

Appendix 2: Ofsted information relating to identified schools (with good progression to post-16 science by students with two B grades in GCSE sciences)

Disclaimer

The Department for Children, Schools and Families wishes to make it clear that the Department and its agents accept no responsibility for the actual content of any materials suggested as information sources in this publication, whether these are in the form of printed publications or on a website.

In these materials, icons, logos, software products and websites are used for contextual and practical reasons. Their use should not be interpreted as an endorsement of particular companies or their products.

The websites referred to in these materials existed at the time of going to print.

Please check all website references carefully to see if they have changed and substitute other references where appropriate.

Introduction

The extracts from Ofsted comments contextualise each of the 30 schools selected for participation in the survey. Schools have been anonymised and the labels given follow on from those used to describe schools in the research published last year. Available from – www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/nationalstrategies.

School G2

Ofsted report 2006

Description of the school

School G2 is much smaller than the average sized comprehensive. It serves a small town and the surrounding area. The school is a designated Extended School and provides a variety of community services. It is an associate member of the local Federation of Schools and is the hub school for the School Sports Co-ordination Partnership. Unusually, the headteacher role has been shared for the last year, with the headteacher working part-time and the deputy headteacher serving as joint headteacher. Almost all students are of White British background. One student in five is eligible for free school meals. This is above average, but seasonal employment patterns mean that more students experience social and economic disadvantage. Students' attainment on entry to the school is below average, with relatively few attaining beyond the expected level for their age. Just over 7% of students have statements of special educational needs. The school caters for the full range of ability with students taking GCSEs in Years 9 and 10 as well as 11; some take AS level in Year 11.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

School G2 is a good school with some outstanding features, providing good value for money. It has improved effectively since the last inspection and has good capacity to improve further. The school's self-evaluation is good and it develops effective responses. It is well led at all levels and has made good use of a joint headteacher arrangement to develop leadership and management skills among a wider range of staff. The school's small size brings a mixture of benefits and challenges. One benefit is that the students all know each other and are all known by nearly every member of staff. A particular strength of the school is its inclusive approach. The quality of care, guidance and support is very good. As a result, students' personal development and well-being are good and their behaviour is outstanding. Provision is good for all students and support is outstanding for those with learning difficulties and statements of educational need. The school has considerable and growing expertise in meeting the needs of students with complex needs. The headteachers have provided strong leadership to develop an exceptional network of partnerships that help to meet the challenges faced by a small school. There are strong links with the wider community through the school's status as an extended school and as the hub school for a large sports partnership. Work with the Federation, partner specialist schools and the local cluster of schools has promoted innovative solutions to shared problems. A significant dip in standards and achievement in 2005 resulted from an unfortunate combination of factors beyond the school's control. Nevertheless, the acting headteacher instigated an effective programme of improvement measures. As a result, teaching and learning are now good overall, although not all the intended improvements in assessment are fully in place. For example, the quality of marking is variable and the assessment by students of their own and each other's work is not consistently established. The curriculum meets students' personalised needs well, though literacy and numeracy across the curriculum are underdeveloped. Achievement is good because, on average, students join the school with levels of attainment that are below the national expectation for their age and leave with standards that match the national average. Progress is good overall but satisfactory in the core subjects of mathematics

and English. Some students' work is difficult to follow because of poor handwriting or inadequately explained mathematical working.

Standards in science were in line with national averages. Students make at least satisfactory progress by age 14. Achievement in Key Stage 3 mathematics and science is slowly improving and is good for students now reaching the end of Key Stage 3. Students with high prior attainment now achieve well, and many more students are reaching the higher levels in mathematics and science tests at age 14. The impressive range of science courses includes single, double or separate sciences and a BTEC First Diploma.

School G3

Ofsted report 2008

Description of the school

School G3 is a heavily over subscribed specialist sports and humanities college. It has recently been designated an enhanced specialist school for targeted work with gifted and talented students. It is a very large school and has an exceptionally large sixth form. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is above average. The proportion of students from a minority ethnic background is well above average with large proportions from Indian, Pakistani or Black African heritage. The proportion of students for whom English is an additional language is above average, but few are at an early stage of learning English. The school has acquired a vast array of awards including Sportsmark Gold, Investors in People and the Basic Skills Agency Charter Mark.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

School G3 is an outstanding school. This statement will come as no surprise to the very large majority of parents returning questionnaires who had nothing but praise for the school.

Standards in Year 11 are exceptionally and consistently high, resulting from outstanding progress given their starting points. Results are continually improving, thus enhancing the life chances of students. Many stay on to the very large sixth form from where they progress to a wide variety of higher education institutions and employment. The proportion of students leaving school and not moving to further education, training or employment is one of the lowest in the borough. The life chances of students are enhanced in a variety of ways beyond academic results. Their personal development and well-being are outstanding as is their care, guidance and support.

The school is an oasis of calm and harmony where students feel very safe. Students are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles and through excellent work with the local authority, the rate of teenage pregnancies has significantly reduced. Students make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community. The needs of the local and wider community are promoted and embedded in all aspects of school life and this is reflected in the diverse range of partnerships with local and international partners. Diversity is promoted in school assemblies and through a range of cultural events where the school ensures that inequality is challenged and addressed by all students and adults. The school makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion.

Students clearly enjoy being at school as evidenced both by what they told inspectors and the above average attendance figures. Behaviour is excellent around the school not least because of the excellent relationships between students and staff. The school now offers a broad range of subjects that meet the needs and interests of different students. The curriculum is good and continuing to improve. The school has been innovative in its use of learning time. Academic and personal mentoring has a high profile.

However, within the context of this outstanding school a relative weakness is that there are insufficient planned opportunities for students to reflect. The legal statutory entitlement for all students of religious education for all students is now in place but is a very recent development.

Two key reasons for the outstanding achievement of students are that the quality of teaching and learning and also leadership and management are outstanding. Inspectors visited lessons and spoke to staff and students. They found that the key to the excellent teaching was a combination of positive relationships and a strong focus on continuing professional development for teachers. Leaders and managers at all levels place a strong emphasis on improving teaching.

Central to the rapid improvements in the school is the commitment and quiet determination of the headteacher. He empowers senior and middle leaders to innovate and improve provision. Students behave safely in lessons and are very aware of potential hazards that could occur in physical education (PE), science and technology.

School G4

Ofsted report 2007

Description of the school

School G4 is a larger than average mixed comprehensive school for 1,402 students aged 11-18 of whom 309 are in the sixth form. The school is located approximately 1 mile outside a large city centre. The area is recognised as having significant socio-economic deprivation and a high proportion of students are eligible for free school meals. Nearly all of the students are from minority ethnic backgrounds and the majority speak English as an additional language. The students' attainment on entry to the school is well below average and a higher than average number of students have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school was removed from special measures in December 2004. In October 2005 the headteacher was appointed as the executive headteacher of both this and another local school. The partnership has resulted in the school being recognised as a National Support School in October 2006. In September 2006 it acquired specialist college status for mathematics and computing.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

School G4 is an outstanding school with good sixth form provision. The school's mission of 'Achievement for All' now permeates the whole organisation and has been a key factor in driving its exceptional progress and improving achievement since the last inspection.

A culture of high aspirations has been established which is subscribed to by staff and students alike. This is accompanied by a relentless pursuit of excellence and commitment to overcoming any areas of relative weakness.

The school is highly inclusive and is successfully removing barriers to achievement for a significant number of students who are at risk of underperforming. One group of students summed up the feelings of many by saying: 'We like this school because the teachers are very helpful and they encourage you to achieve as well as you can.'

The vast majority of students make outstanding progress through Years 7 to 11 and good progress in the sixth form compared to their exceptionally low starting points. Vulnerable students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported and make good progress with some making very good progress. Standards, although generally at or below national averages, continue to rise. The school recognises the need to continue to improve standards further across both key stages and is ambitious yet realistic in its approach to this.

The progress students make in their personal development and well-being is good. The school provides a safe learning environment and students demonstrate a good awareness of health and well-being. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and exclusions have fallen dramatically. Attendance continues to be a key area for improvement, although a wide range of strategies are in place to support students' attendance and it has improved marginally since the last inspection and is now just under that of similar schools.

Teaching and learning are good and assessment is used particularly well to motivate students and help them to realise their potential. Some lessons are too dominated by the teacher and do not effectively promote or develop students' ability to work more independently or think for themselves, limiting the progress of some.

A wide curriculum is offered across the school, including an increasing number of vocational programmes to meet students' needs and an effective alternative curriculum for more vulnerable students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The specialist status in mathematics and computing is in its early stages, but is already beginning to impact through the use of information and learning technologies (ILT) in lessons and in creating learning resources. Inspectors found the school's evaluation of 'good' care, guidance and support to be overly modest and judged this aspect as outstanding for all students, due to the excellent academic guidance which in turn has resulted in such impressive rates of progress by most students. The proportion of students who progress to further education and higher education or employment is high, supporting students' future economic well-being. The vast majority of parents are highly supportive of the school and recognise its improving status. A minority of parents feel the school could take better account of parental views.

Leadership of the school is strong and inspirational. Management of the sixth form is good.

Effective partnership working exists and has aided the school's transformation, along with a supportive governing body. Self-evaluation is used exceptionally well to identify underperformance and check on progress at all levels, with challenging and often ambitious targets being set and in many cases met or exceeded. Senior managers have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas where improvement is needed. Resources are used exceptionally well and the school provides excellent value for money. The school has been energised since its removal from special measures and has demonstrated an impressive rate of improvement, with an outstanding capacity to improve its provision further. In Years 7 to 9 students make exceptionally good progress in mathematics and science.

School G5

Ofsted report 2008

Description of the school

School G5 is a large non-selective secondary school with a sixth form. The school operates within a selective system where about 11% of pupils in the area go to grammar schools. Students enter from around 23 primary schools. The numbers of students with low attainment on entry has risen significantly since the last inspection. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Few students are from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak languages other than English. Nearly half of the students continue their education in the school's sixth form. The school was designated a specialist visual arts college in September 2005. The school has recently attained the Healthy School Award and Sportsmark and meets the Investors in People and Financial Management Standard in Schools.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Achievement is good, with many students starting from a low base of academic skills to go on to reach average standards at the end of Year 11. A key strength of the school is its success in providing fully for those with additional needs.

Students and parents are overwhelmingly positive about the attitudes and welfare the school promotes. One parent wrote, 'I continue to be delighted with the school; the pastoral care is superb.' Students' personal development and well-being are outstanding in both the main school and the sixth form. All students get on well together and grow tremendously in confidence, courtesy and respect for each other.

Students are keen to contribute to the school through their support of the school parliament and good numbers involve themselves in voluntary activities such as fund raising for the community. Attendance has improved well and is now above average. Relationships are excellent and behaviour is good around the school and in the majority of lessons. Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The students comment on how safe they feel and reflect on how well they have developed skills in resolving and managing their behaviour.

The high quality of care, guidance and support helps the students have pride in their achievements and get the most from their lessons. Specialist visual arts status has been used very effectively to motivate and inspire many students to set high expectations of themselves. This aspect of the school's work contributes well to the good community awareness students demonstrate. A flexible and well-planned curriculum offers a range of pathways to suit students' needs. These provide good continuity into post-16 courses and students develop a good understanding of workplace requirements. The strength and the popularity of the curriculum at Key Stage 4 are such that an increasing proportion of students now progress to further education to follow both academic and vocational courses. Changes in the Key Stage 3 requirements have been well managed. The school has been recognised by the local authority for its determination to develop the Key Stage 3 curriculum to better match the needs of the students entering from the primary phase.

