

INSPECTION REPORT

WALTHAMSTOW SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Walthamstow

LEA area: EduAction

(London Borough of Waltham Forest)

Unique reference number: 103103

Headteacher: Ms Jane Quigley

Reporting inspector: Ms Margaret Julia Goodchild
15918

Dates of inspection: 14 – 16 October 2002

Inspection number: 249103

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16

Gender of pupils: Female

School address: Church Hill
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London

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Telephone number: 0208 509 9446

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Carmen Edwards

Date of previous inspection: October 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Walthamstow School for Girls has 900 pupils on roll, aged 11 to 16. The school population is ethnically diverse: 29 per cent of pupils are white; 37 per cent are of Asian heritage; 22 per cent are of black heritage; the remaining pupils come from a variety of ethnic groups. There are 81 refugees, Somalia being the predominant country of origin. English is an additional language for over half the pupils, with 44 languages spoken. These are very high percentages and there is, similarly, a high proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The local area has inner-city characteristics and many pupils face significant social deprivation. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs is fewer than found in schools nationally, but pupils' attainment on entry is below average. The school has Beacon School status and is involved in Excellence in Cities. It has received two School Achievement Awards and been recognised in HMCI's Annual Report as 'an outstanding school'. It is in the process of bidding for specialist college status for mathematics and computing.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an exceptional school. Pupils' achievement is excellent and the school's examination results place it in the top five per cent in the country compared with similar schools. The school is extremely successful in promoting pupils' self-confidence, in creating a climate that enables individuals to flourish and instilling high expectations in pupils: these are major factors which contribute to their academic achievement. The quality of teaching and learning is very good, and the curriculum includes some excellent features. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and ensures that the school is very well managed. She is supported very well by senior managers and by a number of other members of staff in positions of responsibility. The school provides excellent value for money.

What the school does well

- Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 and at GCSE place the school in the top five per cent in the country compared with similar schools and pupils' achievement is excellent.
- The school is unusually effective in promoting in pupils a belief in their own potential and in fostering their personal development.
- The headteacher is an excellent leader, combining vision and rigour, and is very well supported by senior managers and a number of other key staff.
- Very good quality teaching and learning contribute strongly to pupils' achievement.
- Aspects of the school's curriculum are excellent and have a profound impact on pupils' achievement.
- The school employs a wide range of methods to support pupils and enable them to realise their potential.

What could be improved

- Pupils do not achieve as well as they could in modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9 and in French in Years 10 and 11.
- Some weaknesses in accommodation have an impact on the quality of education.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvement since it was last inspected, in October 1996, and is equally well placed to develop further. Monitoring of standards and teaching have been strengthened, and improved standards have taken the school into the top five per cent against similar schools. Development planning has improved and the work of the governing body has been strengthened. In order to support independent learning, there is a new learning resources centre, and information and communication technology resources have been dramatically increased. All but one of the science laboratories have been refurbished. The school pays greater attention to ensuring pupils make a smooth transition from Year 6 to 7, from Year 9 to 10, and from school to further education at post-16. Although there is some very good assessment practice within the school, further work is still to be done to arrive at fully effective assessment procedures that are used consistently by all teachers. The school is working on this and on improving its reports to parents. Since the last inspection, the school has gained Beacon status, Excellence in Cities partnership status, become an Investor in People and received two Achievement Awards from the Department for Education and Skills.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	A	B	A	A*

Key	
top five per cent	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Pupils' achievement is very good in Years 7 to 9 and excellent in Years 10 and 11. Standards have risen since the last inspection and the trend in the school's results is above that found nationally. In 2001, results in National Curriculum tests in Year 9 were above the national average in English, and average in mathematics and science. The school's performance in all three core subjects placed it in the top five per cent compared with similar schools. At GCSE, overall results were well above the national average and in the top five per cent compared with similar schools. Pupils' progress from Year 9 to Year 11 again placed the school in the top five per cent nationally. Although the final national results for 2002 have not yet been issued, the school's most recent GCSE results are likely to compare very favourably with the national figures. Challenging targets for the school's overall performance and clear target setting for individual pupils underpin pupils' very high achievement.

In most subjects, standards of work seen during the inspection were above average in Years 7 to 9 and well above average in Years 10 and 11. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language – who make up the majority of the school population – achieve exceptionally well as a result of highly effective support.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils are proud of the school and value the opportunities it provides. They regard it as a privilege to attend such a successful school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils learn in a calm and orderly environment and their behaviour supports high achievement.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils make excellent and rapid progress in their personal development and grow tremendously in confidence. Relationships with teachers and between pupils, including those between different ethnic groups, are harmonious and pupils readily collaborate with one another.
Attendance	Well above average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good

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

Teaching is very good and in a significant proportion of lessons, it is excellent. Teaching is very good in English, mathematics and science. Most teachers have high expectations and very good knowledge of the subjects they teach. They manage pupils' behaviour very well, so that there is a very positive and focused climate for learning. They make use of a variety of methods, and lessons move at a fast pace, providing much stimulation. In the minority of lessons where teaching is merely satisfactory, teachers do not plan sufficiently to meet the needs of the full range of ability within the class, activities are not varied enough and the pace tends to be slow. In these lessons, teachers' expectations are not high enough and they miss opportunities to move pupils on to the next stage in learning. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very effective.

Pupils of all ages are very effective learners. They are conscientious, concentrate very well, show interest and are particularly skilled in independent learning as well as in working together.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Extra-curricular opportunities ¹ are excellent and pupils benefit from a range of enrichment activities. There are strong links with other educational establishments and with the community, which stem from the school's Beacon status.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils' needs are identified very well, so that targets in individual education plans are precise. The special educational needs co-ordinator and learning support staff work very effectively.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The school's systems for identifying pupils who need help with acquiring English are very effective. Support ensures that these pupils make equal progress to their peers and no group is disadvantaged.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent. The school makes exceptional provision for pupils' personal development: it does this by raising pupils' self-esteem and developing in the girls a belief in their own potential. Although the school does not meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship, it does promote spiritual development well and encourage reflection. Provision for moral and social development is excellent. Provision for cultural development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. The school works extremely hard to include and support all its pupils. It has excellent systems for managing pupils' behaviour, for mentoring those who might otherwise falter, and for ensuring all pupils have the opportunity to flourish. The school is working to make necessary adjustments to its assessment procedures.

