

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **RAYNES PARK HIGH SCHOOL**

London

LEA area: Merton

Unique reference number: 102674

Headteacher: Mr Ian Newman

Lead inspector: Mrs Helen Hutchings

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> November 2004

Inspection number: 271082

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive  
School category: Community  
Age range of pupils: 11-16  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 1103

School address: Bushey Road  
London  
Postcode: SW20 0JL

Telephone number: 020 8946 4112  
Fax number: 020 8947 0224

Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr Colin Waddon

Date of previous inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Raynes Park High School is an average-sized comprehensive school in Merton, London, with 1103 pupils on roll. There are significantly more boys than girls. The school's designation as an upper school within a three-tier system was changed in 2002 and it now admits pupils into Year 7. The changed provision within the borough meant a planned overall increase in the school roll of about 40 per cent. Pupils join the school from over 30 primary schools, but predominantly come from the locality. Their attainment on entry is below national averages. The school has a diverse intake reflecting the ethnic and socio-economic profile of the area. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average. A significant proportion of pupils come from areas where overall socio-economic circumstances are generally below average. About a third of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds, with the main representative groups being Black African, Black Caribbean and Mixed White and Black. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is high, although there are only a few pupils at the early stages of speaking English. The proportion of pupils who are refugees or asylum seekers is higher than nationally. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above average and the proportion with statutory statements is well above the national average. Pupils' needs are social, emotional and behavioural, moderate learning with dyslexia, speech and communication, and hearing impairment or physical impairment. As part of the school's reorganisation, the local education authority introduced an Access Centre providing for the needs of pupils on the autistic spectrum.

The school is part of a Private Finance Initiative to provide and manage buildings and facilities. The school gained Specialist Technology College status in 2002 and has also received a number of awards, including the Football Association Chartermark earlier this year and the Investor in People and Sportsmark re-awards in 2003.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
7541	Helen Hutchings	Lead inspector	
19653	Elizabeth Dickson	Lay inspector	
7118	David Gosling	Team inspector	English English as an additional language
2496	Tony O'Sullivan	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages
30814	Elizabeth Coley	Team inspector	Mathematics
4922	Michael Driver	Team inspector	Science Citizenship
32861	Gaynor Hartle	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology
4475	Keith Remnant	Team inspector	Geography
14490	Susan Jackson	Team inspector	History
23307	Neil McDonough	Team inspector	Religious education Physical education
33135	Kim Ropek	Team inspector	Art and design
33736	Gill Hillman	Team inspector	Music
3242	Michael Newman	Team inspector	Vocational education
19352	Kiran Campbell-Platt	Team inspector	Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils and gives good value for money.** Pupils make good progress because they are taught well. The headteacher and governing body lead the school well and have provided very strong direction and commitment to ensuring appropriate provision for the school's expansion and changed designation to an 11-16 school. The school has a strong commitment to supporting the local community and uses its computer and sports facilities to form strong links with local schools. The school fulfils its aims as a Technology College very well.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Pupils achieve well throughout the school and results in GCSE are above those of similar schools
- The school promotes educational inclusion very well; pupils who have special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language are given good support and achieve well
- Provision for pupils in the Access Centre for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders is very good
- Pupils are generally well-behaved and highly motivated to learn as teaching is effective
- Some teachers do not use performance information well enough when planning their lessons
- Where teaching is less effective, a minority of pupils do not work hard enough
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well and there is a good range of opportunities for extra-curricular activities to enrich pupils' educational, social and cultural experiences
- Punctuality to lessons is unsatisfactory

**Since its last inspection in January 1999, the school has improved well.** Overall, standards have risen and the quality of teaching and learning is better than at that time. Attendance has improved. Statutory curriculum requirements are met but there is not a daily act of collective worship for all pupils.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Performance in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
	D	E	D	B

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

**Achievement is good.** Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment below national averages but are currently attaining standards which are in line with national averages in most of their subjects. Results in tests in Year 9 are in line with national averages and have been rising faster than the national rate. GCSE results are below national averages but are above those of similar schools. All groups of pupils make similar levels of progress.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted satisfactorily.** Pupils' attitudes and behaviour overall are satisfactory. Most pupils arrive to school on time although punctuality to lessons is unsatisfactory. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop socially.

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION

## **The quality of education provided by the school is good.**

**Teaching is good** and enables pupils to learn well. Teachers have very strong subject knowledge and use resources very effectively to make learning interesting and relevant to pupils. The quality of assessment is satisfactory and marking generally shows pupils how to improve their work, but lesson planning does not always take enough account of assessment information to match work to the needs of individuals. The breadth of curriculum opportunities is good and there is a good range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities for enrichment. Links with parents, the community and other schools enhance the curriculum and help pupils to develop self-confidence and to raise the profile of the school in the local area. The quality of support and guidance for pupils is good and pupils are supported well by form tutors and pastoral staff. The arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. Vulnerable pupils are effectively identified and very well supported. Pupils are inducted very well into the school and they settle in quickly.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership, management and governance of the school are good.** The headteacher provides good leadership and has moved the school forward with determination. Other senior staff and departmental and pastoral heads also provide effective leadership. The governing body is very committed and hard-working and plays an important part in forming the direction of the school. The planning for Specialist Technology status and the new building programme has been particularly strong to achieve the current status and improved facilities for the school. The performance of each subject is reviewed rigorously and areas for improvement planned appropriately.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents are positive about what the school offers. The school is popular and oversubscribed, demonstrating parents' confidence in the quality of education provided. They particularly value the approachability of staff, the well-organised arrangements for helping their child to settle when they joined the school, and the high expectations of staff. The inspection agreed that these were areas of strength. A minority of parents have concerns about the behaviour and bullying by some pupils. Inspectors found that standards of behaviour are satisfactory overall, despite a small number of pupils whose behaviour in lessons and around school is thoughtless. Reported incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. Most pupils who were spoken to during the inspection were confident that when incidents do occur they are dealt with effectively. Pupils are satisfied with what the school offers them and many expressed their appreciation of the good facilities. A significant number take part in the range of sporting and other activities which take place outside school hours.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Improve teachers' use of performance data in lesson planning
- Extend some teachers' behavioural management and their use of a broader range of learning styles to include more opportunities for enquiry and independent learning
- Improve punctuality, particularly to lessons, but also of a small but persistent number of latecomers in the morning

and, to meet statutory requirements

- Provide a daily act of collective worship
- Ensure that reports to parents include information about pupils' attainment in citizenship

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils of all abilities and needs achieve well throughout the school and are currently attaining standards which are in line with national averages.

#### Main strengths

- Results in the national tests in Year 9 have been rising faster than the national rate
- GCSE results are above those of similar schools. In recent years, GCSE drama, German, mathematics and music have been strong subjects
- All groups of pupils progress at a similar rate

#### Commentary

1. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school, as measured by their performance in the tests taken at the end of Year 6, is below national averages. In most year groups, girls' attainment on entry is well below that of girls nationally. The school has fewer very able pupils than might be expected in a typical comprehensive school and has a higher proportion of lower-attaining pupils, many of whom have special educational needs. During their time in the school, pupils achieve well and pupils' attainment throughout the school is now in line with national expectations in most subjects.

#### *Standards in national tests at the end of Year 9 – average point scores in 2003<sup>1</sup>*

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	34.1 (30.8)	33.4 (33.3)
Mathematics	34.8 (33.5)	35.4 (34.7)
Science	32.3 (31.4)	33.6 (33.3)

*There were 202 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. The last year for which full validated national comparative data is available is 2003. Pupils in this year group joined the school from middle schools in Year 8 and not at the beginning of Key Stage 3 as is now the case. In this year group, pupils made good gains in their learning and their overall attainment, as measured by the average points scored in the Year 9 national tests, was in line with the national average. The value-added measure<sup>2</sup> was above the national average and the school's improvement trend between 1999 and 2003 is above the national trend, reflecting overall improvement at this level since the last inspection. The test results were above the national average in English, average in mathematics and below average in science. In 2004, results fell in English and science but remained similar in mathematics; the national results fell in science. These results still represented good achievement for the pupils, as the attainment of this year group was lower on entry to the school than the previous year. There was also significant disruption to their education during the reorganisation of education and the closure of middle schools in Merton. This year group was the last to transfer into the school in Year 8. The school only just fell short of its challenging targets set for that year, although the gap was greater in science than in English and mathematics. The target set for information and communication technology (ICT) was met. Present standards of work are in line with national expectations in all subjects.

<sup>1</sup> A full set of validated data for 2004 is not yet available.

<sup>2</sup> Value-added describes the progress pupils make, for example, between their results in the Year 6 and Year 9 tests.

**Standards in GCSE/GNVQ examinations at the end of Year 11 in 2003**

	School results	National results
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-C grades	47 (37)	52 (50)
Percentage of pupils gaining 5 or more A*-G grades	85 (84)	91 (91)
Percentage of pupils gaining 1 or more A*-G grades	91 (93)	96 (96)
Average point score per pupil (best eight subjects)	31.4 (28.8)	34.7 (34.8)

*There were 203 pupils in the year group. The percentages include the equivalent GCSE grades obtained in GNVQ assessments. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

- Results in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) and General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) in 2003 were below national averages overall but above those of similar schools<sup>3</sup>, reflecting pupils' good levels of achievement. Results have fluctuated since the last inspection; the trend in the school's average point score per pupil from 1999 is below the national trend, mainly because of a decline in standards in 2001 and 2002, but the school's value-added measure at this level is in line with other schools nationally. Results in 2003 improved significantly and this improvement has been generally maintained. Although there was a slight decline in 2004, after a predicted dip because of lower prior attainment, the school exceeded its target set with the local education authority (LEA).
- While GCSE drama, German, mathematics and music have been particularly successful against other subjects in recent years, weaker subjects have been English literature, science, business studies and geography. The school has taken action to improve performance in these relatively less successful subjects. During the inspection, standards in most subjects were average, although standards were below average in music because of the lack of specialist facilities in the recent past. Attainment in business studies remains below the expectations of the course. These levels of attainment indicate good achievement for pupils in Year 11.
- The school uses a range of analyses to monitor the performance of different groups of pupils. The numbers within each group are sometimes too small to make statistical comparisons reliable, but generally the data confirms that different groups achieve at similar rates. Relative to national performance levels, girls do less well than boys. However, their attainment on entry to the school is generally lower than boys and the analysis of data confirms that girls and boys make similar levels of progress overall. The numbers from different minority ethnic groups are generally too low to make valid conclusions about differences in performance. The performance of Black Caribbean pupils is slightly lower than other groups at the higher A\*-C grades in GCSE. The school has introduced a project in conjunction with the LEA to address the attainment of boys within this group.

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<sup>3</sup> In this context, 'similar schools' refers to schools where pupils had similar levels of attainment at the end of Year 9.

