

INSPECTION REPORT

HAYGROVE SCHOOL

Bridgwater, Somerset

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123882

Headteacher: Mr R A Ward

Reporting inspector: Tom Ferris
4344

Dates of inspection: 15 – 18 January 2001

Inspection number: 184710

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Durleigh Road
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Somerset

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr J Collingwood

Date of previous inspection: March 1995

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Haygrove School is a comprehensive school of broadly average size for pupils aged 11 to 16. There are 1073 pupils on roll, 530 boys and 543 girls. Almost all the pupils are white, with a very small number from other ethnic backgrounds. Nine per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is broadly average. Thirteen per cent of the pupils have special educational needs, which is below average. The main needs catered for include difficulties with reading and spelling, and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Six pupils have English as a second language, though none are at an early stage of learning English. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Haygrove School is a very good school. The headteacher provides excellent leadership. Very good management underpins the high expectations the school has for its pupils. Very good teaching helps the pupils to progress at a very good rate and to reach well above average standards in their examinations. Most of the pupils do much better than might be expected given their standards when they join the school. The school has many strengths and no significant weaknesses. It achieves very good outcomes on below average funding. It provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Very good teaching enables the pupils to learn effectively and to achieve very good results at GCSE and in the national tests in Year 9.
- The headteacher provides outstanding leadership that has been very effective in giving both the pupils and staff the confidence to aim for and achieve high standards.
- The quality of the provision for the pupils with special educational needs enables them to achieve at a level well above that which might be expected given their initial difficulties.
- The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 7 to 9 is very effective, enabling most pupils to achieve beyond the expected level for their age.
- The school provides very good opportunities for personal development through its extensive programme of extra-curricular activities.
- The high level of care and support has a very positive impact on the pupils' academic progress and on their personal development.

What could be improved

- The reports to parents on their children's progress do not give enough information on their strengths and weaknesses and on how they should improve.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1995. It has made very good progress since then. The high standards in the national tests at the age of 14 have been maintained. At GCSE the proportion of pupils achieving the higher grades has gone up from 54 to 68 per cent. The teaching has improved from "sound to good" in most subjects to very good. The school has

made very good improvement in most of the areas identified as issues at the time of the last inspection. This is so, for example, in respect of the work of the most and least able pupils; the provision for and the pupils' standards in ICT; the monitoring of the implementation of policies. The school has made some improvement in reporting to parents but more is needed and it has not found a satisfactory way of providing a daily act of worship. Good improvement has been made in the other issues.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A*

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

A indicates results in the top 5 per cent.*

The school's results in the national tests for 14 year olds In English, mathematics and science were well above average in 2000, as they have been in three of the past four years. Six pupils achieved Level 8 in mathematics (the expectation is Level 5/6). Boys and girls perform better than the national averages for boys and girls respectively, and by a similar margin.

At GCSE, the school's results are well above average in respect of both the proportion of the pupils achieving the higher grades (A*-C) and in respect of the average points score, which takes into account the results of all the pupils. In comparison with schools that have a similar intake of pupils (based on eligibility for free school meals), the school's average points score is in the top five per cent of these schools. In 2000, all the pupils achieved five or more grades at A*-G. This placed the school in the top five per cent nationally and when compared to similar schools.

The school has maintained high standards at GCSE over the past five years. The upward trend in its results in the last two years has been faster than the national trend. Both boys and girls achieve well above the national averages for boys and girls respectively. The most able and the least able do well. The school considerably exceeded its target for 2000.

All the pupils in 2000 were entered for and achieved a grade in all three of English, mathematics and science (double award). The results in mathematics and in science were in the top five per cent compared to similar schools. In English they were well above average. Other subjects which achieved well above average results in 2000 include art, design and technology, French, physical education, religious education and English literature.

The vast majority of the pupils achieve very well, making very good progress in Years 7 to 9 and maintaining this in Years 10 and 11. Broadly speaking, below average pupils produce work of average standard; average pupils of above average standard; and above average pupils of well above average standard.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils work hard in their lessons. They are enthusiastic, concentrate well and are keen to succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. They behave very well in lessons and assemblies. At lunch and break times they behave very well around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. They co-operate very well with one another. They enjoy taking part in the wide range of extra-curricular activities available.
Attendance	Very good. There is hardly any truancy.

