

INSPECTION REPORT

Quintin Kynaston

London

LEA area: Westminster

Unique Reference Number: 101149

Headteacher: Mr Nick Kemp

Reporting inspector: Mr Calvin Pike

Dates of inspection: 8th to 12th February 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 704649

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996.

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
Type of control:	Local Authority
Age range of students:	11 to 18
Gender of students:	Mixed
School address:	Marlborough Hill, St. John's Wood, London, NW8 0NL
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Appropriate authority:	Westminster
Name of chair of governors:	Patrick Lees
Date of previous inspection:	22 nd February 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Norma Ball Lay Inspector	Supporting mathematics and English	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and students' welfare
Roger Perkins	Mathematics	Assessment
Lionel Farraway	English	Supporting SEN
David Shirley	Science	Curriculum
Vivian Harrison	Design technology Information technology	Learning resources and accommodation
Roger Bailess	Modern foreign languages	Staffing
John Carnaghan	History	Key Stage 4
Michael Naish	Geography	Sixth form
Marjorie Glynn-Jones	Music, art	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Teaching is almost always sound and frequently good
- The vast majority of sixth form teaching is good and results compare well with those achieved in similar schools
- Progress in lessons is good in the sixth form and often good in Key Stage (KS) 3
- Attainment at the end of KS3 and 4 in 1998 was in line with that of similar schools for the percentage of students who had been in the school since the start of their secondary career
- The school's ethos is an exceptionally positive one, focused on enabling students to attain well
- The school's provision enhances the successful moral, social and cultural development of all students of its multi-cultural population
- Students are guided sensitively in their personal development
- There is good management of the school's finances
- Staff and resources are deployed and used effectively
- The school is well-led with an evident commitment to continued improvement and the development of all students

Where the school has weaknesses

- Attainment is low compared to national averages, especially in KS3 and in Year (Y) 11
- Girls attained a significantly lower percentage of higher grade GCSEs than boys in 1998
- The use of assessment to inform the planning of the curriculum is limited
- Attendance levels are unsatisfactory overall and poor in KS4; punctuality to school is poor
- The use of targets to raise standards is underdeveloped
- Statutory requirements are not met for assessment in music, art and physical education, for the provision of information technology in Y11 and religious education across the school, and there are some gaps in the Governors' Annual Report to parents

The school has more strengths than weaknesses. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses identified during the inspection are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of students at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made good progress in most areas since the last inspection. Improvements have involved taking clear steps to improve standards in Y7-9, including the introduction of a reading programme for Y7 which is having a positive impact on standards. The proportion of students entered for GCSE has increased and clear reasons are now required when students are not entered for examinations. The introduction of a Faculty structure, including a Learning Support Department, has begun to organise more clearly the support for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and those whose first language is not English, but the links between support staff and subject teachers are not yet sufficiently well developed. All teachers now receive accurate data on students' levels of attainment but this information is used unevenly to plan subsequent lessons at present. A cycle of monitoring of departments by the senior management team is now

firmly established with outcomes leading to appropriate changes. The school's aims have been reviewed and are being implemented well. The budget deficit of the last inspection has been removed, improvements in accommodation and staffing have been made and the school has made strategic plans to ensure that its financial needs are addressed through a period of anticipated increase in numbers of students on roll. Significant progress has been made in improving attendance levels, although they are still low, and satisfactory progress has been made to reduce exclusions. The school is well placed to maintain these levels of improvement.

Standards in subjects

The following table shows standards achieved by 14, 16 and 18 year olds in national tests, GCSE and A/AS-level examinations:

Performance in 1998 in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar ¹ schools	Key
Key Stage 3 tests	E	D	<i>Well above average A</i>
GCSE Examinations	E	D	<i>Above average B</i>
A/AS-levels	D		<i>Average C</i>
			<i>Below average D</i>
			<i>Well below average E</i>

Results in KS3 were below national averages in mathematics and well below them in English and science. They were below average in comparison with students from similar backgrounds in English and science and broadly average in mathematics. The attainment of students who have been in the school from the start of their secondary education was in line with similar schools, although the overall results were below these averages.

The strongest subjects at GCSE were information technology, drama, ceramics, drawing and painting; English and music were consistently the weakest subjects. GCSE results are worse than schools of similar types because of the number of students who enter and leave the school within any one key stage, creating unusually complex challenges to ensure continuity and progression in learning; levels of attendance and punctuality are low; an extremely high percentage of students come from homes which are socially or economically deprived; and – whilst the school's improvements have been many – target-setting based on a continuous review of what students know, can do and understand is underdeveloped. Nonetheless, the average total GCSE point score per student shows a rising trend, broadly in line with the trend nationally. The attainment of students who have been in the school from the start of their secondary education is in line with similar schools, but the percentage of higher grades obtained by girls is significantly lower than those gained by boys.

In the sixth form, results are in line with schools of its kind. Students who studied for GNVQ courses in 1998 completed them successfully. Of the students who left school aged 17 in summer 1998, 83 per cent went on to a course in higher education.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Years 7-9	Good	modern foreign languages, history, music, drama	science
Years 10-11	Good	modern foreign languages, art, music, drama	physical education
Sixth form	Good	English, science	
English	Sound		
Mathematics	Sound		

¹ Please note the unusual combination of influences on the school's work described in the 'Characteristics' section of the main report.

Teaching was at least satisfactory in 93 per cent of lessons; in 48 per cent it was good or better and in 11 per cent it was very good. Most of the 7 per cent of lessons in which teaching was unsatisfactory were in Y10 and Y11.

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Satisfactory. Little evidence of bullying. The number of exclusions has been reduced.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory overall and poor in KS4. School works hard to promote good attendance and punctuality. Attendance has increased annually.
Ethos*	Extremely positive. Supportive environment. Harmonious relationships which encourage learning.
Leadership and management	Strongly led and effective in managing change. Diligent, highly committed and well-respected. Senior team provides clear direction, planning, coherent structures for delivery and monitoring approaches. Sound middle management.
Curriculum	Appropriately broad and balanced to address range of needs but some inequalities of opportunity. Statutory requirements are not fully met.
Students with special educational needs	Make good progress. Effective provision from support teachers but their needs are unevenly met by subject teachers. Code of Practice requirements are addressed but appropriate information is not contained in Governors' Annual Report to parents.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good. Moral, social and cultural development particularly effective through excellence of relationships, racial harmony and mutual respect.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good. Teachers are appropriately qualified and effectively deployed. Resources adequate and well-used. Accommodation well planned, managed and used to the maximum.
Value for money	Although standards overall are low, value for money is satisfactory.

* Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.

The parents' view of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
The school is friendly and easy to approach with questions or problems	Inconsistency in the provision of homework
The positive values which the school promotes	The information provided by the school about what is taught
The rich range of extra-curricular activities beyond daily lessons	
Students like school	

The inspectors support the parents' good views of the school. Considering areas the parents are not happy about, the inspectors find homework is set regularly and used to improve standards and that parents are provided with a good range of information about the curriculum, including key stage booklets which summarise provision and supportive, curriculum-focused events for parents.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To maintain the improvement since the last inspection and to continue to raise standards the governors and senior management team should:

- I raise attainment by sharpening the focus on standards and refining approaches the school is now developing to cater for the needs of the complete ability range, especially in Key Stage 3 and at the end of Key Stage 4 (paragraphs 6, 54, 85, 86, 89)
- II share, across all departments, the very good teaching in the school which consistently promotes students' progress (paragraphs 34, 35, 37, 38, 40)
- III build on improvements in assessment by using data more fully to refine objectives for all students (paragraphs 37, 42, 51, 54, 55, 56, 57)
- IV attend to the disparity of results between boys and girls in 1998 and ensure that girls attain higher grades at GCSE (paragraphs 7, 14, 19)
- V use guidance and information provided by the Learning Support department to refine teaching and learning in all departments of the school (paragraph 42, 51, 56, 85, 89)
- VI improve attendance and punctuality still further (paragraphs 31, 32, 69, 70)
- VII address statutory requirements for information technology in Year 11, religious education throughout the school, for assessment and for completion of the Governors' Annual Report to parents (paragraphs 43, 44, 48, 56, 76, 89)

Minor issues

- I there is inconsistent practice in registering students at the start of the afternoon sessions (paragraph 69)
- II the use of information technology is insufficiently planned across the curriculum and full use is not made of existing resources (paragraphs 188, 189)
- III planning does not consistently ensure consistency and progression of learning (paragraphs 37, 43, 50, 52)
- IV provision for students with special educational needs when working in whole class groups is not always built on available information concerning the individual needs of students (paragraphs 24, 42, 51, 85, 89)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. The school is in an attractive residential area of St John's Wood in the Lords Ward of Westminster, although few students² come from the immediate locality. Instead they travel from a wide area, often crossing sections of London to attend. The school's buildings are attractive and have been improved significantly since the last inspection. There are extensive grounds for an inner city school including games facilities on-site. From 1994 to 1998, the number of students attending Quintin Kynaston has reduced annually: it has increased however in 1998/9. 790 students currently attend Quintin Kynaston, smaller than the average size school of similar types at 915. Serious budgetary difficulties highlighted in the previous inspection report have been overcome in the last three years. Moreover, projected numbers of students for future years show a continued increase in roll, partly as a result of the closer working links developing with a number of local primary schools.
2. The school's population has predominantly more boys than girls in all years except in Y13. Its students come from a very wide range of socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds. The largest single group is of English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish descent who make up approximately one third of the roll. The next largest group is of Afro-Caribbean origin followed by those of Bangladeshi background. In addition to English, 49 languages are spoken.
3. The percentage of students identified as having special needs including the percentage with statements of special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. However, 63 per cent of the school's total intake come from homes where English is not the first language, which is very high and the percentage of students eligible for free school meals is also well above the national average. In addition, the number of students who enter and leave the school within any one key stage is very high compared with the national average. The combination of these factors presents the school with a very unusual combination of challenges, especially considering that a significant number of students arrive with troubled personal backgrounds or experiences of war-torn lives in countries outside Britain. The school's response to these factors is exceptional, ensuring not only a secure and mutually respectful environment but one which is clearly focused on enabling all students to achieve well for their futures.
4. The profile of students in the current Y7 has changed slightly with fewer students eligible for free school meals and a marginal improvement in the average reading scores. The school recognises the need to amend its expectations in the light of these changes. Its aims are clear, stated explicitly and alive in its day to day work. They are appropriately directed at raising attainment throughout the school, based to a large extent on the issues of the school's previous OFSTED inspection.

5. Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 3

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	72	62	134

National Curriculum (NC) Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of students at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	19	24	18
	Girls	31	24	24
	Total	50	48	42
Percentage at NC School Level 5 or above	School	38 (33)	36 (33)	31 (26)
	National	65 (56)	60 (60)	56 (60)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	9 (10)	17 (10)	13 (9)
	National	34 (23)	36 (37)	27 (29)

² At Quintin Kynaston pupils of all ages are referred to as 'students'.

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of students at NC Level 5 or above	Boys	11	22	21
	Girls	28	23	22
	Total	39	45	43
Percentage at NC School Level 5 or above	School	30 (31)	34 (33)	32 (47)
	National	na (60)	na (63)	na (61)
Percentage at NC Level 6 or above	School	10 (8)	16 (8)	13 (12)
	National	na (28)	na (37)	na (89)

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year
na - data not available at time of inspection

Attainment at Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	65	51	116

GCSE Results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Number of students achieving standard specified	Boys	16	42	54
	Girls	8	40	45
	Total	24	82	99
Percentage achieving standard specified	School	21 (19)	71 (61)	85 (85)
	National	44.4 (43)	89.6 (88)	95.1 (94)

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Attainment in the Sixth Form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 entered for GCE A/AS examination in the latest reporting year

Year	Male	Female	Total
1998	19	18	37

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	16.6	15.3	16.1 (15.2)	4	0	4 (2)
National	na	na	17.5 (18.3)	na	na	2.8 (3.2)

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year
na - data not available at time of inspection

Number in final year of approved vocational qualifications and percentage of such students who achieved these qualifications:

	Number	% success rate
School	31	81
National		na

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year

		%
Authorised Absence	School	7.16
	National comparative data	7.9
Unauthorised Absence	School	4.19
	National comparative data	1.1

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of students (of statutory school age) during the previous year

	Number
Fixed period	122
Permanent	16

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is

	%
Very good or better	11
Satisfactory or better	93
Less than satisfactory	7

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

6. In the Key Stage 3 (KS3) national curriculum assessments at the end of Year 9 (Y9) in 1998, students' attainments across the cohort were below national averages in mathematics and well below them in English and science. In English and science attainment was below average in comparison with schools with students from similar backgrounds but close to that of students in similar schools in mathematics tests.
7. In the same year, the percentage of students gaining 5 or more A* to C grades at GCSE was below the national averages but in line with pupils in schools with similar backgrounds. The percentage of students gaining 5 or more A* to G grades and 1 or more A* to G grade was below averages nationally and compared to schools with students of similar backgrounds. Girls attained a significantly lower percentage of higher GCSE grades than boys. Overall GCSE point scores were well below the national average and below those attained by students with similar backgrounds. In English, mathematics and science the percentage attaining A* to C grades was lower than both those of similar schools and all schools nationally. Post-16 results in 1998 showed that the average points score of students entered for two or more A-levels or equivalent was below the national average. Students following General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) courses achieved successful outcomes.
8. A significant characteristic of the school is that the percentage of students who join and leave it within any one key stage is considerably higher than the average for schools nationally. The attainment of students who remained in the school from the start of their secondary school career was close to the national average for similar schools at the end of KS3, KS4 and the sixth form in 1998.
9. Based on observations, analysis of completed work and discussions with students, attainment for the majority of students at the end of KS3 (Y9) is currently below national expectations in English, mathematics and science. In other subjects by the end of the key stage attainment is in line with expectations in design technology, information technology, art, music, drama and physical education; it is below expectations in geography, modern foreign languages and religious education and well below expectations in history. At the end of KS4 (Y11), attainment levels are above average in drama and information technology and in line with expectations in art but below expectations in other subjects and well below them in geography. At the end of the sixth form attainment levels are in line with the range of expectations for students studying A-level and GNVQs.
10. Levels of numeracy used across the curriculum in KS3 and KS4 are generally unsatisfactory. Most students' mental arithmetic skills are limited although more able students in KS3 can solve equations and substitute formulae and, in KS4, they can use and interpret data well. Students use number skills to support their work across the age groups. In Y7 for example they showed skills in producing graphs of different religions and in Y9 used percentage calculations to compare the properties of materials in design technology. Older students presented their calculations of car-hire charges effectively and sixth form students were confident in their use of number when analysing questionnaires in a GNVQ course.