6. Pupils with English as an additional language achieve well. The school's own value-added system shows them overall to be performing above their predicted grades at GCSE. Those pupils supported in lessons and through targeted support in lessons are achieving well because of skilful teaching.
7. The achievement of pupils who have special educational needs is good overall because of the systematic procedures for identifying needs and the wide range of interventions designed to meet their needs across the school. Pupils with statements of special educational need make very good progress as their needs are well targeted and the provision includes in-class support from teaching assistants. Pupils on the special educational needs register benefit from additional small group lessons for improving core skills. For example in corrective reading and spelling lessons in Years 7 to 9, pupils learn decoding strategies which help them to improve. There is good support from external specialist services, for example the Prevention of Exclusion Activities Team (PEAT) which supports pupils at risk of being excluded because of their social, emotional and behaviour difficulties. The achievement of some groups of pupils who have weak literacy and study skills is limited in some subjects where there is a lack of additional support in lessons. Although the needs of pupils who have special educational needs are appropriately stated on individual education plans, the adaptation and modification of classroom materials and tasks is occasionally unsatisfactory.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour overall are satisfactory. Attendance has improved over the last few years, and is now satisfactory. Most pupils arrive to school on time although punctuality to lessons is unsatisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Where teaching is good or very good, pupils behave very well and are highly motivated, but when teaching is less effective, a minority of pupils have negative attitudes
- Pupils generally form constructive relationships with one another and with staff
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills

### **Commentary**

8. Most pupils have a positive attitude to school and are keen to learn. They behave sensibly in lessons and work constructively on their own or in groups. They respond particularly positively when the teaching is demanding and lively, and where teachers have high expectations and inspire high standards. Where the expectations are set out immediately, and it is made clear to pupils that appropriate sanctions will be carried through when necessary, pupils settle quickly to the work set, and they work hard and want to do well. Attitudes in practical subjects such as physical education, drama and art are particularly good. However, a minority of pupils throughout the school only behave well when the teacher has a firm control of the class and insists on high standards of behaviour and work. They lack enthusiasm, find it difficult to listen for any length of time, and quickly become restless and easily distracted. A few lessons are disrupted, and only become productive because teachers' good management of pupils combats noise and challenges immature attitudes. A few pupils can be very challenging and difficult to manage. Although many teachers are successful in motivating and engaging pupils, there is some inconsistency in the way behaviour is managed in lessons. Occasionally, expectations and the consequences of ignoring them are not made sufficiently clear.

9. Around the school, behaviour is satisfactory. While most pupils behave well and socialise amicably with others, some pupils are less considerate of others, particularly at lunchtime and when moving between lessons. The number of fixed term exclusions is relatively high, but the level of permanent exclusions is below average. The school's inclusive approach ensures that this sanction is used only when absolutely necessary.
10. A particularly positive feature of the school is the good relationships that exist between different groups of pupils. There is no evidence of racial tension, or of racial harassment. The school acknowledges that bullying does take place occasionally. Most pupils who were spoken to during the inspection, were confident that when incidents do occur they are dealt with effectively. Pupils are encouraged, in lessons and assemblies, to report such occurrences to an adult.
11. There are 70 pupils identified as having social, emotional and behavioural difficulties and there is a good system in place for monitoring their progress and providing interventions to support them. These include a range of support from pastoral tutors and PEAT staff. Small group activities such as anger management courses and one-to-one counselling support have a positive impact on helping to improve attendance and reduce exclusion from lessons.

***Ethnic background of pupils***

***Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	680	103	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	48	2	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	32	7	1
Mixed – White and Black African	12	2	0
Mixed – White and Asian	9	11	0
Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
Mixed – any other mixed background	17	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	26	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	29	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	27	2	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	47	15	0
Black or Black British – African	74	10	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	13	3	0
Chinese	8	0	0
Any other ethnic group	39	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	35	0	0

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

## Attendance

12. Attendance levels have been rising steadily over the past few years, and are now in line with the national average. Attendance is monitored effectively using a computerised system and the data collated regularly by the attendance officer. The information is used well by heads of year and the educational welfare officer to identify and help pupils with attendance problems. Punctuality is unsatisfactory. Most pupils come into school in reasonable time, but a small number of older pupils are regularly late. Some pupils frequently dawdle during the changeover between lessons, and show little concern to be in class on time. This often results in the loss of five minutes at the start of lessons. The school uses the first 20 minutes of the day for registration and tutorial time. In practice, many pupils do not use this time usefully, and it does not always provide a sufficiently purposeful start to the day.

### ***Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003-2004 (%)***

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.5	School data	0.5
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

13. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop socially and take responsibility, for example as house captains or prefects, representatives on the year committees, pupil receptionists and library monitors. A significant number of Year 11 pupils volunteer to act as 'buddies' to Year 7 pupils when they join the school. Pupils are encouraged to take part in house competitions and educational visits, and a large number of pupils are involved in the annual drama production. While there is limited scope in many lessons for pupils to be enterprising or show initiative, several subjects do offer possibilities for pupils to develop skills in negotiating and teamwork. For example, in physical education and drama, pupils have many opportunities to work co-operatively.
14. Spiritual, moral and cultural development is satisfactory. There is no daily act of collective worship, but pupils attend assembly once a week. Morning tutor periods provide an opportunity for discussions on particular assembly themes, but the use of this time depends on the individual tutor and is not always productive. A particularly good example of spiritual development was seen in two personal and social education lessons, following the school's Remembrance Day service, when pupils reflected with maturity and sensitivity on the significance of Remembrance Day. Pupils are aware of the difference between right and wrong and are taught the relationship between behaviour and consequence. Moral issues, such as euthanasia, cloning and renewable energy are considered in a number of subjects, for example geography and science. In religious education, pupils explore major world faiths and cultures. They learn to appreciate the art and music from a range of cultures including Africa and India.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good and is consistently so across all elements of provision.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good, leading to pupils achieving well. The quality of assessment is satisfactory and generally enables pupils to know how to improve their work.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and use this to plan well-structured lessons so that pupils learn well
- Resources, including interactive whiteboards, are used very well to make lessons interesting and relevant for pupils
- The good relationship that teachers have with pupils improves pupils' self-esteem so that they make good progress
- Marking and assessment successfully enable pupils to know what to do to improve their work
- Some teachers do not use performance information about the attainment of individual pupils well enough when planning their lessons

## Commentary

15. Teaching is good across the school and has improved significantly since the last inspection, when it was satisfactory with some unsatisfactory teaching. Currently, only an occasional lesson is less than satisfactory.

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 142 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4 (3%)	33 (23%)	65 (46%)	35 (25%)	4 (3%)	0 (0%)	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.*

16. The school has generally been successful in recruiting and retaining teachers during a time of rapid expansion so that very few posts are covered by temporary staff. After a period when teachers had to concentrate on other issues of expansion, with much teaching taking place in temporary accommodation with poor facilities in specialist areas such as music, the recent focus on providing training and investing in resources has ensured that teaching and learning are effective and resources for learning are good. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all subjects and is good in most.
17. The school has identified the development and extension of its approaches to teaching and learning as a priority in the current school improvement plan, and the effectiveness of teaching shows that it is being successful in this aim. Generally, teachers are using the principles of the Key Stage 3 Strategy well in their teaching. For example, most lessons start with the sharing of the learning objectives with pupils. In the best lessons, teachers monitor progress towards achieving these objectives throughout the lesson, often involving pupils in this assessment. Lessons usually end with a review of learning or an activity to introduce the learning to take place in the next lesson. Sometimes the effectiveness of this part is reduced because it is too teacher directed, not enough time is given to this part of the lesson or it does not refer back sufficiently to the learning objectives. The result is that pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to reflect deeply on the learning that has taken place. Teachers also use a range of resources, including new technologies such as the interactive whiteboards, very well to make lessons interesting and relevant for pupils.
18. Teachers have a very good command of the subjects they teach and they use this effectively to structure lessons so that pupils learn well. Lessons have pace and a range of activities provide interest to keep pupils focused and sustain their levels of concentration. Teachers explain things well and then use questions effectively to make sure that pupils have understood new concepts and to give pupils opportunities to articulate their thinking and deepen their understanding. Teachers sometimes use activities designed to develop

pupils' thinking skills, but several lessons were seen in which pupils' development of knowledge and their use of thinking skills were restricted. This was because opportunities were missed for engaging pupils in independent or group work to confirm that they had understood new concepts and ideas fully and to give them practice in using their new learning.

19. Generally, pupils are set appropriate amounts of homework to support and complement learning in school. However, some teachers do not set it consistently in line with the school policy, and this leads some pupils to undervalue the impact that homework could have on their studies and achievement.
20. Teachers have good relationships with pupils. They know their pupils and their needs well, and this develops pupils' confidence and self-esteem well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievements, but within a supportive classroom atmosphere. Behaviour management is often very good and there is effective support for pupils identified with emotional or behavioural difficulties and being at risk of exclusion. Some teachers, however, allow an undercurrent of chat while they talk or pupils to shout out answers and this makes it more difficult for the whole class to listen and concentrate. In some lessons, tasks were not matched sufficiently well enough to the needs of all pupils, although work is usually set at a level appropriate for pupils to make good progress. However, teachers in general do not use the information about pupils' prior attainment to set tasks that are closely matched to pupils' needs, particularly for higher-attaining pupils. The school has identified this as one of its areas for development during this academic year.
21. Teachers' assessments are thorough and effective in mathematics, ICT, design and technology, modern foreign languages and music, and satisfactory in all other subjects except art, where there are inaccuracies in assessment in Years 7 to 9. Marking is satisfactory overall; it is particularly good in music, history and modern foreign languages, where feedback is detailed and constructive, giving helpful advice to pupils on how to improve their work. In other subjects, marking in the form of helpful comments is inconsistent across the departments. In some departments, such as science and mathematics, the use of assessment charts helps pupils to see how much progress they are making.
22. The teaching of pupils at early stages of English fluency is good. These pupils are taught by the specialist teachers in withdrawal groups or supported by them in lessons. The two teachers have very good expertise and they match work carefully to pupils' levels of attainment. Good use is made of visual aids and oral work to develop their language skills.
23. Teaching is good in meeting the needs of pupils who have special educational needs. In lessons observed where there were significant numbers of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, pupils made at least satisfactory and in some cases, very good progress. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and, where tasks and materials are modified to help them to understand their tasks, they make very good progress. Teachers are aware of the targets of pupils who have statements of special educational needs and, in the good and very good lessons, they use teaching methods which allow all pupils to take an active part in activities and learning; teachers use a range of teaching strategies which respond to the different learning styles of pupils and this helps to engage and motivate them. However, there is a lack of consistency across the school in the extent to which teachers are aware of the learning targets for pupils on the school action plus and school action register and this limits the progress made by some pupils because the work is not well enough planned for their particular needs. Because the school has a higher than average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs, it is not always possible

to have teacher assistant support in all lessons where several pupils have literacy or other learning difficulties. In some of these lessons, class teachers are not always able to give them the attention they need to be successful in class work. The special educational needs team has very good specialist knowledge and understanding of pupils' learning difficulties and strategies for support. Teaching assistants are well trained and deployed to support identified pupils; they also give good guidance to other pupils across the classrooms. Expertise is not sufficiently shared with subject departments to ensure that the needs of all the pupils on the school's register are met consistently. Teaching assistants who support pupils from the Access Centre help class teachers by modifying and adapting materials and tasks so that pupils are able to complete their class work.