Good teaching enables the majority to enjoy their learning and develop independence by Year 11. Thorough, systematic observation of lessons is undertaken. Whilst many lessons are good or even of outstanding quality, learning is occasionally slowed when teachers do not question well enough to meet the wide range of needs in their classes. Leadership and management are good. Commitment to including all students in the life of the school could not be better. Self-evaluation is good and involves managers at all levels. The tracking of students' progress is regular but expectations set for students are too modest. Managers are improving the range of information they are collecting on students' progress and evaluating with increasing precision.

Good direction, with strong support and challenge from governors combined with a good record of improvements, provide a secure basis on which to improve school performance further. There is good improvement in science, in narrowing the gap between boys' and girls' achievement. Progress in areas such as science and mathematics, where students have not always achieved as well as they might, is getting better.

School G6

Ofsted report 2008

Description of the school

The school serves the village and the surrounding villages in a large county. It also attracts pupils from the outskirts of the nearby city. The number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below the national average. A small proportion of pupils is from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of educational need is below average, as is the number of pupils who have learning difficulties. A small number of pupils have disabilities. The school is a specialist school for mathematics and computing.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress in their work, reflecting the satisfactory quality of the teaching they receive. Teachers know their subjects well, but there is a tendency for pupils to be engaged in too much listening rather than being actively involved in their own learning. In some lessons, there is not a sharp enough focus on what is to be learned. As a result, although pupils like coming to school, their enjoyment of the education they receive is only satisfactory. In well-taught lessons all groups of pupils make good or better progress. In those which are satisfactory, or in the small number which are inadequate, it tends to be the boys who make least progress because their interest and therefore concentration is not sustained. In the 2007 GCSE examinations, pupils made satisfactory progress but the boys' progress was significantly below that of girls. In response, the school's leaders have put into place a series of measures to ensure that boys' progress improves. This is having success. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

The school's leaders have also made some improvements to the curriculum. This was not serving well those pupils who prefer more practical, vocationally orientated courses. Some such courses have now been introduced and in the case of science, for example, are playing an important part in raising standards. In addition, those who would benefit are now able to take some examination courses early. For example, some Year 9 pupils are studying food technology at lunchtime and after school and will take their GCSE examination in this subject in Year 10. They are producing some high quality work and it is evident that these pupils are highly motivated.

Some pupils take their GCSE in mathematics in Year 10. Nevertheless, the school's leaders recognise that there is more to do to improve the curriculum, particularly in extending the range of vocational and work-based courses. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their future economic well-being. Of the school's specialist subjects, provision in mathematics is good, and in information and communication technology (ICT) it is satisfactory. However, good links in both subjects have been made with the community, for example providing support for primary schools and giving lessons to local adults.

The school's leaders keep the school under review. The evaluation process is satisfactory. It has identified some weaknesses in the quality of its work and robust actions have been taken to remedy them. There are detailed three yearly reviews of departments' provision and shorter annual reviews. Both include an analysis of departments' success in helping pupils to learn.

These reviews are helping to ensure that department leaders are accountable and are leading to some improvements, but are inconsistent in bringing about rapid improvement to the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils are well cared for and the school is successful in encouraging their personal development.

It helps them to appreciate the importance of healthy living. They put this into practice when choosing food in the school dining room. Attendance is good and is well supported by the school. Pupils' personal

development is good. They get along well with each other and with the adults in school. A small proportion of parents had concerns about behaviour, but the inspectors' view is that it is satisfactory. Bullying does occur, although it is infrequent. Pupils are confident that any such incidents will be appropriately dealt with. Racist incidents are rare and pupils feel safe. Pupils make a good contribution to both the school and the wider community.

The school's leaders have also made some improvements to the curriculum. This was not serving well those pupils who prefer more practical, vocationally orientated courses. Some such courses have now been introduced and in the case of science, for example, are playing an important part in raising standards. In addition, those who would benefit are now able to take some examination courses early. Progress was below that expected in science. The school has increased its provision of practically based courses. These are offered for example in construction and applied science and more effectively meet some pupils' interests.

School G7

Ofsted report 2009

Description of the school

School G7 is smaller than the average sized secondary school because it is part of a three-tier education system whereby the students start at the school in Year 9. Almost all the students are of White British heritage. There are fewer than average numbers of students eligible for free school meals. The number of students with a statement of special educational needs is in line with the national average but, overall, the percentage of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than found nationally.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform.

The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to raising standards in English at Key Stage 4; in developing more rigorous monitoring, marking and written feedback to ensure that all students know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further; and developing more robust evaluation and monitoring of provision to ensure that all students achieve in line with their capabilities.

From broadly average standards at both the start and finish of Year 9, the number of students gaining five or more A* to C grades (higher grades) at GCSE at the end of Key Stage 4 is close to average because of the increasing take-up of a greater variety of examination courses on offer. However standards in English and all areas of science, except biology, are below average, as is the proportion of students gaining at least five higher grades at GCSE including English and mathematics. Overall progress at Key Stage 4 is inadequate, despite an improving trend since the previous inspection. This is because students' standards and progress in English have both declined since the previous inspection in 2006, when the school was asked to improve standards in the subject. In addition, the school's own data indicate that while results at Key Stage 4 are set to improve over the next two years, standards would be below average, despite students' broadly average starting points. Overall, students' achievement is inadequate. Although standards have been improving at sixth form level since the previous inspection because of the greater numbers taking vocationally orientated courses, overall attainment at the highest level in A-level examinations declined from 2007, when it was below the national average.

Students' personal development and well-being are developing satisfactorily in both the main school and sixth form. The vast majority of students are reasonably au fait with the reasons for adopting a healthy lifestyle, particularly in terms of taking regular exercise and eating healthy foods. Most students say they enjoy school, although attendance is still below the national average. However, focused effort from the staff, together with a greater range of curricular choices have made students more aware and appreciative of what the school has to offer them in terms of their future economic well-being. The majority of teaching is satisfactory, occasionally good. However, too many lessons are teacher dominated, which limits the opportunities for students to work independently. In the sixth form, however, the students appreciate the different teaching styles because it gives them more opportunities for personal decision-making and independence in their learning. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and improving because of the increased opportunities for more students to study vocational subjects.

Despite the good quality care and support provided for students, academic guidance is inadequate. Insufficient and inconsistent advice is provided to students in the main school, including marking, which too often fails to give specific advice on how to improve work in order to achieve or exceed identified learning targets.

The overall quality of leadership and management is inadequate because key issues from the previous inspection, in particular, standards and progress in English, and the approaches to marking and monitoring students' work have not improved. The school's evaluation of its performance is over-optimistic, and its analysis of some students' performance data in English is flawed. The lack of a formal record of progress against key priorities and actions from the school development plan has limited an accurate assessment of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. Although monitoring and evaluation of provision is satisfactory in Years 12 and 13, the contribution of the head of sixth form to these processes, especially in relation to teaching and learning, is underdeveloped.

However, recent changes to the senior leadership team and governing body, to complement the formation of a hard federation with the local feeder middle schools, gives a clear indication that senior managers now appreciate what needs to be done to make the necessary improvements. Middle managers have also recently developed a more coherent approach to evaluating and monitoring provision, as a further aid to whole-school improvement. The capacity to improve is, therefore, satisfactory.

Standards in English and all areas of science, except biology, are also below average.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and science at Key Stage 4.

School G8

Ofsted report 2007

Description of the school

School G8 serves an inner city community with significant social deprivation.

Half the students are entitled to free school meals. The school population is ethnically diverse; nearly three quarters are from minority ethnic groups. The number of students with learning needs or disabilities is well above average. The school lost its sixth form in 2004 after post-16 re-organisation. The school operates on two sites and is a specialist humanities college and an extended school.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

School G8 is a good school with a record of steady improvement. When they leave, students' standards are comparable to the national average. While progress in the first three years is no better than satisfactory, so that standards are still below average at the end of Year 9, in Years 10 and 11 students' progress is impressive. Given the students' low starting points on joining the school, this means that achievement overall is good. The new headteacher is aware that he has inherited a loyal, committed and hard-working staff and a school accustomed to innovation. It has, for example, a pioneering citizenship programme and is developing successful restorative justice approaches to poor behaviour. Full advantage is taken of a large number of partnership arrangements; membership of a local federation of schools brings many benefits, not least in the development of the 14-19 curriculum. Excellent communications with parents have contributed to the school's popularity. As one parent said, 'I'm proud that my son is at this school.'

The new headteacher has been careful to acknowledge and build on the school's considerable existing strengths, such as the outstanding work on inclusion, while at the same time instituting the changes necessary for the school to continue to move forward. Discussions about performance and how it can be improved are rigorous and productive and comprehensive systems for monitoring activities at all levels are being introduced. The self-evaluation report gives a clear and honest assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses, although is yet to be integrated with departmental reviews. Firm and effective action is being taken in areas of under-performance, including those identified in the last inspection report.

The school's judgements about the quality of teaching and learning are robust and include contributions from students. Teaching is good overall, and much is outstanding, but the school knows that it must do more to encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning in lessons. The school has invested heavily in the training of teachers and good practice is increasingly shared between the departments. Teachers know the students very well and there is an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Students enjoy coming to school and say they are encouraged 'to do their best'. They are not yet sufficiently aware of the need to eat healthily and take regular exercise, but they make an outstanding contribution to the school and to the wider community. The citizenship programme contributes significantly to students' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as do the many arts initiatives. Older students act as peer mentors to younger ones and some are involved in the wider dissemination of aspects of the citizenship programme. One student is deputy young mayor.

The curriculum is well-matched to the school's intake with a good balance of academic and vocational options. Some students undertake 'taster' course in trades such as bricklaying and catering in a local college. The range of additional activities offered students is good, and the school runs revision sessions during the Easter holidays for those that need them. The care, guidance and support provided for students' academic and pastoral needs are outstanding. Citizenship is a very considerable strength of the school and extends into the wider curriculum; science, mathematics, design technology and ICT are among the many subjects which have a citizenship component.

School G9

Ofsted report 2006

Description of the school

School G9 is a medium-sized 11-18 boys' comprehensive. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage; around 30% are from Asian backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average and the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also low. The school has specialist language status and has recently become an extended school in collaboration with another local school. The headteacher is newly appointed in September 2005.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors judge the school to be satisfactory. Since the last inspection the school has been awarded specialist language status and has improved some of its accommodation and ICT resources.

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. In national tests and GCSE examinations the students achieve results broadly in line with national averages. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress, as do those whose first language is not English. Personal development is good and the students behave sensibly. The boys enjoy physical education and understand the importance of exercise in healthy lifestyles. Students show good understanding of other cultures, are regularly involved with the local community and successfully raise money each year for charity. Teaching and learning are satisfactory throughout the school. There is some good and outstanding teaching. Lessons are predominantly well ordered but a minority are disrupted by difficult behaviour. Effective support is provided to students with learning difficulties and disabilities to enable them to progress. The curriculum is good and meets the range of needs in the student body. There is a growing number of vocational courses at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. There are some outstanding enrichment activities available and a wide range of sports and cultural opportunities which are popular with the students.

Care, guidance and support for students are good. Careers education is good and liaison and progression arrangements effective. The enthusiasm the students show for sport illustrates their commitment to fitness and health.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses, provides satisfactory value for money and its capacity to improve is good. A key strength of the school is the vision and leadership demonstrated by the new head teacher. The senior leadership team work well in planning and implementing new developments. The leadership of middle managers is more variable. Financial planning and monitoring have improved following a period of deterioration in which the school incurred a budget deficit. Expenditure on resources is below national average and the facilities in science and physical education are in need of refurbishment. Governors provide good support to the school's management team. The school has an inclusive ethos and celebrates the cultural diversity of the students. Discrimination and bullying, along with other forms of disruptive behaviour, are effectively dealt with. Facilities in science and physical education are in need of refurbishment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the facilities in science and physical education.

