

INSPECTION REPORT

BOW SCHOOL

London

LEA area: Tower Hamlets

Unique reference number: 100965

Ms B Dobson

Lead inspector: Liz Barthaud

Dates of inspection: 3rd - 6th November 2003

Inspection number: 258574

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 students:	11-16
Gender of students:	Male
Number on roll:	541
School address:	Paton Close Fairfield Road London
Postcode:	E3 2QD
Telephone number:	020 8980 0118
Fax number:	020 8980 1556
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Charles Teale
Date of previous inspection:	17 / 9 / 2001

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Bow is a small community comprehensive for boys, located within the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. A high proportion of students live within a one mile radius of the school. The rich ethnic mix is strength of the school. Fifty eight per cent of those attending the school represent ethnic groupings other than white. Approximately 30 per cent of the boys on roll are Bangladeshi, 18 per cent Black African or Black Afro-Caribbean and 36 per cent white British. The very high percentage known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average at 63.5 per cent. This is higher than at the time of the last inspection and indicates the very high levels of social and economic deprivation in this inner city area of East London. Boys joining the school at age 11 come from six main contributory primary schools. Attainment on entry, as measured by tests at the end of Year 6, is well below the national average. The percentage of students with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational need, is well above the national average at 30.1 per cent. Again, this is higher than at the time of the last inspection. As part of this inspection, the inspector with responsibility for special educational needs specifically evaluated the assessment procedures used by the school for students who have been identified as having a special educational need. A high proportion of students, 12 per cent, are at an early stage of English language acquisition and 30.9 per cent have English as an additional language. These percentages are both very high in comparison with national averages. The number of students leaving and joining the school during the last school year was 50, which represents 10 per cent of the school roll. In comparison with the national average, this figure is high. From the time of the last inspection until September 2002, the school continued to face difficulties in recruiting staff. Recruitment of staff to work in the school has improved substantially since September 2002, particularly into key management roles.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
30317	Liz Barthaud	Lead inspector	
9542	Brian Jones	Lay inspector	
3162	Philip O'Neill	Team inspector	English
32305	Matthew Pike	Team inspector	Mathematics
17011	John Clawley	Team inspector	Science
12331	Vera Grigg	Team inspector	Geography Design and technology
31525	Sue O'Sullivan	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages English as an additional language
10895	David Wasp	Team inspector	History Religious education
17349	Paula Askew	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
33176	Anita Wade	Team inspector	Music Special educational needs
32225	Christine Hough	Team inspector	Physical education Citizenship
31688	Brian McGonagle	Team inspector	Art and design

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education

102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire

GL53 7JX

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Bow is an improving school, which is gaining in popularity with parents and students. The rapid improvements, which have taken place over the last three years can be directly attributed to the **very good** leadership of the headteacher. Bow provides a **satisfactory** standard of education. Students joining the school in Year 7 do so with poor levels of attainment. The **good** leadership provided by other member of the school management team has resulted in teaching which is at least satisfactory. Students' achievements are satisfactory and they are making satisfactory progress in their learning. However, although standards are improving they are currently **unsatisfactory**. The school provides **satisfactory** value for money.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good leadership of the headteacher is having a positive effect on improving students' achievements.
- Standards are not yet high enough, particularly in the area of literacy development
- The schools commitment to meeting the needs of all learners leads to good achievement by students for whom English is an additional language.
- Systems for assessing how well students do are not sufficiently developed to have a positive impact on standards.
- Excellent procedures have ensured that students' attendance is good.
- The very wide range of sporting, performing and learning opportunities are a real strength of the school.
- Leadership and management in science are not effective and have resulted in students' achievements being unsatisfactory.

Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The school was last inspected in September 2001 and at that time it was judged to have serious weaknesses. Firm and carefully planned action to address each of the areas for improvement identified within that report has been taken. Attendance is now above the national average and behaviour and achievement are satisfactory. Improvements have been made in all the subject areas identified. Improvements in accommodation are in progress. All required school policies are now in place. The teaching and learning of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum remain unsatisfactory. The use of assessment has improved but remains unsatisfactory including within the area of special educational needs.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	Year-2000	Year-2001	Year 2002	Year 2002
	E*	E*	E	C

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those, whose students attained similarly at the end of Year 9.*

When students join the school in **Year 7 their attainment is poor** based on results at the end of Year 6. Their literacy skills are very poor. By the end of Year 9 their skills in reading and writing and speaking and listening are **unsatisfactory**. The achievement of students for whom English is an additional language is **good**. Achievement is **satisfactory** in English but **unsatisfactory in mathematics and science**. Achievement in ICT is **satisfactory**. Competence in ICT is **unsatisfactory** as opportunities to use ICT in other subjects are **unsatisfactory**. In most other subjects achievement is at least **satisfactory**.

By the end of Year 11, **achievement is satisfactory**. There are no significant differences in the achievement of students from any ethnic group. In English, mathematics and ICT achievement is **satisfactory**. Achievement remains **unsatisfactory** in science.

Standards throughout the school are improving but by the end of Year 9 they are **unsatisfactory**. In English and science standards **are poor**. In mathematics, standards **are unsatisfactory**. In most other subjects standards are **satisfactory**.

By the end of Year 11 standards in English, mathematics and science are **unsatisfactory** and in ICT they **are below** national expectations. Despite the best efforts of the school, staffing issues between 2000 and 2002 have hindered progress in all subjects.

Across the school, students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **satisfactory**. Students' attitudes in Years 7 to 9 are **good**. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all students is **good**. The school has worked hard to develop excellent procedures for promoting good attendance over the last two years and as a result attendance rates have improved and are now **good**. These are the main reasons why the percentage of boys gaining 5 or more GCSE grades A*-C have risen from 9 per cent in 2000 to 18 per cent in 2002. The 2003 results, which are yet to be confirmed, indicate a further rise to 26 per cent.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory and often good. Teaching has many good and excellent features but there are inconsistencies in the overall quality of teaching between and within subjects. The very high staff turnover and difficulties in recruiting during the two school years beginning September 2000 is the main contributory factor for these inconsistencies with the consequent slow rise in standards. Newly appointed staff are addressing this with the result that the progress the students are now making is satisfactory overall and standards are rising. Boys identified as having a special educational need make satisfactory progress and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress. Homework focuses on developing learning from lessons. Individual teachers now have access to a wide range of data on each student. At present procedures in relation to the use of this information within departments is inconsistent and **unsatisfactory**. Care provided by the school for all students is **good** whilst the support and guidance offered to students is **satisfactory**.

The curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory. The range of subjects and examination opportunities available to students in Years 10 and 11 is **good**. The very wide range of additional learning and enrichment activities provided outside of lessons is **very good**. The curriculum reflects the students' different cultural, learning and personal needs.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership throughout the school is good and that of the headteacher **very good**. All members of the leadership group have a very clear vision for the school's future, which is reflected in their work. Leadership and management of subject areas are now good, with the exception of science, where it is unsatisfactory. Governors are actively involved in shaping the vision and direction of the school and provide very good levels of both support and challenge to the management team. Financial management is **good**. Governance of the school is **good**. Since the last inspection governors have taken satisfactory steps to ensure that the school now fully complies with statutory requirements in relation to a collective act of daily worship, and religious education. Currently there are some areas including the provision for ICT across the curriculum and fully complying with National Curriculum requirements in design technology and in geography in Years 7 to 9 where there are weaknesses. Planning for further improvement need to focus more sharply on current school priorities.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents commented positively on the range of improvements over the last three years. They stated their children are taught and supported well. Families with children for whom English is an additional language are particularly pleased with the progress they make. Students like their school and are proud of it. They are confident they are in a safe and caring environment and appreciate that the teachers are committed to helping them. Over 80 per cent of the students stated on their questionnaires that the school was well run.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- Raise standards of literacy across the school.
- Raise attainment throughout the school.
- Focus development planning on current school priorities.
- Procedures for assessment.
- Improve the leadership and management of science.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY STUDENTS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement in Years 7 to 11 is **satisfactory**, however, standards in Years 7 to 11 are **unsatisfactory**. There are no significant differences in the performance of students from different ethnic groups.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students for whom English is an additional language make good progress.
- All students make satisfactory achievement judged against their poor levels of entry to the school.
- Low levels of literacy, particularly in Years 7 to 9, are the main reason why standards are unsatisfactory.
- The poor standards and achievement of all students in science.
- Good standards achieved at the end of Year 11 in art and music.
- Standards at the end of Years 9 and 11 indicate an improving trend.

The tables below show the standards achieved by students at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 based on average point scores¹ in National Curriculum tests.

Key Stage 3

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2002

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.4 (27.1)	31.9 (31.6)
Mathematics	30.0 (29.3)	34.8 (34.4)
Science	27.3 (26.6)	33.4 (33.2)

There were 90 students in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Commentary

1. In 2002, standards of attainment and achievement at the end of Year 9 were below the national average in English, mathematics and science. The number of students achieving a Level 6 or above in English, mathematics and science was what would be expected of students of this age nationally. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for English, mathematics and science was broadly in line with the national trend. The 2003 results indicate good improvement in the percentage of students gaining a Level 6 or above in these subjects. Work seen in all subjects shows that students' progress in the first three years is **satisfactory** overall.

¹ The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in another school or the national average. By the end of Year 9, the Level attained by each pupil, for example, in mathematics, is given a score. A Level 4 = 27 points, a Level 5 = 33 points and so on. Therefore the average points score in mathematics is worked out by adding up all of the points based on the level attained by pupils and then dividing by the number of pupils who took the test. Therefore, a school whose average points score for mathematics at the end of the Year 9 national tests is greater than 33 is one whose pupils are performing above that expected for their age. GCSE grades are also awarded points as are A level grades and these are calculated in the same way although the number of points awarded for each grade is different, for example GCSE A* is worth 8 points, grade A 7 points, grade B 6 points and so on until grade G which is worth 1 point.

Key Stage 4

Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2002

	School results	National results
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	18.1 (16.2)	49.9 (48.4)
Percentage of students gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	77.1 (60.0)	90.9 (90.9)
Percentage of students gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	98.0 (87.0)	95.0 (94.7)
Average point score per student (best eight subjects)	24.3 (18.7)	32.6 (31.9)

There were 119 students in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The 2002 GCSE examination results, shown in the table above, were above the national average in the category 'percentage of students gaining one or more A*-G grades', but below national averages in the other three categories. There was an improvement in results in all categories between 2001 and 2002. The 2003 results, which are yet to be confirmed, show further improvement. Results in art and design and music were well above the national average. GCSE performance in relation to different ethnic groups is carefully analysed by the school and there is no significant difference in the performance of any group. In 2003, with one exception, students for whom English is an additional language achieved a grade in English language within the A*-G range and 50 per cent a grade at C or above. Students who took a GCSE in their home language attained above average standards.
3. The work of students in Year 11 shows that attainment continues to rise and in art, geography, physical education, music and citizenship it is in line with national expectations. In all other subjects it remains below average for their age. The attainment of students for whom English is an additional language is good.
4. Progress made by all students from Years 7 to 11 is satisfactory and good for those for whom English is an additional language. This is because of the high level of support the boys receive in class from their teachers and, where available, support assistants. Teachers work hard to ensure that the needs of all students are met and, as a result, inclusion in this school is **good**. Students receiving specific input for literacy difficulties make satisfactory progress which results in most achieving at least 1 A*-G at GCSE by the end of Year 11.

Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision has led students' attitudes, behaviour and relationships to improve. They are **satisfactory** overall. Attendance is **good** and punctuality is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has excellent monitoring and support of attendance, which has improved from the lowest 5 per cent of schools, to slightly above the national average.
- Students like their school, they are proud of it, and they are eager to succeed.
- Behaviour is calm and well ordered around the school, and students respond well to good teaching.
- When teaching and behaviour management strategies are weak, students' behaviour deteriorates rapidly.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002 / 3

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	7.6	School data:	1.4
National data:	8.1	National data:	1.1

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Commentary

5. In 2002/03 Bow School achieved 91 per cent attendance, slightly above the most recent national average. This is a good figure in an area of high social and economic deprivation. Compared with six years ago, when attendance was 83.9 per cent, it is a huge step forward. Frequent effective use of computerised monitoring enables the school to identify individuals, groups and classes who need help. Personal contacts, in and out of school, provide support quickly. Most students arrive punctually in the mornings. The school works hard to ensure a prompt start in the afternoons and to lessons but narrow stairways and the separation of the main building from the other classrooms leads to slow movement between lessons. Good support in the learning support unit enables students with attendance problems to rejoin the main school as soon as possible.
6. Bow School has a strong ethos. Students want to succeed. They participate enthusiastically in opportunities for extra learning, such as the 'maths extra' club and the open rehearsals for music. Students support one another and work together well. They like their school and are proud of it. The school is a Centre of Excellence for rugby, and its students' coach pupils in primary schools. Students take part in the Spitalfields Festival and perform with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. Older students act as good role models. For example, the head boy spoke well and effectively on the school Tannoy system about the meaning of Remembrance Day. He invited students to reflect on loss of life in the World Wars and the present conflicts. A student with ambitions in media is the first ever student to edit the fortnightly newsletter. Many students took part in Bow's spectacular creative presentation on myths last term. These activities help students develop their self-confidence and positive attitudes to learning.
7. Good moral and social development results in orderly behaviour around the school. Students eagerly welcome visitors, and talk to them enthusiastically. The school makes clear its high expectations of good behaviour. Students with behavioural difficulties who attend the learning support unit get good support and guidance from the unit staff. This includes frequent opportunities to discuss difficulties as they arise. Last year, the incidents of exclusion within the school totaled 65, compared with 183 in the year of the previous inspection. The apparently high number of fixed period exclusions for boys in the black or black British category relate to two students. There are links between the fall in the number of incidents of exclusion and the establishment of the learning support unit. Behaviour overall has improved to satisfactory from unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. Some unsatisfactory behaviour exists in lessons when the work set does not provide sufficient intellectual challenge.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of students

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of students on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	191	14	2
White – Irish	4	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	157	12	1
Black or Black British – Caribbean	31	10	1
Black or Black British – African	44	6	1
Black or Black British – any other Black background	12	18	1
Chinese	3	1	0
Any other ethnic group	5	2	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **satisfactory**. Teaching and learning throughout the school are **satisfactory**. Assessment systems are **unsatisfactory**. The curriculum is **satisfactory** with particular strengths in the provision for enrichment and extension activities. Accommodation and resources are **adequate** to meet the needs of the curriculum. Overall, there are sufficient teachers and support staff to ensure teaching and learning of the curriculum. Students get **very good** opportunities to enrich their studies.