11. The literacy skills of most students in KS3 and KS4 are below national expectations. In KS3 oral skills are underdeveloped whereas in KS4 more able students are able to organise and express their ideas more fluently. By contrast standards of reading for most students are in line with the national expectation by the end of KS3, partly because the school's scheme in Y7 and the silent reading session introduced by the school are effective in raising reading standards overall. Writing skill of writing are below national expectation by the end of KS3 and KS4. Although students are given good opportunities to write in a range of different styles and for different purposes, standards in both key stages are depressed by weaknesses in understanding of basic grammar, spelling and punctuation.
12. In science, although attainment is below the national average, students know basic concepts such as those related to food webs and chemical changes. They show skills in recording and have sound skills of investigation but are less often able to apply this knowledge and skill to enhance understanding overall.
13. In other subject areas, students most often develop sound knowledge but lack understanding of key ideas and principles related to subjects. In geography, for example, limited understanding of ratio impeded progress in working on a population topic. In other areas, whilst their basic skills are secure, students are less able to apply these skills to reinforce understanding or trigger higher attainment levels. In modern foreign languages, for example, listening skills are better developed than reading and writing skills and although oral responses are a strength, few students can provide extended answers which involve a more developed use of verbs or tenses. By contrast, in art, students are able to review work with confidence and offer sound criticisms even though they do not use technical language sufficiently. In the sixth form, students' skills, knowledge and understanding are generally much more appropriate for the age range across all subjects. In GNVQ business studies students can discuss business placement experiences with growing self-confidence, write clear reports of their experience and amend their own action plans in the light of the experiences. In art, students show good higher order thinking and research skills applying them to new contents and writing about them with consideration to produce lively and exciting accounts. Overall a significant weakness in literacy skills, especially of students new, not only to the school but the country, have a negative impact on standards attained overall.
14. In most subjects of the school boys attain higher standards than girls in examinations although this feature was not evident in lessons observed. This reversal of the national picture is evident in end of KS3 tests and in examination results at the end of KS4: it is not evident in the sixth form. In lessons, though there are considerably fewer girls than boys in most year groups, the attainment of boys and girls is not significantly different. The school does not monitor trends in attainment of its socially and culturally diverse populations. In examinations and lessons there were no significant differences in attainment related to ethnic minorities in the school.
15. Students of different abilities generally attain appropriately considering their prior attainment and experience. Students with SEN make good progress and attain well, especially in withdrawal groups or when assisted by support staff in whole-class groups. The smaller percentage of higher attaining students in the school most often reach appropriate levels of attainment in most subjects. In English for example they can organise their thoughts and speak fluently and articulately. Students in top sets in mathematics interpret vectors and use theorems with confidence. Higher attaining science students in KS3 can relate temperature change to energy transfer and in KS4 they could use apparatus well to demonstrate and measure the relationships between speed and time.
16. The attainment of students whose first language is other than English is sound when taught by specialist teachers, especially considering their previous knowledge of English. A Y12 group followed and adhered to work experience documentation used by the rest of the age group even though their knowledge of English was limited. By contrast, in some subject lessons, attainment was below the levels of understanding they demonstrated, either because the work set was insufficiently demanding, or the skills needed by the student to complete the work well were not taught or reinforced by the subject teacher.
17. The attainment of the majority of students on entry to the school is below national average. Although there is a range of ability levels present, highest attaining students are under-represented. Moreover, even when students demonstrate clear abilities and confidence, their attainment is often depressed as a

result of limited understanding and use of language or the difficulties of being temporary members of the school. Attainment levels in KS3 and KS4 and at the end of Y9 and Y11 are directly related to the combination of an unusually high percentage of students whose first language is not English; of students who have joined and sometimes leave the school within any one key stage; and, of students whose backgrounds are socially or economically disadvantaged.

18. Most students make satisfactory progress despite test and examination results at the end of KS3 and KS4 respectively being below and sometimes well below national averages. Considered over a period of time, progress is good in the sixth form, sound in KS3 but unsatisfactory in KS4. The unsatisfactory progress in Y10 and Y11 is closely related to students' levels of attendance, as well as the percentage of students who join the school in this key stage, often from circumstances which have seriously impeded learning in previous years.
19. End of KS3 tests over the three years to 1998 show a drop in average levels of attainment in English for boys, but improvements from 1997 to 1998 for girls. Mathematics and science test results for both boys and girls have much improved since the last inspection. At the end of KS4 the total GCSE point score per student showed a rising trend, broadly in line with the rising trend nationally. The pattern of progress varies between subjects taught. In drama, science and information technology, for example, the proportion of students achieving A* to C and A* to G grade passes has risen in the last three years, and in design technology there has been improvement in A* to C grades gained. In mathematics, results in 1998 showed an improvement from the previous year. In art, high standards noted in the last inspection have been maintained. By contrast, in history there has been a decline in examination results. This is partly as a result of many students' limited literacy skills. It is also because the timetabling of history and geography in blocks reduces continuity of learning, exacerbating problems associated with limited recall for some students.
20. A-level and GNVQ results have improved: the average A/AS level points score of students entered for two or more A-levels or equivalent has remained below the national average, but the number of students entered has increased annually and the extent of difference between the school and national averages has reduced since 1996. Moreover, although only limited progress is evident when considering overall results, the school's intake has continued to change. The progress made by some groups of students in the school for only a limited period, whose results would not be evident in national examinations – such as refugee students learning English and following the full curriculum – is good.
21. Scrutiny of work, discussions with students and observations of lessons and other activities, show that students make satisfactory progress, largely due to the quality of teaching provided. In nearly half the lessons seen progress was sound and in a further two-fifths it was good. In a small proportion, progress was very good. Progress was most consistent in Y9 and Y12: it was least consistent in the lessons observed in Y10 and Y11.
22. Across the subject areas students progress their skills and consolidate experience and knowledge satisfactorily in most lessons across the key stages in mathematics, information technology and science. In art lessons, progress in both key stages is at least satisfactory and often good. In design technology progress is sound in KS3 and good in most lessons in KS4. In English and geography students make sound progress in KS3. In KS4, they make poor progress in English because learning is so interrupted by levels of attendance, whereas in geography unsatisfactory progress is more closely related to weaknesses in the pace and level of completion of work in lessons. In history, progress is unsatisfactory in KS3 but sound in KS4 and good post-16. In music, it is satisfactory and often good in lessons but unsatisfactory over a period of time. This is because planning does not build sufficiently well from one unit of work to the next, especially in developing listening skills. In modern languages, progress is sound in KS3 but unsatisfactory in KS4, partly as a result of the number of students joining through the key stage without similar language provision. Most students made satisfactory progress in lessons observed in physical education but over time progress is unsatisfactory. This is because students do not retain skills gained in individual lessons sufficiently well, a problem exacerbated by limited time for physical education, changes in staffing and the number of students who join and leave the school within a key stage. In religious education, although students made sound progress in lessons observed, their progress across the key stages is unsatisfactory, particularly because there is insufficient teaching time in Y7-10 and the subject is not time-tabled from Y11 to Y13.

23. Sixth form students most often made good progress in pursuing A-level and GNVQ courses. In design technology A-level, for example, students acquired important skills of colour application in project work and GNVQ business studies students made very good progress in reflecting on the work placement experiences, writing evaluations of them and refining their personal action plans for the future.
24. Students with SEN make good progress overall. Although they progress well when supported by special needs staff, when taught by only the subject teacher their progress is less consistent as the requirements for students with SEN are not always suitably planned for or supported in whole class groups. Similarly, students with other than English as a first language make good progress, especially in the early stages of learning English, when taught by specialist teachers. For example, a group of Y12 students made good progress in developing their oral and written language skills well when following up their work placements in discussion led by a specialist teacher of the school. In another lesson, students with more limited knowledge of English developed their spoken language well in an 'English as a foreign language lesson' provided by a visiting specialist to focus on speaking skills.
25. Since the last inspection, attainment remains below national averages overall but there has been some limited improvement in results. The school has made clear efforts to respond effectively to the issues of attainment highlighted in the previous report: it remains appropriately concerned to refine practice to address known and unanticipated challenges of the future in order to ensure the majority of students attain appropriately for their ages and prior attainment.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

26. Students' attitudes, behaviour and personal development have improved since the last inspection report. Although relatively high, the number of exclusions has reduced from 314 to 151 with boys dominating both fixed term and permanent exclusion profile overall. Students' attitudes to learning are satisfactory. Students' relationships and their personal development are good. Parents appreciate that students like and show positive attitudes towards school.
27. In the majority of classes across all subjects students stay on task and show a positive attitude to their work. Good attitudes were especially evident in the sixth form. Most students respond promptly to teachers. Students work co-operatively in groups and develop independent learning and research skills – for example, in using the library before and after school as well as during the day for research and private study. In some cases, although students show interest in their work they do not always show concern to complete it, or pride in presenting it well.
28. Students generally listen well to each other. They show respect and appreciation for the contribution others make to the lesson. Some students do not always show confidence in joining in discussions, although students who speak other than English as a first language are encouraged and keen to extend their oral skills. The majority of students use resources well and show care in handling instruments and equipment such as science and in music.
29. Behaviour in and around the school is satisfactory. In most lessons students behave well. Corridors and stairways can be congested at lesson change times and the popularity of the cafeteria at lunch-time can lead to long queues: in both contexts students remain calm and tolerant. The behaviour of a few students around the school can be both physically and verbally aggressive, but these are exceptions to the good standards usually shown. Bullying occurs in the form of name calling and unkind comments. Students are expected to report incidents of bullying; they know that these are followed up effectively by staff. Students are aware of the school's well displayed rules. They respect personal property and there are few reported incidents of theft or vandalism.
30. The personal development of students is good. They take responsibilities within lessons and in whole school activities. All age groups have been fully involved, for example, in the development of the behaviour policy through discussions in form groups and in the School Council. Similarly, older students have taken lead roles in linking with industries and in the Young Enterprise initiatives, such as in recently promoting the publication of sensitive prose and poetry written by students of the school.

Attendance

31. Since the previous inspection average attendance has increased annually, but attendance figures remain well below the national average for secondary schools. Attendance is unsatisfactory overall and poor in KS4; punctuality to school is poor.
32. The school has a planned strategic approach to improving attendance: this is having a positive effect. Average attendance has increased annually to 88.6 per cent for the last school year. For the most recent term the school statistics show attendance has passed 90 per cent for all year groups except Y10, giving a 91.2 per cent average. Unauthorised absence remains high at 4.2 per cent compared to the national average of 1.1 per cent. The majority of students attend school well: the school's relatively low attendance rates are as a result of the poor attendance of a small number of students.
33. Punctuality to school is poor. A number of students in every year group show a persistent pattern of late arrival. Most late arrival is contained within the tutor time at the start of the day, but there is some loss of teaching time and disruption to lessons by a few students who are very late in reaching school. Poor punctuality is closely related to the school's wide catchment area and the uncertainties of public transport. During the inspection, for example, disruption to the tube service in north London resulted in a large number of students arriving late. Nonetheless, a significant number of students continue to disregard the need to arrive at school on time. Punctuality to lessons is mostly good but some delays can arise from the nature of the site and difficult lesson transfer routes as well as congestion in corridors and on stairways.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

34. The quality of teaching is almost always sound and frequently good. This has a positive impact on promoting the learning of all students. The last inspection report identified a high proportion of unsatisfactory and poor teaching in the school. This serious weakness has been addressed well, partly as a result of some changes in staffing.
35. The teaching observed was of a very good quality in a tenth of lessons observed, good in over a third and satisfactory in almost all others seen. Particular strengths of teaching across the school relate to teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects being taught, their management of students and good planning for individual lessons. This was enhanced by the strong and productive relationships between students and their teachers.
36. In KS3 teaching most often had good features in Y7 and Y9 where planning was most often closely related to the range of students' needs. In the sixth form teaching was most often of a good quality as the range of methods and organisation adopted enabled students to develop not only knowledge of the subject but also a range of thinking, presentation and research skills. In KS4, whilst the quality of teaching was rarely unsatisfactory, there were fewer instances of good teaching. This was influenced by the number of students entering the school at this key stage and the range of challenges which they present, as well as the difficulties in trying to ensure continuity of learning presented by unsatisfactory attendance levels in Y10 and Y11.
37. Teaching most often addresses the needs of lower attaining students and those with special needs, but planning by subject teachers does not consistently focus on the particular difficulties experienced by some students. When these students are supported by special needs staff or specialist language teachers in the classroom or in withdrawal groups, the quality of their teaching is mostly good. The quality of teaching promotes learning for the highest attaining students, although the range of tasks in which they are involved does not provide sufficient opportunities to extend written skills, develop research and organisational skills or reinforce knowledge. Expectations are generally sufficiently high for students joining the school within a key stage. By contrast, overall planning for students who are in the school throughout their career has not provided a firm enough foundation in some subjects – such as music and physical education – to ensure consistency and progression of learning overall. In addition, although teachers' plans for individual lessons are sound in most subjects, they are not always refined by assessment of students' learning from one lesson to the next.

38. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers manage students effectively and use available resources well. Only in isolated examples did teachers lack attention to the need to ensure resources were adequate or organize students to make appropriate progress. In a science lesson, for example, lack of appropriate equipment at the start of the lesson caused delays and disquiet, reduced the pace of the lesson overall and also incurred disruption and inattentiveness which was took too long to resolve. By contrast, the use of the target foreign language, high expectations and good pace in modern foreign languages directly contributed to students' high levels of motivation and good quality of learning.
39. Teachers organize students in a range of ways giving them opportunity for learning in groups, pairs and as individuals. In the best lessons students are given continuous feedback and support to improve their work. Formal tutorial sessions in the sixth form, for example in business studies and in art, give excellent support to students in reflecting on their own practice and performance and in ways to improve still further. Such feedback is less often provided for younger students, especially in Y7. As a result students are not always as clear of their strengths or of future targets. When students are required to work in groups, teachers organize this well, encouraging students to evaluate their work openly and constructively and to understand ways in which they might take responsibility for their own learning and progress. These features were evident in a composing class in music and in a Y8 session based on the theme of Awareness in drama.
40. Although parents expressed some concerns related to the setting of homework by teachers, inspectors did not share this viewpoint because homework is set in most areas of the curriculum and is used to promote learning well. In design technology, for example, homework is used to extend classwork as well as to engage students in research activity. In business studies, Y11 students worked well at individual homework assignments designed to enhance course work, establish greater confidence in liaising with employers, or in researching work opportunities and employee attitudes.
41. Teachers and students enjoy excellent relationships focused closely on raising attainment. Students, as well as parents prior to the inspection, recognise the level of commitment shown from teachers – as evident in a range of extra-curricular activities which take place after school, at weekends and in some holiday periods. Students are keen to underline their appreciation of this work and of the particular care staff take to accommodate the wide range of social and economic needs represented in the school. Such working relationships have a powerful and significant impact on the quality of learning, the atmosphere in classrooms, the ethos of the school, and the standards attained.
42. Teaching of students with SEN is generally at least sound and promotes appropriate standards. The support given by staff in the Learning Support Department and specialist English as an Additional Language (EAL) staff is consistently good. When students with special needs are unsupported by a teacher or assistant in mainstream classes, teaching is more variable as it does not always take account of the particular range of needs present in the classroom.