School G10

Ofsted report 2009

Description of the school

The academy opened in August 2003. It is a large school serving a multicultural area of an inner city with high levels of social and economic disadvantage. There are two main sites with further sports facilities and vocational provision at a number of other locations. The academy enjoys excellent resources to support its specialism in information and communication technology (ICT). Around a third of the students are White British; others are from a wide variety of minority ethnic heritages. A significant number are from families of asylum seekers or refugees; around a quarter speak English as an additional language. Over a third are eligible for free school meals, which is well above average, and the proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also above average (28%). Student mobility is high. There are considerably more boys than girls (56%). The academy has received a number of awards in recent years for its provision in ICT.

Grade: 3

The academy is providing a satisfactory standard of education and has a number of strengths.

Leaders and managers have continued to face significant challenges since the last inspection.

Although student numbers have stayed more or less the same, there have been many projects to further improve facilities, such as the newly opened performing arts and information technology diploma centre, and initiatives to develop the curriculum, often in collaboration with other partners. The number of newly arriving students from abroad has continued to grow, with many having little or no English. Provision for these young people is good. However, overall effectiveness at the academy is satisfactory, rather than good, because students' achievements and their personal development remain satisfactory.

Provision meets most students' needs adequately. Inspectors agreed with the school's own judgement that the quality of teaching is satisfactory. There is, at present, too little very good or outstanding teaching to help and inspire other teachers to improve. Students make satisfactory progress in lessons and over time. Results in the GCSE examinations were good in 2007 but slipped back in 2008. Standards in mathematics are well below average. The curriculum has been well developed: it is imaginative and flexible, meeting a wide range of needs, including those of the most able students. Those with low levels of literacy are effectively supported.

Care, guidance and support arrangements are satisfactory, particularly for some of the most vulnerable students. The personal development of most students is satisfactory. They enjoy the safe environment of the school, behave reasonably and attendance is improving. However, sixth formers do not have sufficient opportunities for their personal development and are unclear who is responsible for their support and guidance. Furthermore, although relations are good in this large school community, the links between senior leaders and faculty and subject leaders have not been sufficiently rigorous. Action has been taken since the examination results in 2008 to restructure the senior leadership team and to focus management processes more clearly on student progress.

The academy has an outstanding range of links and innovative partnership arrangements. There are exciting links with China, the Ukraine and other countries from which many students benefit.

Good links have been established more locally as well and the school works hard to provide services to parents and others. Nevertheless, the number of parents or carers who responded to the questionnaire that formed part of this inspection was very small. Those that did respond were largely positive in their views of the school. Students who spoke to inspectors were very positive about coming to school. The academy has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses and provides satisfactory value for money.

School G11

Ofsted report 2008

Description of the school

School G11 is a very large, popular and oversubscribed secondary school, which serves a neighbourhood containing some significant deprivation. It has specialist status in sport, mathematics and computing. It is a non-selective school within a selective area and consequently recruits fewer pupils of the highest academic ability than it otherwise might. Pupils' attainment on entry is mixed but well below the national average overall, with the proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register being high. The majority of pupils are White British, with nearly a fifth coming from other ethnic backgrounds. About one in every 10 pupils speaks English as an additional language.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Day by day, it significantly enhances the life chances of its pupils of all backgrounds and needs, and is rightly very highly regarded by parents and the local community. The pupils really enjoy coming to school; they are not completely uncritical but they recognise that their school truly cares for them and helps them make excellent progress.

Every pupil matters and they know it.

What makes the school such a success story? First and foremost, it is the longstanding and excellent leadership provided by the headteacher, his senior staff, middle managers and the active and very astute governing body. Together, they have taken the school on a journey of continuous improvement, as successive inspections have shown. They show strong moral purpose, understand the local circumstances very well and are absolutely determined to seek the best for each pupil. Their vision is clear and compelling to others. They evaluate the school very honestly and accurately, involving many people in the process. There is no complacency whatsoever. Where improvements are needed, as recently in the teaching of science, robust but fair action is taken. School improvement plans are very clearly written and put into action diligently, so that they have a great impact and bring the school's vision to practical fruition.

The next element in the success of the school is the strong commitment and very hard work across the large staff team. As one pupil appreciatively said, 'There's a lot of work that goes into the school.' Staff respond very positively to the leadership they receive and are determined to do the best they can for all the pupils. They feel valued and appreciate the training, assistance and guidance they receive, as well as the trust that is shown in them. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is outstanding in Years 7 to 11 and good at post-16. The school's rigorous and well-structured approach to staff performance management assures this. In lessons, pupils understand the teachers' input, are usually actively involved and know clearly what is expected of them, enabling them to make rapid progress. Pupils with LDD receive excellent and very well-managed support. Consequently, they make excellent progress and feel the school is a good place to be. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to this alongside teachers. Administrative and premises staff also fully share the school's vision and make a notable contribution to the school's success.

The third element is the excellent systems the school has developed over time. For example, pastoral support is excellent. Pupils feel very well cared for and know that there is always a trusted adult to approach if needed. Pupils and parents say that bullying is very rare but that if it does occur it is almost always dealt with quickly and effectively. Communications with parents are good, for example through the school's website. Child protection procedures are robust. Pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons is good and respectful as well as very safe. The consistent systems for behaviour management contribute much to this, as does the fact that pupils like school and want to abide by its rules. Attendance is

improving as a result of concerted school action and is now above average. Pupils receive a high standard of impartial and helpful advice about their options and future careers. They also get very useful feedback on their work in lessons and through marking of their work, which the school has successfully developed. They benefit from the opportunity to mark their own and each other's work. Pupils are very appreciative of the many visits out, residential visits, extra-curricular activities and productions that take place. These help bring their learning to life and promote enjoyment, excellent learning about different cultures, good relationships and better understanding of work in class. The school's finances and resources are managed very carefully and effectively and where large sums of money have been gained for significant projects, such as the new post-16 block, these have been used astutely and efficiently.

Strong partnerships with others are the final key component of the school's success. The school has formed close working relationships with other schools, colleges, community organisations, City Challenge, Excellence in Cities, some local authority departments and other public services. These enhance and broaden the experience for all pupils significantly and are often particularly valuable for those who are most vulnerable. The school's specialist status has brought significant improvements in the curriculum for physical education, mathematics and computing and the school has evidence that it has helped to raise standards more widely.

There are areas where further improvements would benefit the school and senior staff are aware of these. The curriculum at post-16 does not contain enough vocational or lower level courses to meet the needs of all students. In Key Stage 4, whilst there is a range of vocational options, a broader selection of these could benefit pupils. Although target setting is well-established and contributes effectively to raising standards, it does not take sufficient account of the progress of each individual pupil. Pupils generally know their targets, which raises their ambitions, but are not always sure what they need to do to achieve them.

In conclusion, what are the main positive outcomes pupils and students gain from attending this very impressive school? Most importantly, all groups of pupils, including those who are higher attaining, those who speak English as an additional language and those with LDD make excellent progress from when they start school to GCSE level. Boys make particularly fast progress. All pupils leave the school with some worthwhile qualifications and are very well prepared for their future lives. Standards are rising but remain broadly average, reflecting the non-selective intake. Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their readiness to be good and happy citizens of the future, are also outstanding overall. Where improvements are needed, as recently in the teaching of science, robust but fair action is taken.

School G12

Ofsted report 2006

Description of the school

The college is smaller than others of its type. It serves a wide catchment area but rolls are falling and it is due to close in 2009. The sixth form closed in 2006. Most students are of White British backgrounds, 4% are of minority ethnic heritage and of these two are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion eligible for free school meals, at 12%, is below average. Fewer students have learning difficulties and/or disabilities than the national average but the proportion with statements of special educational need is above average. The school has specialist status as a technology college. It gained a Healthy Schools award in 2006. At the time of the inspection interim arrangements for the college leadership team were in place following the secondment of the headteacher.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The college provides a good education for its students. A strong ethos of care and values is firmly established. Students respond very positively to this and one spoke for many saying; 'it is like a family here'. Students get on well with each other and with staff. Relationships are characterised by mutual respect. As a result students are happy and enjoy schooling. Provision for students' personal development, well-being and care are good and have strengthened further since the last inspection. They make a good contribution to students' progress and development of confidence. Outstanding opportunities are provided to develop the personal qualities to enable them to contribute effectively to the community. Students' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good and they act responsibly in and around the college site. Attendance is improving but overall it remains below average.

Standards are rising as a result of improvements brought about by the college leaders. They include well-taught courses that suit students' needs and enable them to succeed and teaching strategies to better prepare students for examinations. Teaching and learning are good and improving and students generally make good progress in lessons. Data are beginning to be used more sharply to identify underachievement and set challenging targets. The gap between boys and girls achievement has narrowed and GCSE results rose significantly in 2006: the best in the college's history. Most students, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress given their starting points when they joined the college. The improvements are more firmly focused and established in Years 10 and 11 than in the younger year groups.

Achievement, whilst satisfactory overall at Key Stage 3, varies between subjects. This is as a result of variability in the quality of teaching and learning and the use of assessment. In particular, marking and teachers' feedback to students is inconsistent in explaining what they need to do to improve and move their learning on.

Since the last inspection the college has worked successfully to improve the curriculum and it is now good. Access to information and communication technology (ICT) has improved significantly since the last inspection and it is now very good. Developments introduced this term promote electronic communications further and enable students to access tasks and homework from home. Both students and staff are fizzing with ideas of how to make it better. Specialist status is well reflected in the curriculum and plays a significant role in promoting good effective partnerships with primary schools and local businesses. Leadership and management are good. The acting leadership team are strong and steer the college well in particularly challenging circumstances. Closure of the sixth form, turbulence in staffing and changes to cope with the reducing numbers of students have been well managed. Staff and student morale is good and the college runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Improvement has been maintained across many aspects of the college's work and plans reflect a determination to continue to

do so. Measures have been set in train to support monitoring and evaluation by middle managers. This is developing but is not yet sharp enough to ensure teaching and learning, assessment and marking are consistent across the school. The capacity for improvement is good. Students' achievement in English was significantly higher and they made better progress than they did in mathematics and science. Test results for 2006 indicate a similar pattern and achievement by the end of the key stage is not improving as swiftly in mathematics and science. Most subjects perform well at GCSE, with ICT and science being particularly successful. Many students achieve additional certificates and awards such as a 'certificate of personal effectiveness' and they gain others through their participation in national competitions to promote their understanding of science and technology.

School G13

Ofsted report 2006

Description of the school

School G13 is a large comprehensive school and is very popular. It serves an area that is more advantaged than most and pupils enter the school with attainment that is above average. The school has a unit for 15 visually impaired pupils who are mainly taught in mainstream classes. It is a specialist school for the visual arts. It takes the lead in working with other local schools on four specific projects. Since 2000, the school has been a training school for trainee teachers and is an accredited provider for the graduate teacher programme. It also enjoys International School status and has strong links with many other countries.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school is an outstanding school that gives excellent value for money. It is a specialist school for the visual arts and richly deserves the accolades that it receives for this area of its work, both locally and nationally. The quality of the pupils' artwork is stunning and the teachers are very much involved in sharing their expertise with the wider community. The school is rightly highly praised by parents and as one wrote, 'We are privileged to be able to send our son to such an exceptional state school.' Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is above average. They consistently attain exceptionally high standards at Key Stage 3. Standards at GCSE level have been consistently above average and provisional results for 2006 indicate that they are now also exceptionally high.

This shows that, from high starting points, pupils make good progress and this is due largely to the outstanding teaching they receive. The school has also devised an excellent curriculum and the rich range of experiences underpins the pupils' high enjoyment in their work. Pupils' progress is boosted in Key Stage 4 by their excellent achievement in arts subjects.