At lunchtimes, many of the pupils eat and socialise in the classrooms. They do so without the need for close supervision. There is a high level of mutual respect throughout the school community. Attendance is several points higher than the national average for secondary schools. The number of exclusions is lower than that of schools of similar size. There is a high level of participation in the sporting activities provided, in the annual drama production, in outdoor pursuits and in other extra-curricular activities. Some 80 pupils take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall	Very Good	Very good

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

The teaching is very good throughout the school. The teachers' high expectations, enthusiasm and good planning stimulate the pupils' interest and enable them to learn effectively. Good explanations and good questioning extend the pupils' own knowledge and understanding. Lessons are conducted at a good pace and include a well-planned sequence of activities. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection. The teaching was good or better in 83 per cent of the lessons seen and very good or better in 26 per cent. The skills of reading and writing and of numeracy are well taught. The teaching meets the needs of all the pupils. There is a strong attitude of "This is not easy but I know you can do it", as heard in a Year 7 lesson. Further strengths are the teachers' awareness of how work is assessed in examinations, the extra "clinics" that they provide and the very good revision programmes in the run up to the national tests and to GCSE. These make an important contribution in enabling so many pupils to do so well in these examinations. Particular strengths in the pupils' learning are their willingness to apply intellectual effort and their ability to work well together in pairs and small groups.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a very good range of good quality learning opportunities for its pupils, both through lessons and in the extra-curricular provision.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good, and much improved since the last inspection. Very well organised. Very good procedures for assessing needs and reviewing progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good level of support for these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good in all four aspects. Well-planned provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education. Numerous opportunities to take on responsibility.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Very good monitoring of behaviour, attendance and of academic performance. Very good systems to ensure the pupils' health and welfare.

A particular strength of the school's curriculum is its strategy for improving literacy, particularly reading. In this there is high level of consistency across all subjects. One weakness is the relative lack of time for history, geography and religious education in Years 7 to 9. Close monitoring by tutors and heads of year ensures that changes in a pupil's performance are picked up early and dealt with quickly. Good support is provided for pupils at risk of being excluded because of behaviour problems. The school makes good provision for its most able pupils through its programme of masterclasses. The school works very well with parents, with whom it has good systems of communication.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent leadership by the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy head and other senior managers. Very clear focus on academic success for all and on providing a wide range of experience beyond the classroom.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are well informed, fully involved and provide a very good level of support for the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Extensive use of data on the pupils' performance. Very good systems for reviewing the performance of subjects and other aspects of the school.
The strategic use of resources	The forward planning of expenditure is very good. The school makes very good use of its below average funding.

The headteacher has been instrumental in placing a strong emphasis on good teaching and on high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. The effectiveness of this can be seen clearly in the well above average results being achieved by pupils who arrive with average attainment. The headteacher has also been very effective in delegating management responsibilities; setting clear expectations and letting staff get on with the job and take full responsibility for implementing improvement. There is a very strong shared sense of purpose in the school. Policies are implemented with a high degree of consistency. The principles of best value are well understood and implemented, for example in the comparing of costs with schools of similar size and in the letting of contracts. Staff work hard to minimise the effects of the cramped nature of much of the school's accommodation.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
• High expectations. • Their children make good progress. • Good teaching. • Their children like school. • The approachability of the staff. • The help for their children to become mature and responsible.	• Information about their children's progress. • How closely the school works with parents. • Homework.

The inspectors agree fully with the parents' positive views. The inspectors also agree that the school could improve the quality of its reports on progress, specifically by giving more precise information on strengths and weaknesses, on how the pupils are doing against national criteria and on how they can best improve. Some parents clearly feel that they have not had the response they expected when they contacted the school about a problem. The vast majority of parents, however, appear entirely happy in approaching the school with problems or questions. It is the view of the inspectors that the school has good systems for communicating with parents but that it would be beneficial to re-emphasise to all parents what these procedures are and what to do should they not be satisfied with an initial approach. Where parents expressed a view about homework it was more to do with too much than too little homework. It is the view of the inspectors that homework makes a major contribution to the school's and the pupils' success. Nevertheless, there are times when homework is not set according to the timetable and this can cause stress for some pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Very good teaching enables the pupils to learn effectively and to achieve very good results at GCSE and in the national tests in Year 9.