## **The curriculum**

The breadth of curricular opportunities is good and there are good opportunities for enrichment. The accommodation and resources meet the needs of the curriculum well.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is broad, balanced and is reviewed regularly
- The house structure provides a good vehicle for enrichment opportunities
- Provision for personal, social and health education are good
- There is insufficient time for pupils in Key Stage 3 to cover the Agreed Syllabus for religious education in full
- The school does not provide a daily collective act of worship

### **Commentary**

24. The curriculum is good overall. It is broad, balanced and relevant and provides equally for girls and boys of all abilities and backgrounds. It is inclusive and offers relevant learning opportunities for all pupils including those from the Access Centre. The introduction of drama for all pupils in Key Stage 3 has been very successful; it raises pupils' self-esteem and contributes positively to progress in their personal development. Drama is also very popular at Key Stage 4 and GCSE results are good. Pupils begin a GCSE course in religious education in Year 9 but because of this there is insufficient time for them to cover the Key Stage 3 Agreed Syllabus in full. The line management of each department by a member of the leadership team is used well for effective curriculum review. The governors' curriculum committee is well informed through a rolling programme of reporting by heads of department and the appropriate line manager.
25. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 has been enhanced under the Increased Flexibility Programme (IFP) and very good relationships have been built with Merton College and other local further education providers. The school is making great efforts to support pupils who are disaffected, have poor attendance or are at risk of being excluded. It has used its links well to provide an effective programme that offers, for part of the week, work experience and vocational training at places of work and college and, for the rest of the time, core GCSE subjects in school. The award of Specialist Technology College status has provided further opportunities and resources to broaden the curriculum provision. Pupils can select from a range of GCSE subjects and vocational courses and short course GCSEs offer breadth. Separate sciences are available for the higher-attaining pupils.
26. The provision for personal, social and health education, delivered through the form structure is good. Form tutors know their pupils well, relationships are good overall and pupils respond well because of the positive climate for learning. Provision for citizenship is satisfactory. The expectation is that all departments identify aspects of the citizenship programme then plan and teach them within the subject scheme. However, the quality of this is inconsistent and pupils are not always made aware that they are covering aspects of citizenship. Careers education is effectively taught through the PSHE programme. Connexions offer an interview to any pupil who requests one but the service working with the school also targets specific pupils. All Year 10 pupils take part in well-planned work experience and visit Merton College for a day to consider post-16 opportunities.
27. Pupils who have special educational needs have good curriculum provision at both key stages because it is usually effectively adapted to their needs by caring and dedicated staff. At Key Stage 4, there is an alternative curriculum that is appropriate for the lowest achieving pupils. The PEAT provision for pupils with social, emotional and behaviour difficulties effectively modifies the curriculum, matching it to needs, and thus keep pupils in

school. Pupils from the Access Centre are included successfully into the school. Most are integrated into lessons within the main school for most of the week and tasks are adapted well so that they make good progress. However, not all pupils who are identified as having speech and communication difficulties have sufficient support to meet their identified needs.

28. There is good provision for pupils at an early stage of English language development in Years 7 to 10. The need to prioritise resources has led to more limited provision for pupils in Year 11, where pupils have reached a higher level of language acquisition.
29. The school provides good opportunities for enrichment through a range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. Sport, music, art and drama feature prominently. There are also opportunities for study support to aid the completion of coursework. The house system is central to enrichment and many activities enhance learning and personal development. Many pupils take part in drama and sport and there are also opportunities for involvement in music, debating, super teams and tug of war. The drama department has made good links with local television studios and pupils often have the opportunity to be involved in televised drama productions. The school is also developing links with other organisations, such as sports clubs and businesses to develop work related learning further.
30. Staffing levels are good. Teachers are well qualified and have a good understanding of the subjects they teach. There are sufficient staff available and problems of recruitment and retention are tackled assiduously.
31. Recent building programmes and investment in the school has resulted in accommodation that is good overall in meeting the current needs of the school. Specialist accommodation for mathematics, drama, ICT, design and technology, music and physical education are good and the new Learning Resources Centre provides good facilities for pupils to use for independent study. A programme of refurbishment and improvement has been ongoing and most of the school accommodation is safe and attractive. The refurbishment programme has not been completed and there are deficiencies in some areas, for example, acoustics are poor in geography, history and modern languages and decoration is poor in some other classrooms.
32. Resources for learning are good in most subjects. Interactive whiteboards enhance teaching and learning and, with the most recent investment, overall provision for ICT is very good. However, access to ICT facilities is still limited in business studies and geography. Laptop computers enhance the range of use of technology in science.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Arrangements to ensure pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. Arrangements for transfer and induction into the school are very good. Pupils are given good advice, support and guidance by their form tutors and pastoral staff and careers education is good. The school's involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths**

- Pupils are well known to staff and there are good arrangements to ensure their individual care and welfare
- Vulnerable pupils are effectively identified and very well supported
- There are very good arrangements for the induction of pupils into Year 7
- Procedures to guide pupils' academic progress are good

### **Commentary**

33. Pupils are well known to staff, and the school places considerable emphasis on the needs of the individual. Tutors and heads of year remain with pupils throughout their time at the school and this continuity means that any concerns can be quickly identified, and help promptly directed to those who need it. Pupils who are known to be vulnerable, as well as those who face challenging personal circumstances, are particularly well supported through the Student Support Centre and Learning Development department. For those who have difficulty in coping with the rigours of daily school life, alternative arrangements, including a part-time timetable or alternative curriculum is arranged. The school works well with other agencies, such as social services, to ensure that pupils get additional help when they need it.
34. Health and safety and risk assessment procedures are established in the school's practices, and governors are involved as necessary. Child protection procedures are in place and all staff receive training in these every year. There is a need, however, for the designated person to undergo re-training following the implementation of recent legislation. All staff are informed of those with specific medical problems, and those who are taken ill during the school day are well cared for.
35. There is a very good induction programme for primary school pupils in Year 6. Staff visit feeder primary schools and meet prospective pupils and their parents. This also helps to identify and prepare a programme for any pupils who may need extra support in Year 7. This is followed by a well-planned induction day and prepares pupils well for the move to secondary education, helping them settle quickly in Year 7. Both parents and pupils were complimentary about the arrangements for introducing them to the school.
36. Pupils' views are sought through their representatives on the year committees. Pupils spoken to said they could identify some improvements made as a result of suggestions brought forward to the committees, for example on canteen food and uniform. Some, however, expressed concerns that their ideas take a long time to be put into practice.
37. Regular self-assessment opportunities are given to pupils in most subjects. Although not all departments keep their regular assessments on a central database, key assessments are recorded and good systems have been devised for tracking the overall progress and attainment of all pupils, beginning with the data gathered at the time of entry to the school. This is particularly successful in monitoring those pupils who have special educational needs. Review of their progress and intervention systems are very good. Assessment of those pupils for whom English is an additional language is rigorous; targets are set for pupils and their progress in covering units of work is carefully evaluated. Individual targets for all pupils are agreed between pupils and staff on mentoring days which are regularly held, and parents are sometimes involved with these interviews. From the subject data and grades gathered on these summary reports which are then sent home to parents, staff are able to identify which pupils may be under achieving or coasting, and these pupils are mentored and supported appropriately. In most subjects, pupils say that they have a clear understanding of their standard of work in comparison with National Curriculum levels, and that they know what they need to do to make it better.
38. The good tracking procedures for academic progress and personal development result in a detailed progress report for parents on three occasions each year. The form tutor is regarded by the school as central to the care and support system and time is provided for pupils to meet with their tutor to review progress and set targets for improvement. These mentoring days appropriately consider all aspects of personal development academic aspirations, behaviour and attendance. Achievement is celebrated through a system of certificates and through the end of term year assembly.

39. Arrangements for pupils moving from Key Stage 3 to Key Stage 4 are good. All pupils have careers education from Year 7 as part of personal and social education. In Year 9 the school works well with the Connexions service to support pupils and their parents in making appropriate choices for the post-14 curriculum. Pupils who have special educational needs are given appropriate careers advice and support at an early stage in Year 9.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

There are good links with parents, who are satisfied with what the school has to offer. There are very good links with other schools and colleges, and good links with the local community.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Parents are provided with a good range of information to support their child's education
- The strong links with local schools and the community enhance the curriculum well, develop pupils' self-confidence, and raise the profile of the school in the local area
- Pupils' reports do not contain information on pupils' attainment and progress in citizenship

### **Commentary**

40. Since the last inspection, the school has maintained its good relationships with parents. The school is popular, with more applications for pupils to join Year 7 than there are places, demonstrating parents' confidence in the quality of education provided. They particularly value the approachability of staff, the well-organised arrangements for helping their child to settle when they joined the school, and the high expectations of staff. A minority of parents have concerns about the behaviour and bullying of some pupils. Inspectors agree with the positive comments made by parents. Although standards of behaviour are satisfactory overall, there is a small number of pupils whose behaviour in lessons and around school is thoughtless and at worst provocative. However, reported incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively.

41. Good communication between school and home keeps parents well informed about the school's activities and achievements. Regular newsletters tell them of key dates and events such as house plays, sporting fixtures and information evenings. Parents are informed of their child's progress in a number of ways. On mentoring days, form tutors discuss progress with pupils and share targets with parents. Consultation meetings, held once a year, enable parents to speak to subject staff. Each term, parents receive a written report, including a full annual report in the summer term. Reports are generally informative and helpful, giving parents a good picture of their child's progress throughout the year. However, they do not contain the required information about standards and progress in citizenship.
42. While few parents are actively involved in the daily life of the school, most support pupils' learning well by monitoring homework diaries, attending regular meetings to discuss progress, and supporting concerts, plays and sporting events. The Raynes Park High School Association is run by a small group of committed parents and staff and organises fundraising and social events and, in recent years, has provided funding towards the Astroturf, sponsorship for Specialist College status and the Learning Resource Centre. The school makes considerable efforts to involve parents in their child's education through arranging information evenings and family activities. Although the parent governors and parents association provide a useful forum for gaining parents' opinions, and parental views have been sought on specific issues such as uniform and induction of Year 7 pupils into the school, the school has not yet established a formal and regular programme of seeking their views.
43. The school places a high premium on its role as an important learning centre for the local area. Through its Specialist Technology College status and its very good sports facilities, it has forged productive links with the local community. The school has received the Sportsmark and Football Association Chartermark. The ICT facilities are used for courses during the year for parents and for teachers within the LEA. Family cookery classes are regularly run by staff in the design and technology rooms. The school's Astroturf and sports hall are used extensively by a wide range of local groups for sports during the holidays and after school during term time. During the week of the inspection these facilities were used for numerous sports including volleyball, hockey and football. The school hall is hired each week by the Salvation Army, and on occasions by the Associated Board of Music and the National Blood Service. Local residents are invited to school events and the school newsletter is distributed to the local residents' association. The school nurse, education welfare officer and community policeman visit regularly and involve themselves in the life of the school. The school has productive links with a small number of local businesses and organisations which provide pupils with work placements. The school works with a neighbouring multi-national avionics company, which is the principal sponsor for the school's Specialist College Status bid and also provides expert input into the work related curriculum.
44. Partnerships with other local schools are very good. Pupils from the local primary schools use the school's many sports facilities for out-of-hours learning and activities, and the school is regularly the venue for local primary schools sports tournaments. Staff from the design and technology, science and physical education departments regularly take lessons in primary schools, and the mathematics department holds a roadshow which visits several local primary schools. The school works closely with a number of secondary schools and further education colleges to strengthen its curriculum and provide alternative educational arrangements for those pupils who would otherwise be disaffected. Through its strong links with further education colleges, the school prepares Year 11 pupils well for the move to

post-16 education. Pupils get the chance to visit a number of local colleges to learn about courses, and representatives from the colleges regularly visit the school to speak to pupils.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good overall. Effective governance and leadership from the headteacher and other key staff has brought about good improvement. Management systems are good.