However, achievement is only good overall because too many more able pupils do not make the progress they should in mathematics. For instance, pupils make much better progress in English than they do in mathematics. The school is committed to allocating more time to the teaching of mathematics in Key Stage 4. This is a reasonable strategy as pupils in Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form make good, and sometimes outstanding progress, in classes taught by the same teachers of mathematics. A key factor in the school's success is its excellent leadership and management. The school strives for excellence in all areas and benefits from its openness and self-critical approach to improving the school further. It has excellent links with other partners.

The international links have been used to develop the curriculum and, through its role as a training school, new ideas and staff have been introduced to the school. The school is very innovative and partnerships are used very well to provide excellent care to pupils and means that every pupil is included

in the life of the school. The very high quality of provision is crucial to the pupils becoming, mature, confident young people who have a good understanding of right and wrong. They readily accept the many opportunities to take on responsibilities and carry out their duties very well. Their personal development and well-being are outstanding.

Since the previous inspection, standards have continued to rise and the curriculum has been enhanced in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form to make more vocational routes available to pupils. The school's self-evaluation is excellent and the school is held to account well by a very involved governing body. The capacity to improve is therefore excellent. Although pupils initially make slow progress in English, this is more than compensated for by their very rapid progress in Key Stage 4. Progress in science is at least satisfactory but is below the average for other subjects.

School G14

Ofsted report 2007

Description of the school

School G14 is a voluntary aided, selective school with a small number of girls in the large sixth form. Students are selected by ability into the school and are drawn from a wide area in and around a large city. Attainment on entry is high. Approximately 85% of students are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly of Indian and Pakistani origin. A significant proportion of students have English as an additional language. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and disabilities is low. Eligibility for free school meals is average and 52% of students in the sixth form qualify for the educational maintenance allowance. The school gained specialist status in mathematics and computing in 2004.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school is a satisfactory and improving school. Some aspects of its work are good and even outstanding. The school is a harmonious community where students are well motivated with a very good work ethic. The personal development and well-being of students are good. Attendance is excellent and behaviour is very good. The school council is an active group. Students feel they have been involved in making a number of changes such as introducing water fountains around the school. Students are very positive about the significant range of extra-curricular activities on offer, which they enjoy taking part in. The school celebrates students' success very well.

Standards remain consistently and exceptionally high. The percentage of students gaining five or more A* to C grades at GCSE has continued to increase and was 97% in 2006. Based on the ability of students when they joined the school, students make satisfactory progress by the end of Year 11. The results in information and communication technology (ICT) remain a problem and are not yet high enough. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with examples of good lessons that have teaching techniques that motivate the students and tasks that are well matched to their needs.

However, in too many lessons, there is insufficient planning for the needs of individuals or groups within a class and lessons lack variety. Good practice in the school is not shared consistently across the school. Systems to track and monitor students' progress to ensure students achieve as well as they can have improved but are not yet fully embedded.

Mathematics specialist status has brought many benefits to students and the curriculum. Standards continue to improve in the subject and in 2006 all students achieved a higher A* to C grade at GCSE. Students are provided with a mathematics challenge every week and the school is supporting many community partners. The impact of the computing specialism has been less effective. Parents are supportive of the school and comment on the good support students receive and how well Year 7

students settle into the school. They confirm that their children really enjoy school. A small minority of parents express concerns about behaviour.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides a clear direction and the use of school improvement groups has started to make an impact. These groups have good involvement from a range of staff. Success has been achieved in improving results in science and design and technology and improving accommodation. These actions demonstrate the school has a good capacity to improve further. Self-evaluation within the school is increasingly systematic and rigorous. However, plans for improvement do not focus sharply enough on targets for achievement. Success has been achieved in improving results in science and design and technology and improving accommodation. Strategies to improve the results in science, design and technology, and physical education have been effective.

School G15

Ofsted report 2008

Description of the school

Larger than average and with a rising roll, the school contributes to a local sixth form consortium.

The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average and the percentage of those who are learning English as an additional language is twice the national average. The catchment area displays some social and economic disadvantages. Attainment on entry is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The school has been awarded specialist status in technology. It holds the Sportsmark award.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with outstanding features; a sixth form pupil encapsulated the view of his peers when he noted 'the preservation of tradition makes for a truly individual experience.'

Pupils are challenged, supported and encouraged consistently; they comment that teachers structure the lessons to appeal to the preferred learning styles of the boys in the group. The care, guidance and support the boys receive are outstanding. They are very appreciative of the commitment shown by the staff who they note 'go the extra mile to support you'. The use of assessment to inform teaching and academic mentoring is good. The boys' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding.

The ethos of the school guides and influences the behaviour of the boys. Relationships between them are good. Pupils listen to each other in lessons, are prepared to engage in academic debate and move amiably around the school. There is a very strong mutual respect and excellent relationship between staff and pupils; behaviour is outstanding and as a young pupil noted 'conducive to good learning'. Attendance is above average. However, the procedures for registering attendance at consortium schools are not as robust as in the main school. Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements.

The school's promotion of community cohesion is good overall. Some of the work undertaken through specialist status and as a 'hub' of the local extended services network in support of hard-to-reach groups is outstanding. For example, well-coordinated work with the local primary care trust (PCT) brought fifty boys from a variety of minority communities into the normal United Kingdom inoculation programme. Engagement with the local community is very impressive, as are the school's links globally. A local Christian charity provides a breakfast club and counselling support. The governors have approved the

refurbishment of a surplus building to provide accommodation for extended services facilities, including minority ethnic community support groups.

Standards and achievement are good. Attainment at Key Stage 3 has been significantly above average for three years. The progress the boys make from age 11 to GCSE is good. In 2007, three-quarters of the boys achieved five higher grade GCSEs and just under half were awarded 10 higher grade passes. Two boys secured 13 A/or A* passes. Two-thirds of the Year 11 pupils attained five higher grade GCSE passes including English and mathematics, a key measure of pupil progress. Individuals from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress as well as the rest of the year group. The numbers of pupils doing well in mathematics and science, two of the key areas within the school's specialism, are rising significantly.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The formative comments and guidance provided by the best marking is very good. The strengths of teaching include good use of information and communication technology, the imaginative planning of lessons and the quality of the best questioning. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching is robust. Members of the senior and middle management teams were invited to accompany HMI in the joint observation of teaching.

The detailed analysis of learning developed with inspectors highlighted areas where the school's appraisal of the quality of learning can be further refined.

As a result of the ideas developed within the areas of the school's specialist expertise, curriculum provision is outstanding in the main school. The school has maintained strong provision in modern foreign languages and humanities whilst extending the range of individual subjects made available after school. Extracurricular opportunities are outstanding and the reputation of the school's sporting and musical prowess is significant. Healthy lifestyles are the norm; the level of sporting participation and of competitive success is particularly high. The school prepares pupils for the next steps in their education effectively.

Leadership and management are outstanding; they are good in all major respects and are exemplary in the promotion of the ethos of the school, the boys' personal development and in the school's contribution to the community. Leaders and managers at every level provide clear direction, encouraging staff towards innovation. Self-evaluation is accurate although a little modest. The drive for improvement promoted by senior staff is a significant part of the school's good capacity to improve. Governance is good. The numbers of pupils doing well in mathematics and science, two of the key areas within the school's specialism, are rising significantly.

School G16

Ofsted report 2009

Description of the school

The school is smaller than the average secondary school. The community and school are ethnically diverse. More students speak English as an additional language than in the average school. An average proportion of students finds learning difficult or has a statement of special educational needs. A higher than average proportion of students transfers to the school in Years 10 to 11. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is well above the average.

Specialist mathematics and computing status was achieved in 2005. Transition to academy status in 2010 has started. In the interim between the headteacher's absence and appointment of academy principal the school is led by a head of school and supported by an executive principal.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. Since the last Ofsted inspection in December 2005 when the school was judged good, students' achievement sharply declined in 2007. Despite a recovery in results in 2008 and a marked improvement in the ethos of the school, a wide gap remains between attainment nationally and students' results at the school. However, the impact of changes already made indicates satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Students join the school having attained well below average standards, but soon show they are not without ability, interest or talent. Boys and girls, including those who find learning difficult, make satisfactory progress. Their achievement in the most recent tests and examinations taken in Years 9, 10 and 11 was satisfactory taking into account the increased proportion leaving school with qualifications. Whilst not enough students attain the highest grades in many subjects, including English and mathematics, good results in some practical subjects show what is possible. The personal development of students is satisfactory, evident in improved attendance, reduced exclusions, co-operative behaviour in lessons and responsibility shown towards others when supporting younger students or charity events. Nevertheless, students remain dependent on teachers to manage their learning, showing insufficient initiative in lessons or use of study skills in between, which limits their success in examinations.

Students report that they feel safe in school and understand 'healthy lifestyle', but not all choose to follow one. Similarly, students value careers advice but too many boys have not organised their work experience. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teachers, students and parents report that improvements in behaviour management have had a significant impact on the quality of learning. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but in the best lessons teachers are clearly enthusiastic, make the purpose clear, involve students actively, and manage a variety of tasks. The quality of marking, use of visual and computer resources, and challenge for the most able or articulate students, are inconsistent. The school's curriculum review is imminent, adding to an already improved range of vocational options and early examination entries for the most able. Continuity of the curriculum into Year 9 remains weak. The school works effectively with external partners to provide secure care but guidance about progress is underdeveloped.

Leadership and management are satisfactory, following a period when ineffective monitoring, evaluation and action at all levels slowed the school's progress. The executive principal and head of school have renewed direction and raised expectation, with input from a committed senior team whose roles and responsibilities have been refined. Self-evaluation does not show clearly enough how resources, including specialist status, are focused on raising achievement, or how the experience, views and contributions of all who make up the school community count.

Nevertheless, staff, students and parents agree that the priorities are the right ones, that the strategies are working and that the positive ethos is now established. Key Stage 3 test results in English, mathematics and science indicate that whilst attainment remains exceptionally low, their progress is generally satisfactory. Assessments in science, literacy and numeracy, identified as priorities at the time of the last inspection, contribute to the evidence that while the gap between students' low attainment at the school and the national average remains wide, the trend is one of improvement.

School G17

Ofsted report 2008

Description of the school

School G17 is a very large comprehensive school that serves a town and surrounding district. The sixth form is based on a separate campus two miles away from the main school. Students attending the school come from areas where the socio-economic census data indicate highly favourable home backgrounds. The vast majority of the students are White British. The proportions of students with learning difficulties, who are learning English as an additional language or who are eligible for free school meals are well below the national average. The school has a small number of students with physical disabilities.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school is a good and improving school. Specialist sports status is at the heart of the school and students speak positively of its impact. They enjoy a wide variety of sports clubs, which helps them keep very healthy. They also make a good contribution to the community by being young sports leaders, which includes working with student leaders in Sierra Leone to help prepare them for participation in the 2012 Olympic Games in London. The sports status has supported developments in a number of curriculum areas, for example, through devising healthy diets for athletes in food technology and providing data for work in mathematics. Students also enjoy a wide variety of performing arts activities, with many playing musical instruments in different orchestras and groups. They are rightfully proud of the well-received productions in which many take part.

Students really enjoy school because they receive good pastoral care and support. Racist incidents are taken seriously on the very few occasions they happen and are dealt with appropriately. Students generally feel safe in school and say bullying is rare and is dealt with well if reported to a teacher. However, some parents raised concerns that their child felt unsafe because of instances of bullying. Much of the behaviour observed during the inspection was good. However, it is satisfactory overall because of instances when students need reminding of the school's expectations in lessons and parents identify instances of poor behaviour.