There are many opportunities for parents to work in partnership with the school. Parents are kept well informed by the regular newsletters but the school recognises the need to improve its reports to parents. At present, these do not provide enough information about pupils' attainment and progress.

¹ Extra-curricular activities are opportunities for learning provided outside normal lesson times, such as lunchtime and after-school clubs, trips and visits.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership, combining vision and rigour. This sets high expectations for pupils and staff. She is supported very well by senior managers and by a number of others in posts of responsibility. Administrative and support staff contribute significantly to the school's efficient organisation.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils most responsibilities well, although it does not ensure requirements for collective worship are met. Governors provide good support and are appropriately involved in decision-making.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has excellent systems for evaluating its own effectiveness. The capacity to identify necessary developments and act upon them is key to its success.
The strategic use of resources	The resources at the school's disposal are used exceptionally well and every effort is made to apply the principles of best value in spending and management decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and they are pleased that such an effective school is available to them. • Their children are making good progress and the school expects them to work hard. • The school is well led and teaching is good. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible and behaviour is good. • The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities outside lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all parents feel that the school works closely with them or keeps them informed about how their children are getting on.

Inspectors' judgements support parents' positive views. The school works hard to involve parents, for instance, through regular newsletters and provision of a weekly surgery, where the headteacher makes herself available to parents. They are kept well informed through consultation evenings and regularly involved in social events. A very small, but loyal group of parents supports the school through the Friends of Walthamstow; the school is seeking to involve more parents in this way. It does not provide information about forthcoming curriculum topics and has recognised, rightly, the need also to improve the quality of its reports to parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 and at GCSE place the school in the top five per cent in the country compared with similar schools and pupils' achievement is excellent

1. Standards in public examinations have risen since the last inspection. The school's outstanding results reflect very good quality teaching, pupils' enthusiasm and effectiveness as learners, and the fact that the headteacher and staff have established a climate in which it is seen as every girl's right to fulfil her potential.
2. In the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 9, the school's overall results were in line with the national average and in the top five per cent compared with similar schools, based on the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Compared with schools nationally, pupils achieved their best results in English, with results that were above the national average. Results in English, mathematics and science were all exceptionally high compared with those of similar schools. When their below-average attainment on entry to Year 7 is taken into account, pupils' performance indicates very good achievement.
3. Test results in 2002 remained high, although the national figures are not yet available for comparison. The number of pupils gaining Level 6 and above was high in English (32 per cent), mathematics (39 per cent) and science (31 per cent). Higher-attaining pupils did particularly well in mathematics, where 17 per cent gained Level 7 and above. In English, seven per cent of pupils gained Level 7 and above and in science, nine per cent gained Level 7 and above. The rise in the school's average National Curriculum results for all three core subjects is above the national trend.
4. Standards at GCSE in 2001 were well above those nationally for five or more A* to C grades, for five or more A* to G grades and for pupils' overall attainment. Higher-attaining pupils did very well, with 28 pupils gaining five or more A* grades. The school's GCSE results were in the top five per cent against similar schools, as was the progress pupils made between the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11. Over the past five years, standards have been consistently above those in schools nationally and in recent years they have been well above the national average. Although national results for 2002 have not yet been confirmed, the school's results mean that it is likely to have sustained its position. This indicates excellent achievement in Years 10 and 11, given the very high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language as well as the high figure eligible for free school meals.
5. Relative to their performance in other subjects, pupils do particularly well in English literature, mathematics and science. The school is aware that the success found there, and in music, information and communication technology and textiles, is partly due to the effective use of assessment systems in these subjects. Where pupils do less well, relative to their overall results, the school is very active in identifying the causes and taking necessary action. Senior managers work closely with heads of faculty to push up examination results and to make sure that pupils are achieving as well as possible. Currently, the senior managers are working to strengthen assessment in the school as a whole and to ensure greater consistency of practice.
6. Standards of work seen during the inspection were above average in Years 7 to 9 and frequently well above average in Years 10 and 11. The books of pupils in Year 7 show how quickly the school begins to have an impact on the quality of work pupils produce.

Pupils' written work is very well organised, their spelling generally correct, and the content thoughtful and imaginative. Most pupils are articulate and speak confidently in class or to a larger audience. By Year 11, pupils' work shows that they think deeply about books they have read and they are able to present their opinions clearly. They write fluently and make very good use of quotations. Creative writing shows exceptional maturity, employing elaborate grammatical structures and an extensive vocabulary. In English, mathematics and science, pupils present their work extremely well, and often make very effective use of information and communication technology. During the inspection, pupils in a number of lessons produced work of a very high standard. For instance, in a Year 9 science lesson, average-attaining pupils showed a very good understanding of diffusion and how particles move from an area of high to low concentration. Higher-attaining pupils showed a thorough knowledge of particle theory and could give a number of examples. In a Year 11 biology lesson, pupils identified photosynthesis as an endothermic reaction by writing a balanced equation for the process. In physics, pupils accurately recorded relative wavelengths and different types of electromagnetic radiation and knew that ultraviolet light has a shorter wavelength than infra-red.

7. Pupils from the school meet with success in national and international competitions. Two girls won first prize in a science competition, sponsored by a pharmaceutical company and a motor company. Another pupil got through to the European final of the Intermediate Mathematics Challenge and was one of the top 25 pupils in Europe, receiving a certificate of distinction.
8. When they leave the school, over 80 per cent of pupils go on to full-time education. Subsequently, a significant number (around 60 per cent) go to university, including some to Oxford and Cambridge. In a recent Women's Day celebration, the school welcomed back a number of ex-pupils who answered questions about the range of jobs they now do, including a number who hold prestigious positions.
9. The school seeks to identify early on pupils for whom English is an additional language, and who have significant language needs, and disseminates information to all staff. Particular emphasis is placed on encouraging the development of speaking and listening, with opportunities in many lessons for pupils to answer questions, take part in discussions and present their findings. But equally, pupils learn to express themselves in writing. Support in the classroom for pupils in the early stages of English acquisition is of high quality; this was evident during the inspection, for instance, in an English lesson where the support assistant had produced excellent learning materials and set challenging tasks for the pupils with whom she worked. Close liaison between support staff and subject teachers allows the support system to work very effectively. The co-ordinator, who is funded through the grant for ethnic minority achievement, organises a strong induction programme for asylum seekers and makes 'refugee week' a whole school focus. As a result, these pupils are integrated very effectively into the school and make very good progress. The school's effectiveness in providing for pupils who speak English as an additional language is immediately evident, since they form the majority and contribute to the school's outstanding results.
10. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. The school has made very good progress in implementing the revised Code of Practice and all statutory requirements are fully met. Pupils receive very good support for their individual needs from learning support assistants and from the special educational needs co-ordinator. Very good special educational needs assessment systems are in place and these are used effectively to formulate individual education plans. Targets are clear and precise so that pupils know exactly what they must do in order to achieve. As a consequence,