The curriculum and assessment

The curriculum

43. The school has made clear progress in developing the curriculum since the last inspection. The school's planning of the curriculum has a positive impact on standards achieved by most students, but it is unsatisfactory overall as a result of weaknesses in provision in KS3 and KS4. The curriculum's strengths are evident in the breadth and balance of provision across most areas of the national curriculum and in the additional courses in KS4 and the sixth form, especially considering the school's multi-cultural population and the range of prior attainment of its population. This includes provision for personal and social education throughout the school. Given the number of students who enter and leave the school within a key stage, a strong feature of the curriculum is also evident in the provision for students whose first language is not English and for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) when supported by specialist staff. Weaknesses in the curriculum relate to a lack of fulfillment of statutory requirements for religious education, particularly in Y11 and the sixth form, and for information technology in KS4. In addition, there are some inequalities of opportunity for students in Y7 and for students with SEN when working in full classes without specialist support. Moreover, time allocated for each subject of the curriculum does not always reflect recommendations. In some cases the

timetabling of lessons creates additional challenges in ensuring that students retain knowledge and skills over an extended period of time.

44. **In Key Stage 3**, the curriculum is sufficiently broad but there is an imbalance of provision overall. Whilst all subjects of the National Curriculum (NC) are taught together with social education, the time allocated to religious education is insufficient to teach the Agreed Syllabus fully. This insufficiency is evident in Y7 and Y9, where religious education is taught separately and in Y8 where it is taught within the social education programme. This breach of statutory requirements was identified in the last inspection. Elsewhere there is unevenness in balance between subjects provided. The allocation of time to music and to physical education is below recommendations but mathematics and art have more time than is recommended. These features have a negative impact on curriculum planning particularly in terms of ensuring continuity and progression of learning. Additionally, some students in Y7 are withdrawn from subjects, in rotation, for two periods a week for the development of their literacy skills; whilst they make clear gains from the additional support provided, their learning of the subjects from which they are withdrawn is impeded as a result.
45. **In Key Stage 4**, all the subjects required by the NC are taught but weaknesses in provision relate to the absence of religious education for Y11 and the limited time allocation for information technology in Y10 and Y11, as it is offered only as a GCSE half course. As a result, statutory requirements are not met for religious education or information technology in this key stage. In addition, modern language is offered for only two periods per week and scheduled as a double period. This has a negative impact on standards attained as students have to concentrate for a double lesson period then retain knowledge and skills acquired for a whole week without further opportunity to practice. In the current Y10, 22 students who are not studying a modern foreign language are disapplied from NC.
46. As well as GCSE courses, students are offered Part 1 GNVQs in either product design and manufacturing or business studies. The quality of GNVQ provision is good and standards are sound. Students are enthusiastic and the quality of teaching is good. In a business studies lesson, for example, excellent support and guidance was given to students following up a work-based assignment. Students in the current Y11 have a more limited choice but can study a second foreign language: those who do so benefit from it. A significant minority of students do not enter the examinations at the end of KS4 but the school has recently introduced a policy to reduce non-entry.
47. The **Sixth Form** curriculum offers a balanced range of academic (A-level) and vocational (GNVQ) subjects, matching the needs of the post-16 cohort. Further breadth is added by the provision of General Studies at GCSE and by social education for all students. An access course focusing on literacy is provided for bilingual students which can lead to an award. Where demand for a subject is too low, good opportunities are used to enable students to travel to other institutions for these subjects.
48. The sixth form curriculum is mainly well-planned and flexible, although it fails to make provision for religious education. It allows students to choose from a range of academic and vocational courses. Y12 students can choose GNVQ Intermediate levels in business studies or in science and GNVQ Advanced level in business studies. A-level courses include English, maths, separate sciences, history, general studies and information technology. The GNVQ courses are a strength of the curriculum in providing a continuous vocational route for students from Y10. These courses are well-managed and effectively organised. Students receive a high level of academic and personal support. Teaching is most often of a good quality and levels of attainment and progress made by students are good.
49. Throughout the school, the social education programme is comprehensive, covering health and sex education, drugs-related issues and careers education. It is appropriately balanced across the key stages except in Y8 where time allocated to social education and religious education is shared. The result is that there is too little time to teach the Agreed Syllabus in religious education and time for social education is limited with a consequent negative impact on standards. The school has close links with outside agencies: these regularly provide visiting specialists to participate effectively in lessons. Sex education is taught successfully through the social education programme and the science curriculum.

50. Apart from a lack of religious education, students have equal access and opportunities to the curriculum in the sixth form but there are shortcomings in the previous key stages. KS3 students, in groups withdrawn from lessons in rotation, gain from for the literacy programme. Parents at the pre-inspection parents' meeting expressed their concern about this arrangement. Whilst there are clear benefits to students from the school's programme for developing literacy skills, the inspectors also found that students are denied equal access and opportunity to the full range of the curriculum as a result of organisation of the programme. Furthermore, additional demands on teachers are made to ensure progress and continuity of learning in the subject from which students are withdrawn because the class group does not remain constant from one lesson to the next. In KS4, students are currently denied the opportunity to study information technology in Y11 so cannot take the full GCSE course and do not have access to a religious education programme.
51. The school has a significantly higher proportion of students with EAL than the national average. A minority of students with low levels of attainment in English have recently entered the school in all year groups. The school provides appropriate challenges for these students. Learning support is successfully given by the school's own specialist staff and by teachers from the Local Education Authority. In addition, other teachers from different departments have taken short EAL courses to prepare their teaching better. Provision for students with SEN is made through the close collaboration of the Learning Support and subject departments. Their individual education plans are carefully prepared, involve parents and appropriate outside agencies, and meet statutory requirements. Whilst provision is most often good when students with SEN are taught in withdrawal groups or when supported by specialists in full classes, it is more variable when they are taught only by subject teachers. This is because of the inconsistency of use of information provided by the Learning Support department by subject teachers in planning individual lessons. The staff available to support students with SEN and EAL difficulties enhance the quality of teaching and progress made by students in the school as a whole.
52. Planning for progress and continuity across the curriculum is satisfactory at KS3 and KS4 although there are some weaknesses in some subjects, such as music, and teachers' plans for individual lessons do not always use assessment information fully. There is close liaison with some feeder schools, but the amount and quality of information about new entrants varies. It is adequate in the majority of subjects but insufficient in history, information technology, art and music. All subjects have comprehensive schemes of work that promote satisfactory continuity from year to year. By contrast, some lesson plans insufficiently match work set to the range of students' prior attainment in mixed ability classes. This has a detrimental effect on progress as some students are not always sufficiently well challenged. In the sixth form, good continuity is achieved through the detailed nature of planning and monitoring, especially in GNVQ courses.
53. The school has a good range of extra-curricular activities to engage students' intellectual, sporting and leisure interests. There is a wide programme of lunch-time and after-school activities that include sport, information technology, science, French, history, geography and other curriculum areas. In sport, both boys and girls participate in football, basketball and hockey, for which there are inter-form competitions. Other school-based activities include chess, draughts and scrabble. Outside visits to museums, art galleries and field courses further enhance curriculum support. Provision for careers education and guidance is good. In addition to the provision within social education, guidance is given through subject departments and interviews.
54. Departments analyse data, including that related to student progress, by gender but not by ethnicity. Over the last three years the amount of assessment data available has grown but this is not always used fully to help plan the grouping of students, the curriculum, or individual lessons in a number of departments.

Assessment

55. Arrangements for assessing students' attainment are satisfactory at KS3 and good at KS4 and in the sixth form. The use of assessment to help teachers plan future work is unsatisfactory at KS3 and 4 but good in the sixth form. The school has made satisfactory progress overall since the 1996 OFSTED inspection. The school now regularly accumulates useful data about each student such as KS2 and KS3

test levels, and EAL and SEN stages. This is provided to help each subject teacher in planning their future work. Nearly all staff are familiar with this information but it is not used consistently.

56. All students are formally assessed twice each year in every subject for effort, progress, homework and attainment. This provides the background information for setting students' targets. It is understood by students and used well by staff in some subjects, for example in geography and modern languages. The log and personal action plan used by GNVQ students is particularly effective. Teachers use NC levels for attainment correctly for most subjects, but the internally devised levels for art, music and physical education at KS3 are inappropriate and do not meet statutory requirements. The performance grades given for religious education are not in line with school policy. Teachers mark students' work conscientiously but the quality of comments and follow-up is patchy. There is an effective system for moderating students' work across the school twice each year.
57. Students with SEN and those with EAL are assessed and helped effectively by support staff. Their individual educational plans are produced thoroughly but there is too little direct involvement of subject staff in this process. Although teachers generally make sound use of all the information the school provides to devise suitable activities for different groups of students in mixed ability classes, they are not yet at the stage of fully meeting the needs of individual students within these classes.
58. The school is making satisfactory headway in analysing performance data to find out the extent to which different groups of students make progress in different subjects as they move through the school, for example by gender. The analysis has recently enabled the school to provide measures of the success of students who have been in the school from the start of their secondary career compared with those who join the school for a shorter period within any key stage.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

59. Provision for these aspects of students' development is good overall. It is satisfactory for spiritual development and good for moral, social and cultural development. There is good whole school planning for assemblies, but no requirement that subject departments should include these aspects of development in planning provision for all students. Many departments consider moral, social and cultural development in planning, but few include explicit reference to spiritual development.
60. Assembly themes provide stimulating opportunities for students to reflect on their own lives and on the wonder of the natural world. In a KS3 assembly, Y9 students presented reflections on their experiences in their first home country and in the United Kingdom. Opportunities for reflection through worship were not observed in assemblies. Through the Young Enterprise Scheme older students have prepared a book of writings about their experiences entitled *The amazing world of mixed emotions*. Some of the writing has extraordinary power. In science, students studying the earth and the solar system were stimulated by a video to reflect on the beauty of the earth. In geography, they are helped to wonder at natural phenomena such as earthquakes and volcanoes. Students consider issues beyond their own beliefs in religious education through studying world religions.
61. A strong framework of moral values is put into practice in every aspect of school life. Students are encouraged to develop their own moral code through the system of rewards and sanctions, and are taught to respect the rights of others. They are taught to abide by rules in physical education. They explore moral issues in social education and subject lessons. For example, in design technology they look at the moral implications of design development and in information technology the moral impact on life at work and home. A geography topic on national parks raises issues connected with the use of the environment. Science offers opportunities to consider the sale of human organs and genetic engineering. Assembly themes include 'resisting temptation' and the religious observance of Ramadan and Lent.
62. Many opportunities are provided for students to take responsibility. They do so as electors, choosing representatives for the School Council. Each form elects a boy and girl sports captain. Monitors help in the library, students have a weekly responsibility for taking the register to each lesson, and students in the sixth form show visitors round the school. In most subjects there are good opportunities for students to work cooperatively in groups. In music this is a regular feature in composing and performing, through which students learn to negotiate agreements. The need to share equipment, for example in technology, helps students learn to take their turn. Residential visits provide valuable experiences of corporate

responsibility. In science issues to do with alcohol abuse are discussed in a thoughtful way. Social responsibility is emphasised in English through the study of texts such as *Animal Farm* and *An Inspector Calls*.

63. There are rich opportunities for appreciating world culture. For example, there is a GCSE poetry unit *Poems from other cultures and traditions* and students explore traditions such as Islamic art and Japanese design. In the language awareness course, Y7 students survey the languages spoken in their class and identify the countries on a world map. The languages department display features a range of French-speaking countries. Visits are arranged to the science museum, to galleries and performances. Students have taken part in a Youth Arts project in the borough and a theatre company has a base on the site in return for working with students. The Theatre Royal, Stratford touring company performed in the school, and students from the Royal Academy of Music led a workshop. Music activities include gospel choirs for different ages, and groups for drumming and steel pans. A school priority is to provide free tuition on a range of instruments. Different religious festivals are celebrated in assemblies.
64. Multi-cultural awareness is reflected strongly in displays around the school and within departments and in many other ways for example, in the choice of library books.

Support, guidance and students' welfare

65. The provision for support and guidance in the school is good. The school provides a caring environment in which the individual is respected and valued. The support and guidance given to students makes a very valuable contribution to the education standards attained and the personal development of students.
66. Monitoring of progress and personal development is good. Since the last inspection, the pastoral system has been reorganised and is now based on a key stage structure. It is well-organised and staff show a positive commitment to this aspect of their roles. Tutors, year and key stage directors work in close partnership. There is good linking with academic departments. The school has developed an increasingly valuable system of target-setting and regular progress checks are shared with students and parents. Academic targets are set for each subject and more general performance targets for personal development are set with the form tutor. Although the system is still in its early stages, the school is beginning to work towards more rigorous application of the good assessment data it is collecting to inform and direct students' progress.
67. Students appreciate the involvement they have in agreeing and reviewing their personal targets. The school has initiated a comprehensive range of mentoring systems to support students in need of this extra level of support. In some cases, members of staff act as tutors and a very productive link has also been forged with Westminster University whose students mentor sixth formers and students in Y8 and Y9. Students from Imperial College also support science lessons.
68. Good monitoring of behaviour is used effectively to improve standards of behaviour in the school. The successful application of the policy has led to a significant reduction in exclusions from the school. Information is collected in a systematic manner and followed up conscientiously by staff. There is a sensible system of recording and monitoring of unacceptable behaviour. The new behaviour policy is a well-managed whole school initiative. The *OK Way* – which provides a simple statement of expected behaviour – is well displayed in the school. The policy is supported through a clear system of rewards and sanctions which are understood and respected by students. Parents are appropriately involved when there are concerns about behaviour. The homework diary provides a useful medium for keeping parents informed of the awards made to students for good work. Conduct and certificates are also presented in tutor groups, in assemblies and celebration events.
69. Monitoring of attendance is good. There have been clear improvements in levels of attendance since the last inspection, even though a significant number of students have entered the school during a key stage. Attendance records are now reviewed on a very regular basis by responsible staff but there is a weakness in the initial recording of attendance. As there is no formal registration period at the start of the afternoon, the school relies on subject teachers to register absences at the start of the first lesson in the afternoon. Whilst the majority of teachers complete this task effectively, the approach is inconsistent. Some teachers, for example, do not complete the register until sometime after the start of the lesson, thereby failing to address requirements to register at the beginning of the afternoon session.