Standards have been consistently above average over the last few years and most students made good progress. Until recently a group of lower-attaining students made less progress, mainly because the curriculum failed to enthuse and engage them in learning. The school changed the curriculum two years ago so that all students now follow appropriate courses, and these students now make good progress. The number of courses taken by some higher-attaining students was reduced because some of them were taking up to 13 GCSE examinations. The emphasis on quality rather than quantity has resulted in students being more enthusiastic and engaged in their learning and they now make consistently good progress. These improvements mean that the school is now better placed to meet its aim 'to be an excellent specialist school which, in partnership with its community, motivates all of the young people it serves to achieve their maximum potential and to play a full part as adults in shaping the society of the future'.

Teaching is good and students enjoy most of their lessons. Good relationships between staff and students and well-planned and engaging lessons ensure students learn well. When teaching is less effective, learning outcomes are not specific enough and the variety of activities is limited and led too much by the teacher. Tutors give very good pastoral care and support but academic guidance, although satisfactory overall, is not consistent across all groups.

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher gives a clear direction and impetus to the school and is well supported by the senior leadership team. Middle management has improved from

the time of the last report and holds departmental staff to account for their work by a thorough self-evaluation. In many subjects the quality of learning has been improved by improving the quality of teaching. The school has worked hard to develop communication with parents, for example, through a weekly newsletter, but parents rightly still feel this is an area which the school can improve. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance learning has improved since the last report and is often used as a teaching aid in lessons.

Governance is good and governors take an active part in the school to hold it to account through its committee structure. They ensure all appropriate policies, including race equality, are kept up to date and evaluated for their impact. GCSE results are particularly good in mathematics, music, English and the separate sciences. In Key Stage 3, students make good progress in English and mathematics and satisfactory progress in science.

School G18

Ofsted report 2008

Description of the school

School G18 is a large secondary school with a large catchment area in a city. The proportion of students from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average, as is the number whose first language is not English. However, very few of these students are at an early stage of language acquisition. The percentage of students with a statement of special educational needs is above average and the school has a dedicated centre, the Integrated Resource, for students with autistic spectrum disorder. The overall number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which includes those with a statement of special educational need, is however below average overall. Levels of disadvantage and the number of students eligible for free school meals are in line with national averages. The school is in its fourth period of designation as a specialist technology college and has moved into a new building since the time of the last inspection. The school has a number of quality awards including Sportsmark, Investors in People and the Healthy School Award.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding elements, particularly in relation to the care, guidance and support students receive. Students make good progress both academically and in their personal development. This is because good leadership and management have ensured that teaching and learning are good and the curriculum is well matched to student needs. The progress of students who attend the Integrated Resource centre is outstanding.

There is a friendly, caring ethos and students really enjoy school life. They respect each other and the high quality facilities, and value the outstanding range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities that are provided. Students feel very safe in school, reporting that bullying is minimal and that any incidents are always dealt with quickly and effectively. Students' appreciate the way the school seeks and acts on their views and speak highly of the commitment of staff to ensuring their enjoyment and achievement. As a result many aspects of their personal development are outstanding. However, student attendance is only satisfactory despite much action by the school and the high profile given to the importance of good attendance.

Students achieve well. Standards on entry to the school are broadly average and students make very good progress during Key Stage 3 to reach standards that are well above average by the age of 14. Standards by the time students reach the end of Key Stage 4 are above average.

Notably, there is little difference in the number of students gaining five A* to C grades at GCSE and the number of students gaining five A* to C grades including English and mathematics.

Progress during Key Stage 4 is good overall. Data on students currently in school indicates improved standards and increasing rates of progress, particularly for Pakistani students, who have done less well than their peers in recent years.

There is a high proportion of good teaching across the school, and some that is outstanding.

Teachers have very good subject knowledge, use varied and effective teaching and learning strategies, and often enhance learning through the use of modern technologies such as interactive whiteboards. These features ensure that in most lessons learning is brisk and enjoyable, with a good degree of challenge. There is a strong focus on cooperative learning and this is successfully promoting students' skills as independent learners. School leaders have high aspirations and are well aware that, to improve levels of achievement further, the targets that are set need to be even more challenging and the proportion of outstanding teaching needs to increase. The curriculum has been improved and is good. At Key Stage 4 a broad range of both academic and vocational courses is on offer. This includes courses provided through external partners to effectively meet the needs of individual learners. Enrichment through themed days, trips, visitors into school and holding special events such as the celebration of World Book Day, make an outstanding contribution to students' enjoyment, and to their personal and academic development.

The care and support that students receive is outstanding. This is because school-based staff, including the learning mentors and the counsellor, work in a very effective, well coordinated way with external partnership agencies. This approach, combined with robust tracking systems, ensures that the needs of all students, including those most at risk of underachievement or disaffection, are quickly identified and extremely well met. Guidance to students is also outstanding, with rigorous and regular tracking of both academic and personal progress, effective review days, and very detailed information to support learners in making choices.

The school is developing well as a technology college. Specialist status has enabled the lead departments to make considerable improvements in teaching and learning, particularly through the application of information and communication technology (ICT). Specialist subjects have also led developments in the use of interactive whiteboards across the whole school.

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. The determination to continually improve outcomes for students is clearly evident and rapid successes in addressing areas identified for improvement demonstrate a good capacity to improve further. Targets set are challenging and leaders at all levels are held accountable for pupil progress. The school is effectively supported and appropriately challenged by the well informed governing body. Child protection arrangements are secure and comply with statutory requirements. By the end of Year 9, students attain standards that are well above average in English and Science.

School G19

Ofsted report 2008

Description of the school

This average-size school selects students from a wide area centred on a suburb of a large city.

Well below average numbers of students are eligible for free school meals. Students come from a range of background; about a third are White British, a third Indian Asian, and others come from a range of ethnic backgrounds. On entry to the school, attainment is well above average.

About a quarter have a first language other than English, although none is at the early stages of learning English. The school has only a few students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school gained performing arts specialist status in 2003.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This school provides an outstandingly effective all-round education. Attainment is well above average and examination results are consistently very high. In 2007 every student gained five A* to C GCSEs, including English and mathematics. For many years, the majority of students have obtained A* and A grade passes in their GCSE examinations. Results are similarly impressive in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 3. In Years 7 to 9 increased student progress has led to a steady rise in results at this key stage. Achievement is outstanding because the school does so well in ensuring that every student, including a few with learning difficulties, makes consistently good progress. Despite this impressive record of academic success, there is no hint of complacency. Teaching and learning are outstanding and have improved since the last inspection. Staff are constantly refining their approaches to teaching in order to develop students' personal qualities, whilst striving for academic excellence. There is an excitement in the school about learning. Excellent relationships result in teachers responding to the feedback students are encouraged to give about lessons. Staff and students use information and communication technology well to enhance learning. Lessons have a very good mix of activity to ensure that students are actively involved, work collaboratively and develop as independent learners. The school ethos ensures all in the school community have high expectations. Effective lessons in the first few years enable students to improve the management of their own learning.

As a result, students are being better prepared to handle challenging targets without feeling too much pressure, particularly in Year 11. The school has increased student enjoyment by using its performing arts specialist status to broaden the already outstanding curriculum.

Students have excellent opportunities to be creative and to participate in dance, drama, fashion and musical activity. Many of these activities have the added advantage of increasing awareness of different cultures and enhancing relationships between different ethnic groups in the school and community. Almost all students take advantage of the very wide range of extra-curricular activities offered, including a good number led by the school's sixth formers. Students have excellent opportunities to contribute to improving the school and community. The school raises large amounts for charity, and voluntary work further promotes students' leadership skills. For instance, students and staff organise sports activity in the local primary school. The school council is valued because it operates in a school ethos that takes students' views very seriously.

Work-related learning and advice are successful in encouraging students to broaden their horizons about future careers. Care, guidance and support are very effective in ensuring all learners achieve well. Safeguarding, child protection and risk assessment procedures ensure a safe environment. Students appreciate the comprehensive support they receive from their form tutors, sixth formers appointed to each class and members of the management team. The school has developed a first-rate approach to monitoring student progress. This identifies at a very early stage any dips in performance and makes

clear the responses needed to correct the situation. The school is very effective in ensuring students know how they can improve. As a result of this outstanding provision, students' personal development is second to none. Students live healthy lives, behave impeccably and develop all the skills needed to succeed in the future.

Attendance and punctuality are excellent. Ultimately, highly effective leadership explains the superb outcomes achieved by the school. Governors bring great expertise and their sharp insight plays a significant role in improving the school. Governors lead important work, contributing to the very clear, shared vision. The senior leadership team is refreshingly honest about all aspects of the school. The headteacher gets the best out of a talented senior leadership team by encouraging high-level critical debate. The school's self-review is accurate and the systems for monitoring the work of the school are extremely thorough. Crucially, these systems result in improvements for students. Inspectors found impressive evidence of how well the school ensures training improves teaching. At middle leadership level, there are major strengths but there are inconsistencies that at times slow the rate of improvement. The school's improvement planning does not contain enough outcomes that are measurable to aid the monitoring of progress. Not surprisingly, almost all parents responding to the questionnaire expressed very positive views about the school. The school has recognised that further improvement will come through even greater involvement of students and parents in the life of the school. The very good improvement made in recent years and the astute self-review demonstrate the school has an outstanding capacity to improve.

School G20

Ofsted report 2007

Description of the school

This is an average size school serving an area of challenging social and economic circumstances.

The numbers of students from minority ethnic groups and those for whom English is an additional language are well above average. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is also higher than usual. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is above average. The school holds Leading Edge and Training School status. It was designated a specialist science college in September 2007.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school in which students make good progress and achieve well. The quality of care, guidance and support the school provides is outstanding. Because of this, students develop into confident and inquisitive young adults by the time they leave school. Very high numbers move on to full-time education and training when they reach 16 because the school encourages them to value learning and to have high aspirations for the future. The school has the confidence of parents who praise it for offering a, 'rich and rounded' education for their sons and daughters.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection.

Students make good progress and achieve well as they move up through the school because teaching is good and highly focused on learning. From below average starting points, students attain broadly average standards by the end of Year 9. By the end of Year 11 standards are also broadly average, although the school recognises the need to raise further the proportion of higher attaining students gaining five or more higher grade GCSE passes. This is being tackled rigorously by the introduction of new courses and qualifications, for example. Students' work observed during the inspection and data presented by the school show clearly that standards are rising significantly.

Students' personal development and well-being are good. They behave responsibly. They value the respect with which they are treated. They enjoy coming to school and speak warmly of it.

Students know how important healthy lifestyles are. Large numbers take part in the extensive range of sporting enrichment activities offered. They feel safe in school. They trust adults to deal effectively with any concerns they may have. Students from different ethnic backgrounds cooperate and mix well in lessons and around school. Students contribute effectively to decision-making through the school council. They take an active part in school life by acting as peer mentors, for example. This helps them develop a sense of social responsibility and initiative. Positive attitudes to learning and good levels of basic literacy and numeracy give students a satisfactory foundation for the future. However, the largely academic curriculum for all students limits the opportunities they have to follow vocational courses and gain vocational qualifications and skills before they leave school.

Teaching and learning are good. The school's status as a Training School is used effectively to encourage teachers to develop their practice, so that their expertise can be used to train student teachers and their work can be shared with other schools. Learning is at the heart of the school.

There is great consistency across subjects in enabling students to learn effectively. Teachers are skilled at posing demanding questions and encouraging students to see and understand links between what is being taught and what they have learned previously. A student's comment that, 'Learning is about more than memorising facts. It's about what you do with them when you've got them' summarises students' views, and the school's approach, succinctly.