they make very good progress towards their targets and pupils with statements of special educational need achieve a very good rate of success at GCSE. The school has been able to reduce the number of pupils it identifies as having special educational needs because teachers have received training in meeting the needs of pupils who might otherwise require additional support. Many pupils initially identified as having special educational needs require little or no additional support as they move through the school. Subject teachers accommodate the individual needs of pupils with special educational needs well overall. Particularly where pupils are taught in mixed ability groups, there is scope for some teachers to plan more carefully so that pupils are set tasks that are better informed by their prior attainment, but this does not have a significant impact on their overall achievement.

11. There are a number of factors that contribute to pupils' excellent academic achievement in their time at the school:

- There is a strong focus on achievement of all types, academic, personal and social. Teachers expect pupils to achieve and pupils, therefore, feel confident that they can.
- There is exemplary analysis of examination results and performance data - led by an assistant headteacher - to identify strengths and weaknesses by subject, to track standards over time and monitor the progress of pupils across the curriculum. This is especially well applied in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and used very effectively to set targets in all subjects.
- Heads of faculty closely analyse value-added data for each pupil and are very aware of which subjects enable them to do their best.
- There is a great deal of discussion, amongst senior managers and heads of faculty, about standards and how they can be raised.
- The strong extra-curricular programme encourages pupils to take a genuine interest in subjects.
- The school is increasingly focusing on learning, and has begun to highlight this within lesson observation as part of the monitoring undertaken by heads of faculty.
- The school, and its staff collectively, promote in girls a sense of their capacity to succeed – not only personally, but academically. This is one of the powerful factors in pupils' achievement compared with schools with a similar intake.
- The impact of all these features is magnified by the school's reputation and by the girls' desire to be at the school.

The school is unusually effective in promoting in pupils a belief in their own potential and in fostering their personal development

12. Pupils have excellent attitudes and are proud of the school: they value the opportunities it provides and regard it as a privilege to attend such a successful school. They speak in glowing and almost romantic terms about the school, saying that it is 'like a castle' set in grounds that are 'like a park', and they appreciate the fact that 'teachers teach because they are interested in their subject' and 'have faith in the pupils'. Parents also have very positive views and recognise that its over-subscription and academic success makes a place at the school highly desirable. An Alumni Association was recently formed, reflecting the affection in which many ex-pupils hold the school.
13. The school, in turn, does much to perpetuate this. It plays on its positive reputation and uses it to raise pupils' beliefs about themselves. The school has an excellent ethos, with a tangible commitment to high achievement, to pupils realising their individual and collective potential and each feeling valued as part of the whole. The school's cultural diversity is celebrated not just through the marking of festivals and through displays around the school, but by a more subtle acknowledgement of what every girl has to offer. This gives rise to a vibrant, yet harmonious atmosphere, where pupils feel themselves to be part of a coherent community but have space to flourish as individuals. There is a strong sense of camaraderie amongst pupils, with many examples of excellent relationships.
14. Pupils make excellent and rapid progress in their personal development and grow tremendously in confidence in their time at the school. At every point, staff convey to pupils the notion that they can succeed and that only the best will do. Pupils feel that the staff are 'on their side', wanting them to do well and so most readily co-operate in this process. The school instils in its pupils the belief that girls can do anything they want in their future careers and that their gender is a very positive attribute. This is communicated to all pupils, regardless of pupils' prior attainment or cultural heritage, and leads pupils from all ethnic groups to relate together harmoniously and achieve high standards academically. Pupils particularly value the cultural mix in their friendship groups and talk with enthusiasm about the way the school 'celebrates womanhood' through events such as International Women's Day.
15. Pupils are very well behaved and the behaviour of many is excellent, so that they learn in a calm and orderly environment. Pupils behave in a mature manner when they are gathered together in large numbers and their maturity is a feature of many lessons. They have a genuine interest in listening to what others' have to say, co-operate very effectively and often work very well independently with little direct supervision. There were 21 fixed-term exclusions in the past year, with no permanent exclusions. This has been a fairly steady figure in recent years and the school is working very effectively to bring the number of exclusions down further. This is certainly not an easy school in terms of maintaining discipline: there are some potentially challenging girls who test the boundaries. The school works very hard to include everyone, thus militating against any group of pupils feeling marginalised. Graffiti is rare and there is very little vandalism.
16. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and to exercise their initiative. Pupils make a very real contribution to the school through weekly school and year council meetings, for instance, quickly alerting senior managers to problems with supply teachers or facilities that are not meeting their needs. Pupils feel that the school council gives them a voice: they recognise that it provides them with a direct line of communication to the headteacher and ensures that any problems are sorted out

quickly. They feel consulted and involved in the school. Pupils use their own initiative to raise money for a wide range of concerns, ranging from leukaemia to victims of war. There are waiting lists for several voluntary groups, and pupils organise anti-litter campaigns and raise money for the Year 11 handbook. A magazine is produced by pupils in Year 8 and a welcome booklet for the new Year 7 intake is produced by pupils. A large proportion of the pupils and various faculties contribute to organising a community party for senior citizens each Christmas and pupils speak warmly about their involvement in this.