Teaching and learning

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good lesson planning seeks to interest, encourage, engage and challenge all students.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about their subjects.
- Most teachers manage and organise their students' well and use assistants and technicians effectively to provide additional support and guidance in lessons.
- The systems used by teachers to assess the work completed by students are unsatisfactory overall, and there are inconsistencies in the way in which work is marked and targets are set.
- Many teachers make insufficient use of ICT to support teaching and learning in their subjects

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 84 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (3.6)	16 (19)	23 (27.4)	34 (40.5)	6 (7.1)	2 (2.4)	0 (0)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

Commentary

8. Evidence from students' work and observations of lessons during the inspection confirm that teaching and learning are satisfactory. This is the main reason why standards at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are rising. The majority of lessons now have a clear structure, which

moves students' learning on from simple to more complex tasks. Good planning and careful use of resources ensures all students are able to make satisfactory progress in their learning.

9. There is evidence of good and very good teaching in all year groups. A major characteristic of this is the depth of teachers' subject knowledge and their ability to impart what they know to their students. All teachers are experts in their subjects and are keen to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with students. This together with pace and challenge often results in students being able to develop and express their ideas in depth and making very good and sometimes excellent progress in their learning. Where teaching is unsatisfactory students are not motivated to learn. The slow pace of the lesson coupled with activities that lack challenge results in unsatisfactory behaviour. In these lessons behaviour is not managed effectively and this results in learning being unsatisfactory and occasionally poor. Since the time of the last inspection the school has worked hard to implement a number of systems to identify and share good practice across the school, including the use of its two Advanced Skills teachers and this has resulted in the overall quality of teaching improving significantly since the last inspection. There are however inconsistencies in the quality of teaching not only between, but also within, departments.
10. Teaching assistants and technical staff are well deployed to work with individuals and groups. Good joint planning enables students with identified learning difficulties to take part fully in lessons and learn well. There is clearly a high level of mutual respect and a good partnership between adults and students.
11. The lack of effective assessment systems restricts the school's ability to provide individual guidance in subjects. In some instances, the school still cannot set targets that show students clearly how they can improve their standards. Until September 2002 the school did not have a central register to record the range of data available on all students. During the last academic year a member of the senior management team collated and recorded all the available data. From October 2002 this has been provided for every member of staff. There is now a need to integrate the teaching and learning policy with that of assessment to ensure that all staff use data to plan lessons and monitor students' progress in lessons individually. The school has recognised that assessment procedures need developing and as a result middle managers will now carry out formal assessments three times during the school year, the first of which will be 'benchmarked' on the results of the newly established school examinations.
12. 12. In subjects the marking of work is constructive, but lacks a consistent, focused marking scheme. Where data is collected and recorded it is often not used effectively to inform planning and set targets. As a result, students currently do not fully understand how well they are doing or how to improve on their performance. However, the assessment system in art and design and information and communications technology (ICT) is good. The assessment system used in ICT is based on an acknowledged model, 'Inside the Black Box'. Marking is thorough and a range of data is used effectively to compile projected grades. Students are involved in the target setting process and a 'traffic lights' system encourages and directs them to work towards the higher levels of attainment. Data is used effectively and this enables students to work towards targets matched to their specific needs. Assessment for students for whom English is an additional language is good. A wide range of data is analysed to track the progress made by both individuals and small groups of students.
13. Assessment of students with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Whilst useful data is collated and circulated, and students are involved in setting targets in collaboration with learning support staff, there is as yet no overall school policy on how this should be used to inform teachers' planning. Work undertaken through the academic mentoring system has led to the introduction of academic review days. On two occasions during the year, students in Year 11 are involved in reviewing their targets in collaboration with teachers and parents.
14. With the exception of music and discrete ICT lessons the full range of ICT is not being used by teachers or students in lessons. As a result students' competence in ICT is currently unsatisfactory.

Example of outstanding practice

An excellent Year 7 religious education lesson developed into a 'feast' of multicultural discussion and experience. Through a presentation by Portuguese students (and translated by a Brazilian student) and readings from the Qur'an, the lesson focused on the significance of Ramadan for Muslims. Students were encouraged to consider other people's experiences and understand the significance of beliefs that were not necessarily their own. The quality of teaching and learning was excellent, as a result of the promotion of relevant aspects of citizenship through this religious education lesson.

Example of outstanding practice

In an excellent Year 11 basketball lesson students were encouraged to apply their refereeing skills to a full game and abide by the resulting decisions. The hardest aspect for these students was to accept those decisions that did not go in their favour. As a result of the teacher's very good intervention in which he explained patiently to the whole group the moral and social merits of respecting the different roles of referee and player, using topical illustrations from international football to reinforce his points. Such was the power of his intervention that one of the players who had been sent off readily took on the role of referee and actually applauded his original opponent when he outwitted another player.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. Students get **very good** opportunities to enrich their studies.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is committed to ensuring equal opportunity and social inclusion for all students.
- The wide-ranging programme of 'out of school hours learning' motivates and often inspires the students.
- The flexible curriculum in Years 10 and 11 increases opportunities and meets the needs of all students.
- There are weaknesses in the curriculum areas of science, design technology and geography in Years 7 to 9 and in the provision for cross curricular ICT in Years 7 to 11.

Commentary

15. The curriculum for Years 7 to 9 gives all students an appropriate range of experiences with the full range of National Curriculum subjects on offer. The school has been unable to employ specialists in drama and religious education. Statutory requirements in religious education are met in Years 7 to 11 through good teaching by humanities staff. The curriculum for students for whom English is an additional language is good.
16. The curriculum provided for students in Years 10 and 11 is good. All students follow full GCSE courses in English, mathematics, science and religious education, a GCSE short course in citizenship plus five optional subjects. Good additional opportunities for students with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are provided through a basic skills course in addition to the full curriculum. The sports leadership award has been offered for the first time this year. In addition to GCSE courses, all students also have the opportunity to gain accreditation at GNVQ level through attendance at the local college. Only one teacher of ICT is employed by the school. To ensure all students have discrete lessons in ICT Year 11 students attend the City Learning Centre at various intervals throughout the year. These lessons are taught by staff employed at the centre. On reaching Year 11, if the school believes that an individual student or small group of students would benefit from a different curriculum arrangement, individual time-tables are negotiated. This may include a work placement element and a reduction in the number of courses studied to GCSE level.
17. Bow School sets a high priority on out of school hours learning. It uses its place at the heart of London to put together a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Poets, writers and artists come to school. In music, students perform at major venues and festivals. They choose from a huge variety of sports. Language clubs give them access to GCSE in Bengali, French, Spanish and Turkish. There is a computer club and a 'make it' club for design and technology.

Students win food hygiene certificates at the nearby Billingsgate Fish Market. Every year group gets a rich, attractive programme of extra-curricular activities.

18. Resources are satisfactory for most subjects, but they are weak in science, design and technology, and ICT. As a result learning opportunities for all students are limited which impacts negatively on standards.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides **good care** for students. It values students' views and responds to them well. Guidance and support are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides very good personal support and advice.
- The school seeks students' opinions and takes notice of what they say.
- It gives them good help when they settle into school, and guides them very well to work or further study when they leave.
- It provides good care for students' health, safety and well-being.