70. There is a daily check of absences and a well-organised home contact system. This begins with telephone calls to all absentees by the school's Attendance Officer. The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) provides a valuable support service to the school and gives good assistance following up attendance problems. However, the school draws students from a wide area and inter-agency welfare links can be difficult. For students living some distance from the school following up attendance problems can be less effective than the school would wish. The diligent approach to monitoring attendance has contributed to the improvement in overall attendance levels since the last inspection. The school has been less successful in reducing the incidence of late arrival at school in the morning despite close monitoring and an appropriate structure of rewards and sanctions associated with punctuality. The school is in the third year of its home-school liaison project. This has proved to be a valuable addition to the overall initiative in improving attendance and punctuality.
71. Procedures relating to students' well-being, health and safety are good. The social education programme is organised effectively, covering a range of relevant issues for each year group. There is a regular inclusion of drugs awareness and sex education in the programme appropriate to the needs of each year group. Careers education is included in the life skills course and developed more systematically from Y10 onwards. Good support is provided by Capital Careers Service in KS4 and in the sixth form with careers interviews and the contribution it makes to the work experience programme. This is well organised by the school for Y10 and Y12. The school has developed a number of other links through its GNVQ courses. Students are able to make a range of visits locally to businesses and industry to support their classroom work. The school makes appropriate use of the support offered by outside agencies, especially the EWO, Educational Psychologist, the Tavistock Clinic, Marlborough and Brandon Centre. The Neti Neti Theatre is based on the school site and well used by staff – as are the Police and Hungerford Drugs Agency – to enhance the social education programme.
72. Students with SEN receive good support from the school. The school's health and safety policy is well understood and the school complies with legal requirements. A high priority is given to matters of health and safety. A few health and safety concerns were noted during the inspection and reported to the school. Staff and governors have given much time and attention to this area. This has included the need to satisfy their concerns about the security of the school site by fitting a substantial perimeter fence. The school recognises the problems that arise from the narrow corridors that can become very congested during lesson change times and staff manage student movement around the school effectively. There are regular site checks, fire drills and equipment inspections. The buildings are generally clean and well kept despite their intensive use during the day and the evenings.
73. Students with SEN and those with EAL are given extra support with work experience placements in Y10. The librarian monitors use of resources by gender. This shows that more girls than boys borrow books and more boys than girls use the computers, although they have equal opportunities to use all the available resources.
74. The school provides effective role models for students. This is reflected in the good balance of male and female staff in positions of responsibility. Staff set good examples for students by the way they treat other people and in the quality of mutually respectful relationships which teachers and other adults establish with all students of the school.

Partnership with parents and the community

75. The school enjoys satisfactory partnerships with parents or guardians. Parents appreciate the way students are encouraged to become involved in a range of activities beyond the classroom and the friendly approach of staff, including their readiness to listen to questions or concerns.
76. Information provided by the school is satisfactory overall and has many positive elements. The inspection findings did not support the view of some individual parents that the school does not keep parents appropriately informed about what is taught in school. The school prospectus and documents for new parents are well presented and clear. However, whilst the Governors' Annual Report to parents and the school prospectus are helpful, they do not contain the full range of information required. For example, there is an absence of data which compares attainment levels of students at the school with those nationally, of details concerning SEN and of information related to the school's

sporting activities. The school offers a comprehensive induction programme for new students and their parents. For each key stage there is a range of curriculum information and an additional, helpful prospectus is provided for students entering the sixth form. The school also offers curriculum-focused events for parents, such as the meeting on English for Y7 parents. There are additional meetings for parents such as the Y9 options choice meeting which provide those parents who attend with valuable information to support their children's choices.

77. Regular weekly newsletters from the school provide useful and detailed information on administrative and organisational matters. The students' homework diaries provide a valuable home-school link. The school uses this well to inform parents of students' successes as well as any concerns that arise. Some parents were unhappy about the consistency of homework set by the school, but the inspection did not support their view. Homework is regularly and well-marked.
78. The school makes clear efforts to involve parents as partners in the children's education. Parents attend a range of consultation and social events at the school and some give good support with work at home. Currently no parents are involved with the school on a day-to-day basis but parents and other members of the community offer good support with extra-curricular activities, including parents who are involved with language clubs. There are two Progress Review Days held each year when parents and students meet with staff to consider targets and progress. The summer term Progress Review Day is linked to the Annual Report for parents. The inclusion of students at meetings with parents provides a valuable opportunity for them to make a positive contribution to their own progress targets. The Annual Report is valued by parents but does not convey information on attainment to parents in a clear manner in all subjects. The descriptions of progress do not make full use of the assessment data available to the school. In some subjects there are no NC attainment grades shown. Parents are appropriately involved in reviews for students with SEN.
79. The partnership between the school and the community is good. The school has developed a valuable range of productive community links which have a significant impact on the standards attained by students. The school receives students from over fifty primary schools in Westminster and beyond. Good links have been developed with those primary schools whose pupils most often move on to Quintin Kynaston, and senior staff visit all primary feeder schools each year to meet staff and potential new pupils. In two primary schools where links are especially well formed subject staff contribute to teaching offering support in drama and ceramics. There are also good links with tertiary education including Westminster University whose students enhance the school's mentoring programme and Imperial College whose students support work in some science classes.
80. The school has a good and well-established pattern of community initiatives linked to the extra-curricular programme as well as curriculum subjects, notably the life skills programme. The school has fostered productive associations with some local employers who offer work experience placements. Through the GNVQ programme and Young Enterprise Scheme good links have been established with businesses and the professions. The valuable work experience programme is well supported by Capital Careers. Regular support is provided by a number of sports coaches, including Arsenal Ladies Football Club. There is a very good range of clubs and extra-curricular activities available for students, particularly at the end of the day. This is valued by students and parents alike.
81. The curriculum is enriched by a range of visits in the United Kingdom and in other areas of Europe. These include theatre visits, sports trips and visits to environmental, historical and cultural sites, especially in the London area. There is a residential trip for all Y7 students and other opportunities for older students to extend their social skills as well as support their academic studies. Staff show commitment to extending the study and recreational opportunities for all students. Visitors to the school also make a limited but valuable contribution to the teaching programme. The school is available to the community and well used as an adult education centre. There are regular lettings to the Kensington Temple, a Saturday Iranian school and Neti Neti theatre as well as other lettings for public and private functions.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

82. A number of changes have been made to improve the overall leadership and management of the school since the last inspection in 1996. These have been carefully planned, well timed and effectively implemented to contribute appropriately to the quality of education provided as a whole and the standards achieved by students in particular.
83. The headteacher has a clear educational vision and has communicated this unequivocally and shared it convincingly with staff, governors, parents and students. All are committed to this vision which is articulated clearly in the school's documentation and underpins its strategic development plan. Moreover, it permeates the excellent ethos of the school, its day to day work, and the quality of relationships throughout.
84. The school's aims are expressed in a clear set of manageable objectives. Policies and procedures to support them have been refined appropriately since the last inspection; they are reflected well in the work of the school as a whole. Governors have very good understanding of the school's priorities as a result of their involvement in defining them. They are well-informed to act in a constructively critical role; governors' minutes show how well they exercise this role. Governors play an important part in the strategic planning necessary to establish a clear educational direction for the school and a firm set of accountabilities against which to measure the school's success in the future. They have had good involvement, for example, in preparing the school development plan and in understanding the parameters of setting the budget over recent years.
85. The senior management team (SMT) has been refined since the last inspection. Its members share the headteacher's commitment, diligence and enthusiasm to continue to improve standards in the school. They have worked co-operatively to introduce new structures and a range of policies since the last inspection with clear success. In practice, the changes in staffing structure and the introduction of a comprehensive monitoring programme have been sufficiently focussed to have a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching overall and, although limited, on beginning to raise attainment across the school. Evaluation of data available to the senior team has highlighted strengths and future challenges for the school. This has been used to shape the priorities of staff in classrooms but details of students' attainment are not analysed fully to identify differences in successes or future targets between students who have been in the school from the start of their career and those who have joined the school within key stages.
86. The school development planning process involves all staff and governors. It has set realistic targets and necessary time-scales to achieve appropriate action and outcomes. Departmental planning reflects the objectives of the school development plan. Individual lesson planning is clear but is not always built on coherent curriculum structures which ensure progression such as in music, or the range of needs of students involved in the lesson.
87. Staff in middle management positions in departments and year groups most often lead enthusiastically and with commitment. Guided by the work of the SMT, they are developing necessary skills to monitor teaching and curriculum in order to raise expectations, ensure more consistent progress, and improve attainment overall.
88. There is a caring atmosphere throughout the school that embraces the need to raise standards despite the complexities of challenge and personal needs brought by many students to the school. Expectations are most often appropriately high and good attention is paid to develop an eager pace and enthusiasm for learning along with positive, responsible attitudes to work. Although most students have equal opportunity to the curriculum, the reading programme for Y7 denies access to some elements of it.
89. Statutory requirements are met in most areas of the school with the exception of information technology in Y11, religious education provision after Y7, assessment of music, art and physical education at the end of KS3 and the requirements to report on these subjects, provision of information to parents concerning national comparatives, sporting achievements and SEN and the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

Staffing

90. The school has sufficient numbers of staff with appropriate qualifications to meet the demands of the subjects, age and ability range that they teach. Most staff have full-time contracts. A significant number has been appointed in the last few years. The student-teacher ratio is good and better than the national average. There is a satisfactory number of staff to work with students with SEN and to give English language support.
91. Some part-time or peripatetic staff are provided by different outside agencies as well as the local education authority. The part-time or peripatetic nature of the work of such staff create additional challenges in managing and integrating their work with full-time members of staff of the school. In most cases these challenges are addressed well but the use of information provided by staff supporting students with special educational needs or those for whom English is an additional language is not consistently used well by class teachers.
92. The allocation of non-teaching time is commensurate with teachers' responsibilities. Newly qualified or appointed teachers are well supported by a clear and comprehensive induction programme linked to information sessions, mentoring, observation and feedback.
93. There has been a relatively high turn-over of staff, along with an improvement in the quality of teaching overall, since the last inspection. New members of staff are generally inducted well and show a clear understanding of the school's overall educational direction. This has a positive impact on standards attained and the ethos of the school as a whole. Staff development is organised effectively and is most often appropriately directed at underpinning the objectives of the school development plan. Appraisal systems are clear and consistent with other whole school policies. Classroom observations are recorded and used to establish individual targets for teachers which, in turn, are used to prioritise requests for professional development and further support. These procedures work well, are understood by staff and link to the school development plan. The school has succeeded in making a number of key staff appointments, putting a particular emphasis on recruiting the best teachers available. This has had a very positive effect in enhancing the quality of teaching since the last inspection.

Accommodation

94. The teaching accommodation is sufficient and of good quality in most areas and satisfactory in others. This has a positive impact on standards overall. Since the last inspection considerable improvements have been made to the school's accommodation. Most departments now have suited rooms and there is an on-going programme of re-decoration throughout the premises. The school is already planning to address weaknesses in the accommodation provided for art and music. In the latter, for example, the one main teaching room is too cramped and sound is easily transmitted between the smaller practice rooms. Additionally, in physical education one gymnasium is out of use and the surface on the outside hard area used for games lessons is uneven. All but one science laboratory have been upgraded. The library provides a stimulating learning environment and is enhanced with the provision of a networked computer suite.
95. The site has been made considerably more secure in recent years and wheelchair access is available to the ground and first floors. The school policy on the display of work is now in place and this is seen to good effect in many areas of the school. Quality displays are also evident in most classrooms. The separate provision for KS3, KS4 and sixth form for registration purposes gives students ownership of an area which, as a result, are mainly well-looked after. Nonetheless, some shared areas of the building look untidy and the dining facilities are rather cramped. There is also a concern over the volume of students using the stairways at lesson changeover times. These can become crowded and students do not always keep to the left as instructed. The school is generally graffiti-free with little evident damage.

Learning Resources

96. There has been an increase in expenditure in learning resources over the last four years. For most departments the sufficiency, access, quality and use of resources is satisfactory and good in many cases. Considerable expenditure in upgrading and improving information and control technology

resources has been made and a new network system installed. The ratio of computers at 5:1 is very good. Difficulty in accessing this resource is perceived by some departments. The library is well-resourced with fiction, non-fiction and departmental reference material. There is also a section on “home language” and “dual language” books. A video library includes films in other languages. The library is open from early morning, at lunchtimes and after school and is well used by students.

97. Most departments now have sufficient textbooks to support learning and the lighting system for drama is now improved. The allocation of resources to departments is based on student periods taught with a weighting given to specialised subjects. Individual departmental bids can be made in relation to development plans. The issues raised at the last inspection have been largely addressed both in terms of accommodation and resources. The planning of priorities agreed with the governors to ensure the continuing programme of refurbishment and decoration is a positive step in creating a pleasant and secure working environment.