17. One of the school's aims is to 'promote responsibility and awareness amongst pupils so that they become alert and critical citizens with a strong sense of justice and equality'. Through assemblies, lessons and extra-curricular activities, pupils are encouraged to consider moral questions and to stand up for justice. Teachers make sure that pupils know about national and international events, and broaden their understanding to encompass a concern for others. There is a strong emphasis on environmental issues and the school has gained awards in this area, including winning a silver Eco schools award. Teachers clarify pupils' moral code by questioning and probing their thinking. This was evident in an excellent English lesson where, in relation to a character, the teacher demanded, 'Do you think it's right to bully someone?'. It was equally evident in another English lesson where the teacher pushed pupils to think deeply about how people define themselves by their possessions and challenged any stereotypes revealed in class discussion. In science, pupils learn much about how the ethics of a society change, so that beliefs held at one point may be overturned as more knowledge comes to light. This gives pupils valuable insight into developments such as cloning and helps them to consider scientific 'breakthroughs' from a moral standpoint. Through the debating society, pupils have opportunities to develop insightful arguments for and against motions. During the inspection, they argued firmly and directly, citing excellent examples and abiding strictly by debating rules. They showed remarkable tolerance of the values and beliefs of others, yet were able to produce counter-arguments to justify their case.
18. Although the school does not meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship, it is effective in promoting many aspects of pupils' spirituality and pupils respond positively. The school's motto 'Neglect not the gift that is in thee' is used to unite staff and pupils in a common goal, which is at once spiritual and emotional as well as intellectual. In assemblies and in individual lessons, pupils show a capacity to respond deeply; they are aware of the inner dimension, and many are able to articulate their perceptions of an inner reality. This is evident in the best creative writing and in class discussions. Equally, pupils show respect for others' feelings and beliefs, and a genuine interest in the diverse beliefs and cultures represented within the school. The school provides a prayer room and encourages pupils to reflect within some assemblies. It promotes pupils' self-esteem a great deal through assemblies and fosters a strong sense of belonging in a community that values high ideals. Opportunities to reflect were missed in some assemblies during the inspection, and the school has not yet given enough attention to how it might meet statutory requirements for collective worship in the context of its mixed faith population.
19. Religious education lessons make an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual awareness, providing pupils with an arena in which to explore personal and sensitive issues in complete freedom. In an excellent religious education lesson in Year 10, pupils showed outstanding maturity when preparing and posing questions on belief in God. Their reasoning was very adult and they showed genuine tolerance of alternative views. They were able to discuss sensitive issues without embarrassment, reflecting on moral and religious dimensions. Their listening skills were excellent and they

showed an understanding of both sides of a point of view. Many pupils clearly had a deeply considered set of beliefs, and were able to reflect on deeper meanings beyond the superficial. This lesson was an excellent example of how the school encourages each pupil to contribute to the corporate spirit of the school: a spirit that is composed of individual pupils sharing their understanding with, and profiting by, the strengths of others within the school community.

The headteacher is an excellent leader, combining vision and rigour, and is very well supported by senior managers and a number of other key staff

20. The school is a highly successful organisation because it is led by a headteacher and senior managers who have a clear commitment to excellence, and who are effective in communicating this commitment to staff and pupils alike. Teamwork within the school is strong between senior managers, heads of faculty, teachers and non-teaching staff. Throughout the school, there is a joint commitment to improving and developing the quality of education to make provision as good as possible for the girls.
21. The headteacher, who has been in post for two years, combines vision with rigour. She is sharply perceptive and has the capacity to cut through and innovate, as well as to recognise those aspects of the school's traditions that are in the pupils' best interests. Highly committed to girls fulfilling their potential, she works closely with her senior managers through a shared vision, valuing the dedication of her staff and facing necessary development with clarity and directness. She is exceptionally strong in communicating high expectations to teachers and pupils, and in leading the school as a highly effective establishment capable of evaluating its own performance.
22. The seven members of the senior management team (known as 'the leadership group') have complementary strengths which enable them to work together very effectively. They provide stability and innovation. Three senior managers have been in the school for more than ten years; three have been appointed by the current headteacher and one new post has been established. This latter post, for a business manager, is strategic, since it ties in with preparing the bid for specialist college status as well as with reviewing all financial arrangements. Communication and consultation are strong throughout the school. Heads of faculty hold their own meetings and choose two representatives to discuss matters with the headteacher, and there is a weekly briefing for all staff.
23. The school is highly effective in evaluating its own performance and in identifying areas in which further development will lead to improvement. It actively compares its performance with that of other schools and challenges itself to make decisions that will raise standards further. Through the work of one of the assistant heads, a wealth of statistical and performance data is collected which enables senior managers to evaluate the school's effectiveness and to measure the impact of provision on pupils' overall achievement, as well as to track individual pupils' progress. Performance management is complemented by a school self-review system. Each teacher is observed twice a year and receives feedback. Newly qualified teachers are observed more frequently and new staff are seen by senior managers. Heads of faculty have been trained by the link adviser in how to observe lessons and classroom observation is regularly discussed at management meetings.
24. The roles of members of the senior management team have been redefined in the last two years, with clear line management responsibilities that focus closely on teaching and learning. Most faculties are well led, and a number are very well led. The leadership and management of science are excellent. A number of senior staff teach

the subject and the faculty continuously strives for higher standards. The head of faculty meets on an individual basis with every teacher fortnightly, to discuss progress. Teamwork is strong in many faculties, with much sharing of good practice. Heads of faculty undertake valuable monitoring, which includes careful tracking of pupils' progress and scrutiny of samples of work, as well as lesson observation. The school does not yet include in its monitoring arrangements a system for checking that teachers are matching work to the different abilities of pupils in their classes.