The school is not meeting its statutory requirements in respect of the provision of collective worship and including citizenship in pupils' annual reports.

### **Main strengths**

- The headteacher and leadership team have clear vision that focuses on all pupils achieving well and building effective staff teams
- The governing body is highly committed and very involved in forming the direction of the school
- Strategic planning is now back on track after a series of upheavals based on expansion of the school, new buildings and Technology College status
- Raynes Park is an educationally and socially inclusive school
- Self-evaluation is rigorous and put to good use in improving teaching and learning
- Professional development is strong within the school and departments. Staff new to teaching are well looked after
- Support staff make a strong contribution to education, particularly in the area of special educational needs

### **Commentary**

45. The governing body is effective. Governors are actively involved in strategic planning and have a good grasp of the school's priorities. A particular strength is the annual planning day where a range of data is reviewed by governors and key teaching staff, and priorities for the year are identified. Governors' involvement in the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) for improving the school's accommodation has been very thorough. Generally, governors have an insufficient overview of the quality of teaching, but otherwise have a very secure knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Statutory requirements for the reporting of citizenship and for collective worship are not being met. Governors have evaluated their own work rigorously and have a very good action plan for improvement.
46. The headteacher has shown determination and imagination in focusing on the achievement of pupils, while a series of changes to the status and size of the school has been undergone. The school has improved well since the last inspection. Gaining Specialist Technology College status has increased resources and provided valuable opportunities to evaluate curriculum provision. Through very good partnerships with other schools and colleges, a wider choice of courses is open to pupils. Strategic planning is good, because the school's self-evaluation processes are effective in identifying strengths and weaknesses. The planning for the departments, science, mathematics, design and technology and ICT, involved in Specialist Technology College status has been particularly strong. The school is still at a relatively early stage in the implementation of the bid but already resources have been enriched, such as the upgrading of the library to allow conferencing of a professional standard. Each subject is rigorously reviewed on the basis of a value-added analysis, which is carried out down to the level of individual classes. The leadership group is committed and hard working. Its roles have changed, but are clear and harnessed to the development of teaching and learning throughout the school. It provides effective leadership for both subject and pastoral leaders and contributes well to the development of a cohesive school team. The leadership of subjects is good overall and directed to raising standards and pastoral leaders are also focussed on improving achievement through the mentoring days.

47. There is a strong sense of commitment to running an inclusive school in which individuals matter, particularly through the above average number of pupils on the special needs register, as well as through the Access Centre, PEAT for pupils in danger of exclusion and the work related curriculum, in association with local colleges. The leadership of special educational needs and provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is a particular strength.

48. School management is good. There is very good practice in catering for special educational needs as well as catering for the care of the pupils and creating effective links with a wider range of primary schools, to address the needs of pupils entering Year 7. Financial constraints have limited the use of externally provided training but, within the school, career and professional development of teachers and support staff is well managed and closely linked to the system of performance management. There is good induction for new teachers. The strong middle managers reflect the school's readiness to develop staff in line with its commitment to wider participation in the leadership of the school.
49. The financial resources available to the school are targeted well to take its development forward effectively. The income that the school receives is below that paid in most London boroughs. The school and departments are focused well on raising standards but not all development plans are costed and some heads of department do not have a broad enough view of whole school issues. The school manages its finances appropriately and the finance committee of the governing body has a clear understanding of its role and fulfils it effectively. Governors have a good overview of the budget and monitor it half-termly.

***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income <sup>4</sup>	4,642,175	Balance from previous year	8,948
Total expenditure	4,683,282	Balance carried forward to the next	(-93,337)
Expenditure per pupil	4,326		

50. The significant impact of PFI to the school both financially and in terms of increased management time has made it difficult to maintain effective budgetary control and the school has gone into a deficit situation. The LEA has been providing expertise to agree a financial recovery plan with the school. Under PFI arrangements the school is required to pay a set percentage for facilities management and maintenance and benchmarking indicates that this is a higher cost than similar schools have to spend.
51. Principles of best value are understood and applied to most aspects of school and financial management, but are weaker in seeking the views of parents in a structured way. The school benchmarks its spending against statistical neighbours and in all areas except the premises, costs are low and spending controlled. Overall the school provides good value for money.

**OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES**

**Work related learning**

Provision for work related learning is satisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is good careers guidance, which is valued by pupils
- Design and technology, ICT, mathematics, history and physical education make a good contribution to work related learning
- Work related learning activities are not presently co-ordinated well across the curriculum

**Commentary**

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<sup>4</sup> Income and expenditure include capital income/expenditure which following the school's year of transition was in excess of what it would be normally and this is evident in a higher than usual per pupil expenditure.

52. The school has produced a policy outlining its intended approach to work-related learning and has effectively completed an audit of existing provision, together with possible areas for development.
53. At present there is a two-week work experience programme in Year 10 for all pupils and this year there was a pilot of extended work experience for a small group of pupils. There is a good careers guidance programme, involving the Connexions service and good vocational options in Year 10 and 11 in health and social care, business education and ICT. Some subjects offer good opportunities in relation to work-related learning. In mathematics, pupils develop good problem solving and investigative skills and this has a positive impact upon learning. In design and technology, design activities develop these skills, for example in a recent project centred on commercial processes for making pizzas. History makes a good contribution to thinking skills; in a Year 11 lesson, pupils analysed historical evidence to evaluate the decision making process that followed World War II. In ICT, business models are used frequently; in a Year 9 lesson, pupils were developing a model theatre seat booking system. Generally, problem-solving approaches and independent working are not well developed across the curriculum. The school has identified in its own self-evaluation that links with business and industry are in need of development and that there is a need to take a more holistic approach to work related learning. The audit carried out provides a good basis for future planning in terms of the areas identified.

### **The Access Centre for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders**

Provision for pupils in the Access Centre is very good.

#### **Main strengths**

- The specific needs of pupils within the Access Centre are catered for very well
- Pupils are integrated well into mainstream classes
- Pupils make very good progress overall in developing social and academic competence

#### **Commentary**

54. The Access Centre was opened in 2002 to coincide with the expansion and redesignation of the school and is funded by the LEA to make provision for 20 pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. The aim of the centre is to provide access for pupils to the school's mainstream curriculum, with appropriate levels of support. The centre is very effective in meeting the needs of the 15 pupils with autistic spectrum disorders who are currently on roll and in promoting their inclusion in school activities. It has also been very effective in promoting inclusion in the main school. This is because there is very good communication with pastoral staff and class teachers on pupils' needs and strategies for meeting them in the classroom. The centre has instituted a range of arrangements for promoting pupils' access and achievement across subjects. These arrangements are flexible and responsive and ensure that pupils who have difficulty in the classroom get one-to-one support in the centre if necessary.
55. The quality of provision is very good. The centre is generously staffed with one specialist teacher, in addition to the director of the centre and a team of well trained teaching assistants who carry out a range of tasks including in-class support for pupils, modification of classroom materials and taking the role of key worker for pupils. Specialist teaching is provided in small group lessons to pupils who find it difficult to keep up with English and mathematics lessons in the main school. Specialist lessons are also given in food technology for those pupils who benefit from closer attention than is possible in the larger school classes. Pupils get very good one-to-one support to meet their language, literacy,

numeracy, homework and social development needs which are linked to their individual education plan targets and curriculum areas. The response of staff to pupils' emotional and social needs is constructive and developmental. For example, they use social stories to help pupils to gain a better understanding of how to cope with the daily challenges that they face. This additional help promotes pupils self-esteem and confidence. Pupils make very good progress overall in developing social and academic competence.

56. Accommodation is very good and provides a safe and secure place for pupils. It is well resourced with information technology equipment which pupils use for work related tasks and also, in their free time for example, for online discussion. A key strength of the centre is the leadership and the management. Thorough and effective procedures have been established for assessment, monitoring and evaluating the progress made by pupils so that interventions are well matched to needs. Teachers and teaching assistants show consistency of approach and offer good guidance to class teachers to ensure that pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are appropriately placed and given challenging work, in line with their ability. Areas identified for further development appropriately include improving the monitoring of pupils' academic achievement in lessons taken in the main school and working with the Learning Development department to sharing good practice to meet the needs of all pupils with autistic spectrum disorders needs.

## PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

### SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

#### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

##### English

Provision in English is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the previous inspection	Good

##### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement in GCSE English is very good, but is weaker in GCSE English literature
- Pupils' work is accurate and they are able to write well in a range of styles
- Teachers are well-qualified and have very good subject knowledge
- Pupils are too passive in lessons and there are too few opportunities provided for independent learning and the active engagement of pupils through small group work and role play

##### Commentary

57. Pupils' attainment in their end of Year 9 National Curriculum tests in 2003 was above the national average. National comparisons are not yet available for 2004 but results declined. In 2003, pupils' achievement in their end of Year 9 tests was good. In 2004 it was satisfactory. At GCSE in 2003, results were in line with the national average. In 2004 there was a slight decline but they were still in line with the national average, although these results are not yet validated. GCSE literature results were below the national average in 2003 and they declined further in 2004. Achievement was very good in 2003 and 2004 compared with schools with similar results at the end of Year 9. Pupils underachieved in literature in 2003 and 2004 and boys' achievement in particular was worse in literature. The decline in results in 2004 was due to some staffing instability which has now been resolved and to changes to the literature syllabus which were not sufficiently addressed by the department.
58. During the inspection the standards seen show that pupils in Year 9 are making satisfactory progress from their starting point when they entered the school. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 build well on their Key Stage 3 achievements. The key strengths in attainment are the pupils' ability to write essays, both imaginative and persuasive, and their basic technical accuracy. The weakest achievement is in responses to literature which lack rigour in reference to the text, and in speaking and listening where many pupils lack the skills to work productively in groups. Pupils who have special educational needs make satisfactory achievement overall.
59. There is a well-qualified team in the department with a high level of subject knowledge. This is leading to authoritative and fluent introductions to lessons, and an interesting range of references which are helping to illuminate the work of writers. In one Year 11 lesson on

Macbeth, for example, the teacher's thorough knowledge of the play enabled the teacher to develop constantly the views expressed by pupils and relate their ideas to particular extracts from the text. This subject knowledge, together with high expectations, explains why achievement in English in Key Stage 4 is good. Other strengths of teachers are their rapport with pupils, which is resulting in pupils being relaxed and enthusiastic, and the sharp focus on accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. There are two relative weaknesses in teaching. Firstly, as in the last inspection, too few opportunities are being provided for pupils to be active in lessons and be independent learners. In one very good Year 9 lesson, the pupils made mobiles, with key sections of a discussion essay arranged vertically. There were, however, few other examples of this sort of active engagement by pupils. Secondly, too little attention is placed on developing speaking and listening skills. In some lessons also, there is an insufficient targeting of work on pupils at different attainment levels but teachers are pitching lessons at a challenging level and more able pupils are achieving well.