The efficiency of the school

98. The school makes efficient use of its resources and the most important of these in terms of the school’s budget – the staff – are managed effectively to ensure necessary change and raise attainment where appropriate.
99. There are excellent systems within the school for managing finances. Governors are appropriately involved in the strategic planning of the budget guided by the headteacher and the school’s bursar. Since the last inspection the budget deficit has been removed and significant improvements have been made to the school’s accommodation and staffing profile. A carefully organised programme of change has been implemented well, supported by good income-generating strategies – for example in letting unused space to adult education – which have benefited the school as a whole. Financial planning is a strong feature of the school’s work.
100. The basis on which budgets are allocated to departments is clear and understood by all. The process of making additional bids for financial support beyond a formula-funded allocation of money rests on departments identifying specific needs. This process is implemented effectively, closely linking departmental plans with priorities clearly identified in the whole school development plans and using available data on attainment related to national expectations well.
101. Teachers are deployed efficiently to make best use of their subject expertise. Learning support staff make a positive contribution to the development of students with SEN but insufficient links are currently made to ensure that information from the special needs and language staff is used fully by subject teacher and departments.
102. The work of the senior team in managing important change is well reflected in the practice of a range of middle managers across departments or year groups. The induction process which underpins this level of consistency of practice is sound and measures used to help ensure a shared educational direction to raise standards in the future have been effective.
103. Learning resources and the school’s accommodation are used very effectively. Display and foyer areas are generally used to celebrate students’ work and the success of the school as a whole. Students and staff have responded to improvements in the accommodation and resources well. The new information technology suites are used fully: in early morning and after school opening sessions they are filled with enthusiastic and diligent students well supervised by staff in extending their learning skills, researching or developing computer-related competencies.
104. Financial controls are extremely good. These and the school’s administrative team are efficiently managed by a member of the SMT and make a valuable contribution to the overall smooth daily running of the school. The issues of the last audit report have been addressed effectively. Grants for students with SEN are used appropriately.
105. Considering levels of attainment and socio-economic circumstances of the students on entry to the school and the quality of education provided, including the quality of teaching, the school gives satisfactory value for money overall.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

106. Over the past two years more than 60 per cent of the Y7 students entered the school with a reading age below their actual age and almost half with a reading age two years lower than their actual age.
107. The proportion of Y9 students achieving Level 5 and Level 6 in the end of KS3 tests is well below the national average. The attainment of boys is well below that of the girls. Over the past three years, boys' results have steadily declined. Although girls' results were better in 1998 than in 1997, both boys and girls results have fallen in comparison with the national average. These results are below average in comparison with schools with students from similar backgrounds. These test results reflect attainment levels in the classroom. By the end of KS3, 60 per cent of classroom attainment is below the national expectation. There has been no significant improvement since the last inspection, which highlighted the under-achievement in KS3.
108. There has been an improvement in the proportion of students achieving A* to C grade passes in the GCSE English language examination this year. This result is well below the national average and below average in comparison with schools with students from similar backgrounds. There has been a small decline in the proportion of students achieving 5 A* to C grades since 1996. The proportion of students achieving A* to G grades has risen steadily over the past three years and is in line with the national average. Four students entered for the Certificate of Educational Achievement and all passed, three with merit. The proportion of students achieving A* to C grade passes in the GCSE English literature examination has fallen slightly over the past three years. Although the proportion rose significantly in 1998, it is well below the national average. Classroom attainment reflects the GCSE English results, and by the end of KS4, two thirds of attainment is below the national expectation.
109. In 1998, all seven students entered for the A-level English literature examination achieved a pass. This result is above the national average and is an improvement over the past three years. Most sixth form students are making good progress and attaining standards above the national expectation.
110. Most students with SEN attain standards and make progress commensurate with their ability. Although there is much good practice, where class teachers and support teachers plan the provision together so that tasks are appropriate, there are cases where classroom activities are not differentiated and learning support is less effective. The support programme, for students for whom EAL, is most effective for students with very little English. Insufficient support is provided for students whose limited English is hampering their progress in subjects across the curriculum.
111. The literacy levels of most students throughout KS3 and KS4 are below the national expectation. Speaking and listening skills are under-developed and below expectation in KS3, where students are given insufficient opportunities to practice oral skills. In KS4, higher attaining students are able to organise their thoughts and speak fluently. Many listen carefully to others and present their own viewpoint cogently and coherently. Many of the students for whom EAL, lack the confidence to express themselves freely in English and are hampered by a limited vocabulary. Although more planned and structured opportunities for students to develop oral skills have been written into the scheme of work since the last inspection, there are too few opportunities provided within lessons for extended discussion.
112. Students' attainment in writing is well below the national expectation in both key stages. Students are given opportunities to write in a wide range of different styles and for different audiences throughout KS3, but most students are hampered by a limited vocabulary and a poor understanding of basic grammar, spelling and punctuation. Similarly in KS4, the major weakness is poor basic writing skills. There are good examples of writing for different audiences. In some cases this is almost entirely literature based, with some teachers failing to provide sufficient opportunities for imaginative and creative writing. Handwriting is poor in Y7, but from Y8 onwards most students' handwriting is fluent, joined and legible and in line with the national expectation.

113. By the end of KS3, the standard of reading for most students is in line with the national expectation. The school's reading scheme in Y7 and the silent reading sessions the school has introduced are very effective strategies for raising reading standards throughout the school.
114. In KS3, almost three-quarters of students are making satisfactory progress. A particular strength is reading. Students are developing the skills of drafting and re-drafting, the ability to analyse and assess the structure and content of their own and others' written work. Less progress is being made in the development of speaking and listening skills and the spelling, grammar and punctuation upon which progress in writing depends. In KS4, progress is poor, with two-thirds of students making unsatisfactory progress. The factor most affecting students' progress over time is poor attendance.
115. Students' attitudes to learning are satisfactory, with the vast majority of students in both key stages responding positively to their teachers. Most students behave well, are courteous and show a respect for the views of others and class relationships are good. Most students work together co-operatively in pairs and groups and enter enthusiastically into class discussions. These positive attitudes enhance learning, enabling students to listen attentively and analyse and criticise each other's work positively. There is some noisiness and drifting in and out of concentration in both key stages. In KS4, amongst some lower attaining students, there is apathy and a lack motivation.
116. Over 80 per cent of the teaching in both key stages is satisfactory. In KS4, there is some good teaching and in the sixth form there is some very good teaching. Teachers have a good command of their subject, plan lessons carefully and identify clear learning objectives. Teachers establish good working relationships with their students and there is almost always a purposeful and positive learning environment in classrooms.
117. A key whole school issue from the previous report was to ensure that the quality of teaching is more consistent within and across departments. Consistency in English teaching is now supported by the development of units of work, which provide a structure for teaching, a range of teaching activities and in some cases differentiated materials. This has led to more consistent approaches in terms of both content and teaching approaches. There is, however, insufficient provision of differentiated activities for higher-attaining students and lower-attaining students generally and higher attaining students with language difficulties.
118. The content of double lessons (lasting 1 hour and 40 minutes) in KS3 is not always well-balanced. Most teachers provide a range of activities within the confines of the unit being studied but this is not always sufficient to provide necessary variety within a lesson—for example between class reading, spelling, diary work and poetry writing as part and parcel of each long session. This also leads, in some cases, to an imbalance of provision, with some teachers teaching mainly literature whilst some teach mainly basic skills. The last report called for more opportunities for students to take responsibility for their own learning. Although there is some group and paired work and some teachers provide opportunities for peer assessment, the provision is inconsistent and insufficient. Appropriate homework is regularly set.
119. The curriculum meets the requirements of the NC. The scheme of work provides a structure which enables teachers to plan a broad and balanced programme and provide for continuity and progression within and across the key stages. The allocation of time for teaching in Y7 appears inadequate, but the two periods of the school reading programme adequately compensate for the loss of time within the mainstream department. There is insufficient provision for some groups and individuals with particular language difficulties.
120. There are effective procedures for assessing and recording attainment in line with school policy. The previous report called for centrally provided data on entry and at the end of key stages. Teachers have good access to this data and keep efficient records. Assessment procedures ensure that statutory requirements are met and this data is used to set individual and class targets but these are not always sufficiently well focused on raising attainment. Reports meet statutory requirements.
121. Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is firmly embedded in the work of the English department. The good relations which exist between students and teachers and the secure learning environment created help students to develop their own value systems. The department has chosen texts at KS3 which are particularly appropriate to the profile of students within

the school and in KS4 the GCSE texts provide opportunities for teachers to explore these dimensions as they arise.

122. The department is well-led and well organised. There is a comprehensive departmental handbook which contains policy statements, schemes of work and general organisation. Departmental policies and aims reflect those of the school. Teaching materials are well-organised and clearly documented. There are regular departmental meetings and communications are good within the department. Staff are supported by regular visits to classrooms on a formal and informal basis.
123. There are sufficient well-qualified and experienced teachers to deliver fully the school curriculum. There is adequate teaching accommodation for both departments. The suite of rooms together with stock rooms and a workroom enables the department to function efficiently. The department receives adequate funding and sufficient learning resources for the delivery of the curriculum. The previous report referred to limited stocks of pre-20th century literature and few poetry collections. The department has eradicated this deficiency.

Mathematics

124. Standards of attainment in tests at the end of KS3 and GCSE examinations at the end of KS4 are below the national average but A-level results are of a high standard. Y9 results in the 1998 national tests are below the national average for both boys and girls but much improved on results in earlier years. The results are in line with those in schools which have students from similar backgrounds. GCSE results in 1998 are below the national average, better than those in 1997, but similar to earlier years. A-level results in 1998 are above average, with most students taking mathematics in 1998 achieving high pass grades in the subject.
125. Inspection evidence shows that, by the end of KS3, attainment is below average. Students' mental skills are limited with many using calculators far too readily to make the simplest of calculations. More able students can solve simple linear equations and substitute in formulae but many others are at an early stage of algebraic understanding. Most students plot co-ordinates accurately in their work in geometry with the more able detecting parallel lines in the shapes created. Most students can read information from a conversion graph. By the end of KS4 attainment remains below average overall but there is a considerable range. Students in the top set interpret and use vectors and understand Pythagoras' theorem. Although many other students have some basic algebraic skills they struggle with more complex tasks. Some A-level students are of a high calibre. They develop and follow alternative approaches to problems and give reasons for their methods.
126. Students make satisfactory progress through both key stages and in the sixth form. Progress in individual lessons is nearly always satisfactory and in some cases it is good. For example, in an enthusiastically taught Y7 lesson on mappings the teacher used a 'think of a number' game to stimulate students' interest. The students learnt that there can be many ways to arrive at a rule for determining the final number and they became much more systematic in their search for a pattern. A well-chosen selection of balancing problems enabled Y9 students to make good headway in their understanding and skill in solving linear equations. The presence of a support teacher for the large number of students in the class with alternative languages helped these students also to make good progress. A brisk and well organised Y10 lesson led to students significantly improving their knowledge and understanding of how different shapes, in a variety of positions, reflect in a line. Students with SEN make good progress helped by support staff and some smaller grouping arrangements.
127. Students' attitudes to mathematics and their behaviour in most lessons are good. In nearly all other cases it is satisfactory. Overall it is better in KS4 and in the sixth form than in KS3. Students settle to work on tasks conscientiously and join in discussions with interest. They are prepared to ask thoughtful questions themselves and are keen to answer questions posed by the teacher. In some classes there is a lack of urgency with a leisurely approach to completing tasks particularly towards the end of the lesson.
128. Teaching is nearly always satisfactory; it is good or very good in more than a quarter of lessons. Teachers generally have good understanding of the subject matter, are enthusiastic about it and give clear explanations. There is a high expectation of what students know, understand and can do in many classes. For example, in a very good Y12 A-level lesson on the motion of a projectile the teacher

illuminated the subject matter with alternative approaches to the problem. This raised students' depth of understanding considerably. On some occasions, notably at KS3 where there is a wide range of ability, more able students are insufficiently challenged. Lessons are generally planned thoroughly with a good mix of activities. Teachers involve students well through questions, discussion and encouragement. For example, very effective teaching took place in a Y10 lesson on ratio where students were encouraged to come to the front of the class to write their solutions on the whiteboard and explain their method to the rest of the class. This approach was very productive in cementing their understanding of the topic and skill in completing questions.

129. Teachers manage students competently and have high standards of discipline. The pace of lessons is mostly satisfactory but on occasions it is too slow with opportunities missed to introduce some quickfire mental work at the beginning or end of a lesson. In the best lessons teachers move students on quickly through the work while making sure that all are following at an appropriate level. There is a sound system of assessment which tracks students' progress on a regular basis. In most cases this helps to guide planning and teaching successfully. However, these records are not always passed on fully to new teachers of the class. In one example this led to a lesson presentation which does not match the students' needs. Homework is set and marked regularly. Mathematics teachers are highly committed. They give freely of their time to run lunchtime and after-school clubs which help improve students' progress and attainment. The school has temporary mathematics teachers in post at present of unusually high calibre so that the students they teach are well served.
130. Leadership is effective and some important improvements in practice since the 1996 OFSTED inspection have taken place. Attainment levels in mathematics remain too low at both key stages but those in KS3 tests are much better than in 1995 and 1996. Teachers are provided with much more information from primary schools and they are beginning to make good use of it. There is a much greater variety of teaching style than indicated in 1996 so that students are less prone to the isolation of following a completely individualised programme of work. The school has taken a positive step to group students by ability for their mathematics lessons in KS4 and for numeracy in Y7. The use of information technology was not observed during the inspection because the network in the mathematics department is out of action. This impedes progress in this aspect of mathematics. In other respects the department is now well placed to move forward on improving attainment levels generally.

Science

131. The results of National Curriculum tests in 1998 at the end of KS3 were well below the national average. The results were below average compared with those of students with similar backgrounds. There has been an improvement over the past three years and since the last inspection. In the GCSE examinations, the results in both the single and double awards were well below the national average for grades A* to C and A* to G. The results were below average when compared with similar schools. In the single award, the attainment of girls was better than that of boys. In the double award, boys did better than girls at the higher grades but girls did better in grades A* to G. Over the past three years there has been a steady improvement in the single award but a decline in the higher grades in the double award. In the sixth form, a small number of students took science A-level examinations or the GNVQ Intermediate science. At A-level, the results in biology, physics and chemistry were above the national average at the higher grades. Overall, 88 per cent passed at grades A to E. Students taking the GNVQ Intermediate science achieved 89 per cent pass, which was well above the national average and 33 per cent achieved distinction or merits.
132. At the end of KS3, attainment as seen in students' work in lessons is below the national average. Students have some knowledge of basic concepts in the main branches of science. They know, for example, about food webs, chemical change and balanced forces. Students can record their results in graphs and tables but make little use of information technology. They have satisfactory investigatory skills but many have difficulty in understanding underlying principles. In a mixed ability Y9 lesson, for example, students successfully completed and recorded their investigations into melting points. Although students recognised the significance of temperature change, only the high attainers could relate this to energy transfer and particle behaviour.
133. Attainment, as seen in work and lessons, at the end of KS4 is below the national average. All students now take the double award course. The majority of students use scientific language appropriately and

make good use of graphs and calculations to enhance attainment. In practical investigations, most students are able to design simple experiments but some have difficulty with technical details. In a Y11 lesson on speed, for example, some students were not able to connect the apparatus correctly. In contrast, higher attaining students could manipulate the apparatus to demonstrate and measure speed, distance and time relationships. In both key stages the recently improved schemes of work are contributing successfully to higher attainment compared with the 1998 results. Students with SEN generally achieve their attainment targets. The attainment of students with EAL is more variable since they enter the school at different stages.