25. Senior managers provide excellent support to teachers, enabling them to operate effectively. Support is particularly effective in relation to behaviour management and pupil guidance, the provision of performance data and the identification of professional development that will be most useful to staff. The majority of the school's training days have been concerned with developing staff's fundamental skills and understanding, for instance, in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Meeting the needs of individual pupils and those of bilingual learners are constant areas for review and development. The impact of this is evident in the improved quality of teaching since the last inspection and in higher standards.
26. School development planning is thorough, as is planning at faculty level. Priorities are appropriately related to raising achievement further, enriching the curriculum and realising the school's aims more fully. Planning shows coherent thinking, thorough attention to detail and the ability to take actions that are likely to have a powerful impact. A residential conference each year determines priorities; information from lesson monitoring and performance management leads into the leadership conference and influences priorities in the school development plan. Each member of the leadership group then takes forward elements of the school development plan that lie in their areas of responsibility.
27. Governors provide good support to the school and are kept well informed. Since the last inspection, the work of the governors' committees has been strengthened. The full governing body meets at least termly and there are the usual committees for curriculum, personnel, finance and premises. A member of the senior management team contributes to each committee and meetings are timed so that decisions in each committee can inform the next meeting. There are some key governors who bring particular professional expertise, - for instance, an architect chairs the premises committee and an accountant is chair of finance. Some governors have more experience and are more committed than others; although the school has worked hard to get representatives of its main ethnic groups, it struggles to fill some vacancies. Various individual governors have named responsibility for key areas, such as literacy, special educational needs, health and safety, and training. There is a system whereby some link governors visit the school, observe lessons, spend time with the head of faculty and look at planning. The full governing body has a defined role in school development planning for monitoring purposes. It receives reports and data, and individual governors have become skilled at interpreting performance and budgetary information.
28. The school is well staffed with experienced and well-qualified teachers, who are committed and dedicated. The number of pupils per teacher is somewhat lower than the national average, as is the amount of time that teachers spend in contact with classes. Both these factors are conscious decisions and have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning.
29. Administrative roles have been redefined and the open, friendly and helpful approach of the office staff enhances the school's welcoming atmosphere for visitors, as well as

providing excellent backup to teachers and managers. Other support staff make a highly valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school and work to a common purpose. Support staff, as well as teaching staff, are subject to performance management.

30. The school has Investor in People status, reflecting a strong connection between whole-school and faculty planning and the identification of professional development needs. Opportunities for professional development are exceptionally good and the school provides an excellent setting for student teachers. As part of the professional development of middle managers, a head of faculty attends senior team meetings for half a term.
31. The school is making very good use of information and communication technology and has made excellent improvement in its information and communication technology resourcing in the last two years. The pupil to computer ratio is very good, at one computer to every five pupils. This gives pupils very good access to equipment, thus supporting their learning and providing particularly good opportunities for independent study.

Very good quality teaching and learning contribute strongly to pupils' achievement

32. Teaching and learning are of high quality. Of the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching and learning were excellent in almost a quarter and at least very good in over a half. This is an unusually high proportion of excellent and very good teaching and learning, and it is easy to see how this contributes to excellent achievement. In over eight out of ten lessons, teaching was at least good and it was satisfactory in the remainder. No unsatisfactory teaching or learning were seen. There was no clear distinction between the overall quality of teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 and that in Years 10 and 11, except that there was rather more excellent teaching in Years 10 and 11. A significant amount of teaching was excellent in English, mathematics and science, subjects at which pupils do particularly well in examinations. Excellent teaching also occurred in drama and religious education, and very good teaching was seen in French, information and communication technology, Spanish, physical education and Urdu.
33. Much of the teaching is enthusiastic and teachers' in-depth subject knowledge is evident particularly where teaching is very good or excellent. This ensures that pupils acquire a full understanding of new concepts. Most teachers pay very careful attention to literacy, including subject specialist vocabulary and spelling, and teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy supports pupils' progress across the curriculum. From Year 7 onwards - and only a few weeks into their first term in the school - pupils organise their ideas very well in written form. Moreover, it is evident when looking at pupils' work that, by Year 9, average-attaining pupils are setting out their ideas in a coherent manner that is usually seen only in the work of the highest attaining pupils. Their note-taking supports more extended and independent writing, and their ability to record their ideas effectively stands them in very good stead in examinations. The mathematics faculty has made very effective use of the Key Stage 3 numeracy strategy and there is very good attention to developing pupils' numeracy skills in some lessons across the curriculum. For instance, in a Year 11 science lesson, the teacher promoted the numeracy skills of a low-attaining class by providing many opportunities for them to use, weigh and record mass. She used ongoing assessment to clarify pupils' misunderstandings, numbering test tubes so that potato samples would not be confused, and used a digital electronic balance very effectively. In many subjects, teachers make very good use of information and communication technology and pupils

benefit enormously from the excellent access the school provides for them to use computers in their independent study.

34. Where teaching is excellent, teachers make learning objectives exceptionally clear to pupils and they have very high expectations for work and behaviour. Very high expectations were evident, for example, in a Year 11 mathematics lesson, where the teacher set a GCSE higher tier paper as homework, and in science, where teachers challenged pupils to complete and record investigations as independently as possible. As a result of teachers' high expectations, pupils work extremely productively and have no time to waste. They show a clear interest in learning and are highly motivated. They readily ask questions of the teacher and request examples where they need them to further their understanding. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively, to engage in independent learning and to express their opinions in class discussion, as well as through question and answer sessions. This encourages pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and builds their confidence to work in a variety of ways.
35. Planning is thorough, with very clear learning objectives, and teaching is carefully structured to make learning systematic. Tasks are stimulating and involve pupils' active participation, with high challenge apparent at every point. Teachers easily establish a sense of purpose, addressing the class assertively and asking probing questions that push pupils to think deeply. They make it clear to pupils that they expect their total involvement and maximum effort. In return, pupils engage with teachers, making it clear that they want to contribute in the process of their own learning. Teachers almost invariably manage pupils' behaviour with skill and confidence, so that time is rarely lost over behavioural issues, allowing teachers and pupils to concentrate without distraction.
36. Varied and exciting methods are employed to get pupils to take part as active learners. This was evident in an excellent lesson in English, where pupils in Year 7 took notes as they watched a video excerpt from *Alice in Wonderland*, in preparation for a piece of extended writing about the cinematic techniques that the film director had used to create dreamlike effects. The teacher's introduction had given them vital clues and advice on how to organise their ideas. In response, pupils produced well-organised notes that served them very well when they came to write more formally about their interpretation of the film. They were able to write convincingly, to make use of lively examples to illustrate their thinking, and they showed tremendous enthusiasm for the task they had been set. They wrote silently, meticulously recording their ideas, and requested homework, even though English did not appear on the timetable for that day.
37. Teachers make sure that pupils know how to succeed with their coursework. For instance, in an excellent lesson in religious education, the teacher modelled an answer for pupils so that they knew how to substantiate their opinions, referring to specific examples from the study of religions, as well as from world events and personal experiences. He used this to prompt brisk oral contributions from the class, and to stimulate their note-taking within a given framework. In a Year 9 science lesson, the teacher provided pupils with highly relevant examples of diffusion, taken from their own experience – by using examples such as perfume or the smell of fresh fish – to stimulate their understanding and enable them to acquire new knowledge quickly.
38. In the best lessons, teachers are able to mould the response of the class and take pupils beyond their previous known boundaries. This was particularly evident in an excellent drama lesson, where the teacher's humorous and light, yet purposeful, approach relaxed the pupils as they practised the game of 'Chinese whispers' to warm up. Her explanation and demonstration were exemplary, making pupils absolutely clear