60. Leadership and management are both satisfactory. The school has been slow to adopt the National Key Stage 3 Strategy and schemes of work are still not complete for Years 7 to 9. This helps to explain why achievement is less strong at the end of Year 9 than at GCSE level. Leadership of the department is supportive and good use is being made of external support to develop the Years 7 to 9 curriculum. There is not a secure overview of standards in each year group, however, and the department audit and action plan lack rigour.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

61. There is some inconsistency in the correction of errors in language but, overall, other subjects make a good contribution to developing literacy skills, which pupils use competently. A particular strength throughout the subjects is the way teachers explain and reinforce the key concepts and technical vocabulary for their areas. Two examples are in history where glossaries are being used effectively, and in physical education where crosswords with key words are used well by pupils. In science, modern languages, geography and history, there is good provision for extended writing tasks and in design and technology teachers are providing good support for lower-attaining pupils by helping them structure their written work.

### **Modern foreign languages**

All pupils study French in Years 7 to 9. Two classes of more able pupils begin German as a second foreign language in Year 9. A number opt for German as their GCSE language course.

Provision in modern foreign languages is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the previous inspection	Good

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in German are well above average
- Boys do well in languages compared with national averages

- Assessment is good: pupils are clear as to their progress and how to improve their work
- ICT is well used to enrich the curriculum
- Lack of carpeting and soundproofing in classrooms makes an unsatisfactory environment for language learning
- Links with France and Germany are not exploited fully to enrich the curriculum

### **Commentary**

62. The results of teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003 were below the average reported nationally and results in 2004 were similar. There was little difference between boys and girls. GCSE French results in 2003 were above the national average, though there were few higher grades. Boys' results were well above the national average and girls' were in line with the average. GCSE results in French in 2004 fell from 2003. The pattern of attainment changed and boys results were relatively higher than those of girls. Results in German in 2003 were well above the national average from a relatively small entry, although no pupils obtained the highest grades. Results in 2004 improved over the previous year, continuing a recent trend of high attainment.
63. Pupils have little experience of any foreign language on entry to the school and well below average literacy levels. This accounts in part for their below-average performance at the end of Year 9. Pupils make a sound start in French in Year 7, though previous experience in some primary schools is not easily transferred to the secondary phase. In one lesson, they used ICT effectively to produce brightly-illustrated descriptions of their families. In general, pupils use French willingly in speech and writing. Their progress in Years 8 and 9 is less rapid, though some good written work on number and the Euro was seen in Year 8. Pupils in the current Year 9 are attaining average standards in French, which represents some improvement. Their language skills develop steadily and they are beginning to use the past tense effectively. In German, pupils began the language in September and have made rapid progress, sufficient to have caught up with their first language by the beginning of Year 10.
64. In Year 10, where languages are part of the extended core curriculum for the majority, standards are in line with expectations for GCSE courses, though their achievement in German is better. In the current Year 11, pupils' achievement in both languages is satisfactory. A good example of GCSE role-play with peer assessment and evaluation was seen. The value added to boys is particularly notable by the end of Year 11. In German, pupils have caught up with their first language by the beginning of Year 10. They speak willingly, develop a sound grasp of key grammar and produce very good extended writing on a range of topics. Pupils who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The curriculum is adapted and planned to meet their needs.
65. Lessons are well prepared with clearly-defined learning outcomes. The variety of tasks and activities is good. Teachers model French and German very well and make good use of ICT to enrich the curriculum. The teaching of German is particularly dynamic and effective, leading to very good outcomes. Teachers work hard to engage and involve pupils, who learn willingly as a result. Assessment and marking of pupils' work are good. Pupils are clear as to their progress, examination requirements and what they have to do to improve. However, in Years 8 and 9, many lack confidence and require a good deal of support. Learning and progress are more effective in Years 10 and 11.
66. The department is well led, with commitment, enthusiasm and good role-modelling. A cohesive team has been built following some staffing difficulties. The current management structure includes a good shared role in Years 7 to 9. The development plan sets appropriate goals. Monitoring of teaching is constrained by lack of management time. The

languages curriculum is well planned. An extra-curricular Spanish class offers a further opportunity in response to pupils' interest. Although many pupils do not continue languages in Year 10, the school has maintained the subject's position and profile. The school has a longstanding link with a French school but this is limited to an exchange of pupils' letters. Overall, links with France and Germany are not exploited fully to enrich the curriculum through visits. Although there is specialist accommodation, acoustics in the large, uncarpeted classrooms are poor and have an adverse impact on pupils' learning. Since the last inspection, results have improved, teaching and assessment are more consistent and pupils make more secure progress in Years 10 and 11. Improvement has thus been good and the department has the capacity to continue to improve.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Progress since the previous inspection	Satisfactory	

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The trend in GCSE results over the last four years has been upwards because of effective teaching
- Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well because of targeted support
- A few pupils do not achieve as well as they should because of unsatisfactory behaviour
- Pupils are fully involved in good assessment procedures

## **Commentary**

67. In 2003, pupils' results in national tests taken at the end of Year 9 were in line with the national average. The 2004 results were similar. Pupils' results in the GCSE examinations of 2003 were in line with the national average and well above average in comparison with similar schools. The 2004 results represent an improvement and are very high in comparison with similar schools, although the national results are not yet validated. The trend over the last four years has been an upward one. Prior attainment of these pupils was below the national average. These results mean that pupils have achieved well at the end of Year 9 and very well at the end of Year 11.
68. Standards seen during the inspection show that pupils, who entered the school with below-average standards, make good progress. A very good example of investigative work was seen, where Year 9 pupils were managing or working for a company and had to use modal, median or mean averages to resist or bargain for wage increases for the workforce. They were able to calculate these averages and articulate why they had chosen their method of calculation with confidence. Pupils who have special educational needs, English as an additional language or lower attaining pupils progress well because they receive targeted support not only from the class teacher but also from the teaching assistant. This was evident in a Year 11 lesson on highest common factors where pupils were encouraged by the teacher and teaching assistant to explain the strategies used in their mental calculations. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs has improved since the last inspection. The presentation of pupils' work is generally good. Overall, standards and achievement in mathematics have risen since the last inspection.
69. Where teaching is very good, teachers have strong subject knowledge which results in good questioning, and the organisation and structure of lessons means that pace is brisk and keeps pupils motivated. The clarity of teacher explanations challenge pupils' understanding, and correct mathematical language is constantly encouraged. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils became familiar with the terms numerator, denominator and improper fraction and, by the end of the lesson, all were using these terms correctly. Staff offer a great deal of praise which gives pupils confidence to attempt some difficult tasks. However, occasionally a few more able pupils were held back in their achievement because the task set did not offer them enough challenge. Although the majority of pupils settle down to work quickly and sensibly, in some lessons, a very small group of pupils did not achieve as well as they should because of low level chattering, calling out of answers, and demanding the teacher's attention without considering the needs of their peers. This was also the case in the last inspection.
70. The new leadership has a clear vision focused on raising achievement, particularly during Years 7 to 9, where a recent priority has been making good use of the National Strategy framework. Development planning is good with several initiatives being introduced, aimed at improving standards still further. The department works together as an effective team and responsibilities are delegated successfully. Assessment procedures are good, with end of topic tests and pupil self-assessment in place. Pupils know their National Curriculum levels, how well they are doing, what progress they are making over time and set

themselves appropriate targets. However, there are inconsistencies over marking. Not all teachers are consistently indicating to pupils what they must do next to improve. Monitoring the standards of teaching and learning is not carried out regularly, and so the inconsistency in marking has not been identified. Accommodation is excellent and includes a new suite of rooms and a departmental base room. Resources are good and include interactive whiteboards in all classrooms and graphical calculators. The department maintains good links with local primary schools through the annual 'roadshow'. Extra classes are arranged as examinations approach in order to boost pupils' achievements.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

71. Competency in mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Other subjects make a sound contribution to developing mathematical skills. Pupils are given good opportunities to use their mathematical skills in science and music, but they are satisfactory in most other subjects. In science, very good emphasis on using mathematics was seen where GCSE pupils studied heat loss from different types and sizes of beakers; they measured the heat loss, surface area, volume and ratio of surface area to volume to find out what determined the rate of cooling; this exercise made good demands upon the average ability set. In music, pupils were measuring sound, working with chord patterns, and understanding polyrhythms in African music and number sequences in Indian music. Mathematical skills were used in ICT in work on spreadsheets, and in modern foreign languages in numbers up to 1000, and in work related to the euro. Other examples were seen during the inspection in physical education, history, geography, design and technology and art and design.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

  

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the previous inspection	Good

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective teaching results in pupils learning and achieving well
- There is an increasing range of teaching and learning opportunities but the range is still too restricted, with insufficient open, extended, investigative work
- Assessment procedures have been improved but are not yet fully effective

## Commentary

72. In 2003, results at the end of Year 9 were below average and below those in similar schools. There was a further decline in the results in 2004, in line with pupils' lower levels of attainment when they joined the school. GCSE results in 2003 were below the national average but above those in similar schools. Results in 2004 were slightly lower than the previous year, in line with the fall in the overall results of the year group. Despite fluctuations in results from year to year, the overall trends are of improvement.
73. Standards of pupils currently in Year 9 are in line with expectations, for example in terms of pupils' understanding of photosynthesis, their ability to write word equations for the reactions of acids with metals and to calculate pressure from force and area. Pupils make good progress and achieve well since attainment on entry in Year 7 is below average. In Year 11, standards are average, for example, in terms of pupils' understanding of ionic and covalent bonding and their ability to use the equation relating charge, time and current. The standards for this cohort were below average in Year 9, so that pupils have made good progress and are achieving well.
74. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and have high expectations of both the level and pace of work. Lessons are well planned with a good variety of activity to engage and sustain pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Questioning is used regularly to check pupils'

understanding. In one particularly effective discussion, pupils were allowed to give more extended answers, thereby revealing more of their understanding of the topic. A significant amount of very good, and occasionally excellent teaching was seen. In a lesson with a lower set in Year 11, pupils' interest was engaged with the prospect of a demonstration with a Van der Graaf generator. The concept of static charges had been introduced in the first part of the lesson and the teacher used open questioning very skilfully to get pupils to understand why the pupil who was to be connected to the generator had to be insulated from the ground. Further questioning and explanation with the use of models helped the pupils understand why the girl's hair would stand on end, in terms of the charge model. In the conclusion of the lesson, the teacher enabled the pupils to gain an understanding of electrostatic induction. There is an increasing range of teaching and learning styles in use including demonstrations, practical work, data interpretation, video, sequencing and matching activities, poster work, concept cartoons and some research and pupil presentations. There is, however, too little emphasis upon independent work. In particular, there is insufficient open, extended investigative work.