Commentary

19. A key element in the headteacher's very good leadership is that she values students as individuals. Bow staff know students well. A parent at the pre-inspection meeting said 'I don't think a student's own mum could care more than the teachers do'. Students are very confident there is someone at school they can talk to. The support for pupils is reflected in the systems that have been put into place to support all of them. For example, the school is rapidly building the opportunities for gifted and talented students. There is good support for students with special educational needs, and high quality support for students with English as an additional language, which enables them to take a full part in learning. The academic mentoring programme in place for students in Year 11 is very good and does much to raise their self esteem. This programme has contributed significantly to the recent rise in GCSE results.
20. The school uses questionnaires effectively to determine students' opinions. The school council gives students opportunities to express their views and the school clearly takes note of these. For example, the breakfast club is a suggestion from the student council. It welcomes about 30 students every morning. They get a free breakfast, do homework and read about the wider world in the daily papers.
21. There are good arrangements for students joining Bow from primary schools. They meet teachers from Bow while still in Year 6 and Year 10 sports leaders instruct primary students in tag rugby. Newly arrived Year 7 students have two days getting to know Bow. The school has good arrangements to welcome students who join after the start of Year 7. It gives very good guidance to help students build up their skills and ambitions, ready to move on to work or further study. It supports them very well in their choice of career. In addition to work experience, the school provides opportunities for students to sample academic life at university.
22. There have been improvements in care for students' health, safety and well being since the previous inspection when health and safety arrangements were found to be unsatisfactory. The school now has a policy and carries out regular risk assessments. It stores hazardous chemicals correctly. The premises manager checks the site day by day. He corrects minor issues as they arise. The special educational needs co-ordinator is the designated teacher for child protection. She updates her training regularly, and ensures that staff know the requirements.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Good and improved links with parents and other schools and **very good links** with the community greatly benefit students' learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good links with the communities enhance students' learning across a very broad range of subjects.
- The school has greatly extended its links with parents in the very recent past.
- Individual education plans written for students with special educational needs are not routinely shared with parents
- Good links with local schools cater more accurately for a variety of students' needs and ambitions.

Commentary

23. The school has developed its partnerships with the community consistently and imaginatively. These links provide very good, wide-ranging support to benefit students' learning and personal development. For example, staff from two City banks come in at lunchtime as students' reading and number partners and a local businessman funds an annual scheme to reward students who contribute outstandingly to the life of the school. The Bow community and Neighbourhood Renewal play their part. The community policeman comes to school regularly and holds a 'surgery' each week. He helps students understand their responsibility as members of the wider community. Students build up their self-confidence and maturity by working with London-wide institutions such as the National Gallery and the Thames Festival.
24. The school's initiatives in improving its links with parents are working positively. Many families, local and from overseas, do not have happy memories of their life at schools. They lack confidence in approaching the school. The number responding to the inspection questionnaires is lower than usual. However, response has more than doubled in the two years since the previous inspection. There have been some spectacular changes in parents' views. For example, 88 per cent now say that teaching is good, compared with 38 per cent two years ago, Satisfaction with homework has risen from 32 per cent to 87 per cent. Parents are more ready to become involved with their children's learning. Over 100 students and parents came into school for the launch of its new literacy strategy. Two years ago, the previous report found that much parental documentation was in draft form or unsatisfactory. Most parents now say they get good information about students' progress in the annual reports and the meetings with the class teacher. The prospectus and the governors' annual report are clear and well presented and parents get newsletters every two weeks.
25. Parents are appropriately involved in the statutory annual reviews of students with statements of special educational need. The individual education plans drawn up following the meeting are not shared with parents. This is contrary to the good practice contained within the special educational needs code of practice as parents do not have the opportunity to be fully involved in supporting the educational development of their child.
26. Good links with other local schools enhance the quality of students' learning. The local primary schools, which provide the majority of Bow's students, send teacher assessments in April. They supply the national test results in English, mathematics and science at the end of the summer term. Teachers at Bow have many formal and informal links with teachers at these schools. One local college offers GCSE courses in media, leisure and tourism and business studies. Bow's students take vocational courses, particularly in engineering and crafts, at another college. Courses in construction skills at a building firm lead directly into apprenticeships.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the leadership and management of the school are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is **very good** and that of her key staff is **good**. The effectiveness of management is **satisfactory**. Governance of the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher provides very good leadership and is strongly supported by the leadership team.
 - The governing body has successfully addressed the financial problems it had.
 - Leadership and management in science are unsatisfactory.
 - The governors know the school well and are well led in supporting its work.
27. The headteacher and other key staff have high aspirations, a sense of purpose and a clarity of vision for the development of the school. The headteacher is a very good leader who, over the last three years, has clearly identified and successfully tackled, areas where the school needed improvement. As a result, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and the school now provides satisfactory value for money. She has effectively implemented a wide range of systems that have positively impacted on all areas of the school. As a result of her constituent focus on improvement and detailed planning, behaviour is now satisfactory and attendance is above the national average. Her commitment to staff support and development has successfully addressed leadership and management issues within subject areas. Leadership and management are now good except in science where the school is taking action to address this. Staff at all levels have been provided with the opportunity to be involved fully in decision making and in setting priorities. The headteacher has encouraged staff to take responsibility and provided them with effective support. Staff appreciate this approach and morale in the school is high. Building work in relation to improving accommodation in design and technology and ICT is nearing completion and this will help address some of the weaknesses identified in the curriculum. Assessment practices and procedures require further improvement. Standards at the end of Year 9 and 11 are improving but remain unsatisfactory. All of the improvements at Bow school that have taken place since the appointment of the current headteacher have been achieved against a background of financial constraints and difficulties in recruiting staff that are fully committed to and have the capacity to improve standards at Bow School.
28. The governing body plays a central role in shaping the vision and direction of the school and fully shares the headteacher's vision. The governing body, led by an experienced and knowledgeable chairman, challenges and supports the headteacher and the leadership group effectively. Governors are fully involved at a strategic level in the formation of policy and are actively involved in identifying priorities for the development of the school. Bow was about £250,000 in deficit when the present headteacher joined the school. The deficit was almost £70,000 in April 2002. Greatly improved financial monitoring and procedures enabled the school to eliminate the deficit during the past year. The school seeks and gets extra grant income from various sources. With careful, consistent adherence to 'best value' Bow achieved a significant carry forward for the present year.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,578,426	Balance from previous year	-69,465
Total expenditure	2,337,808	Balance carried forward to the next	171,153
Expenditure per pupil	4,321.27		

Additional specified features

What is the effectiveness of assessment of students with special educational needs?

Assessment of students with special educational needs is currently **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The link between special educational needs information and how this is used to raise achievement is not yet established.
 - Assessment of students on entry is good, however, follow up assessments are yet to make a positive impact on raising achievement.
 - There are inconsistencies in using data and support staff effectively across the school.
 - There is no system in place to ensure that the information made available is being used to support learning.
29. The good system for circulating information on students with special educational needs to subject teachers is relatively new. All teachers are now given brief notes on the students in their class, and individual education plans where appropriate. There is inconsistent practice in how subject teachers use this information to set targets and appropriate work for students. Students with special educational needs make progress in line with students of the same age as a result of the high quality support they receive in class from subject teachers and learning support assistants.
30. The quality and quantity of information on students with special educational needs made available to staff is good. Re-assessment is beginning to take place during the year, enabling progress to be monitored. The special educational needs register is a useful tool for teachers to gain a quick overview of the students in their class. Learning support assistants have access to a range of materials for supporting students in class. There are sufficient special educational needs staff to provide high quality support to students.
31. The special educational needs co-ordinator collates and circulates information efficiently. The lack of a whole school approach to using data to inform planning at an individual level limits the impact this information has on learning. There is no whole school policy on the effective use of support staff. This results in inconsistencies in practice between individual support staff and subject teachers and lack of clarity over where the responsibility lies for reviewing progress and setting targets for students with special educational needs.
32. There is no clear view as yet of how the new way of working will impact on achievement of students with special educational needs. The co-ordinator does not monitor how subject areas use the information to inform planning on a group and individual level.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Overall, provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- As a result of new leadership improvements are being rapidly made.
- Low levels of literacy in Years 7 to 9 have a negative impact on standards at the end of Years 9 and 11.
- There is a significant proportion of good and very good teaching.
- There are some imaginative and successful initiatives focused on raising standards of literacy for students for whom English is an additional language in their homes.
- Assessment is not effective in letting students know how well they are achieving and how to improve.