about the possibilities within the theme of 'Dream into nightmare'. Pupils' response was excellent: their concentration was total and they showed that they trusted the teacher enough to be both relaxed and focused simultaneously. They worked extremely well in collaboration, interacting excitedly and confidently within their ethnically mixed groups. Many pupils were expressive and able to think creatively; they revealed an ability to exercise their imaginations, to be innovative and free, yet self-disciplined. The best presentation was of very high quality, containing a sophisticated fusion of different types of movements and voice. The teacher ended the lesson with a very focused evaluation, to which pupils contributed effectively. As a result of dynamic and enthusiastic teaching, pupils enjoyed a highly focused and absorbing lesson.

39. Teachers foster excellent relationships by paying great care and attention to the needs and contributions of individual pupils. They listen carefully to pupils, taking their views seriously so that they feel valued, and make space for them to consider 'real' issues, within the context of studying set topics. Pupils are practised in working collaboratively: they take turns, share, and readily exchange views and information. They take a pride in their work and relate very well with one another. This enables them to express their views openly and to explore ideas with others. The very positive relationships they enjoy with their teachers empower them but this is not at the expense of respect: they clearly value the support and guidance teachers provide, just as teachers encourage the contribution all pupils make and instil in them the importance of valuing one another. Pupils are polite, and interact in a confident and self-possessed manner. This makes a major contribution to their learning and to their academic achievement.

Aspects of the school's curriculum are excellent and have a profound impact on pupils' achievement

40. The school provides a very good curriculum that supports pupils' high achievement. Aspects of the curriculum are excellent and have a profound impact on the school's work and on pupils' achievement. Particularly strong features are the school's commitment to equality of opportunity and to educational inclusion, the range of extra-curricular and enrichment opportunities provided, and the school's links with the community and with other educational establishments that come with its Beacon status.
41. Central to the school's success is a belief in equal opportunities. Careful analyses are made of examination results, exclusion figures, racist incidents, behavioural referrals, progress of bilingual pupils, option groups and extra-curricular registers. The school's own analysis of its examination results indicates that pupils with special educational needs do well at GCSE (for example, last year all statemented pupils gained four or more GCSEs and went on to further education) and that gifted and talented pupils are very well catered for. Parents are informed that their daughters are on the gifted and talented register and the school gains many A* grades at GCSE. Gifted and talented pupils have opportunities to experience university summer schools and receive guidance on entrance to Oxford and Cambridge. There have been particular activities seeking to extend the gifted and talented, for instance, developing a school website, an environment / global citizen project, and work involving using a video editing suite. Academic challenges - for instance, mathematics problems - for gifted and talented pupils are posted on notice boards around the school and all gifted and talented pupils have learning mentors. As part of its specialist college bid, the school has decided to introduce a GCSE in statistics, particularly with the intention of extending higher-attaining pupils. Within some subjects, teachers plan lessons with clear extension activities for gifted and talented pupils, but this practice has not yet been taken up by all faculties and remains an area for further development.

42. The range of learning opportunities is extended by a rich variety of extra-curricular activities. The school runs over a thousand extra-curricular sessions a year, with more than forty timetabled sessions every week. The range of enrichment activities, include, or have included, involvement in the Middlesex University Dance and Literacy Project; Enfield Magistrates Court mock trial; ski trips; basketball coaching; borough league matches; London Mathsfest; the Year 8 Gabbitas masterclass; attendance at the Faraday Lecture; school performances; a black achievement show; talent shows; theatre trips; poetry events; presentation by a filmmaker; and annual Greek Theatre Players performance in the school's classical amphitheatre. The school celebrates International Women's Day, to which all faculties contribute, as a means of extending pupils' experiences and raising their awareness of women's achievements. Every week, there are clubs for dance; drama; Formula One design; origami; animal welfare; gardening; Arabic; information and communication technology; a debating club; Amnesty International; an environment club; a London club; and mathematics, science and Spanish support. A fortnightly programme is provided for pupils in Year 8, which includes support and extension work spanning literacy, science, languages, information and study skills, citizenship, typing and information and communication technology. Nearly all the teachers and support staff contribute to the extra-curricular provision.
43. Additionally, pupils go on various trips that relate closely to the curriculum and the school receives a number of visitors into the school. For instance, the humanities faculty ensures that every pupil in Years 7 to 9 goes on at least one visit per year. In Years 10 and 11, geography and history pupils attend visits, for instance, to the old operating theatre at Guys Hospital. A number of visitors come into lessons, ranging from the Gideon Society to relatives of pupils who have particularly relevant experiences to share. The faculty takes a leading role in various whole-school events, runs lunchtime clubs and organises competitions for pupils.
44. Music makes an excellent contribution to pupils' social and cultural development, offering a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. Enrichment activities include the wind band; choirs (school, chamber, junior and staff); cello, string, string quartet, flute and brass groups; the clarinet choir, woodwind and chamber ensembles; and the steel band, which has played at high profile events, including the Jubilee Celebration and Croydon Music Festival, and has been invited to play on GMTV. During the inspection, these pupils arrived early in the morning to practise and showed themselves to be superbly motivated, spending time at every break time rehearsing and playing very effectively together without the need of adult supervision. Pupils are involved in music making for various school events, including music and poetry evenings, the carol service, music festival and the community party. The school is active musically in the immediate community – where pupils perform to raise funds for charities and play at local schools – and in the wider community, with appearances at the Barbican with the LSO, at Trafalgar Square, the Royal Albert Hall and Royal Festival Hall. Pupils have had opportunities to go on concert tours in Europe, to Salzburg, Prague, Krakow, Barcelona and Italy.
45. The school is very outward looking, readily embracing new initiatives and seizing opportunities. Most recently, it has been preparing its bid for specialist college status. Already the school has Beacon status, which has led it to develop excellent links with other schools. Teachers in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and music are regularly called upon to support schools in Waltham Forest and Essex. The school has established a wider partnership with other schools through its programme of consultancy, training, seminars, mentoring, work shadowing and visits. Additionally, the school has close links with a small number of schools with whom it collaborates in various ways, with sixth form colleges, further

education colleges and higher educational establishments. There are increasingly close links with the sixth form college to which the majority of pupils transfer at post-16, which clearly help transition from GCSE to advanced work.