The headteacher provides the school with thoughtful and reflective leadership. He is ably supported by other senior leaders and managers who share his values and vision for the success of the school. There is good quality strategic planning and organisation. There is strong teamwork in the pursuit of the school's overriding aim of enabling students to become effective learners. The school is focusing effectively on translating learning skills into raising standards further at GCSE. This is supported by the newly won specialist status, which has already led to higher standards by improving staffing levels and introducing new courses and qualifications.

This, and the school's strong focus on improvement, gives the school good capacity to improve further. Standards in national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2006 were broadly average in English, mathematics and science.

School G21

Ofsted report 2009

Description of the school

School G21 is larger than most secondary schools. It serves an area of a large city but also attracts students from other areas. Above average numbers of students are eligible for free school meals. Students come from a wide range of backgrounds and their attainment on entry to the school is average. Just over half are White British; slightly over 10% are from Asian Pakistani backgrounds and similar proportions are of Asian Indian heritage. The rest are from a range of different backgrounds. A special unit attached to the school has 45 students with speech and language or community difficulties. The school has Leading Edge status. It has been a specialist school for technology for 13 years and has had applied learning status since 2007.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This outstanding school has made many changes in order to fully meet the needs of all students and overcome any barriers to learning. Students' achievement is outstanding. Many students study sixth form courses early and leave school with an outstandingly wide set of academic and vocational qualifications. The proportion of students gaining five higher grade GCSEs is well above average. The school has also increased the proportion gaining these qualifications including English and mathematics to above average levels. The school is highly effective at motivating students who have made limited progress in the past. This results in many middle and lower attaining students, including those with a variety of learning difficulties, making outstanding progress. Other groups of students make good progress. The school's records of current progress and lessons observed by inspectors provided further evidence of the overall outstanding progress students make in the school. There is a buzz in the school because of the continuing improvements. It is hardly surprising that the vast majority of parents who completed the inspection questionnaire were very positive about the school.

The curriculum meets the needs of the wide spread of ability in the school very effectively.

From Year 8 onwards, students have the opportunity to sample a wide range of courses, many with a strong work-related dimension. As a result, students are much more certain they have made the right option choices. Information and communication technology is used very well and extensively, so much of students' work is electronic. Students were able to tell inspectors of how their involvement in a building course was really enhancing their motivation to improve in English. The curriculum is a major factor in ensuring excellent behaviour and high levels of motivation amongst all groups of students. Work-based skills, including teamwork and enterprise, are promoted very well throughout the school. The above average standards and excellent work-related learning opportunities prepare students outstandingly well for employment or the next stage in their education. In Years 7 and 8, students experience a very interesting curriculum in which some subjects are taught together. This provision promotes independent learning and global links very well, but some students are not clear enough about the distinctive nature of each subject.

The extremely effective care, support and guidance also contribute to the students' outstanding personal development. Students feel very safe and value the very good relationship with adults in the school. The rapid transition to an all-age tutorial system was handled very well, with the school encouraging much student and parental debate about this change. Students contribute much to the school community and beyond, mainly as a result of the school's strong links with many other schools, both locally and beyond. The excellent care, involving strong links with external agencies, is fundamental to ensuring the outstanding achievement of students with learning difficulties. Daily attendance at assemblies and the well-organised tutorial system contribute enormously to the students' outstanding social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Academic guidance is superb. There is a long-proven track record of successful interventions for lower attaining students to ensure they remain on course to achieve challenging targets. In recent years, a similar rigour has been applied to academic guidance across the whole ability range. All students are very aware of their targets because they are regularly reviewed. Teaching and learning are outstanding because of the consistent way in which teachers plan lessons in the light of students' targets. Lessons invariably identify the outcomes appropriate for different abilities, with students often involved in planning how these are to be achieved. Students work at a good pace, because they enjoy the challenge of regularly presenting their findings to others and they have the criteria they can use to measure their success. Inspectors saw a few examples of a lack of concentration by some younger middle ability students when undertaking independent learning activities in the combined subject lessons. Students are generally very positive about the long lessons they experience because teachers are highly skilled at using a variety of approaches to maintain their interest. Regular discussions with teachers in lessons and in their tutorial groups keep students well informed about their strengths and weaknesses. High attaining students are particularly positive about their challenging targets because teachers, particularly in Years 10 and 11, consistently refer to these.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The combination of the Principal and the Chief Executive provides thoughtful and far-sighted strategic leadership. There is an extremely clear vision that permeates the entire school. Students speak proudly of what their school is striving to achieve. The key priorities are succinct and based on sound evaluation. The school has been creative in developing high quality leaders at all levels in the school and as a result, there are very high levels of consistently good practice throughout the school. The school promotes all aspects of community cohesion well, although the policy has not been fully updated to meet all current requirements. Monitoring and evaluation are good and generally enable the school to implement change effectively. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning has not always identified quickly enough the progress made by different groups of students.

However, the outstanding use of challenging targets for all students means the school is able to respond rapidly to any variations in progress. Governors are very effective because they play a key role in ensuring that many new developments are carefully considered prior to implementation. Governors insist that 'best value' principles are applied to all that the school does. The school is fully compliant with the government's safeguarding requirements. It has used its specialist status very well to establish firmly the use of technology for learning and more recently to expand applied learning further. The school has a well-deserved high reputation for implementing changes that benefit all students. Current leadership arrangements allow the school to support other schools in their quest for improvement. The school has developed considerable leadership capacity and is able to support many other schools in their quest for improvement. The school's capacity to improve is outstanding.

School G22

Ofsted report 2007

Description of the school

The academy opened in September 2004 in the buildings of the predecessor school and in a neighbouring middle school that closed as part of the town-wide reorganisation to 11–18 education. The highly technological teaching environment provides superb information and communication technology (ICT) and sports facilities. The academy has a dual specialism in sport and in business and enterprise. The academy has faced significant staffing difficulties, including a high turnover in teachers and changes in senior leadership. The principal took up post in January 2006. The recruitment of suitably qualified and experienced teachers remains an ongoing challenge in some key subject areas.

The number of students on roll is rising. The academy is an increasingly popular school. The academy draws its students from a city's eastern estates. The catchment has high levels of social and educational disadvantage. Students come from a wide range of different backgrounds. Most are White British, although the proportion of students from other ethnic backgrounds is broadly average. The proportion entitled to free school meals is above the national figure. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, although more students have a statement of special educational need than is found nationally.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The academy is an improving school. Its overall effectiveness is satisfactory. There are notable and developing strengths in the academy's provision, particularly those developed through its specialism in sport. The curriculum is good because it meets the needs and aspirations of most students well and gives them good enrichment opportunities. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the academy provides good care, guidance and support for its students. This sound provision has a positive impact on the students. Their personal development and well-being are satisfactory and improving. Given

their starting points, students make expected rates of progress. Although standards of attainment are below national average figures, they are rising year on year and are set to increase further. Achievement is satisfactory overall. However, weaknesses in students' literacy skills constrain their rates of progress across the curriculum.

The split site arrangement presented a considerable challenge during the first four terms until the academy moved into its excellent new accommodation in January 2006. Despite turbulence and staff upheaval since it first opened, the academy has established a settled climate and a positive ethos. The improving picture is the result of strong and effective leadership and a team of staff that is increasingly cohesive and confident. However, there remain a small but significant number of students, across Years 7 to 11, whose attendance, behaviour and attitudes continue to present a considerable challenge and take up a disproportionate amount of management time and energy. The most challenging students do not readily respond to the academy's support or rise to its expectations. The academy's leadership and management have strengthened significantly and are good. Procedures for monitoring the academy's performance are rigorous and effective. There is good capacity to sustain and increase the academy's improvement.

School G23

Ofsted report 2007

This is a small school. Students are drawn from a wide number of primary schools with a significant percentage coming from disadvantaged areas. The proportion of students entitled to free school meals is well above average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average and is increasing. The number of students from minority ethnic groups or whose first language is not English is low. The school was designated as a specialist languages college in 2000 and re-designated in 2005. The school has achieved the International Schools, Sportsmark and Investors in People Awards.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

School G23 is a good and improving school. It is popular with parents. Students enter with below average standards in English and mathematics. By the time they leave, they reach standards that are only slightly below the national average, and GCSE results have risen significantly over the last five years. Students' achievement is good because they are well taught and are supported in their learning. The school works hard to raise students' aspirations and to remove barriers to success. The most vulnerable students receive very good support and gifted and talented students are given a broad range of opportunities to fulfil their potential.

The school has effectively tackled underachievement of individuals and groups of students. For example, action to address the previously poor performance of girls, particularly in Years 7 to 9, has resulted in significant improvement. Students generally enjoy school. In particular, they value lessons that are well structured and fun. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Five departments, including modern foreign languages, have been recognised for their innovative practice and there is some outstanding teaching, which inspires students.

However, whole-class teaching dominates too much lesson time and students are not given enough opportunities to respond to questions and to develop as independent learners. Marking is usually thorough and is beginning to indicate how students can improve their work. However, assessment is inconsistent and departments are using different and sometimes confusing systems. The impact of specialist language college status is apparent across other departments and in the impressive outreach work in primary schools. There is a good curriculum.

The school has achieved the International Schools Award for its extensive links with partners in Europe, Africa and China. It also offers a broad range of sporting opportunities, which has been recognised by the Sportsmark Award as well as a variety of performing arts activities. There is a broad curriculum that includes a range of GCSE courses as well as vocational opportunities, and there are valuable and innovative enrichment activities.

The care, support and guidance provided for students are good and as a result, they develop well personally. They like school, behave well and their attendance is above average. They are encouraged to eat healthily and their awareness of personal safety is developed within effective personal, social and health education lessons.

Too many form periods are not used constructively to help promote pupils' personal development, however.

Students' awareness of environmental issues is developed through a range of activities such as work with the Woodland Trust. They are encouraged to be responsible citizens and to become involved in the community and there is a good range of enterprise and careers education opportunities.

The leadership and management of the school are strong and purposeful and the senior team has a clear commitment to maximising the opportunities of students and all staff. Its programme of courses and staff development is excellent. Despite the fact that the school is scheduled for closure in 2008 and will be amalgamated with another local school to create a new learning centre, the headteacher, governors and all staff have ensured that the school has continued to make significant improvements and is at the leading edge of many innovations. Its judgements about its effectiveness are accurate and it knows what it needs to do to improve further.

The school has good capacity to bring this about. However, given their relatively low starting points, students make satisfactory progress during Years 7 to 9, with boys exceeding their targets in mathematics and science.

School G24

Ofsted report 2007

Description of the school

School G24 is a popular school with a fully comprehensive intake, although the majority of students are of broadly average ability on entry. At the time of the inspection 14 students had statements of educational need, which is slightly below the national average. Approximately 74% of students are from a White British background. Students from minority ethnic backgrounds are mainly of Indian or Pakistani heritage. The number of students for whom English is not their first language is well above average. Some of the areas the school serves have high levels of social and economic deprivation. In September 2002, the school became a specialist sports college. This status was confirmed in 2007. Sixth form provision is offered jointly with two other nearby schools. The current headteacher has been in post since January 2007.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. Inspectors recognise it as an improving school, sufficiently so to judge there is good capacity to improve further. The school is a welcoming community, inclusive and respectful of all cultures. Students' personal development is good, as is the care, support and guidance they receive. The school has very effective links with external agencies and other partners to ensure the care of all students and especially the most vulnerable. Behaviour in and out of classrooms is generally good. Students say they feel safe and know that any cases of bullying are dealt with quickly

and effectively. The school has taken full advantage of the opportunities offered through its specialist status: people of all ages take part in sport and use the school facilities and this has cemented strong links with the community.