Commentary

33. This is a department that is beginning to come to grips with the difficulties created by the many staffing changes experienced recently with the consequent disruption in students' learning. The head of department, in the short time she has been in post has done much to support innovation and some of the changes needed to address the students' low levels of literacy. She has begun to create a clear sense of common purpose in the department and has improved considerably the documentation needed to support the work of the teachers. Her decision to encourage increased entry to GCSE examinations has raised students' expectations and led to the first clear signs of rising standards, which are currently unsatisfactory.
34. Though teaching is satisfactory overall, there is much that is good and very good. As a result students' achievement is satisfactory. The best teaching is in Year 11, where some innovative and imaginative lessons are very successful in raising levels of literacy, particularly for students for whom English is an additional language in the home. The range of strategies used in teaching these very good lessons is excellent. In one lesson, for instance, the teacher fired the students with enthusiasm for the analysis of demanding texts by providing a sequence of progressively challenging activities that built rapidly on their earlier knowledge. This results from returning regularly to basic skills of word recognition. What was most striking was the skill with which the teacher taught the students to become learners and to feel at ease with their work. These students are fired with the will to succeed and settle immediately to their tasks.
35. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, chiefly in improving the quality of teaching and implementing strategies to address the students' low levels of literacy. Standards are rising but remain unsatisfactory at the end of Years 9 and 11.
36. Management of the department is satisfactory and there has been much good work in directing the teachers' towards raising standards of attainment. The monitoring of teaching, however, is not refined enough to address the weaknesses identified in lessons. Group work, for instance, is often unstructured and feedback to students unclear. Though there is a good level of information gathered on students' attainment it is not used well enough to support learning.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

37. Students achievement in all subjects throughout the school is persistently hampered by their low levels of literacy. Many come to the school with standards of literacy two to three years behind their peers nationally. The school has made some strides forward addressing this but progress has been slow. A commercial programme, the Ruth Miskin programme, is very effective in raising standards of literacy for students entering the school in Year 7 with low literacy levels. However, there is not enough common understanding across the school about the nature of the problem or about how to address it. There are, for instance considerable inconsistencies in the way teachers mark students writing in different subjects and within subjects. There is not enough emphasis in all subjects on extended writing and on nurturing students' capacity to think independently.

Modern Foreign Languages

Overall, provision in modern foreign languages is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management, which have ensured very good improvement since the previous inspection.
- Standards are below average by the end of Years 9 and 11.
- Satisfactory progress made by all students from the time they join the school to the end of Year 9.
- Teaching, which is always satisfactory and sometimes good or very good.

Commentary

38. Two teachers jointly lead and manage this subject area. Their leadership style is energetic and effective. They have focused on the school's priority of improving teaching and learning and have a clear vision for raising standards in French. This is supported by, good management of curricular planning, resources and assessment procedures. Through their leadership since September 2002, the department is now well placed to raise the profile of modern languages in the school by raising standards and achievement.
39. Standards by the end of Year 11 have risen since the previous inspection but remain below the national average. The unconfirmed 2003 results indicate that 29 of the 31 students who took GCSE in French achieved a grade between A* and G. Four gained an A* to C grade. These results reflect an improving trend on previous years. Standards at the end of Year 9 remain below the national average.
40. When students join the school in Year 7 their experience of French is limited. Teachers' work hard to make learning enjoyable and students make rapid progress in Year 7. As a result of this achievement by the end of Year 9 is satisfactory. Most students enjoy learning French but a few younger students show immature behaviour on occasions and this slows learning for all. Students following the GCSE course in French made good progress as a result of good teaching, which promotes positive attitudes to learning in all students.
41. The teaching of French is always satisfactory and sometimes good and very good. Teachers have good knowledge of the language and use a variety of strategies to motivate students. They are confident in their ability to build on the information provided in the text-books, which provides students with greater learning opportunities.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use made of the three-part lesson structure.
- Work does not always meet the needs of all students.
- Good starter activities motivate students and improve learning.
- Assessment does not help students to improve their work.
- Inconsistencies in the approach to behaviour management in lessons.

Commentary

42. National tests at the end of Year 6 show that pupils' standards in mathematics are well below the national average. By the end of Year 9 standards remain well below those expected nationally. There is a clear focus by teachers on dividing all lessons into three discrete learning sections. This has resulted in the number of students attaining a Level 6 and above in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 doubling in the last two years. Standards in mathematics at the end of Year 11 remain below the national average. The percentage of boys achieving a grade within the A* to C range in 2002 was 35 per cent against a national figure of 50 per cent. The 2003 GCSE results, which are yet to be confirmed, indicate a similar trend. All students who sat a GCSE in statistics in 2002 achieved a grade C or above.
43. Achievement overall in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory. Progress is restricted because work does not provide sufficient challenge for the full range of abilities in every class. Achievement in Years 10 to 11 is satisfactory overall and good for higher ability students who benefit from the setting arrangements.
44. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Where it is good, teachers use frequent changes of activity and set clear time frames for the activities. Starter activities are well planned and delivered enthusiastically and this ensures that student learning in mathematics is regularly consolidated. However, there are missed opportunities to extend learning and probe students on their understanding of essential concepts. Students know the mathematical levels they are working at, but marking and oral feedback does not enable them to identify what they have to do to improve. The use and sharing of targets with students is inconsistent.
45. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. The very recently appointed head of department has introduced a number of important changes but it is too early to judge their effectiveness. Too many instances of weak behaviour management in lessons are currently prohibiting a rise in standards.
46. The previous inspection identified the use of ICT and the structure of lessons as areas for improvement. Good progress has been made in each of these. The achievement and attainment of students' remains amongst the highest in the school.

Mathematics across the Curriculum

47. Standards in numeracy are satisfactory in Years 7 to 11. Numeracy training has been provided for all staff. As a result of rapid staff turnover and the schools needs to focus on different priorities no formal policy or opportunities to share best practice exists. Liaison exists with the ICT department regarding the use of spreadsheets and graphs. There are some good examples of higher ability students using numeracy skills effectively to improve their science coursework. Poor numeracy skills are inhibiting progress in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Overall, provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Subject leadership and management are unsatisfactory with existing policies being implemented incoherently and inconsistently.
- The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory resulting in most students not achieving as well as they should.
- GCSE results at the end of Year 11 are not improving as fast as they should.
- Poor resource levels result in ICT not being used effectively to support students' learning.
- Teachers' marking is poor and there are no systems for checking the progress students are making.