134. Attainment at the end of the GNVQ and A-level courses is above the national average. Students show strength in research skills and in their use of scientific method although there is some weakness in precision in A-level practical work. The majority of students have a mature understanding of their subject and its wider implications. For example, in a Y13 biology group, students could debate the broader social and moral issues of environmental conservation.
135. Students make satisfactory progress through KS3 and KS4 and progress is often good. Students with SEN and EAL make appropriate progress, especially where given classroom support. Students make good progress where they are given challenging tasks that extend their ability, as for example, in a Y7 lesson on measuring and recording weighted springs. Presented with increasingly complex tasks, students of all abilities made good progress in evaluating relationships between the variables involved. In KS4, students of all abilities make sound progress in investigative assignments and through the encouragement of independent study. Regular testing helps students to consolidate their knowledge and understanding. Students in the sixth form make good progress through well-developed independent learning skills.
136. Almost all students behave well in lessons, only rarely is behaviour unsatisfactory. Students co-operate well in practical lessons encouraging good experimental skills and responsible attitudes towards safe laboratory practice. In the majority of lessons the relationships between students and teachers create a positive atmosphere for learning. In KS3 most students listen attentively but a minority finds difficulty in sustaining concentration. At KS4 higher ability students develop note-taking skills and some show independent learning. Sixth form students show maturity and enthusiasm in their studies and take responsibility for their own learning. Some volunteer to assist younger students in science by supporting those with language difficulties in lessons and by producing printed revision booklets.
137. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory in KS3 and KS4 and good in the sixth form. Teaching is good and occasionally very good in half the lessons. Teachers know their subjects well and plan their lessons satisfactorily. Control and management are almost always good, especially in practical work. The majority of teachers use a variety of strategies to engage their students, have high expectations and set appropriate tasks. For example, in a Y12 lesson on hydrocarbons, the teacher gave students different tasks involving literature research, practical investigations and the use of information technology. This enabled students of all abilities, working independently, to make good progress in understanding chemical structure, properties and industrial uses. Teaching is less effective where the range of strategies is narrow. For example, in an unsatisfactory Y7 lesson, lack of appropriate range of tasks and inefficient discipline resulted in students making very little progress in investigating buoyancy. Efficient use is made of SEN and EAL support staff through close departmental collaboration. Homework is used effectively by most teachers to consolidate and extend class work. The department has a standardised assessment scheme that successfully assists curriculum planning and monitoring. It is effectively used to set targets for students at all stages. The department has a marking policy but this not always followed and marking lacks the constructive comments needed to improve students' learning.
138. The NC requirements are met in science but the use of information technology is poorly developed and resourced, hindering attainment in KS3 and KS4. Equipment and material resources are adequate. The technical staff provide efficient support for laboratory work but the number is inadequate for curriculum requirements. Since the last inspection, all teachers have job descriptions and, with the exception of one, all laboratories have been refurbished.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art

139. The 1998 GCSE results are in line with the national average for grades A* to C. In ceramics and in painting and drawing, results are very good. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. By the end of KS4, attainment is in line with the standard expected. Students select images to convey ideas, such as 'old and new', in their paintings. They show the influence of established artists, for example, Magritte. They review their work confidently, making appropriate judgements about it. Although they can talk about their work, they do not make enough use of technical vocabulary. This is an improvement from the poor use reported at the last inspection. Higher attainers show good skills in drawing from direct observation, for example, in investigating shells and in figure drawing. They record detail accurately, select different scales, and express some of the qualities of a reclining figure. The small number of students taking A-level achieve very good results. In the sixth form all work is of a satisfactory standard, and much is of high quality. Students research thoroughly and apply new understandings in their work. This can dazzle. Some writing is lively and thoughtful. Students acquire new skills and use them effectively, for example in designing and making tableware drawing on the work of William Morris. They refine and extend ideas and techniques, for example using computer technology to manipulate scanned images in an imaginative way.
140. Results of the end of KS3 teacher assessment in 1998 are not available in the form required for reporting. By the end of KS3 students achieve the expected standard. This has been maintained since the last inspection. Across the attainment range they explore a range of two- and three-dimensional materials confidently. They use sketchbooks and homework books to explore ideas related to lesson tasks, for example drawing their hand. Students draw from direct observation with some analysis of line and shape, for example in chalk drawings of a skeleton. Higher attainers analyse and record detail in their drawings. and show understanding of balance in their work on pattern, for example in designing the faces of a 12-sided shape using ideas from Islamic patterning. Students show the influence of artists' work, and different art traditions, for example, in designing a kimono. Higher attainers show an understanding of space in Japanese design. Some work in Y8 ceramics is of a very high standard. Students work on a large scale, create expressive shapes and control the clay medium well.
141. At each stage, progress in lessons is at least satisfactory and is often good. Teachers' high expectations and the good attitudes students have to their work, enable them to make the most of their time in art lessons. There is satisfactory progress over each key stage. This is made steadily and is well supported by the use of sketchbooks, for example for drawing tasks requiring close observation and an understanding of perspective. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Progress over Y12 and Y13 is good.
142. Students' response is nearly always satisfactory, often good and sometimes very good. In lessons students settle to work quickly and efficiently, notably in the Y10 single lesson. Most work hard and concentrate well. They make a strong contribution to the busy, focused workshop atmosphere in the department. Students in the sixth form approach their work with maturity and a good level of self-demand. Across year groups, all show good skills in working independently, including those with SEN and those for who have EAL. Most concentrate in a single-minded way in lesson activities. When there is an opportunity, students collaborate effectively, for example in Y7 to produce a decorative panel of tiles drawing on Islamic patterning.
143. Much teaching is good and it is always at least satisfactory. There are strengths in all aspects of teaching. Subject expertise is strong and often used rigorously in evaluating individual students' work in discussion. This tutorial help older students receive in lessons is a particular strength, although younger students do not always receive detailed enough comments to help them improve their work.
144. Lessons lack opportunities for group discussion and evaluation, which is a weakness. Staff have high expectations for the standards achieved, although these are sometimes not communicated clearly enough. Some planning is excellent and provides a good basis for ensuring consistently high standards in planning across the department. Staff make good use of resources and there is good practice in the planning and monitoring of homework.

145. Arrangements for assessment are unsatisfactory and do not meet requirements because the school's "levels" do not reflect National Curriculum levels sufficiently well and are not being reported to parents fully enough.

Design Technology

146. At the end of KS3 attainment levels in the assessments for students at the end of 1997 and 1998 were well below expectations but there was a marginal improvement from one year to the next. No gender differences were evident. At the end of KS4, GCSE results were well below the national average in 1996 and below them in 1997 and 1998 for both A* to C grades and A* to G grades but there has been improvement at A* to C grades. The 1998 results compare well to the school's own internal results and to those of similar schools. At A-level, the results in textiles have been consistent since 1996 with all students entered receiving A, B and C grades but from low entries.
147. From work observed, attainment is in line with expectations at the end of KS3, not reflecting the results at the end of the key stage last year. The improvement is partly due to changes in staffing, schemes of work linked to NC levels and target-setting, all of which are now more appropriate to the needs of the students. Across KS3 there is a range of good and sometimes weaker design folder work. Most students demonstrate good practical and oral skills are generally good. Students can engage in a variety of tasks covering the programmes of study and they show a developed awareness of concepts and processes in designing, making and understanding. Higher attaining students can generate a number of ideas and use a variety of presentational skills together with an appreciation of the constraints of materials used. Lower attaining students often have difficulty in recalling previous work and do not always understand the principles involved. Students with SEN attain well considering prior attainment and make sound progress. There is good use of colour and shading techniques and some use of information technology to enhance presentation in design folders. Some folders, however, lack depth and are sometimes incomplete. In practical lessons students use tools and equipment safely and confidently in all areas of the department.
148. Attainment from work observed is in line with national averages and is sometimes above these at the end of KS4. Differences between examination results and observed work are attributable to the improvements which have been made in the department. The design folder work shows a broad range of experience with the best having very good research, analytical and presentational skills. Use of colour, information technology, photographs and commercial material is evident in most subject areas. The weaker design folders show limited evidence and evaluation is not always complete. Good work is seen in textiles where students work in batik and appliqué and the trainer investigation was interesting. In food technology students are able to evaluate a range of vegetarian food products and in resistant materials students can answer a design brief and produce a range of solutions using different materials for example in the lighting project.
149. Attainment in the GNVQ manufacturing course is satisfactory with evidence of the required components in numeracy, information technology and communication skills. Students have produced good folder work with clear examples of research tasks in which they have been involved leading to the completion of their topics. At A-level students, show good theoretical and practical knowledge, for example in the application of dyes on fabric and a good range of presentational skills in design folders. Their oral skills are well-developed and they are confident when presenting ideas to others.
150. Student make satisfactory progress through KS3 overall. It is good progress in lessons which are well-paced and are supported with appropriate materials for the range of abilities present. For example, in a Y9 structures lesson and in a textiles lesson, students could use the sewing machine safely and confidently. When working at practical tasks with clear objectives, students consolidate their skills well, using tools and equipment with increasing accuracy. At KS4 progress is generally good across the department because, in most lessons observed teachers set clear expectations and intervened when appropriate to guide and give advice. This was evident, for example, in lessons on textiles, food technology and resistant materials where a variety of teaching strategies helped to keep students on task. Students develop good practical skills and often use appropriate technical language when explaining the work in which they are involved. Students also progress well in the GNVQ manufacturing course, developing appropriate research skills in completing a range of units of work. At A-level good progress is made when acquiring skills of colour application in project work.

151. Students have a positive attitude to work overall. They work with a sense of purpose and enjoy their lessons. They work cooperatively in groups and are rarely off task. Behaviour is good in all lessons and students are polite and helpful. Relationships are generally good. Some independent work was seen at KS4 and at A-level when students were working on their projects.
152. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory with a high proportion of good teaching. Lesson planning is usually good with a blend of theory and practical work and most lessons. Teachers appreciate the needs of SEN and EAL students, often providing a range of work to suit the range of students' prior attainments. Teachers set homework regularly: this is used effectively to extend classwork or to engage in a research task.
153. The department follows the NC programmes of study at KS3 and all students take a technology subject at KS4. The GNVQ Part 1 in manufacturing has been introduced this year into Y10. There is a broad and balanced curriculum with equality of access for all students. Good records of attainment and progress have been developed and are used in target setting. Assessments are linked to NC levels or examination board criteria and students are made aware of the requirements.
154. The head of department offers effective leadership. There is a system of monitoring teaching in the department and curriculum planning is good. Development plans show short and long term objectives and teachers are committed to raising standards. The accommodation is all in one area and of a good standard but some windows are in need of repair and the extraction system for the circular saw is not in place. Resources are generally good but there is a shortage of textbooks and no resource-based research area with appropriate information technology facilities.
155. Since the last inspection the use of information technology in design folders has improved and assessment is now better used. Progress is satisfactory at KS3 and there is continuity between the modules but this is not helped with the carousel arrangement at present. The food technology area identified in the last report as being badly planned is now more appropriate for the delivery of this subject and a general improvement in all rooms now offers a positive learning environment with ample exemplar material on display. Some issues raised in the last inspection remain, including the length of time between modules at KS3 and its consequences in trying to ensure consistency and progression of learning; the importance of setting of short term targets for the completion of coursework at KS4; and the limited monitoring of standards at KS3.

Drama

156. The proportion of students achieving A* to C grade passes and A* to G grade passes is well above the national average and has risen substantially in the last three years. In 1998, all students entered for the GCSE examination passed.
157. Attainment in the classroom does not always reflect these results, partly because the number of students who enter and leave the school within any one key stage means that the nature and ability levels of cohort from one year to the next differ. Nonetheless, by the end of KS3 and KS4 attainment as seen in lessons and students' work is in line with national expectations. Most students with SEN attain standards and make progress commensurate with their ability.
158. The majority of students make satisfactory progress overall with some good progress in KS4. Students develop sound knowledge and understanding, for example in using technical language to evaluate their own work and constructively criticise that of other groups. They also show developing skills, particularly in the development of improvisation techniques.
159. Students' attitudes to learning in class are satisfactory and most students respond well to both their teacher and other members of the class. Students behave well, show respect for others and the accommodation in which they work. For example, Y8 students worked co-operatively in pairs and groups when refining their improvisations based on the theme of Awareness. They showed a clear sense of performance when sharing their work with others as well as a good appreciation of both audience and critic roles in watching and discussing each others' performances.
160. The quality of teaching is consistently good. All teachers are confident to teach drama and have a good knowledge of their subject. They plan lessons in detail with appropriate and clear learning objectives. Teachers are successful in encouraging good working relationships with their students, leading to a

warm and often exciting learning environment – evident, for example, when sixth form students made masks showing their appreciation and understanding of Greek tragedy. This has a positive impact on standards.

161. Throughout KS3, the drama scheme of work provides a sequential, skills-based programme, which effectively draws in social, moral and cultural issues as they arise. The department has produced a number of drama units which link with the English curriculum. For example, students' learning in KS3 is enhanced by the joint work on *Romeo and Juliet*. This year is the first year of the A-level drama course.
162. The department has effective procedures for assessing and recording attainment. These are in line with school policy. In response to the previous inspection report, teachers now have good access to this data and keep efficient records. Statutory requirements are met and data is used effectively to set individual and class targets and students are able to develop self assessment skills through clearly defined criteria. An example of good practice in KS3 is the introduction of level descriptions, reflecting the system of the NC.
163. The department enhances students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. A wide range of opportunities is provided for students through school productions, visits to the theatre and participation in community arts projects enhances students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
164. The department is managed effectively. Its documentation is clear and comprehensive including policy statements, schemes of work and general organisation. The department's policies and aims reflect those of the school. Teaching materials are well-organised and clearly documented. There are regular departmental meetings and communications are good within the departments. Staff are supported by regular visits to classrooms on a formal and informal basis.
165. Sufficient numbers of well-qualified and experienced teachers deliver the school curriculum. Teaching accommodation is adequate. The suite of rooms together with stock rooms and a workroom enables the department to function efficiently. The use of a school hall constrains teaching and learning, but the drama studio, criticised in the last report, has been refurbished to provide an effective teaching area. The department receives adequate funding and sufficient learning resources for the delivery of the curriculum.