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Results in examinations at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 show a gradual trend of improvement to around the national average. Most students make satisfactory progress, but the school is aware of groups of students, including boys of middle ability, who underachieve in some subjects. Strategies are in place to tackle this issue and are beginning to have an impact. Inspectors agreed with the school's judgement that teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving. A more rigorous approach to assure the quality of teaching has led to a rapid increase in the proportion of lessons that are good and some that are outstanding. However, there remains a significant proportion that are still only satisfactory. Outstanding teaching has been identified, for example, in sport and physical education (PE) and this is beginning to be shared. However, this practice is not yet sufficiently widespread. The curriculum is good because it is inclusive and highly responsive to the needs of all students. For example, in Key Stage 4, a good variety of academic and vocational options is supplemented with a successful programme aimed at students who are at risk of leaving school with no qualifications.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, together with his senior leaders and the governors, provides a strong driving force for improvement. Senior leaders are self-critical and demonstrate a clear awareness of what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve. Provisional data for 2007 indicate that mathematics and science have continued to improve, although results in English show a slight decline. School data for 2007 shows that pass rates in GCSE remained at similar levels to the previous year but the school did not meet its overall targets. However, results in English and science improved further.

School G25

Ofsted report 2009

Description of the school

School G25 is a selective boys' school, which takes an increasing number of girls into the sixth form. It has been designated a specialist languages college since 2002 and more recently acquired the status of a business and enterprise college. The school holds an International Schools award from the Department for Children, Schools and Families and has a Healthy School Award.

The percentage of students entitled to free school meals is very low compared to the national average, as is the proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Over half of the students are from minority ethnic groups. Whilst many pupils can speak languages other than English, none are at the earliest stages of learning English.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The overall effectiveness of the school is outstanding. In the short time since his appointment, the headteacher's drive and vision are having a significant impact on the life of the school.

Standards, which are already very high, are continuing to rise as more students achieve the very highest grades. Although most students arrive at the school already having achieved very high levels of attainment by the end of Key Stage 2, they go on to make outstanding progress throughout their time in school so that by the time they leave, standards are exceptionally high.

Much of the reason for this high achievement is students' very high motivation for self-study and wanting to do well, as seen in their outstanding level of personal development. The school encourages

and develops this by ensuring they have many opportunities for taking responsibility for their own learning. The outstanding range of extra-curricular opportunities enhances this and students are well served by the challenging courses, which motivate them to succeed. The majority of teaching is good but the combination of students' attitudes and the wide range of curriculum experiences and support they receive ensures that their learning is excellent.

Planning of lessons does not consistently take account of the needs of different groups but students still go on to achieve very well. Students are not always well informed as to how well they are doing and how to improve. Care, guidance and support are good. Students are given every encouragement to do well in their tests and examinations. The tracking of individual students' progress is developing well but this is not fully established in all subject departments. One of the headteacher's early priorities has been to ensure that senior and subject leaders play a greater role in monitoring and evaluating the performance of subjects. He has successfully ensured that there is a greater shared responsibility among senior leaders in the school and with the governing body. The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection and gives outstanding value for money. It has excellent capacity to improve further.

School G26

Ofsted report 2007

Description of the school

School G26 is a large comprehensive school, designated as a specialist science college. There are a relatively low proportion of students eligible for free school meals. Although measures of socio-economic deprivation are low on average, some students do face significant deprivation. Most students are from predominantly White British backgrounds. There are low numbers of students whose first language is not English, and these mainly come from Southern European backgrounds. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average, but the proportion with a statement of special educational need is similar to the national average.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Young people who attend the school are well prepared for their future success. This is evident in their good personal development, very positive attitudes, and academic standards that are above the national average. The school is embarking upon great change and development, not the least of which are in relation to improvements to the curriculum for students aged 14-19. There is a clear and refreshing approach to learning, founded upon explicit teaching of learning skills. Students and staff have contributed to a revised and effective behaviour policy.

There is a new tracking and support structure for students which monitors both individual subject progress and the bigger overall journey students are making. Coupled with excellent support for vulnerable learners and thorough, very effective, guidance to all students, this leads to outstanding overall care. The shabby accommodation, although still in use, is soon to be swept aside for a £30m new school building.

There are exciting and challenging times ahead, which the school is well placed to exploit. A strong feature of leadership and management is the extent to which middle leaders have been empowered and encouraged to innovate. This has come about because of the strong team spirit amongst staff at the school, led by a headteacher of conviction and kindness in equal measure.

The school's specialist status for science has been effectively used to raise standards in science and mathematics. Additionally, it has catalysed good information and communication technology (ICT) provision for supporting teaching and learning across the school. Many staff have recognised this

transformation of provision and are using ICT successfully for teaching. The specialist college work has led to a substantial uptake of students studying science in the sixth form, the support and funding of very good primary school links leading to excellent transition arrangements, and providing access to school resources for the local community.

The school has good capacity to improve. Teaching is consistently good enough to ensure every student, regardless of ability or circumstance, is able to make the expected progress and develop effective personal skills. However, full use of the information about students' ability and their previous knowledge is not always explicitly used in the planning of day-to-day activities. The school has recently given staff and students precise information about the small steps needed towards learning targets, but students do not yet have that information at their fingertips in all cases. The recent good curriculum changes for Key Stage 4, of which the current Year 11 are the first beneficiaries, are a substantial and effective response by the school to an apparent slow-down in the improvement of standards at Key Stage 4 since the previous inspection. The school's specialist status for science has been effectively used to raise standards in science and mathematics. The specialist college work has led to a substantial uptake of students studying science in the sixth form. Mathematics and science results have improved, meeting specialist targets, and are comfortably higher than average. English, mathematics and science results are all high. The specialist science college status is a strength of the school, demonstrated in real enthusiasm for science and mathematics and impressive take-up of sciences at all levels, including transition to further education.

Accommodation remains shabby, although many rooms have good displays of students' work; in science corridors, for example, there are systematic and informative displays on topical matters.

School G27

Ofsted report 2008

Description of the school

The school is above average size and serves a small market town. It operates within a selective system of education and most higher attaining students attend the local grammar school. The percentage of students entitled to free school meals is low. Most students are of White British origin and very few speak English as an additional language. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and increasing. There are more boys than girls on roll, but the reverse is true in the sixth form. The school has been a specialist Technology College since 1999 and was awarded an applied learning specialism in 2006.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school is a good and improving school with outstanding features in its specialist areas of technology and applied learning. Parents and students are strongly supportive of the school. One parent summed up the views of many by commenting that: 'It is a large school, but it feels like a small one because teachers know the students so well and there is always somebody to help.' The newly appointed headteacher has a clear vision of how to improve the school still further. He shares this ambition with a talented senior leadership team and supportive governors who challenge effectively.

Achievement and standards are good. Students enter the school with broadly average standards, although there are relatively few students who have high levels of prior attainment. Students make good progress overall, but a significant minority do not make sufficient progress in English.

Students make excellent progress in Key Stage 3 but progress is slower in Key Stage 4. The proportion of students who achieve five or more GCSE grades A* to C is above the national figure, but slightly

below it when mathematics and English are included. In recent years the progress made by students who find learning difficult has been satisfactory but recent changes to the arrangements for literacy and numeracy support have led to improvement, so that these students now make progress which is comparable to that made by others.

Personal development and well-being are good. The vast majority of students enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their consistently good attendance. The school is a safe, calm and well-ordered place. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Incidents of bullying are rare and, when they do occur, are dealt with swiftly and robustly. Students make a good contribution to the community at school, and at local and national levels. Spiritual, cultural, moral and social development is good and there are excellent opportunities to develop economic understanding through enterprise activities and vocational experience. The school has introduced a range of initiatives to help students adopt healthy lifestyles. It has been successful in encouraging more students to participate in extra-curricular sports, but knows that some students could choose healthier options at lunchtime.

The school evaluates the quality of teaching and learning as good. The rigorous quality assurance procedures, developed through the school's applied learning specialism, underpin this judgement and evidence from this inspection confirms its accuracy. The most successful lessons capture the imagination of students and inspire them to do their best, but this practice is not consistent.

Sometimes students are not provided with sufficient opportunities to take control of their own learning. This deprives them of valuable opportunities to think for themselves and develop their use of English and, as a result, they do not make the progress they are capable of making.

Teachers' assessment is accurate but the rigour of marking varies between subjects, particularly in the attention given to grammar and spelling.

The curriculum in the main school is outstanding. The school's successful development of learning pathways in Key Stage 4 has been extended to Key Stage 3, enabling students to undertake a programme of learning which is designed to meet their particular needs. Within these pathways students are provided with a very good range of options, with a particularly broad choice of subjects within the school's technology specialism. The development of vocational learning is a particular strength of the school and has enabled it to take a leading role in the development of specialist diplomas in the local area. The school has recently revised its curriculum to provide a more coherent literacy support programme for students who find learning difficult. Although it is too early to assess its full impact, there has already been an improvement in the progress made by the students who participate in it. The school offers a good range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities.

Care, guidance and support are good. All students, including the very vulnerable, are looked after well. Procedures for safeguarding are comprehensive. Teaching assistants work hard to support students who need their help in the classroom, but they are not always deployed effectively enough to maximise the benefit of their high level of commitment. Students receive very good advice on career choices and progression.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. He has a clear vision of how to take the school forward and has not been afraid to take difficult decisions when they are in the best interests of the students. The quality of subject management is generally good. Those managers who require support in their roles receive it and improve.

Careful and co-ordinated planning is a strength of the school and has resulted in a broad range of well-considered initiatives designed to make improvements in important aspects of the school's work, including achievement, teaching and learning and the monitoring and evaluation of progress. Considering the recent development of these plans, the school has made excellent progress with their implementation. This, together with the school's meticulous approach to self-assessment and quality review, gives the school excellent capacity to improve.

School G28

Ofsted report 2006

Description of the school

School G28 is a smaller-than-average secondary school that serves an inner city area that has high levels of deprivation. It has higher proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups than the great majority of schools and, in addition, there is also a higher proportion who do not have English as their home language. Attainment on entry has risen steadily. It is now broadly average but was below average for the Year 11 cohort which took GCSE examinations in 2005. This is also the picture for the proportion of pupils joining the school at other than the usual times. The school has been a specialist college for science since September 2004. In recent years, the school has experienced recruitment difficulties but for the first time from September 2006, it is fully staffed with specialist teachers.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is an improving school providing a satisfactory education which has good features. The school has for some years placed a high priority on successfully developing its ethos and creating a safe and secure environment. Consequently, students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and reflects the Christian values of the school. Students show a good understanding and respect for other beliefs and cultures and the rich diversity of their backgrounds is celebrated. Their positive attitudes are demonstrated by their good attendance and behaviour. They enjoy coming to school and feel safe there. This is a result of effective measures taken by the school and by the consistent and sustained leadership given by senior managers.

Having established a positive climate for learning, the school is now focussing on raising students' standards and achievement but with more mixed success. Standards have risen rapidly at Key Stage 3 and students make outstanding progress, particularly in mathematics. This has been underpinned by a rigorous monitoring of teaching quality, effective use of performance data and very good implementation of national improvement strategies. Standards at GCSE level are below national averages and rising. Given students' starting points, they achieve satisfactorily.

Teaching in English, mathematics and science is good and so students make good progress in these subjects in Key Stage 4 but progress in some other subjects has been unsatisfactory. As a result, the GCSE results were too low in 2005 but there was a very marked improvement in 2006 because the school identified and rectified the problem.

This cohort was the first where the school received an intake which contained the expected proportion of higher attaining students in Year 7. Expectations were not sufficiently raised to meet all their needs so that some of these more able students did not do as well as they should have in 2006. The school is taking actions to remedy this and early indications are that they are being successful.