Commentary

48. Despite significant and well-targeted support from both internal and external sources, subject leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Leadership at departmental level has not made expectations of teaching and learning clear. Existing policies are incoherent and implementation is inconsistent. Monitoring and evaluation of work in the classroom are unplanned and ineffective. Consequently, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory resulting in most students not achieving as well as they should. Teaching and learning approaches introduced as part of a national strategy to raise standards in Years 7 to 9 are not being implemented well enough or consistently enough across the subject. However, whilst starter activities enable most students to settle at the beginning of lessons, they are not linked clearly enough to the rest of the lesson to enable students to gain maximum benefit. Plenary sessions are appropriately identified in teachers' planning and are sometimes used satisfactorily to check students' recall of facts. In many lessons, however, they are either too rushed or not used well enough to check and consolidate students' understanding of key ideas. Teachers use questions satisfactorily to consolidate aspects of students' factual knowledge but this is too often at the expense of questions that encourage students to predict, justify and explain their thinking. Consequently students are not developing their understanding of scientific ideas or investigative skills as fast as they should. The range of teaching strategies used is narrow with an over-reliance on the use of note-taking. Poor resource levels result in ICT not being used effectively to support students' learning. Teachers use praise consistently and spend a lot of time encouraging students to give of their best. Consequently, many students try hard and behaviour is satisfactory. A significant minority of students are less well motivated and this results in teachers spending too much time trying to manage inappropriate behaviour. In these lessons students' make insufficient progress in their learning.
49. When students join the school in Year 7 their standards of attainment in science are well below national expectations. At the end of Year 9 standards remain well below national expectations and the performance of similar schools despite recent improvements in the results of Year 9 national tests. Achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9. A small minority of higher attaining students has a sound grasp of elements of investigative work and can recall scientific facts accurately. Most students struggle to recall factual information accurately and their understanding of scientific concepts is not developing well enough. They have difficulty in talking about their ideas and explaining their thinking clearly. Too much written work is incomplete and poorly presented with key scientific words misspelled.
50. In 2002 GCSE results in science were well below national averages in terms of the proportion of students obtaining A*-C grades. Approximately one quarter of the students entered did not achieve a GCSE grade, which was well above national figures. On average, students' performance in GCSE science was well below their performance in other subjects. Unvalidated GCSE results for 2003 show no significant improvement in the proportion of higher grades obtained although the percentage of students obtaining a GCSE grade has improved. On current inspection evidence achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11.

Whilst small minorities of higher attaining students are making satisfactory progress the majority of students are not progressing as well as they should. Most higher attaining students produce good quality GCSE coursework. The majority of students have difficulty in making predictions based on scientific knowledge and using mathematical skills to present and analyse experimental results. Most students have difficulty in recalling scientific information accurately, applying their knowledge to new contexts and explaining their thinking clearly. As in Years 7 to 9, too much written work is incomplete and poorly presented with key scientific words misspelled.

51. Assessment is unsatisfactory overall because the systems that have been put in place do not enable the progress students make to be monitored. Test and examination results are analysed to a satisfactory standard and targets set for students relate appropriately to their levels of prior attainment. Data is used appropriately to identify groups of students to receive additional support lessons held outside the normal school day. Students are aware of the National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades they are seeking to achieve. They are unclear, however, about what steps they need to take to meet their targets. Assessment data is not used well enough to inform teachers' lesson planning with the result that many tasks are not varied sufficiently to meet the needs of all students. Insufficient feedback is given to students on how they can improve. The spelling of key scientific words is often inaccurate and not corrected clearly enough through teachers' marking.
52. Since the last inspection teaching, leadership and management have deteriorated.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good management of the ICT department.
- Good practice in assessment in place.
- Good out of school hours opportunities for using ICT.
- A lack of monitoring of the use made of ICT in other areas of curriculum has placed limits on learning in lessons in for students in design and technology and science.

Commentary

53. Good management of the department has resulted in the improved teaching of ICT since the last inspection. The achievement of students is now satisfactory as a result of the good range of subject expertise of both members of staff. Good systems are in place to track the progress made by students. Individual targets are set in order to raise achievement in the subject and to improve skills to support learning through ICT in other subjects.
54. The percentage of boys attaining a grade within the A*-C range at GCSE in 2002 was 59.4 per cent, which is above the national average. Unvalidated data for 2003 indicates an improvement in this ratio. Teaching is good overall. Teachers have good subject knowledge, the majority of lessons are very well prepared and relationships in the classroom are good. As a result all students demonstrate good attitudes to learning.
55. Since the last inspection there has been a complete change of staff followed by a period of instability until current management arrangements were put in place. Until this academic year timetabled lessons for all students in Years 7 to 9 has been unsatisfactory. This has resulted in attainment by the end of Year 9 remaining below national expectations. All students in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10 now have weekly timetabled ICT lessons in school. Current Year 11 students attend the City Learning Centre for their ICT lessons, which are spread out at regular intervals throughout the years. Over the last 12 months resources for the subject have been improved and this has extended the range of learning opportunities for all students.

Information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum

56. Since the last inspection there has been improved provision and use of ICT in other subjects. During the inspection very effective use was observed to support learning in history and mathematics. In a Year 7 history lesson students used laptops to investigate bias in historical accounts. Good use of the interactive white board in the recently established mathematics laboratory enabled all students to be involved in solving quadratic equations with their suggested answers modeled on screen. Staff provide good access for students to use computers and laptops before school, at lunchtimes and after school. This facility is used regularly by students in Years 10 and 11 to produce and improve their GCSE coursework.
57. A lack of resources, data logging and sensing equipment in science and computer aided design software in design and technology, result in difficulties in teaching specific aspects of the curriculum. Effective systems to monitor the use and impact of teaching and learning in ICT across the curriculum have yet to be developed.

HUMANITIES

The subjects of geography, history and religious education are led and managed by a head of humanities. A number of staffing issues resulted in a period of instability in this curriculum area from the time of the last inspection until the current post holder was appointed in September 2003. The inspectors involved in inspecting these subject areas judge **leadership and management to be very good**.

Geography

Overall, provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership provides a clear direction to the subject.
- Standards in Years 7 to 9 are unsatisfactory as a result of unsatisfactory teaching.
- Very good teaching in Years 10 and 11 results in a high degree of student motivation and good achievement.
- The scheme of work in Years 7, 8 and 9 does not cover all areas of the National Curriculum.
- Assessment is not developed in Years 7, 8 and 9.

Commentary

58. The current head of humanities has already determined the areas in which improvement is needed. Resources for use by students and staff have been extended and the development plan specifies the radical action to be taken to raise standards. These include providing a scheme of work for Years 7 to 9 that covers the National Curriculum and challenges students in their learning, both in classroom and in their homework.
59. The numbers of students who sat the GCSE examinations in 2002 and 2003 was too small to be statistically significant, but the overall results were very low.
60. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory. The amount of work covered in each lesson is minimal, and students do not have a clear understanding of basic geographical concepts, such as the reason for studying Italy as an example of disparate economic regions. Standards are very low by the end of Year 9. Achievement is very low and behaviour in lessons is unsatisfactory overall.
61. In Years 10 and 11 enthusiastic teaching leads to a high level of interest by students. Standards in work seen are satisfactory, and students achieve well to gain those standards. Fieldwork is well planned to aid students' learning and to add to their geographical

experiences. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to the progress of students in lessons with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.

62. In Years 7 to 9, students are not assessed against National Curriculum levels. At present they are unaware of the progress they are making. Systems in this area have been introduced to enable students to monitor improvements in their learning.

History

Overall, provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students develop historical skills well despite very low levels of literacy on entry.
- Very good leadership and management.
- GCSE results are still well below national averages.
- There are examples of very good and excellent teaching.
- There are very good relationships within classrooms.
- Assessment techniques are not yet fully developed.