Geography

166. Assessments at the end of KS3 show attainment to be well below national expectations in 1997 and below in 1998. When geography was offered as a short course for the first time in 1998, 18 per cent of candidates achieved grades A* to C, which was well below the 32.4 per cent achieved nationally. The proportion gaining grades A* to G was 80.5 per cent, below the national figure of 87.5 per cent.
167. These results are reflected in the inspection evidence, which shows attainment to be below national averages by the end of KS3. There are high attaining students in most classes, who produce impressive work, both orally – as for example in a Y9 lesson when students debated issues relating to National Parks – and in their essay writing. Many students find difficulty in understanding key ideas and principles. In a Y7 lesson, for example, students were not clear about the idea of a ratio and so had difficulty in understanding the work on population dependency. For most students, oral work is stronger than written work including the production of maps and diagrams. Students are encouraged to write in a range of styles, including recording information, reporting on their research and more expressive writing, such as the description of their trek across the Sahara in Y8. Most make an effort with their writing, but many are held back by poor literacy skills. Maps and diagrams often provide important information, but are not always well presented.
168. By the end of KS4, attainment is well below national averages. In Y11, attainment is impeded by the time-tabling of the subject in blocks of time, as this makes it difficult to achieve continuity in students' studies. The situation is improved in Y10, where students are studying for the full course GCSE and their timetable is continuous. Students show a limited grasp of key principles and ideas, as for example in a Y11 lesson on correlation, where the concept was not easily grasped. In the application of techniques, students show variable capability. In a Y10 lesson, they knew when cross-sections were

required and could construct these well, but many had difficulty remembering how to use the scale of the map. In a Y11 lesson, student activity was mainly limited to copying notes and a diagram and viewing a video. Many had difficulty in completing these tasks to a satisfactory level.

169. Students make satisfactory progress in KS3, but progress is unsatisfactory in KS4. Students with SEN and with EAL make satisfactory progress. Where progress is satisfactory, students consolidate their previous learning well, for example, in a Y7 lesson where students recalled key terms about population. They extend their knowledge and understanding effectively, as in a Y7 lesson where students developed their understanding of factors affecting sites of settlements to a higher level. Constructive practice of skills and techniques is gained, as for example, in a Y10 lesson on contours and river valleys. Where progress is unsatisfactory, the rate of work is slow in lessons and work is not satisfactorily completed.
170. The response of students in geography ranges from very good to unsatisfactory, but is mainly satisfactory or better. Most students show interest in the subject, behave appropriately and focus on the work in hand. They listen well and show respect for the contributions of others to lessons. This generally positive response in most lessons is contributing to improvements in attainment in KS3 and Y10.
171. The teaching of geography is generally satisfactory; it is often good and sometimes very good. Teachers have high expectations of their classes, are well-organised and plan work to meet the needs of most students. Activities are also planned to extend higher attaining students. Class management is effective and teachers are able to involve students in active enquiry work based on a range of resources. Planning of the curriculum and assessment system is well developed and supportive. Thorough marking and testing are beginning to produce information which enables teachers and students to plan for improvements in attainment and progress.
172. Positive subject leadership, with effective management, monitoring of teaching, attainment and progress, constructive planning, improvements in resource provision and extension of enquiry activities, including fieldwork, have led to improvements since the last inspection. Attainment and progress have improved in KS3 and Y10. More able students are now more successfully challenged and students in most classes are now less teacher dependent and involved in more challenging activities. The new assessment system is being well applied in the subject and now provides more comprehensive information to raise attainment, through improved planning and teaching.

History

173. Post-16 attainment is below national expectations. A-level results vary markedly from year to year; in 1998 those gaining A or B grades were above national levels but all other indices, including A to E grades and average points, are below expectations. In 1996 and 1997 all figures were well below national averages. Attainment at the end of KS4, based on GCSE results of students gaining A* to C grades in short course history in 1998, is well below national expectations for comprehensive schools. The results of the previous three years were for integrated humanities and again show figures well below national expectations with no trend of improvement. The percentage of students gaining A* to G grades – 76.3 per cent – for 1998 are again well below national figures and show a steady fall since 1995.
174. From observations and analysis of available work, attainment at the end KS3 is well below expectation of students of this age. By Y9 some students can make links between characteristics of past periods and societies in studying topics like the rise and fall of slavery; but most have problems of recall and interpretation of historical evidence. Many of the learning problems of students stem from poor literacy skills; students are not fluent readers and have limited vocabularies. Some are able to express themselves orally on historical issues but most have difficulties writing with clarity and fail to express themselves lucidly on paper. There are too few opportunities to develop the skill of writing fluently and at length on historical issues. Students at all levels fail to present their work in a neat and orderly fashion.
175. It was not possible to observe a Y10 lesson but lesson observations, scrutiny of work and interactions with students indicate that attainment at the end of KS4 is below national expectations. Students express themselves well orally, are widely read but have weaknesses expressing themselves in writing.

Most students have limited subject knowledge, but they can analyse source material and can begin to account for the results of historical events. Recall is usually weak, for example a Y11 group working on the post-1919 treaties had a limited understanding of the links between the events of the war and the main elements of the peace treaties. Post-16 students make good progress. The key factors in this are good lesson and course planning so that knowledge builds on earlier work, good relationships in classrooms and a strong commitment of students to their studies. Across the key stages students with SEN generally attain well considering prior attainment.

176. Students in KS4 make satisfactory progress. Lesson planning is again careful to refer back to earlier learning so that new skills and knowledge build on what has been learnt before. Students begin to show stronger commitment to their studies than in KS3 and ask for and get help when it is needed. Progress through KS3 is unsatisfactory; students often start from a very low base of knowledge and skills. Many students fail to show commitment to their studies. However, teaching usually propels them forwards and in many lessons progress is at least satisfactory. Careful planning of lessons with a clear focus on learning objectives are positive factors; students are invariably clear about their tasks, which are demanding but achievable. Over time – with the large turnover of students in the school – this pattern of improvement is not evident. Progress of students with SEN is satisfactory in both key stages.
177. Students' responses in post-16 education are very good. Students show real enjoyment of history and debate historical issues with enthusiasm and maturity. They are pleasant and confident and show good skills as independent learners. Response in KS4 is satisfactory. Aided by enthusiastic teaching, students are encouraged to show greater commitment to their studies, usually with some success. Response to challenge is variable and some students are reluctant to work independently. The atmosphere in lessons is usually pleasant, helped by the courtesy shown by teachers to their students. In KS3 students show good responses to history. They settle to tasks and usually concentrate well. Students enjoy participating in question and answer sessions and show interest. At both key stages the students have too few opportunities to work in groups. Their skills in working independently as learners are too limited and students rely too heavily on teachers to propel them forwards.
178. Post-16 teaching was observed in Y13 lessons only, as there is no Y12 group. Teaching is good as is the subject knowledge of staff. Lessons are planned effectively, teachers select appropriate activities to meet their learning objectives. There is a good focus on the demands of the A-level examination and teachers relate well to students. Teaching at KS4 is satisfactory. Subject knowledge is a strength and students are closely questioned. Teachers are skilled at utilising the correct strategy to meet their learning objectives; they have good expectations and this communicates to students. A Y11 lesson on Germany after the Treaty of Versailles was enlivened by the good resources, which the teacher had prepared in advance. These clarified and consolidated earlier work, closely relating to the clearly enunciated lesson aim. However, the task was insufficiently differentiated for the wide range of learning needs of the students and they relied on individual help from the teacher to overcome any difficulties. A number of lessons in KS3 and KS4 lack sufficient differentiation.
179. Teaching at KS3 is good. Lessons are thoroughly planned with sensible regard for the needs of the students and there is a good focus on the learning objectives for each individual lesson. Teachers have good subject knowledge and students, who can be difficult, are well managed. For example many lessons start with a 'calming activity' to quieten the class and re-focus them on the topic under consideration. Students are perceptively questioned to check understanding and consolidate learning. A very good Y7 lesson, in which students explored CD-ROM information on Elizabeth I, had been well planned to include a range of different work to meet the students' varying needs. This helped them stay on task and make good progress. The individual educational plans of pupils with SEN, to which individual history teachers contribute, are known to teachers and effectively used in both key stages. The department is developing a focus on literacy and language and teaching is starting to develop these skills.
180. Record keeping of the progress made by individuals includes students each having a portfolio of their best work in KS3. The results of unit assessments are held centrally, making it straightforward to track individual progress and set targets. Y9 history is taught on a carousel system with geography with the result that that students do not have any history teaching for half of the academic year. A similar

pattern pertains in Y11 with the short courses in each subject. This discontinuity seriously impedes progress. It is planned to end these anomalies at the end of this academic year. The head of department regularly monitors classroom teaching and each teacher's planning and marking. There are developing opportunities to use information technology through the study of history.

181. Since the last inspection GCSE results have remained largely static. Over this period the nature of the examination has changed. There has been a recent move to a GCSE syllabus which favours bi-lingual students, but these students have not yet sat the examination. A-level results have been largely static but improved considerably in 1998. Attainment, as observed in lessons, has fallen. Teaching has improved but the previous report's observation that oracy is better than literacy in the subject still holds true.

Information Technology (IT)

182. Attainment levels in the assessments for students by the end of KS3 for the last two years were well below expectations, although there was an improvement from 1997 to 1998. Girls performed slightly better than boys. At the end of KS4, GCSE results were marginally above the national average in 1996 and 1997 for A* to C grades, and well above national average in 1998 with 80 per cent of students achieving A* to C grades and 100 per cent A* to G grades. These results were among the best when compared to the school's own internal results and better than similar schools.
183. In work observed, attainment at the end of KS3 is in line with expectations. Although levels increase slightly from Y7 to Y9 overall, there is some repetition of basic skills due mainly to the installation of new equipment but also to earlier curriculum deficiencies at KS3. Following the requirements of the NC, by the end of KS3 students are competent in word processing, can manipulate text and are familiar with internal and external memory. Their keyboarding skills are generally well developed.
184. From observations attainment is just above national averages by the end of KS4. Higher attaining students are able to design and implement a database, giving good examples of where and why a spreadsheet or database might best be used. Students competently use an increasing range of programmes and functions. In the sixth form students can distinguish between systems and applications software, understand and apply the functions of an operating system and are able to understand the concept of back-up procedures. Pupils with SEN attain well considering prior levels of attainment. Those for whom EAL attain well and, in some cases, students showed good skills – for example in using and interrogating a database.
185. Students make sound progress in KS3 but good progress is made with appropriate intervention from the teacher. Students are able to rearrange work using 'cut and paste', can insert or delete text and edit text using word processing skills. At KS4 progress is generally satisfactory and students develop their skills and consolidate knowledge in the uses of spreadsheets and databases and relate this to the work situation. At sixth form level good progress is made with effective teaching strategies used to consolidate theoretical knowledge and the transfer of theory into practice. Sixth form students show good oral skills and communicate their ideas well. Pupils with SEN and with EAL make satisfactory progress.
186. Students have a positive attitude to work overall and are generally interested and involved in their work. They usually settle quickly to the task and want to do well. Although a minority of students are inattentive and some cause disruption by calling out in lessons, most students concentrate well and remain on task. Relationships are good and students work cooperatively when required to do so. Students in the sixth form respond very well to their work and are enthusiastic learners.
187. The quality of teaching is mainly satisfactory with examples of good teaching seen in all key stages. Teachers have good subject knowledge and their explanations in lessons are clear and helpful. Students only occasionally misunderstand the objectives of a lesson, resulting in uncertainty as to how to proceed. Teachers usually plan their lessons well and make full use of the resources available. Most lessons include a focus on theory as well as practical work, but teachers do not always manage lesson time successfully to balance explanation with practical activities. Teachers provided work that supported the range of abilities in each group, but this was not sufficiently well targeted to meet the students' specific subject needs.

188. The curriculum follows statutory requirements and appropriate schemes of work are in place. These give most students equal access and opportunities to the information technology curriculum including those with SEN and EAL. The exception to this is in Y11 where there is no provision for all students to access IT. KS3 units of study in data logging form part of the science curriculum: the control element is taught through design technology but there is insufficient monitoring of the IT curriculum to ensure overall coverage. Assessment procedures are in place and linked to NC levels or examination board criteria. The use of assessment data to ensure continuity and progression of learning for individual students and to plan and set targets for the curriculum is currently under-developed.
189. Leadership of the department is sound and the head of department is working towards developing information control technology in the school with greater input on a cross-curricular basis from other departments. There is some evidence of IT being used in design technology, English, history and in GNVQ lessons. There is also evidence of good display work around the school using IT skills. Some departments express difficulty in accessing IT equipment and the general usage of IT in the curriculum is underdeveloped.
190. The accommodation is good with two well-equipped rooms that are used fully both in lesson time and at other times during the day. The seating is inadequate in quality in both rooms and one room does not have a printer. Networked stations are also available in the school library and sixth form centre. The use of display to enhance the learning is good in both rooms.
191. Since the last inspection some issues have been addressed, including the assessment policy at KS3. Work is now more regularly marked and students' IT capabilities are reported to parents. In addition, accommodation and resources for IT have been improved and the use of resources maximised.

Modern Foreign Languages

192. The results in GCSE in all languages taught in the last three years at the school are well below national expectations although results in community languages in 1997 and 1998 are better than in French, German and Italian which have low percentage pass rates.
193. The levels of attainment at the end of KS3, on the basis of lessons observed and work scrutinised, are below the national expectation but show significant signs of improvement compared with levels recorded for 1997. Evidence from the inspection also reveals that this progress is being well maintained. By the end of KS3 students' main strengths are in the speed of oral responses and their range of vocabulary and language content within familiar topic areas. Pronunciation is usually accurate, but few students give extended oral answers or manipulate verbs or tenses without visual or written support. Students' listening skills are usually better developed than reading and writing. Most listen to a tape and recognise, for example, if telephone numbers are true or false. Students of all abilities usually make good progress in class but progress over time is less satisfactory except for students with SEN who continue to consolidate their listening and reading skills. The lack of progress over time is not a result of unsatisfactory teaching but is influenced by the number of students joining classes through the key stages who have had no, or different, language provision, and the wide linguistic and ability range in classes.
194. Attainment is below national expectation at the end of KS4 and students' progress is unsatisfactory within the key stage. Only a few students can use a range of present or perfect tenses with accuracy except a few higher achievers and few students write short passages without support. The infrequency of lessons and the short amount of time available, especially in German, has a negative impact on students' attainment and progress by the end of the key stage. As in KS3, students make best progress in reading and listening skills but make slower progress in speaking whole sentences or short dialogues.
195. Most students' attitudes to learning are good and they co-operate fully with each other in pair work and when the teacher involves them in the lesson at the front of the class. In several lessons they show real enthusiasm and enjoyment. In a few classes there is some restlessness towards the end of periods in the afternoon.
196. The majority of teaching is good and some of it is very good, especially at KS3 where there are some excellent lessons. Most teaching is characterised by the extensive use of the foreign language and an

insistence that students also use it. Pace and expectations are usually good, sometimes excellent. Resources are quickly to hand, prepared by teachers and of high quality. Activities are timed and there is an insistence on correct pronunciation, often humorously. There is a very good range of tasks to practice language and motivate students. In one lesson at KS3 students themselves produce activities to test each other at varying levels of difficulty. In another lesson at KS3 animal glove puppets are used and students work out in pairs what questions to ask in French and the puppet replies. Follow up activities include a tape of animal sounds that students have to guess and the lesson ends with a humorous song about other animals. Students react with delight and amusement and are very motivated.