46. The school has some close business and community links, for instance, with HSBC, City of London Police, Oracle, BBC World Service, Whipps Cross Hospital, and Marks & Spencer. Commercial and community mentors are used for pupils who are most at risk of disaffection and the school uses its business links to very good effect to support careers education. Industry days were held for the first time this year, to give Year 10 pupils an opportunity to take part in problem-solving activities, mock interviews, careers' presentations, co-operation activities, simulated work games, as well as competitive team activities. Over 30 companies and organisations were represented. Pupils are able to visit local companies and are involved in industry-related whole-school problem-solving activities. The school has close links with those organisation and businesses that take pupils on work experience, in addition to pupils having the opportunity to organise their own work placements.

The school employs a wide range of methods to support pupils and enable them to realise their potential

47. The school is a very supportive community in which staff make it clear that they care about the welfare of every pupil. Pastoral care is very well developed and pupils feel that they could go to any member of staff if they had a problem, whilst stressing that 'problems are very rare'. The high level of concern for pupils' well-being and the effective guidance offered by the school contribute greatly to pupils' self-esteem and to their academic achievement.
48. The pastoral system is strong and coherent. Pupils are organised into tutor groups, with a head of year guiding them through the five years. Each senior manager is assigned to a particular year group and the complete system is overseen by an assistant headteacher. Pupils are supported further by a counselling service and by a sophisticated mentoring system. There is a high level of awareness of child protection issues throughout the school, and several senior staff have been trained in child protection; lines of communication are very clear.
49. Transfer arrangements for pupils from the 36 different feeder primary schools are thoroughly developed and much appreciated by parents and pupils alike. This means that pupils settle in very quickly, with lower-attaining pupils well supported by literacy and mathematics summer schools. Parents are equally positive about the school's system for supporting pupils when they prepare for transition at post-16. Pupils receive detailed support and guidance in making choices about their future, both in terms of which educational establishment to apply to and possible career options. The school works very hard to maintain high expectations and to ensure that pupils continue to believe in their ability to succeed long after they leave. They instil in pupils a belief that as they 'have already succeeded', they will find themselves empowered 'to succeed in the future'.
50. The school has an unusual number of mechanisms for supporting pupils and enabling them to realise their potential. These support systems clearly contribute to the school's excellent examination results compared with similar schools and go some way to explaining how the school achieves what it does with such a challenging intake.
51. Pupils receive support from a very wide range of different sources, including tutors, support teachers, the special educational needs co-ordinator, a learning mentor,

community mentors, industrial mentors, life skills trainers, education business partnership staff, careers advisers, youth workers and social services, and from the local Connexions service. There are catch-up programmes for pupils whose attainment is particularly low when they enter the school; smaller groups for subjects in which girls traditionally underachieve (mathematics, science and design and technology); and in Years 10 and 11, the smaller groups for English clearly support the large numbers for whom English is an additional language. As part of the support the school offers pupils, it has an Easter Revision Programme. Every subject has some form of study support which Year 11 pupils take advantage of, as well as the Year 11 mentoring scheme which provides every pupil who wants one with a mentor. Senior managers all mentor pupils, readily taking on some of the most challenging girls.

52. Although the school finds that more and more pupils exhibit challenging behaviour, fixed term exclusions are small in number. Senior managers have made social inclusion, and the countering of disaffection, principal whole-school objectives. An assistant headteacher, who is also the Connexions co-ordinator, has worked with heads of faculty, heads of year and teachers in order to identify, track and monitor a target group from all years in the school, so as to provide opportunities for early intervention. As a result, the school has been very successful in meeting the needs of pupils who would otherwise be at risk of permanent exclusion.
53. The school is active in researching and identifying alternative provision for disaffected pupils, and in identifying suitable resources for those who are most at risk. It supports the successful completion of compulsory education and transition to sixth form college of Year 11 pupils who are known to be at risk of falling 'by the wayside', and is working very closely with a number of commercial and business mentors to support pupils' achievement. For pupils with deep-seated emotional difficulties, the school provides sessions of art therapy, stress management and conflict resolution. It has been particularly effective in bringing together all the different possible agencies, who have something different to contribute to pupils' welfare and achievement, into a cohesive framework.
54. There are some excellent systems for managing pupils' behaviour: this ensures that teachers feel truly supported and that pupils learn in a calm, orderly environment. A behaviour task group has been set up and the school has a social inclusion forum which aims to develop a structure to manage pupils with repeated behavioural difficulties; to prevent duplication and doubling up of roles; and to ensure a quality system underpinned by fairness and consistency. A very effective duty system is used to identify and pick up disruptive pupils. This also acts as an informal mentoring system, identifying pupils in need of further intervention, and means that weaker curriculum areas are easily identified. The school has adapted a computerised record system to enable it to collect data about pupils who are referred to the member of staff on duty. This provides a valuable means of analysing patterns in behaviour that may link with attendance, special educational needs, and so on.
55. The duty system was seen to be working extremely effectively during the inspection: it was clear that any pupil behaving inappropriately is quickly identified and firmly dealt with. Just as the school is conscientious in rewarding pupils for effort and application, it does not allow indiscipline to go unnoticed. Firm and effective sanctions are soon put into place and parents are promptly contacted where their involvement is deemed necessary. The headteacher provides outstanding support to teachers in the way she deals with inappropriate behaviour and conveys high expectations to pupils around the school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Pupils do not achieve as well as they could in modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9 and in French in Years 10 and 11