Overall, standards and achievement are satisfactory except for the much smaller proportion of students on advanced courses in the sixth form who make inadequate progress. Teaching and learning and the curriculum are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, manage their classes well and cultivate climates in classrooms that are conducive to learning.

However, they provide too few opportunities for pupils to show initiative and to find out things for themselves. This is a weakness in preparing students for the sixth form and is one of the reasons that sixth form students do not do as well as they should.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Senior managers have been effective in Years 7-11 in maintaining a high level of care and there have been significant improvements in students' achievements in the last year. The headteacher provides good leadership and the school knows its

strengths and weaknesses well. Staffing difficulties meant that the school was not able to develop its science specialism as quickly as it would have liked. These have now been resolved, standards in science are rising and this success is beginning to make a positive impact on other areas of the school's work.

The school's capacity to further improve is good. The school's overall standards attained, and the progress made, by students in English, mathematics and science are consistently higher than those achieved in most other subjects. Teaching is consistently good in English, mathematics and science and there are examples of good practice in other subjects. A learning initiative based on computers is being established and is being used most in English, mathematics and science.

School G29

Ofsted report 2007

Description of the school

School G29 is a popular school, which is oversubscribed. It has specialist status as a mathematics and computing college. Students are predominantly of White British heritage but a small minority comes from minority ethnic backgrounds, including a small number of asylum seekers and refugees. A few of these students are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The school's intake contains the full ability spectrum, but overall attainment on entry is average. The school serves an area of broadly average socio-economic circumstances but there are pockets of deprivation. A small minority of students has learning difficulties and disabilities, particularly of a social, emotional or behavioural nature.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

School G29 is a good and improving school, with outstanding features. Christian values are at the heart of its work and students from different social, cultural and faith backgrounds feel welcomed and very well cared for. It has the confidence and support of parents. Standards are above average, and students' progress and achievement are good. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities and the small number whose first language is not English are well supported and make the same progress as others. Students have good literacy, numeracy and computer technology skills. Many students, however, do not take sufficient care over the presentation of their written and diagrammatic work. Students' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy school and say that they feel safe and secure in this caring environment. They understand what they must and must not do to stay fit and well, and they adopt healthy lifestyles. Behaviour is excellent and any minor instances of poor conduct are dealt with quickly and effectively. A very small number of parents expressed concern about behaviour in lessons. The inspection found that, although there are a few students who have difficulty adjusting to the routines of school life, they are well managed. This was also the view of the students that the inspectors consulted. Attendance is average and the school is actively trying to improve this. Students are involved in a variety of charitable activities and environmental projects in the local and wider community. They exercise responsibility through the work of the local and school councils, and as representatives on an international youth forum. Students know right from wrong and they have good social skills. Their spiritual and cultural development is also good. All students receive the care and support they need. For example, refugee and asylum seekers whose first language is not English receive the right support to enable them to benefit from the curriculum and so progress well.

The school has an excellent system for monitoring progress to identify and address weaknesses in students' performance and this has contributed significantly to rising standards. The quality of teaching ranges from outstanding to satisfactory and is good overall. Students know how well they are doing. They understand their learning targets and what they must do to improve. The school is aware of the need to challenge students to show greater initiative and to be more independent as

learners, and is looking at ways to achieve this. The school's curriculum is good, and the computer and mathematics status has brought great improvements in the use of technology for teaching and learning. There are extensive enrichment opportunities and extra-curricular activities, and the take-up for these is high. This is particularly so in drama, music and sport, which do much to develop students' confidence and self-esteem, and to foster creativity and enjoyment. Leadership and management are good. The school's commitment to equality of opportunity and inclusion is excellent, and all students thrive. The headteacher and senior staff are steadfast in realising their vision for high quality care and education, and they are supported by able and diligent teachers and assistants. There have been good improvements since the last inspection and the school's capacity to raise standards and achievement further is good.

School G30

Ofsted report 2008

Description of the school

School G30 is a Specialist Technology College. It has an above average number of students. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is below average. Most students come from White British backgrounds, although there are an increasing number of students from other ethnic groups. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, including those students with statements of special need. There is a nursery on site, which is not managed by the governing body of the school. The school holds the Investors in People Award, Future Visions Community Award and Enhanced Healthy School Award.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school is a good and improving school. It has worked hard to develop an outstanding curriculum in Years 7 to 11, which is personalised to meet the needs of all its students. The school has used its specialist subject technology extremely well to substantially increase and enhance the number and quality of subject choices. Tailor-made courses have helped to raise the aspirations and confidence of less able students. The school also plays a leading role in the development of 14-19 diplomas in the area which have the potential to enable students in successfully accessing courses to match their needs more closely.

Students' personal development and well-being is good. Students feel very safe and enjoy coming to school. The support and respect shown by all students for each other is a strong feature of the school. Students participate well in physical education (PE) lessons and in extra-curricular sporting activities. Most students are developing healthy eating habits and lifestyles. Some hard-to-reach, persistent non-attenders keep the school's attendance rates broadly in line with the national average. Generally, most students behave well but there are some instances where some staff do not consistently challenge the minority of students who misbehave.

Care guidance and support are good. Many adults are available to give support to students which is well tailored to their needs. Child protection procedures are secure and regularly reviewed. Health and safety is well managed and risk assessments are accurate and appropriate.

Support to vulnerable students and those with emotional problems is excellent. Students are well supported in their academic guidance and their progress is monitored well. As a result, they are able to meet or exceed well-matched targets.

Teaching and learning are good. Most teachers are very successful in creating an environment where students are motivated to work hard, enjoy learning and take pride in their work. A key characteristic

of many lessons is very good planning which includes a range of teaching styles and well-matched activities, which engage and challenge students of all levels of ability. In the few lessons where classroom management is less effective, low-key disruption interferes with the lesson and consequently progress of the whole group is more limited.

Achievement and standards are good. Students enter the school with standards that vary from year to year but are never less than the national average and often above. During their time in the school, most students make good progress and at the end of Key Stage 3 attain results in English, mathematics and science, which are well above those seen nationally. This good progress continues through Key Stage 4 and after a sustained upward trend, the school's unvalidated GCSE results for 2008 look like being the best ever, with a higher than average proportion of students attaining 5+ A* to Cs including English and mathematics.

The headteacher has fostered a collaborative senior management team who have a strong commitment to raising standards. Senior leadership, including the governing body, know the school well and are clear about the next steps for improvement. The headteacher has been keen for the school to be an integral part of local and wider community. As a result, the school works well with other schools, agencies and employers. Because of the improvements since the last inspection, rising standards of attainment and a commitment to community cohesion, the school has good capacity to improve. During their time in the school, most students make good progress and at the end of Key Stage 3 attain results in English, mathematics and science, which are well above those seen nationally. This good progress continues through Key Stage 4.

School G31

Ofsted report 2006

Description of the school

The School is a comprehensive school serving parts of a large conurbation. On entry to the school, the overall ability of students is above average. The large majority of students are of White British heritage. Other students come from a wide range of backgrounds. Nearly 19 per cent of students have some form of learning difficulty or disability. The school is a specialist sports college.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory standard of education for its students. Standards are above average in Key Stages 3 and 4 and average in the sixth form. This means that students make satisfactory progress given their above average ability on entry to Year 7 and average ability when they start the sixth form in Year 12. Students' personal development is good.

The last Ofsted inspection report in 2001 painted a picture of a popular school where standards were good and young people were supported well in their personal development. But it also made clear that that students were not doing as well as they could given their above average ability when they started school. The report judged that this was because the school did not know itself well; it did not monitor and quality assure enough and did not have the resulting plans to bring the quality of its academic work up to the standard of its pastoral support. The result of this situation has been seen in successive examination results – standards overall being above average but with students making less progress than could reasonably be expected.

The school has responded positively to the last report and, during the past two years, has made significant improvements - in its identification of issues and in the way it responds to them. There have been significant changes in the governing body, to the senior leadership team and to other staffing.

The analysis of data and other evidence has improved so that staff and governors have a clearer idea of strengths and weaknesses. The academic aspirations of the school are now more tightly defined. Strategies have been implemented to improve students' progress including changes to teaching, encouraging students to raise their own aspirations and take more responsibility for learning, changing the curriculum, and providing tighter management. Ideas have been prioritised and translated into effective plans, many of which are coming to fruition. However, the school is not there yet. Some students' academic progress is now good but this is not consistent across all subjects, classes and year groups, not least because many of the improvements will take time to work well. Some teaching is good but this high quality is not found consistently throughout the school. Some teaching fails to put sufficient onus on students to think for themselves and be actively involved in their learning. Nevertheless, given what has been achieved so far, inspectors are confident that the school's capacity to go on improving is good. Specialist school status has already had positive results. It is providing opportunities for more able sports students as well as encouraging previously less interested students to participate in a range of activities. However, this approach to supporting higher attaining students is not consistent in the rest of the school.

School G32

Ofsted report 2006

Description of the school

The school is a below average sized secondary school which operates in an area where there is a selective system of education. As a result, most higher attaining students attend the local grammar school. The college is oversubscribed and serves a very wide area with many students coming from small rural communities. Almost all students are from White British backgrounds, but with a few from minority ethnic families. The proportion of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is well above average as is the percentage of students with statements of special educational need. The percentage of students eligible for free school meals is about average. A very small number of students are from Traveller families. The proportion of students who speak English as an additional language is also very small.

Specialist technology college status was gained in September 2003 and Foundation status in April 2004.

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This school judges its effectiveness as good and inspectors agree. Standards are rising and progress in Years 7 to 9 is outstanding. This is mainly because of the exceptional progress made in English and mathematics where standards are close to average by Year 9. The challenge for the college now is to ensure that the performance in science rises to match that seen in the other core subjects. A similar upward trend in performance is seen in Years 10 and 11, and although results in the GCSE examination are below average, achievement is good when standards on entry are taken into account. Central to the improvement seen in the college are the excellent leadership provided by the headteacher, well focused management by a strong leadership team and good support from governors. The key issues identified in the last inspection report have been tackled successfully. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the work of the college are exemplary. As a result the college knows where more work needs to be done to improve even further.

The college gives considerable attention to improving teaching and learning. Because of this there are many good lessons and examples of innovative practice. Specialist technology status has led to improved learning resources and the beneficial impact of the use of new technology can be seen in lessons across the whole college. In most lessons, students are managed well and teachers take full advantage of the students' positive attitudes and encourage them to take the initiative. In some lessons

learning objectives are not clear enough and activities are not well matched to students' attainment levels. In these lessons students are too passive and some become inattentive. There is inconsistency in the marking of students' work. Much provides clear guidance on the standard of the work and how it can be improved but in some instances marking does not provide this guidance and expectations with regard to the care of exercise books and the presentation and completion of work are not high enough.

The curriculum promotes achievement well. One of the strengths of the curriculum is the flexible way in which the college attempts to meet the needs of those students for whom GCSE courses are not appropriate. The college is seeking to extend the number of vocational opportunities to provide for a wider range of students' interests. Staff share a desire to help students develop into confident, mature and caring individuals and the guidance and support given to students are excellent. Students' progress is carefully monitored so that underperformance can be tackled at an early stage. Students have many opportunities to demonstrate leadership and their self-confidence increases as they progress through the college. As one parent wrote, 'My child is making good academic progress but just as importantly he has grown in self-confidence and self-belief. I believe the college genuinely cares about individuals, valuing all of their talents and achievements'. The college works exceptionally well with other schools, agencies and with the community to enrich students' education and ensure their well-being. As a result students' personal development is good. Students appreciate how to live healthily and they are well prepared for further study or employment. The challenge for the college now is to ensure that the performance in science rises to match that seen in the other core subjects. Progress is slower in science and these results remain below average.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in science at the end of Year 9 by ensuring that teaching and learning are consistently good.