75. There is increasing use of ICT by both teachers and pupils. This is having a positive impact upon learning and, appropriately, more training is planned for teachers to make the most effective use of the new interactive whiteboards. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to carry out data-logging. Assessment procedures now involve regular assessment with feedback to pupils on their levels. Work is marked regularly using the department policy but errors are not always corrected. There is some good practice in giving pupils specific feedback on how to improve but this is not consistent across the department. The National Strategy for science is having a positive impact upon teaching and learning but is neither fully nor consistently in place.
76. There is a clear focus on raising standards of teaching, learning and achievement, all of which are now good. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. There is some monitoring and evaluation of teaching and also some peer observation of lessons, but these strategies have not yet been sufficiently embedded in order to share examples of particularly effective practice. Pupil tracking has been improved but systems do not currently easily provide information about the proportions of pupils at different levels. Plans are in place to incorporate good quality homework activities in schemes of work.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

In Years 10 and 11, pupils are offered courses in GNVQ ICT and GCSE ICT. The GCSE course was inspected fully and is reported on below. The GNVQ course is reported in the section on vocational courses.

Provision in information and communication technology is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Good	
Progress since the previous inspection	Good	

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers' expertise is used effectively and lessons are well planned and structured

- Pupils use ICT with confidence and competence as a result of the good teaching
- Leadership is strong and has led to significant improvements in ICT
- More able pupils are not always challenged enough

### **Commentary**

77. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were broadly in line with those reported nationally in 2003 and 2004. Boys perform better than girls at the higher levels. GCSE results were broadly in line with standards nationally in 2003, but fell slightly in 2004. The GCSE course is restricted to pupils who take single science GCSE and to those pupils who wish to attend additional classes after school. In 2004, boys performed better than girls.
78. The work being undertaken by pupils in Years 7 to 9 indicates that standards are higher than those reported in previous years. Pupils start Year 7 with a variety of skills and experiences, make good progress and achieve well throughout the school. They use ICT confidently and their practical skills are developed well, particularly by Year 11. Pupils apply their ICT skills in a range of other subjects and this enhances their learning effectively.
79. Good planning and well structured lessons ensure that pupils have access to good learning opportunities. Teachers have good subject knowledge and present work in an interesting and relevant way which supports pupils in gaining a wide understanding of the skills gained. Many of the projects relate to the business world and have relevance to everyday life. For example, Year 11 pupils studied the use of ICT in a supermarket, looking at spreadsheets to monitor stock and finances and bar code information. Teachers use computer controlled whiteboards effectively and, as a consequence, basic skills are taught successfully to the whole class. Common features of good teaching include well managed time, clear instructions and giving good feedback on pupils' work. In a few lessons, the routine organisation at the start of the lesson took too long and pupils became chatty and lacking in concentration. Relationships in the classroom are good and teachers generally give good individual support, although the needs of more able pupils are not always extended enough in lessons. Assessment is clear in helping pupils to understand what they have achieved but marking does not always indicate what they have to do to improve.
80. Whole-school ICT provision is co-ordinated by the department and there is a clear strategic view for the development of ICT throughout the school. This is making a strong contribution to the school's implementation of its aims for Specialist Technology College status. This is communicated well and has led to significant improvement in overall provision. Good progress has been made in incorporating the National ICT Strategy into classroom teaching. Management is ensuring that there is a consistent approach and good provision within the department.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

81. Since the last inspection, the school has made a substantial investment in computers and related technology through its Specialist Technology College status. This has resulted in a ratio of computers which is above national average. In many lessons, the use of interactive whiteboards is making lessons more interesting for pupils. Specialist expertise is shared enthusiastically to support the development of ICT in other subjects. Staff development has taken place and further training is planned to give staff additional skills to use ICT more confidently in the classroom. Systems are in place to monitor staff competencies and to share effective practice in using ICT across the curriculum. The impact of ICT is patchy across the curriculum. It is not developed well enough in English, history, business studies and physical education. In subjects such as music, art, modern foreign languages, design and technology and science, the use of ICT enhances pupils' achievement and capability in

how they access, present and record information. In design and technology, pupils use control technology and digital cameras to record results and in art, pupils scan and manipulate images. The school has recognised that the mapping of cross curricular ICT delivery and recording of the full range of experiences pupils' receive requires further development with the rapid increase in the application of ICT in other subjects.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is satisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Satisfactory
Leadership	Good	
Management	Satisfactory	
Progress since the previous inspection	Satisfactory	

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm
- Lessons are too teacher directed and provide little opportunity for pupils to work co-operatively or to make decisions about learning
- Teachers' ICT skills are good
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are good
- Day to day assessment is not used effectively to plan work that matches pupils' individual needs

## **Commentary**

82. In 2003, pupils' attainment in Year 9 was below the national average and a significant number of pupils did not reach expected levels for their age. In 2004, a similar number reached the expected level for their age, but currently there is no national figure although the percentage achieving the highest grades was below the national average. Boys performed much better than boys nationally, while the performance of girls was broadly in line with girls' performance nationally, reflecting the prior attainment levels of boys and girls when they joined the school. In 2004, results declined in both the full GCSE and short course. This was partly as a result of staffing difficulties in the department at the time.
83. Attainment in Year 9 is better this year. Pupils are working in line with national expectations and are achieving well in their map work, their ability to handle data and to describe features of landscapes and economic patterns. In Years 10 and 11, progress can be seen in pupils' ability to provide reasoned explanations and to consider different approaches to geographical issues. Literacy skills are developed appropriately and pupils write for a range of different purposes. Numeracy skills are used well in ranking development indicators, constructing population pyramids and in graphical interpretation. Standards in Year 11 are now average. Pupils in that year group know the effect of economic growth on the environment and provide persuasive arguments from a range of stances. Issues of morality, culture, beliefs and government feature and are appropriately addressed.
84. Teachers have very good knowledge and are enthusiastic about the subject. As a result, pupils' attitudes are generally positive, relationships are very good and this contributes to successful learning. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Lessons are thoroughly prepared and usually tightly structured. Sometimes the pace is too slow and there is insufficient challenge for more able pupils by providing them with opportunities to work co-operatively or make personal decisions about their learning because all pupils are expected to complete the same tasks. The newly installed interactive whiteboards are used effectively by teachers and pupils are beginning to be involved in their use. The plenary is used well to link one lesson to the next but is not being used well enough to assess progress and learning against the learning objective. There is thorough marking for detail and accuracy but comments do not always highlight for pupils other ways to improve their work. Pupils from the Access Centre and those who have other special educational needs are integrated well and teaching assistants provide high quality support.
85. Leadership is good and management is sound. The new leadership arrangements are providing a clear vision for the subject. Systems for monitoring pupils' progress and strategies for supporting pupils to complete coursework have been developed quickly, a weakness earlier in the year which, in part, accounts for the fall in standards in 2004. Fieldwork opportunities are satisfactory overall, take place in most years and are developing. ICT is satisfactorily incorporated into work and further opportunities are planned as resources become available. Through its vision and careful planning the current team has demonstrated that it has the capacity to move the subject forward and there are already indications that standards are improving.

## History

Provision in history is satisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

  

Leadership	Satisfactory
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the previous inspection	Satisfactory

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good range of curriculum opportunities serves to heighten interest in the subject
- Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and make good use of a variety of resources to promote learning
- The development of thinking skills is good, with a strong emphasis placed on developing pupils' analytical ability
- The lack of challenging homework lessens pupils' independent learning skills, especially for the most-able pupils
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing skills

### Commentary

86. Pupils' attainment in the 2003 national assessments at the end of Year 9 was below national averages. Attainment in 2004 was at a similar level. In GCSE in 2003, following the pattern of satisfactory, or better, results gained over the previous three years, results were in line with the national average for all schools. In 2004, the proportion achieving the higher A\*-C grades fell but the overall unvalidated results were at a similar level to the previous year. Pupils following the short course GCSE performed more strongly in 2004 than those following the full course. In terms of relative performance, over the two years these results were amongst the best in the school.
87. Pupils arrive at the school with below average levels of literacy and skills in the subject. They are making at least satisfactory progress in lessons across the age range largely due to the focused teaching of historical skills. Pupils currently in Year 9 are attaining standards that are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils have a basic knowledge and understanding of the major historical events and personalities they are studying. They appreciate that history is based on evidence. Most pupils show a developing sense of chronology and many are beginning to use historical terms appropriately. In Year 11, overall standards attained by pupils are broadly in line with those expected nationally, and their achievement is satisfactory, or in respect of GCSE short course pupils, good in terms of their prior attainment. Overall, pupils' historical knowledge and understanding has deepened during their courses. Class discussions show higher-attaining pupils analysing evidence confidently to produce reasoned and intelligent arguments. All pupils are able to use sources to support their responses and the majority are practised at developing points of reference. Throughout the school, whilst most pupils acquire at least satisfactory listening and oral skills, their writing skills are less assured and some pupils find difficulty in adopting a formal writing style and are reluctant to write at length. Most pupils take pride in their work and present their work well. Lower-attaining pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language generally make similar rates of progress as their peers.

88. Teachers possess a good level of subject knowledge and are purposeful, even commanding, in their approach. Lessons are well paced and lean to the analytical. Good quality resources are used to stimulate interest and help understanding. Teachers provide clear guidelines that are linked to examination requirements, and pupils have regular practice in working with source materials. Good relationships underpin the most effective classroom control. Levels of engagement are generally high as pupils respond well to lively and interesting lessons, which can include some theatre. However, teaching is not so strong in developing independent learning. There is not enough regular, challenging homework to enhance the development of knowledge, skills and understanding, particularly amongst the most able pupils and there is not sufficient emphasis on regular testing to improve standards of recall. Overall, the quality of marking is good. Class work is checked regularly and pupils are given clear indicators for the improvement of their performance. However, errors in literacy are not highlighted systematically. Teachers acknowledge the importance of skills development in lesson planning and are successful in helping pupils to acquire effective thinking skills. The best lessons place a focus on the importance of literacy, but do not go far enough in encouraging pupils to undertake extended writing tasks, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. In this important respect, higher-attaining pupils lack challenge. As yet, the subject has provided limited opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills, due to timetabling difficulties. Teachers are proficient in their use of newly installed interactive whiteboards.
89. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. There is a strong enthusiasm for the subject, which is reflected in a positive departmental ethos. Appropriate priorities are being set for the future. The department recognises that there is scope to enhance assessment procedures, specifically by sharpening the process of setting and sharing individual targets with pupils. The curriculum is well designed to heighten the interest of an ethnically diverse pupil body in both local and international issues. Topics of study help significantly towards the development of moral, political and social understanding. As the department has indicated, further enrichment could be derived from extending the programme of visits to incorporate all year groups. There is limited celebration of pupils' achievement in the department although display provides relevant information for them. The department does not provide sufficient activities, such as history clubs and competitions, to contribute to the extra-curricular life of the school and meet the interests of pupils.