197. At KS4 most teaching is also good. The work of the foreign languages assistant supports teachers and other adults and is carefully planned and integrated. A good range of differentiated material is used and students' progress and effort is frequently rewarded in class – a whistle is blown and the 'man or woman of the match' is elected – the student who has worked the hardest. At both key stages there are a small number of unsatisfactory lessons where too much language is presented to students with insufficient practice and activities do not involve the whole class.
198. The leadership of the department is outstanding and has ensured significant progress on all the issues raised at the last inspection. There is a high level of collaborative working, jointly produced materials, common planning and shared approaches to teaching. Resources are meticulously organised. Procedures and policies are fully consistent with faculty and school requirements. There is mutual lesson observation and a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities to support students. Accommodation and resources are good, display is very good, providing an excellent ethos for language learning that follows the clear and energetic direction given by the head of department.

Music

199. The numbers taking GCSE are too small to make valid comparisons with national figures. In 1998, not all students achieved a pass. Very few gained higher grades, fewer than in 1997. By the end of KS4 attainment is below the standard expected. In Y11 about half the students joined the school in Y7; three have joined during the GCSE course. Students perform with some confidence, for example communicating the lines of a song with rhythm backing quite clearly. They usually achieve coordinated group playing. For example, timing the verse and chorus of rap with keyboard backing. A vocal duo was mostly tuned in well and in time. Students' compositions have shape and some use a simple structure effectively – for example, creating an introduction and fade-out ending to a piece. Students use recording equipment well. Listening skills are weak.
200. Results of the Y9 teacher assessment in 1998 are not available. By the end of KS3, students are working towards the standard expected. In performing, their control is mostly successful although they do not always give attention to the effect of the music. For example, most can play a series of simple chords using different fingers, as well as the keyboard function. Higher attainers play the melody with the chords. Control of instruments to play in time is not always secure. One group performed a rap over simple rhythms on conga drums and tambourine well in time, with a good balance of sounds. Students' compositions often rely on backing tracks, occasionally selected to create an intentional rhythmic effect. Other parts are usually fitted in suitably. Most compositions are built using repetition, with little development of ideas. For example, two students created a song with simple scale patterns going up and down. One group planned their piece to speed up; another planned the start well, repeated the pattern accurately, but could not come up with a clear ending.
201. In lessons, students usually make satisfactory, often good progress at KS3. For example, Y8 groups successfully practised their pieces to get them properly together. Good progress is supported by teaching which can leave students breathless and high student motivation. In Y9 progress is not always supported by probing enough use of subject knowledge in class discussion and questioning. Progress over the key stage is not satisfactory. Planning does not build steadily enough from one unit of work to the next in order that the expected standard can be achieved in each of the curriculum aspects, especially listening. This is also true at KS4. Progress is satisfactory in lessons and sometimes good. However, over the key stage it is not sufficient for students to reach the standard expected.

202. Students' response is mostly good and never less than satisfactory. Behaviour is generally good. Students get instruments out and put them away quickly and efficiently, and treat the resources they use with care. Most sustain concentration and listen hard. A particular strength is the quality of collaborative working in group performing and composing. Students work independently in all lessons. They show a habit of listening critically to their pieces and editing them to make improvements. From Y9, the quality of the critical appraisal is limited by the lack of progress in analytic listening skills.
203. The quality of most teaching is at least satisfactory and teaching is often good. There are major strengths and a significant weakness. The strengths are in the range of methods used and the way lessons are organised. All aspects of resourcing are put to very good use. Students are managed with a high level of skill. The weakness is in the use of subject knowledge from Y9 upwards. Because this is not probing enough, for example in explaining and questioning, the expectations for the standard of work are not high enough. This is limiting the progress made by older students. However, the revisions to the planned work for Y7 and Y8 provide a good basis for building sufficiently and steadily on students' previous learning.
204. Since the last inspection, standards have remained much the same, with listening and appraising skills remaining a weakness. Music planning is better and there is excellent improvement in the pace of lessons. Statutory requirements for the music curriculum are now met, although singing and the use of information technology are insufficiently developed at KS3. The range of percussion instruments has been extended well and instruments are fully used. The school's arrangements for assessment are unsatisfactory and do not meet requirements because the school's "levels" do not reflect NC levels sufficiently well and are not being reported to parents fully enough.

Physical Education

205. GCSE examination results for 1998 are well below national averages. Results were lower than at the time of the last inspection. Teachers' assessments indicate that attainment was below national expectations at the end of KS3. The attainment of a significant minority of boys meets expectations as, for example, in their standards in football both at school team level and within lessons. Too few students achieve the highest standards in any sport or activity and many students of all levels of attainment underachieve. The attainment of girls is below that of boys and differences increase as students move up through the school.
206. Standards were in line with expectations within KS3 in half the lessons seen. At the end of KS3 standards for the majority are in line with expectations although a large minority are below national expectations. Students' basic game skills are generally under-developed, as there are insufficient opportunities to put them into a full game due to lack of appropriate facilities. In a Y7 football lesson held in a gymnasium, for example, the development of students' sound heading skills could not be transferred to a modified game as a lack of space might have led to students colliding with one another. Students understand the principles of attacking and defensive play but a significant majority of them have poor basic skills, ball control and spatial awareness. Higher attaining students demonstrate a variety of techniques in football such as a feint dodge to outwit the opposition. Evaluation skills are below standard. Most students evaluate as a class group, but not independently of the teacher. Y9 students as beginners in badminton, for example, played a successful singles game using basic forehand and volley strokes, scoring correctly and with some knowledge of rules. Students know the principles of a good warm up and the names of some of the major muscles. Higher attaining students plan and lead effective warm ups.
207. At the end of KS4 students' attainments are predominantly below expectations. Evidence suggests that improvements have taken place as, until recently, students were not accustomed to structured taught core lessons and regarded them as leisure activities. Attainment of examination students in Y11 mostly falls below course requirements. Knowledge and practice of safety is satisfactory throughout the school.
208. Over time students' progress is unsatisfactory overall but in the majority of lessons at both key stages most students, including those with SEN, make satisfactory progress. Where progress is good the teacher sets challenging tasks, breaks the skills down and gives good feedback. Where progress is

unsatisfactory – as in a Y11 football lesson – the students, rather than the teacher, controlled the pace and direction of the lesson. Students’ planning and evaluation skills are developing satisfactorily but unevenly because some teachers’ understanding of NC requirements is limited. The rate at which many students acquire basic skills is steadily improving because of the expansion in extra-curricular provision such as inter- form games. Gains made in lessons are insufficiently retained, reinforced and developed over time. Curriculum time at KS3 is below the national average and allocated in only one long lesson each week. These factors, along with a lack of permanent teachers and constant changes in students in the school, have resulted in poor continuity and progression of learning.

209. Students’ response to teaching is satisfactory. Their participation, enjoyment and self-respect at both KS3 and KS4 have greatly increased since the appointment of the new departmental head. Increasing numbers of students attend extra-curricular activities with more at KS3 than KS4 and more boys than girls. Sixth form students do not take sufficient advantage of their opportunities: only a quarter of the cohort attend lessons. Students show positive attitudes towards each other and work in racial harmony, enhancing collaborative, group and team work. When, on occasions, petty arguments erupt, this is due to frustration with lack of skills rather than lack of co-operation. Although students’ concentration is satisfactory, interest begins to wane towards the end of the long lessons. Their behaviour is generally good although a few boys in Y11 prevent others from learning. Respect for others, good relationships and mutual support enable students to willingly undertake responsibility, such as that of team captain.
210. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and good in a quarter of all lessons seen. It has improved since the last inspection as it is now more consistent and has fewer weaknesses. Inadequate management of the behaviour of older boys can occasionally lead to unsatisfactory teaching. The recent introduction of good quality schemes of work carefully mapped to NC requirements and student assessment procedures have greatly strengthened teaching. Good use is made of information on students’ SEN for example, in the grouping of students. Tasks set, while appropriate, rarely capture students’ imagination and interest. Good organisation, student management and purposeful use of time ensure smooth running lessons. Most teachers make realistic demands of students in terms of depth, quality and quantity of work expected.
211. Assessment procedures now in place are good but statutory requirements were not met at KS3 in 1998 as the school’s ‘levels’ do not match NC levels sufficiently well and they were not reported clearly to parents. Nonetheless, the process of assessing students has improved by providing clearer information to inform teaching. Since the last inspection, a predominantly skills-based curriculum has been balanced by modules of gymnastics and dance at KS3. The curriculum provides equal opportunities for all students. For example, girls participate in football and boys in netball. Despite careful planning, boys dominate the lesson in some mixed gender teaching groups where boys significantly outnumber girls. This contributes to girls’ under-achievement. The new dynamic departmental head has instigated a variety of effective initiatives, such as augmenting the extra-curricular activities programme with the involvement of community instructors.
212. Poorly maintained and inefficient use of available accommodation is having a detrimental effect on the quality of learning and standards achieved. One of the gymnasiums is out of use due to a leaking roof. Although little improvement has been made on raising student attainment since the last inspection, systems have been put in place, such as monitoring and support, which have led to improvements in departmental ethos, curriculum and teaching.

Religious Education

213. No public examinations are taken in this subject. The attainment of students at the end of KS3 is below the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus. Students use some religious vocabulary with understanding and know some of the main ideas of major religious traditions but they have insufficient knowledge of Islam and Judaism, and their exploration of moral and social issues lacks depth.
214. In lessons observed progress in the key stage was satisfactory. Y7 students consolidated their knowledge of signs and symbols in an assessment task and in another group the idea of common era was grasped and Y9 groups were consolidating their knowledge of Buddhist suffering and enlightenment. Some EAL and SEN students make better than expected progress. However, progress

across the key stage is unsatisfactory overall, especially due to a lack of curriculum time for the subject.

215. The attainment of students in KS4 is below the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus. In Y10 lessons observed there was progress in understanding new terminology related to discrimination and some students made satisfactory contributions when discussing a video depicting racial harassment of an Asian family, but most students do not achieve expected standards for their age, either orally or in writing. This is also due to the lack of timetabled time for the subject across the school.
216. Students in KS3 behave well in lessons, listening to the teacher and each other students as required and most remain on task well. Y7 students are positive but attitudes to the subject decline as they get older. In KS4 some Y10 boys are unwilling students and most students spend little time on homework in Y9 and Y10.
217. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Strengths include strong classroom management, attention for individual students, a clear role model of respect for other cultures and beliefs and an emphasis on language acquisition. However, the use of assessment to influence planning and ensure tasks are set to meet the different needs of the range of abilities is underdeveloped. Moreover, there are currently insufficient opportunities for students to develop their skills of extended writing and research or benefit through external visits and the involvement of visitors to the school.
218. The curriculum does not meet statutory requirements. There is no religious education in Y11, Y12 and Y13. The time allocated to religious education in Y7, Y8, Y9 and Y10 is insufficient. The school is aware of this issue and plans to provide 66 per cent of the required amount in Y7 to Y11 by September 1999; currently it only provides 46 per cent. This is the major factor in the weaknesses identified above resulting in unsatisfactory progress and levels of attainment which are below expectations at the end of each key stage. The low time allocation and lack of certification or formal award for students studying religious education also contribute to its low status for many students.
219. Assessment procedures are at an early stage. End of unit testing, performance grades and course folder assessment are being introduced but they are insufficiently linked to the Agreed Syllabus and whole school practice. Currently there is no analysis of performance by gender, prior attainment or ethnicity.
220. Religious education makes a satisfactory contribution to students' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. A prayer room has been established and a new unit on the *Nature of God* is being developed for Y9 to increase spiritual emphasis. Students are taught to understand and respect other beliefs and cultures and the classroom ethos is informed by clear moral values.
221. Levels of staffing for the subject are adequate only for current provision which itself is insufficient to address statutory requirements. The specialist room is well-maintained and attractive. Resources are sufficient to teach the current curriculum. Although a collection of artefacts is being made, there are insufficient materials to support students across the ability range of those with EAL either in the department or in the reference section of the school's central library.
222. The curriculum leader is an experienced, conscientious, hardworking teacher who is managing a difficult situation. Since the last inspection progress has been made in a number of areas but priorities – including meeting statutory requirements in time allocation, completion of thorough schemes of work and the implementation of an assessment system that helps drive up standards – remain outstanding.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

223. The inspection was carried out by a team of 12 inspectors. A total of 47 inspection days were spent in the school. During this time 166 lessons or parts of lesson were observed for a total of 131 hours. Inspectors observed a range of assemblies and registration periods for each year group, extra curricular, lunch time and break time activities, as well as the arrival and departure of students to school. Records were reviewed as well as statements of special educational needs and individual education plans. The inspectors also spent time in interviewing all staff in senior and middle management positions, key members of the governing body and students of all ages. A formal scrutiny of work was carried out in all subjects and areas in addition to the work scrutinised during lessons. Separate pre-inspection meetings were held with parents, governors and staff and 125 responses to a parents' questionnaire were analysed.

DATA AND INDICATORS

Student data

	Number of students on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of students with statements of SEN	Number of students on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time students eligible for free school meals
Y7-Y13	790	18	89	409

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Y7-Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	53.4
Number of students per qualified teacher	14.79
Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	69.99
Average teaching group size	KS3 22.8
	KS4 21.9

Education support staff (Y7-Y13)

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked each week	226

Financial data

Financial year	1998/99
	£
Total Income	2,695,000
Total Expenditure	2,661,000
Expenditure per student	3,172
Balance brought forward from previous year	35,000
Balance carried forward to next year	34,000

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out

790

Number of questionnaires returned

125

Responses (percentage of answers in each category)	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	26	57	13	2	2
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	38	52	7	2	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	25	53	18	2	2
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	23	56	14	6	1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	38	49	9	5	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	35	52	6	2	3
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	44	39	13	3	1
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	37	45	10	6	2
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	32	54	10	3	1
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	29	50	14	5	2
My child(ren) like(s) school	29	41	5	3	2

Other issues raised by parents

Parents were eager to:

- Emphasise the school's ethos and the support provided in order for students to achieve well
- Recognise the headteacher's openness and willingness to listen to and rectify any concerns which are raised
- Highlight a significant number of improvements in the school in the last three years, including staffing, accommodation and the finances of the school
- Note their perception of the inconsistency of the provision of homework and its use