56. In teacher assessments at the end of Year 9, modern foreign languages is the one subject area where pupils are under-performing. This is particularly evident in the much lower proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 or above (16 per cent in 2001) than in schools nationally (45 per cent). French, and sometimes Spanish, have underachieved for several years and much of the action that has been taken to remedy this has been delayed for too long. At GCSE, results in French show that pupils are not achieving as well as they could and the number of non-entries in modern foreign languages is higher than in other subjects. A deputy head is monitoring the work of the department and senior managers recognise the need to take distinct action to raise attainment. There is, however, a lack of drive and focus from the head of faculty, who is not entirely clear about how to galvanise the faculty into concerted effort.
57. Despite this, there is some very good teaching and a newly appointed teacher of French has brought many positive ideas. In a French lesson in Year 11, the teacher's command of the subject, pace and proficiency in oral drilling and in using the overhead projector set very high expectations and appropriate challenge for an upper set of pupils. They enjoyed the challenge and approval they received, and were able to follow and contribute to a lesson conducted almost entirely in French. In a Year 8 Urdu lesson, the teacher's calm authority and emphasis on disciplined listening, speaking and writing promoted very good learning and achievement.
58. Pupils' work reveals below-average attainment in Years 7 to 9. In Year 7, pupils' attainment is superficial and limited; for instance, pupils are insecure in their recall of numbers from one to thirty. By Year 9, pupils' written work is accurate, neat and shows careful application of structures and of recall under test conditions, proving that an average amount of language has been assimilated and reapplied. However, the curriculum is unambitious and not enriched by the range of grammatical structures which higher-attaining pupils and those who are gifted and talented normally learn to apply.
59. Where pupils do less well in modern languages, this is partly as a result of low expectations in some lessons, evident from pupils' work, and methods of teaching that are not wholly effective. Assessment information is not used sufficiently to inform teaching and to match tasks to the needs of different groups of pupils. However, the below-average standards are mainly the result of unsatisfactory curriculum provision in Years 7 to 9. In Year 7, pupils learn each of three modern languages for only one term (French, Spanish and Urdu). Whilst this gives pupils a taste of three languages and makes an informed choice possible, it is an unsatisfactory arrangement since it has an adverse impact on standards. Pupils in the current Year 9 have received insufficient lesson time in each of their two languages – well below the minimum recommended level – in which to acquire sufficient knowledge and understanding or develop speaking and writing skills. Current arrangements reduce the entitlement of all pupils to the full modern foreign languages curriculum. In an attempt to raise standards in modern languages, pupils now choose one language at the end of Year 7 rather than two, in order to concentrate on this, rather than 'dropping' the second at the end of Year 9. Pupils do not have the opportunity to take two languages at GCSE, which restricts the access - particularly of higher-attaining pupils and those who are gifted and talented - to an appropriately enriching curriculum in Years 10 and 11.

There are some inadequacies in accommodation which impact on the quality of education

60. There are five connected buildings: an Edwardian main building; a sports area with gymnasium which also accommodates some mathematics and drama; a design and technology block; a 1960 building where English, languages, drama and information and communication technology are taught; and 'The House', which is used for administration and has three teaching rooms.
61. A modernisation programme is underway, aimed at making manifest in the fabric of the building all the things the school wants for its pupils: that they should feel valued and made to feel that they deserve the best. This programme has led to:
- a new learning resource centre, with six well-equipped information and communication technology rooms;
 - five newly refurbished and redesigned offices;
 - redecoration of some corridors and classrooms;
 - remodelling of the front foyer.
62. The school is reviewing its accommodation in the context of its bid to become a specialist college for mathematics and computing. Mathematics rooms – noted as a weakness in the previous inspection report – are seen as a priority as they are scattered and often cramped. One science laboratory has not been refurbished and seriously limits methods of teaching and learning. Additionally, 'The House' is in need of refurbishment and includes some classrooms that are too small for their purpose. Physical education facilities are poor and this clearly has an impact on attainment; the school has temporarily suspended its GCSE course in physical education. The dining room is grossly inadequate and would constitute a health and safety risk if pupils were not so patient and well behaved. There are leaking gutters and rotting window frames. A recent health and safety audit raised some important concerns, including suggesting the presence of asbestos. Further checks are being undertaken.
63. An asset management plan is being developed and the school is awaiting an update condition survey from the local education authority.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. In order to build on the school's many strengths, the headteacher, governors and staff should:
- (1) Raise standards in modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9 and in French at GCSE, by:
- improving curriculum arrangements so that:
all pupils receive their full entitlement to the subject throughout Years 7 to 9; gifted and talented pupils in particular are enabled to study a second modern language in Years 10 and 11;
 - raising teachers' expectations of what higher-attaining pupils can achieve in each year, especially in speaking and listening, through adopting appropriate assessment strategies and matching tasks to the full range of learning needs in each class;

- clarifying priorities for development and improving the action that is taken by the head of faculty towards their achievement.
(Paragraphs 56, 58 – 59)
- (2) Press for improvements in accommodation in relation to shortcomings noted in this report*.
(Paragraph 62)

** This area is featured currently as a priority in the school's development plan.*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	9	14	13	7	0	0	0
Percentage	21	33	30	16	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7- Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	900
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	331

Special educational needs	Y7- Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	24
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	53

English as an additional language	No. of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	470

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No. of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	31
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	39

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	8.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.3
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2001	0	178	178

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Girls	142	112	120
	Total	142	112	120
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	80 (72)	63 (61)	67 (49)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	31 (24)	44 (32)	35 (27)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Girls	127	116	130
	Total	127	116	130
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	72 (82)	65 (62)	73 (62)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	33 (36)	38 (33)	42 (31)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	0	181	181

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Girls	114	178	178
	Total	114	178	178
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	63 (54)	98 (96)	98 (98)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	45.3
	National	39.0

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No. of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	67
Black – African heritage	46
Black – other	40
Indian	44
Pakistani	273
Bangladeshi	11
Chinese	3
White	255
Any other minority ethnic group	146

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	5	
Black – African heritage	3	
Black – other	1	
Indian	1	
Pakistani	4	
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	2	
Other minority ethnic groups	5	

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	55.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.9

Education support staff: Y7– Y11

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	381

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	70.0
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25.8
Key Stage 4	22.9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	3290092
Total expenditure	3203855
Expenditure per pupil	3560
Balance brought forward from previous year	76013
Balance carried forward to next year	162250

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	17
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	17

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	885
Number of questionnaires returned	151

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	31	0	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	38	1	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	49	1	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	55	6	0	5
The teaching is good.	43	51	2	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	39	12	3	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	36	2	2	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	26	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	38	45	11	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	54	39	2	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	38	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	66	28	3	0	3