-swimmers is good and reflects the high standard of coaching, as well as overall success of this programme.
179. Satisfactory progress in skill levels takes place in Year 7 football lessons. The rate of progress increases in years 8 and 9 as pupils' more mature attitudes and knowledge of routines and expectations develop. High attaining pupils show good control, using both feet, when dribbling the ball for prolonged distances. Other pupils tend to lose control when put under pressure of time. Most pupils are able to describe how to carry out the block tackle. By Year 9, pupils' skill standards have improved and their progress is good overall. The majority can recognise the main muscle groups and carry out the appropriate stretching exercises correctly. In football, most

pupils pass accurately and with control, while high attaining pupils are able to consistently trap the ball, turn and beat opponents acting as defenders. However, knowledge of tactics, how to use space and position, continues to be insecure for most pupils. Across the years the pupils' ability to analyse and suggest strengths and weaknesses in their performances is insufficiently developed. The school has begun to build a record of individual pupil success at local club level and beyond.

180. Teaching is good in approximately half of the lessons observed while in a quarter of lessons very good teaching is in evidence. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Where very good teaching is practised, the pupils are coached and challenged by teachers with strong subject knowledge. Pupils' motivation is maintained by a variety of activities that build the level of challenge, and reflects the use of accurate on-going assessment of pupils' progress during the lesson. Pupils are encouraged to show their skills, and are asked to evaluate such performances using appropriate subject vocabulary, and in a progressively more detailed way. In the less accomplished lessons the teachers do not adequately develop or make clear precise learning outcomes. Such objectives and key vocabulary are not consistently put into written form, and pupils consequently do not benefit from constant reinforcement, throughout the lesson, of what they are aiming to achieve, and where they have succeeded. The use of more challenging and imaginative plenary sessions is in need of development. The subject has yet to develop a system whereby learning assistants are consistently well briefed as to their role within lessons.
181. Very good pupils' attitudes are reflected in their keenness to get involved in lessons, and their general determination to work hard and improve their standards of work. Behaviour is good for most pupils. There does exist a significant minority of pupils who are reluctant to answer questions in class, whose commitment to work, and levels of concentration are at an unsatisfactory level.
182. Good management of the subject has meant that the subject has developed a curriculum that delivers a very good quality and range of experiences to pupils. In each year the pupils have the opportunity to return to the same activities and thereby improve their standards. The planning is comprehensive, although there is an inconsistency in the level of the precision of learning outcomes that guide teachers' planning for progression. Built into the curriculum are good extension activities where pupils participate in a range of sports. In addition, the small number of PE specialists also oversee after-school clubs and competitive games against other schools.
183. Good assessment arrangements ensure that pupils know how well they have achieved at the end of each module, and are involved in negotiating their targets at their chosen level. The subject records and uses a good range of data to help inform planning, although the development of data formats that make such analysis easier is required. Monitoring of standards of work and lessons takes place, but with the increased numbers of classes the role of the subject head, in this respect, is in need of further development.
184. Resources overall are very good, but there are issues surrounding the standards of accommodation. The lack of access to playing fields has meant that many lessons have taken place in the sports hall. However, the ability of pupils to learn about tactics and the use of space in games is further curtailed by floor areas that need repair, and are currently "out of bounds". Whilst the better use of displays will brighten the department area, the changing rooms require more comprehensive refurbishment.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Some of the teaching is excellent.
- Teaching about world religions is a strong characteristic of the lessons.

- There is a good balance in the majority of lessons of learning from religions as well as learning about them.
- The department makes a significant contribution to the pupils overall spiritual, moral and cultural development.

Areas for improvement

- About one third of the teaching is done by non-specialists and this is having an effect on some aspects of the pupils' learning.

185. Overall, the standard of attainment in relation to the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus is good. The pupils have a strong knowledge and understanding about Christianity and many other world religions such as Hinduism and Islam. The pupils can recognise and use a lot of religious language in a meaningful way. The pupils can relate a lot of their religious learning to life in general and they can often see how their learning might have relevance to their own lives and experiences. In some instances, however, this could be stronger. Their general skills are good as, for example, they have completed a significant amount of written work in their folders and they can make intelligent oral responses in discussion work. In general pupils are good at thinking through the reasons why things happen and why believers participate in religious activities in the way that they do.
186. Overall achievement of the pupils is very good as the department works hard to ensure that the pupils progress as well as they are able. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language is also very good, as well developed differentiated work enables them to work according to their ability. The differentiated work also enables the more able and the gifted and talented pupils to be stretched and be involved in more demanding work.
187. The response of the pupils is very good. The pupils are well behaved and they work hard during the lessons. They concentrate on the work and they are able to maintain this concentration. They respect each other and the teachers and they respect other people's viewpoints and opinions. The pupils are willing to participate in the lessons both in written work and in discussions. The pupils are willing to express their own personal views on many of the issues raised in the lessons.
188. Overall the teaching is very good with some excellent and some good aspects. All lessons are well prepared and the objectives of the lesson are clear both to the teachers and to the pupils themselves. The teaching includes a wide range of activities that keeps the pupils interested in their work and so their learning is strong. The teaching is sensitive to the different needs in the class and a lot of work is done on this by way of lesson preparation. The pace of all lessons is always good and the majority of lessons have high expectations and so the pupils learn a lot in the time available. The excellent teaching is characterised by a stronger emphasis on learning from religions as well as learning about them. There is also a stronger emphasis in these lessons on asking why things happen and also in pointing out how the learning might have relevance to their own lives and experiences. Where the lessons are less than excellent, the teaching has more of an emphasis on the factual dimension of religion and there is less confidence in the subject matter. This tends to be seen in lessons taken by non-specialists. Homework is set and there is an ongoing assessment policy. Information technology is actively used in the teaching. The teaching makes a significant contribution to the standards of literacy in the school in the reading and discussion of various texts. The teaching and learning also makes a significant input to the pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development in its study of topics like the meaning and purpose of life and moral issues in several world religions.
189. The leadership and management are excellent. The staffing is good but one lesson in three is taken by non-specialist teachers and this is having some effect on the pupils' learning. Statutory requirements are being met but some additional time would enable the content of the Agreed Syllabus to be taught in a more detailed way.
190. The resources and accommodation are excellent.