### Religious education

Provision for religious education is satisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Good	Satisfactory

Leadership	Good
Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the previous inspection	Satisfactory

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 7 to 9, lessons are well planned to meet the needs of pupils
- There is insufficient time in Years 7 to 9 to teach all aspects of the locally Agreed Syllabus in detail

- Good leadership is providing the platform for improvement

### Commentary

90. All pupils in Years 9 and 10 follow a GCSE short course and take the examination at the end of Year 10. In Year 11, the subject is not taught discretely but aspects of religious education are considered through the school's personal, social and citizenship education programme.
91. Results in the GCSE short course in 2003 were below the national average and results in 2004 were at similar levels for the first whole year cohort to sit the examination. As pupils begin their GCSE course in Year 9, not all pupils have the depth of learning required to be successful because they have not covered all the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus for Years 7 to 9 fully.
92. By the end of Year 9 pupils have studied two years of the Key Stage 3 Agreed Syllabus and one year of the short course GCSE. In Year 9, pupils have knowledge of Islam and Christianity and how beliefs and teachings affect the lives of individuals. They are able to understand Christian teachings on the sanctity of life and apply their knowledge to respond to moral teachings about abortion. Pupils achieve well in their lessons but have not covered all elements in the Agreed Syllabus in detail. By the end of Year 11 pupils are able to analyse reasons for the existence or non existence of God and construct logical arguments giving scientific and inexplicable reasons. Pupils in Year 10 know how to describe a miracle and understand a spiritual experience. However, pupils only study religious education in detail for one year and so achievement overall is satisfactory. Year 10 achievement is enhanced through understanding of the meaning of omnipotent, omniscient and benevolent as a way of explaining views about God. In Year 10, a small number of pupils underachieve because of poor attitudes and behaviour.
93. Pupils learn well because teachers plan lessons which match pupils' individual needs. The use of story with Year 7 helps pupils to learn religious meanings through listening and the use of periods of silence help pupils to learn how to be reflective. End of unit assessments in Years 7 and 8 are helping pupils to understand their attainment and what they need to do to improve. However, marking in books does not always contain comments about areas for improvement. In Years 7 to 9, high expectations in lessons are helping the majority of pupils to improve. However, in Year 9 the GCSE course is too advanced for some pupils as they do not have the maturity and a sufficiently broad experience of the Key Stage 3 syllabus. Text books with different levels of language and ICT are used by teachers to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are able to participate fully in the lessons. Teaching assistants make a positive contribution to the progress of pupils who have special educational needs.
94. The department is well led. There is a clear focus for development and appropriate key priorities. Staffing difficulties have been overcome. The approach to the curriculum and introduction of the short course in GCSE is successfully providing relevance for pupils. The Key Stage 4 curriculum meets requirements but there is not enough time in Years 7 and 8 to meet the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus in full.

### TECHNOLOGY

#### Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average

Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Very good
Management	Good
Progress since the previous inspection	Good

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A consistent approach to design work across all areas of the subject supports pupils well in understanding the problem-solving nature of the subject
- Well planned and structured lessons support pupils' achievement, particularly in practical lessons
- Effective use of demonstration enables pupils to work well independently in practical lessons
- Teachers use their own skills and knowledge to good effect
- Some aspects of assessment are not well enough developed in Years 7 to 9, including marking and pupils' evaluation of their own work

### **Commentary**

95. The subject consists of graphics, food, resistant materials and textiles taught throughout Years 7 to 11. GCSE courses are offered in all four areas. In 2003, teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were below those reported nationally but rose further in 2004 to be broadly in line with national expectations. Results in GCSE examinations in 2003 were in line with results nationally but fell slightly in 2004.

96. Pupils start the school in Year 7 with a range of experiences in design and technology and, by the end of Year 9, they gain a good understanding of what the subject is about and use problem-solving approaches well. Year 11 pupils reach a good standard of work which meets the requirements of GCSE design projects. In Years 7 to 9, skills of evaluation are insufficiently developed in some areas, particularly in graphics and textiles. Pupils use ICT well, particularly in Years 9, 10 and 11, to extend their work and improve presentation.
97. Features of good teaching are the well-structured and briskly-paced lessons which help pupils to concentrate on the task. Teachers use demonstration very effectively. This helps to communicate high expectations to the pupils as well as enabling pupils to work with a high degree of independence in practical lessons. Pupils use tools and equipment confidently and competently to enable them to achieve successful practical work and make high quality products. Good relations and teachers' help and support encourage pupils to work with enthusiasm. GCSE teaching is particularly effective when teachers have high expectations and explain the differences between examination grades, often using exemplar work from previous high scoring examination work.
98. Written work is well structured, with clear work sheets which guide pupils through the tasks. Some opportunities are missed to teach subject knowledge that underpins practical work and to extend gifted and talented pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to the supportive way learning support assistants and teachers understand and meet their individual needs. Marking is positive but does not always help pupils know what they have to do to improve. This is better in Years 10 and 11 where feedback to pupils is regular and constructive.
99. There is a strong vision for improving pupils' achievements within the department and planning is clear about the actions to be taken to accomplish this. There is a common intention to identify, share and build on good teaching across all areas of design and technology. Teachers' expertise is used well and teamwork is a strength of the department. Pupils' learning benefits from good accommodation and resources.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Drama**

100. Drama was sampled during the inspection and judgements are based on lesson observations, an interview with the head of department and discussions with pupils. Drama GCSE results are above the national average and pupils achieve very well. This is partly because of very good teaching. The drama teachers who take the GCSE classes have significant expertise and they generate great enthusiasm for the subject. The department is led well and there is a secure overview of standards and progress at GCSE. There is a less secure overview at Key Stage 3 where overall assessments for year groups are not collated. Very good provision for drama out of lessons includes an annual production and house plays which the pupils themselves direct.

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is satisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Below average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good
Leadership	Satisfactory	

Management	Satisfactory
Progress since the previous inspection	Satisfactory

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers' subject knowledge and expertise enable pupils to achieve well
- Very good accommodation and ICT facilities enhance pupils' learning
- The art department is friendly and welcoming with a good team of teachers
- Departmental planning needs to be updated and schemes of work do not follow a common structure
- Assessment is not used effectively in Years 7 to 9. Data is not analysed and used to set targets in Years 10 and 11

## **Commentary**

101. The teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2004 suggested that standards were above average. However, these assessments were over-generous and standards are in line with expectations. Results in the 2003 GCSE examinations were below average. This has been the trend over the last three years and results in 2004 were similar to previous years.
102. Pupils enter the school in Year 7 with attainment that is below expected standards. They achieve well during Years 7 to 9, so that by the end of Year 9 standards have improved and are in line with national expectations. Pupils make progress in learning new skills looking at the basic elements of art using a variety of media. Pupils gain knowledge of the work of other artists and are able to discuss this using key words. Standards of work seen in the current Years 10 and 11 are below average for GCSE courses, with groups covering a wide range of attainment levels. However, standards are beginning to improve, particularly in Year 10, now that accommodation problems have been resolved. This disruption during expansion and the building programme had a major impact on the department, when teaching had to take place in non-specialist rooms. Current GCSE pupils make good progress and work well in sketchbooks. They experiment with a range of two-dimensional media and are able to relate their own work to the work of other artists. They benefit from a variety of projects and individual guidance in meeting examination requirements.
103. Teaching and learning are good in all years. Teachers demonstrate secure knowledge of their subject enabling pupils to do well. They offer a range of specialisms, including ICT, batik and ceramics and use this effectively to provide a wide range of learning opportunities for pupils. In Year 7, pupils use different grades of pencils to achieve different textural and tonal effects. They are able to discuss the work of Edward Hopper, Van Gogh and William Morris. Teachers engage pupils well in lessons using a variety of teaching methods. A "feely box" captured Year 7 pupils' interest in a drawing lesson. Teachers use interactive whiteboards to show images and provide interactive tasks for pupils that extends their learning. Stories are read to pupils and they are encouraged to visualise images with their eyes closed. The use of different teaching styles enables pupils to acquire a sensitive awareness of their surroundings. In Years 10 and 11, a range of resources is provided to stimulate pupils leading to good drawing work. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported in lessons and achieve well. Teaching assistants are well directed by the class teacher. Pupils relate well to each other, and there are strong relationships between pupils and teachers. Pupils are willing to help each other, working constructively in groups and showing consideration for each other. Teachers support pupils well, building their confidence and praising them when appropriate. Homework is used effectively to reinforce learning and the department provides a good range of extra-curricular activities to extend pupils' experiences in art.
104. Lesson planning in Years 7 to 9 does not fully take account of National Curriculum levels. Marking and assessment of work does not make sufficient reference to National Curriculum levels for pupils to understand fully how to improve and achieve their target levels.

Similarly, data in Years 10 and 11 is not used as effectively as it could be to build upon pupil's prior attainment and help pupils to become fully aware of their target grades and what they need to do to achieve them.

105. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff share a commitment to their subject and provide a caring department in which the pupils achieve well. Departmental documentation is out of date and not sufficiently structured to provide a clear framework for teachers to plan their lessons and planning is not consistent across the department. The 50-minute single lessons for two GCSE groups have a negative impact on the depth and quality of work that can be produced. New specialist accommodation and ICT facilities provide the department with an opportunity to move forward after a difficult period where the curriculum was restricted by the school refurbishment works. Visits to Kew Gardens and the Royal Academy enhance the curriculum, as do links with Wimbledon School of Art. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

### Music

Provision in music is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Below average
Achievement	Very good	Good
Teaching and learning	Very good	Very good
Leadership	Good	
Management	Very good	
Progress since the previous inspection	Good	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils respond well to knowledgeable and enthusiastic teachers
- Very good use of ICT impacts positively on pupils' learning
- Pupils are stronger in performance than composition
- Pupil numbers at extra-curricular activities are low although the quality of the activities is good

### Commentary

106. Standards at the end of Year 9, as measured by teacher assessments in 2003, were below the national average. Levels of attainment were similar in 2004. The numbers entered for GCSE examinations have been very low and so comparison with national averages is unreliable. However, the small cohort of pupils in 2004 achieved well and all gained a grade B at GCSE.
107. Pupils currently in Year 9 have achieved very well this term and are working in line with national expectations, because of the very good specialist teaching. Effective use of ICT is enabling pupils to develop their composing skills, layering melodic and rhythmic patterns which are developed through keyboard composition and the study of film music. Pupils use electronic keyboards successfully to perform well rehearsed ensemble pieces, blended with vocal and percussion skills.
108. Pupils in Year 11 are working at levels generally below the expectations of the GCSE course. They have better performance than composition skills, but are currently developing composition well and are producing imaginative pieces in a variety of styles using ICT and multi-tracking. Pupils are improving their performance skills in a range of styles, including world music. Higher-attaining pupils perform with attention to style and a sense of

ensemble and occasion often extending musical director and solo skills. Year 11 pupils are generally good performers on their chosen instrument. Pupils' knowledge of music theory is less developed, with only basic knowledge of the elements of music, devices used for composition and performance and use of basic music terminology to describe and analyse music. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are achieving very well. Their attainment levels were low when they began their GCSE courses, mainly because they had a limited range of study with poor resources in non-specialist accommodation during the reorganisation period.

109. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and pupils learn very well because work set for them is structured well and builds on their prior knowledge. Lessons follow a three part structure and teachers' enthusiasm ensures a brisk pace. Pupils respond well to the enthusiastic teaching and work hard. Pupils have very good access to computers with music software which enables them to enjoy creating music using technology, exploring and analysing sound. Teachers ensure lessons have a very good range of activities that capture pupils' interest. Teachers expect pupils to behave and achieve well and keep pupils motivated. Marking and assessment are good. Targets are shared with pupils and opportunities for self-evaluation help pupils to know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The numbers of pupils learning a musical instrument is lower than the national average but is increasing. The numbers of pupils attending extra-curricular activities is low but the range and quality is good.
110. The department is well led and the vision for the use of ICT to raise pupils' attainment is very good. Management is very good. Day-to-day organisation and planning are very effective and new schemes of work and a revised handbook have been developed within a short time. Improvement since the last inspection is good and the issues raised have been rigorously addressed. The recent move to specialist accommodation and the very good resources have greatly increased overall provision for music.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education is good.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Good	Good
Teaching and learning	Good	Good

Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since the previous inspection	Good

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy the challenging activities in lessons
- Opportunities for extra-curricular sporting activities are helping to develop pupils' talents
- Pupils' very good attitudes are contributing to their progress
- Assessment at Key Stage 3 is ineffective, and GCSE pupils are not clear about their progress
- Leadership and very good facilities are helping to provide a platform for improvement

### Commentary

111. Standards, as indicated by the results of the teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2003, were above the national average. Girls' achieved higher levels than boys. Attainment in 2004 was at similar levels. In Key Stage 4 all pupils follow either a full course or a short

course GCSE. GCSE results for the full course in 2003 were well above the national average. Results in 2004 were significantly lower than the previous year. Short course GCSE in 2003 were below average and the 2004 results were similar. Results overall in 2004 were not as good as the previous year due to a number of pupils not completing the course requirements.

112. Current standards in Year 11 in GCSE are average. In GCSE football, boys are able to analyse the effects of marking positions. Boys and girls know how psychological factors can affect sporting performance and use statistics to measure fitness. In Year 10 basketball, pupils select the right skill in passing, shooting or dribbling. Standards in Year 9 are in line with expectations, for example, boys know when to play a drop shot in badminton and girls have initiative to plan effective cheerleading routines in a dance module. Year 7 pupils evaluate each other's gymnastic performance recognising differences in headstand technique.
113. On entry to the school, pupils' attainment is below average, but by Year 11 standards are average and this shows good achievement. In practical lessons boys and girls achieve equally well but in Year 11 GCSE fitness practicals, girls' achievement is better than boys because they perform exercises with greater precision. Year 10 basketball pupils are able to dribble effectively and have achieved an understanding of when to use a chest or bounce pass and how to fake and drive. In a Year 9 badminton class where achievement was very good, pupils had developed skills in racquet control and shot selection to maintain a rally and an awareness of tactics. In gymnastics in Year 7, pupils understand how to work with a partner to practise and improve balances. They have learnt how to support each other safely and that observing and talking about technique can help improve their performance.
114. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve as well as other pupils in all years. Pupils of all levels of ability are provided with extra-curricular activities through the house system and through community programmes and these result in the pupils involved achieving highly. Many represent the school and gain national and international honours.
115. Lessons are stimulating and maintain pupils' interest. Pupils learn through a range of activities designed to set challenges. Fast moving short sided games in basketball help pupils' concentration. Challenging GCSE pupils to complete a circuit helped them learn about motivation techniques. The cheerleader module is a popular activity where Year 9 girls' learning is enhanced through teaching which challenges them to perform routines linking gymnastics, music and choreography. In Year 7 hockey, pupils have achieved an understanding of the importance of good stick control for passing with accuracy and power and reverse stick technique is taught through an enthusiastic teaching style. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan modified lessons to cater for all abilities. Teaching assistants are providing a good addition to lessons. This allows for individual needs to be met effectively. Teachers assess pupils during lessons and give verbal feedback about how to improve.
116. The leadership has a clear vision for future development and there is a commitment from the whole team to provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including inter-house competitions. The development plan appropriately focuses on rewriting schemes of work to take into account the excellent new facilities. However, the plan does not have a clear focus on GCSE monitoring.

## **BUSINESS AND OTHER VOCATIONAL COURSES**

117. Double award GCSE in health and social care was the focus subject. GCSE business studies and GNVQ information technology were sampled, with lessons in each year group observed.
118. Results in business studies in 2003 were below national averages. Results improved in 2004 but were still below expectations. A significant proportion of the cohort, about a fifth, achieved below the level expected on the basis of their prior attainment. The rest of the cohort in 2004 achieved the expected level. In the work seen, there is too little written work and use of computers. Behaviour and motivation have improved since the previous inspection, but there is disaffection in Year 11, where the pace of teaching was too slow and too little demand was placed upon the pupils. Links with industry have not been developed sufficiently to provide relevance for the work being undertaken but there has been some progress since the last inspection.
119. GNVQ ICT has been introduced since the last inspection. Results in the course (pass level equivalent to 4 GCSE C grades) are average. Pupils show very good attitudes to work in both year groups. Work included research into demand for tuck shop products, a project including menus for an Italian restaurant and coursework gathering and presenting information for a corporate event in Cardiff. Standards meet and often exceed expectations and the nature of the work makes a good contribution to work related learning. Achievement is good and this includes pupils who have significant special educational needs. Teaching and learning are good; the work is individualised and matched well to pupils' prior attainment levels. Assessment is good. Leadership and management are good. The future development of the course to a diploma in applied computing will improve the overall provision by providing opportunity for success at intermediate levels for those unable to achieve the four grade Cs at a level equivalent to GCSE.

### Health and social care

Provision in health and social care is good.

	Year 11
Standards	Below average
Achievement	Good
Teaching and learning	Good
Leadership	Good
Management	Good
Progress since previous inspection	N/A

## **Main strengths**

- Pupils' attitudes are very good and relationships are very positive
- The course makes an effective vocational contribution as part of the school's increased flexibility programme for Years 10 and 11
- Teacher knowledge and understanding are very good, including knowledge and needs of the pupils

## **Commentary**

120. A course in health and social care has been running since 1997, but up until 2003 it ran as a foundation and intermediate level GNVQ. The results were below average. In 2003, the GCSE dual award in health and social care course was introduced. Results were below previous national outcomes for the course, but some were revised upwards on appeal.
121. Standards observed in lessons and in work samples, while still below average, show that pupils are achieving well. Their work is well presented and is challenging for all pupils. Portfolio work on health included examples of above-average work and it is expected that overall results will show improvement over those achieved last year. Pupils not expected to gain high grades on the basis of Year 9 attainment are nevertheless working at a level that indicates good achievement.
122. Very good aspects of teaching and learning include assessment and motivation, mutual respect and the teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject. Pupils' attitudes were very positive in Year 10, when they expressed great personal interest in the physical, intellectual, emotional and social bases of health. Year 11 pupils were positive, although appropriately their work was more pragmatically based on coursework and examination requirements. Marking includes detailed positive feedback on how to improve, indicating very good assessment for learning. Teaching is knowledgeable about syllabus requirements and the moderator's report on coursework is very positive. The laboratory was used well to provide a range of learning experiences.
123. The curriculum is good and makes an effective vocational contribution as part of the school's increased flexibility programme for Years 10 and 11. It is enhanced by very good links with a local college, which provides pupils with an additional experience of the college environment. Work experience makes a good contribution to work related learning and develops pupils' confidence and self-esteem. The school has reduced curriculum time to three periods a week for a double GCSE and the course is currently dependent on teachers and teaching assistants giving up their own time for coursework guidance. Accommodation is awaiting refurbishment and is unsatisfactory.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

As part of the inspection, personal, social and health education lessons were sampled, while citizenship was inspected in detail. Teaching and learning in personal, social and health education lessons were good overall, and there was a significant number of very good lessons, contributing well to pupils' personal development. A variety of approaches were used to engage pupils' interest. Pupils in different groups planned and produced posters about bullying, generated ideas for fund raising and considered post-16 options. In some lessons, there was good follow-up to a school assembly on Remembrance Day. Pupils carried out role-plays empathising with the impact of war on families, wrote poems and discussed the tactics of the First World War.

### **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is satisfactory.

	Year 9	Year 11
Standards	Average	Average
Achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching and learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership	Satisfactory	
Management	Satisfactory	
Progress since previous inspection	N/A	

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a core of good teaching and learning in citizenship
- A variety of curriculum activities is used satisfactorily to develop pupils' understanding of citizenship issues
- Not enough attention is paid to developing pupils' enquiry skills
- There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of citizenship education

### Commentary

124. Standards at the end of Year 9 are in line with expectations. Pupils have studied some topical events, such as the war in Iraq and have reflected on the arguments for and against. They have looked at issues relating to rights and responsibilities and given talks on what makes a good citizen. At the end of Year 11, standards are again in line with expectations. Pupils have, for example, considered legal and human rights issues in connection with abortion. They have studied two major religions and developed an understanding of how these are reflected in the daily lives of people who follow them. Pupils have considered how the school environment might be improved and made suggestions. Progress and achievement are satisfactory.
125. There is a core of good teaching, particularly within the school's personal, social, and citizenship education programme. A variety of activities is used to develop pupils' understanding of citizenship issues and to promote communication skills using approaches such as debate, group discussion, role-play and pupil presentations. Some subject departments make a good contribution to citizenship education. For example in geography, there is substantial treatment of issues such as the deforestation of the rainforest and exploitation of poorer countries. In religious education, pupils discuss topics such as abortion and euthanasia. Physical education makes a good contribution as pupils reflect upon the process of participation in sports on health, and negotiate roles in activities. Assemblies also contribute to citizenship education, for example an assembly on fair trade was seen during the inspection. There is also participation in voting for a Youth Parliament. All year groups adopt a charity and fundraise during the year. Pupils have recently been involved in designing a memorial garden for a greatly respected former teacher who died in 2003. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, as many departments across the curriculum do not consistently give enough emphasis to citizenship education in an extended fashion. In particular there is insufficient attention paid to developing pupils' skills of enquiry. Assessment procedures have been introduced where pupils assess their own development in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills. This system depends upon teachers informing pupils when topics and skills relate to citizenship. At present the system is not being operated consistently.
126. Leadership and management are both satisfactory. Contributions by individual subjects have been mapped out to complement the provision in PESCHE. However, there is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the overall programme to ensure consistently complete and effective implementation. This is particularly the case in Years 10 and 11,

where there are fewer core subjects to complement the provision in PESCHE. Planning is in place to strengthen the cross-curricular element of citizenship and ensure coherent and full implementation across all year groups.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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