Commentary

63. GCSE results have been well below the national averages for the last three years. In lessons seen and work analysed during the inspection, standards are below national expectations at the end of Year 9 and Year 11. Major contributory factors to these judgments are the very low levels of literacy and subject knowledge exhibited by most students on entry to the school in Year 7. From this low base as a result of the good teaching they currently receive, students quickly develop historical skills, for example, how a variety of historical sources can be used to help recreate the past. Higher attaining students show a sound knowledge of historical techniques demonstrated by Year 9 students through their extended pieces of writing on the Industrial Revolution. Lower attaining students, those with special educational needs or English as an additional language are supported in class but need access to a wider range of materials to meet their individual needs. In Years 10 and 11, students develop a wider understanding of change over time and detailed evaluation and analysis of sources of evidence were seen by Year 10 students on the Treaty of Versailles.
64. The department is very well led and managed within the humanities framework. Effective strategies are now in place to improve literacy skills. A comprehensive development plan has been produced which appropriately identifies the areas of improvement. ICT is now making a significant impact on the work of the department, but students would benefit from more opportunities to visit places of historical interest.
65. The quality of teaching is good overall with examples of very good and excellent practice. The previous report raised concerns about lack of challenge provided for students and poor levels of concentration. This is no longer the case. Teachers use a wide array of techniques to stimulate learning and plan well to include all students in classroom activities. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and clear aims and objectives are set. Ample time is also allowed at the end of lessons for students to reflect on their achievements. As a result, very good relationships are fostered in the classroom and students have very positive attitudes towards their learning. They respond well to high expectations and achieve well.
66. Procedures and systems for assessing the progress students are making are currently unsatisfactory, however, they are new and at an early stage. The department needs to focus on devising and implementing a system of tracking student progress so that targets for improvement can be set.

Religious Education

Overall, provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students develop a good knowledge of Christianity and other world religions from Year 7 onwards.
- The department lacks sufficient specialist teaching.
- The subject makes a very strong contribution to personal development and multi-faith understanding.
- Assessment techniques are not yet fully developed.
- Teachers use a wide array of techniques to stimulate students' learning.
- Students would benefit from opportunities to visit local religious sites.

Commentary

67. Results in the recent GCSE short course examinations have been below national averages. In lessons seen and work analysed during the current inspection, standards are below those expected by the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Year 9. Students enter the school with very low levels of literacy and subject knowledge, but they soon acquire a good knowledge of Christian beliefs and customs, as well as those of other world religions, such as Islam and Judaism. This has addressed an issue arising from the previous report concerning lack of subject knowledge at this stage. In Years 10 and 11, higher attaining students achieve well and show good understanding of spiritual and moral concepts, such as Human Rights and the sanctity of life, but, overall, written work lacks depth and insight. Students with special educational needs and English as an additional language are given good support in classrooms and as a result make good progress.
68. The quality of teaching is good overall and one excellent lesson was observed during the inspection. The humanities teaching team have high expectations of all students and use their strong classroom management skills to promote good learning. Lessons are planned meticulously and there is a sense of shared purpose in classrooms that encourages all students to do their best. Teachers use a wide variety of techniques to stimulate students' interest. Students have positive attitudes towards their learning and listen to each other's views with respect. They enjoy taking part in discussions but are more reluctant to commit their ideas to paper.
69. There is no subject specialist in the humanities team at present. The current head of humanities leads and manages the subject very well, despite the lack, until recently, of adequate schemes of work or assessment procedures. The head of department has the capacity to implement a much needed assessment procedure to ensure that it is used by teachers' to aid students' learning. Classroom resources are good but students' knowledge and understanding would benefit from opportunities to visit local religious sites. The subject makes a very strong contribution to the personal development of all students, especially in the area of multicultural understanding. Overall, considerable improvements have been made in a very short space of time and the subject is well poised for further development. A key issue now is the provision of more specialist teaching to support the head of humanities so that further progress can be made in this curriculum area.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Overall provision for design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management are now very good and are resulting in a clear direction to the subject.
- The temporary accommodation and lack of resources prevents the full coverage of the National Curriculum.
- The good and very good teaching results in a high level of motivation in students.
- A small amount of unsatisfactory teaching results in lower standards from students in these groups.
- Assessment in Years 7 to 9 is not developed, therefore students do not know how to improve.

Commentary

70. The recently appointed acting head of department has a clear recognition of areas that need development. This has already resulted in an improvement in the quality of teaching. The subject is taught in temporary demountable classrooms, and the planned refurbishment has come to a halt. This creates difficulties in ensuring the full coverage of the National Curriculum. A lack of resources prevents students' full experience in the subject, for example, the lack of computer aided design and manufacture equipment. The GCSE examination results in 2002 were well below the national average. Unconfirmed results for 2003 indicates an improving picture but results standards remain well below.
71. In lessons observed all students in all years were working well, but appear to have covered little subject content previous to this academic year. This results in an uneven spread of attainment. Standards of work seen were below national expectations but this represents good achievement for these students. Standards of students currently in Year 9 are well below those expected, which represents satisfactory achievement. Low standards are apparent in their making skills, which are poor. In Year 11, for example, students had to be taught the design process, which should have been integral to all projects from Year 7, and should have needed only a brief reminder.
72. Good and very good teaching ensures that skills are thoroughly taught, but an element of unsatisfactory teaching, due to unsatisfactory classroom management, results in lower standards, poor motivation and unsatisfactory behaviour from those students. Opportunities for teachers to assess the work completed by students in Years 7 to 9 have not been built into schemes of work. As a result students do not know how to improve their work and this is contributing to low standards. Teaching assistants are used very well in the classroom and make a positive contribution to the learning of students with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and Design

Overall provision in art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers are well informed and possess good subject knowledge.
- Little evidence of effective use of modern technology, photography and ICT.
- Teachers' line of questioning provokes interesting responses from students.
- Most students respond positively to the set tasks.
- Class sizes are too large for the available studio space.

Commentary

73. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good features. Teachers are well informed and consequently they can offer sound advice and provide good support for students. Their line of questioning in lessons is good and this provokes interesting responses from students. Management of time and resources is satisfactory, but much greater use could be made of slide projectors, television, video recorders, CD ROMs and DVD's to improve introductions to lessons and stimulate learning. On too many occasions, teachers tolerated a level of conversation that interfered with concentration and impacted on learning and the standard of students' work.
74. Students' attainment on entry to Year 7 is below national expectations. By the end of Year 9 attainment is broadly in line with national expectations and a significant minority of students are working above. In the 2002 GCSE art and design examination the number of students to achieve the highest grades was well above the national average. Attainment in art and design was much higher than in all of the other examinations they took that year and well above the national average. Early analysis of the 2003 results indicates there is a slight decline in the number of students achieving the highest grades.
75. Year 7 students enter the school with weak drawing and painting skills, but through a series of well designed projects they make good progress during their first year. In Year 8, most students work with reasonable concentration to acquire knowledge and develop new skills in the use of various media and materials. The work produced by Year 9 students is in line with national expectations, but significant minorities are working above. Students with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. Achievement from the start of Year 7 to the end of Year 9 is good.
76. Students in Years 10 and 11 enjoy the subject and the majority display a positive attitude to the tasks that are set by their teachers. There is ample evidence in the visual diaries that they have the capacity to carry out independent research and produce drawn and painted studies of a standard that is well above national expectations. However, there is little evidence of any use of modern technology in the production of images. Students with special educational needs make good progress. Achievement from the end of Year 9 to the end of Year 11 is good.
77. At present there are issues surrounding leadership and management as the previous head of department left in August 2003 and an appointment has yet to be made. However, good systems and structures for teachers have been put in place so that they can follow easily the scheme of work and ensure that students' learning is effective. In addition the structures in place to ensure students work is assessed, recorded and tracked are of good quality and are being used to provide students with frequent detailed feedback on how well they are doing and what they should do to improve. There is a department development plan in which the previous head of department outlined her strategy for future development of the department.
78. Accommodation is satisfactory. There are two reasonably large studios and one smaller room but space can be very restricted when there are groups of more than 20 students. This does have an impact on the scale of objects that that can be produced. Resources are limited and students are obliged to work mainly with a narrow range of drawing, painting and craft materials. There are few opportunities for students to produce images using modern technology, photography or computers, digital cameras, scanners and printers in a design context. With greater access to these resources more students would have the opportunity of achieving higher standards at the end of Years 9 and 11.

Music

Overall, provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good improvement since the last inspection
- Lack of monitoring of learning through the effective use of assessment.
- Insufficient monitoring of the work of the department
- The wide range of extra curricular opportunities.

Commentary

79. Good progress has been made in addressing the issues raised in the previous inspection report. Schemes of work have been revised and now present a more practical approach to learning music. Teaching and learning is now satisfactory overall with good teaching in Years 10 and 11. Peripatetic teaching observed in Year 10 was also good. Arrangements to formally monitor the work of peripatetic staff are not in place. Teachers have good knowledge and skills and they use a range of resources well to stimulate and maintain the interest of all students. Most students make progress in lessons as a result of brisk pace and high expectations set by the teacher. There is a satisfactory range of instruments and appropriate ICT equipment available to support performing and composing.
80. When students join the school in Year 7 standards of attainment are well below average. As a result of the teaching they receive they make good progress and, by the end of Year 9, achievement is broadly in line with national expectations. GCSE results for 2002 were in line with national averages. Unconfirmed results for 2003 indicate a similar standard. Students with special educational needs and English as an additional language make progress in line with their peers.
81. Whilst the teacher assesses students' progress at certain points in the year, monitoring of learning through formal assessments is not fully recorded and not embedded in the schemes of work. The result is that students are not made aware of their achievements or how to make improvements. There are no historic recordings of class and individual performances, especially during Years 7, 8 and 9, so students cannot evaluate how they have improved over time. Criteria for success and how to improve are not consistently shared with them. During lessons, the learning of students is not checked frequently enough. As a result, tasks are not always broken down sufficiently to meet individual needs. Peripatetic staff do not at present contribute to reporting on students' progress.
82. All students are given the opportunity to develop their musical talents through the wide range of additional learning opportunities available. These include working with the Guildhall, London Philharmonic Orchestra and local community projects. The music department is open at lunchtime to any student who wishes to develop their musical skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Assessment is unsatisfactory. It does not reflect students' achievements within the framework of the National Curriculum, nor does it help them to achieve higher levels.
- The high quality of the compulsory curriculum for Years 10 and 11 which caters well for different students' needs and learning styles.
- Leadership is a strength of the department.
- The examination option offered in Year 10 does not meet students' needs and learning styles.

Commentary

83. Current teacher assessment procedures at the end of Year 9 do not reflect standards that incorporate National Curriculum levels of attainment. As a result they indicate standards to be well below national expectations. From evidence seen during the inspection standards in Year 9 are in line with national expectations. By the end of Year 11 standards seen are in line with the national average. GCSE results for 2002 were well below the national average. The unconfirmed 2003 results reflect a similar picture. By the end of Year 9 students make satisfactory progress and by the end of Year 11 their progress is good. Students with special educational needs make good progress as a direct result of the support given to them by teachers within lessons.
84. Across the age groups students' attitudes towards lessons are satisfactory and sometimes good or very good. In the few lessons where attitudes are unsatisfactory, students lack confidence as learners. They find it difficult to take on the challenge of new roles or to deal with the inevitable mistakes and uncertainties that arise from trying out new things.
85. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory and sometimes very good. At its best, teaching is consistently challenging and activities and demands are well matched to students' needs. In a very good Year 9 basketball lesson, an imaginative approach to teaching produced a high level of interest and good progress from all students. Through using different hand signals during a practice, the teacher triggered alternate attacking and defensive court movement from the teams. Students responded immediately, without comment. They switched roles fluently, which they were then able to apply successfully in the game. Across Years 10 and 11, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are interesting and in most cases the level of challenge is realistic. Teachers relate very well to students and in the best lessons, difficult skills are taught effectively and in an inspiring way.
86. The core physical education curriculum in Years 10 and 11 includes a good range of activities. Students have opportunities to experience different roles, such as organiser and coach through the junior schools' leadership course. They can select options from a range of individual and team activities, both on and off site. The GCSE physical education course is currently under consideration as the content and nature of the syllabus does not cater for students' differing learning needs. This is the main contributing factor to the low GCSE results in recent years.
87. Leadership of the physical education department is good. The head of department has been in post since September 2003. He has a clear vision for the department and the drive to see it through. He has a good understanding of the existing strengths and weaknesses and this has informed the content of the development plan. He is currently constructing a new assessment system and this is well advanced in its planning. Effective delegation of staff responsibilities will be in place next year, through proposed plans for the recruitment of another full time physical education specialist teacher. Management of the department is satisfactory. The development plan reflects the priorities of the school and improvements in aspects such as the schemes of work, which are in the process of being implemented. There is strong support from senior management and this contributes significantly to the very good extra-curricular programme through the deployment of a network of coaches and instructors.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The personal, social and health education and careers guidance programme is provided through discrete lessons in conjunction with citizenship

Citizenship

Overall, provision for citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of the subject are good.
- The curriculum is comprehensive, well documented and incorporates all strands of the programme of study recommended through the National Curriculum.
- Assessment in the subject is not yet linked to the National Curriculum, nor is marking directed consistently to support students' progress.
- An audit of where through other curriculum areas students are given the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills in citizenship has yet to take place.

Commentary

88. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There is a clear drive towards the establishment of citizenship as a discrete subject, both through taught lessons and the school's involvement in schemes such as Creative Partnerships, Healthy Schools and the planned School Service Award. Such projects promote important aspects of the subject such as equality of opportunity, the responsibilities that underpin society and the skills of participation and responsible action. There is still progress to be made in linking citizenship across other subject areas and this will be improved through the establishment of a mapping system. The aims of citizenship are allied closely to the school's main policies and the regular review bulletins provide clear information for staff about curriculum issues and future developments. The coordinator has a clear grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject as it stands and is addressing these through the development plan and the deployment of a team of teaching staff.
89. Procedures for assessing student progress are not yet linked to National Curriculum levels. The result is that students are unaware of their progress and targets for improvement are not recorded. Teachers are not consistent in the way in which they mark the work produced by students with the result that not all students are clear as to what they need to do to raise the standards of their work.
90. The teaching of citizenship is provided through discrete lessons in conjunction with personal, social and health education and careers guidance. Teaching and learning across the year groups is satisfactory with examples of good and excellent. Where seen, paired teaching strongly supports learning. In a good Year 9 lesson, students' interest was engaged and sustained as a direct result of effective differentiation and well-chosen teaching methods. As well as making good progress with the tasks based on choosing a career, students were encouraged to contribute their own ideas to group discussion and consider, equally, other people's experiences and viewpoints. Where teaching is poor, little or no account is taken of what students already know and staff have an incomplete understanding of how to guide students in discussion towards drawing out issues that relate to the different areas of the citizenship curriculum. The standards seen across all age groups are satisfactory and all students make satisfactory progress.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Students' achievement	4
Students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	3
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well students learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets students needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Students' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for students	4
How well the school seeks and acts on students' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).