1. The very good quality of the teaching is one of the main reasons why the pupils learn at a very good pace and why they achieve well above average results in both the national assessments at the age of 14 and in the GCSE examinations. The extent of the teachers' expertise in, their knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, the subjects they teach stimulates the pupils' interest and makes them want to develop their own knowledge and understanding. For example, in a Year 11 history lesson, the teacher's knowledge of the period enabled him to present a vivid picture of Bridgwater in the second half of the nineteenth century. Very good resources and good questioning enabled the pupils to develop their awareness of the need to look critically at historical sources, e.g. lurid presentations of disorder in newspapers of the time and the rosy images presented by advertising. In a Year 10 English lesson, the teacher's dramatic description of the witches' scene in "Macbeth" immediately engaged the pupils and stimulated their own insights as to why Macbeth then acted as he did. The teacher's focus on "Macbeth" as a play to be performed and not just as a text to be studied helped the pupils to visualise what is going on and greatly increased their enjoyment of the lesson.

2. A key feature of much of the teaching is the teachers' skill in questioning to extend the pupils' understanding. For example, in a Year 8 lesson in religious education, questions such as "What does Saviour mean?" "Saving from what?", "So what does dying to save mean?" enabled many of the pupils in this mixed ability group to explore this difficult idea and to share their own ideas. In Year 11 humanities, part of the lesson involved a discussion of the proposal to allow schools to provide the "morning after pill". The teachers' question "What do you think of the argument that a school would be conspiring to break the law in respect of underage sex?" led to well-reasoned arguments both for and against.

3. The teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. There is a strong attitude of "This is not easy but I know you can do it", as heard in a Year 7 drama lesson. In a Year 8 history lesson on the causes of the English Civil War, the teacher's choice of challenging statements which the pupils had to categorise under "power", "loyalty" and "money" effectively brought home to them the complexity of reasons why individuals and groups acted as they did. Other key characteristics of most of the teaching include clear explanations, lessons conducted at a brisk pace and a well-planned sequence of activities. For example, in a Year 10 ICT lesson on preparing a questionnaire, the teacher's organisation of a series of short and very focused discussions enabled the pupils to realise quickly the importance of clarity in wording their questions in order to get reliable and valid information to analyse. In the lesson they learnt how to modify their initial questions. Most then produced well thought out guidance on formulating questions.

4. Another strength in the teaching was only partially visible during the week of the inspection. This is the very good revision programmes and the extra "clinics" that the teachers provide in the run up to both the national tests at the end of Year 9 and to GCSE. From talking to pupils, teachers and parents it is clear that this is a very important feature in enabling so many pupils to do so well in these examinations. What was evident in many lessons was the teachers' acute awareness of the demands of the various examinations and how the pupils' work is assessed in them. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson, the pupils had to compare the use of language in "Pride and Prejudice" and in the recent novel "The God of Small Things". The teacher insisted throughout that the pupils backed up their

points with precise reference to the texts. In doing so, she effectively reinforced a crucial examination technique. The quality of the teachers' marking and of the comments they make to show the pupils how to improve is a further strength. The pupils' response to high expectations leads to some impressive coursework for GCSE. One boy in Year 11 provided a particularly good example, a study of Arthur Miller's 'The Crucible'. As well as demonstrating an impressively comprehensive grasp of the forces that motivate the characters, he was able to evaluate the extent to which the play can be seen as a warning against McCarthyism in the United States.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership that has been very effective in giving both pupils and staff the confidence to aim for and achieve high standards.

5. There is a widespread view in the school, shared by governors, teachers and parents, that the headteacher provides a high quality of leadership and management. The inspectors endorse this view. The headteacher has provided an exceptionally clear direction for the work of the school. He has been very influential in establishing and maintaining the strong emphasis on academic success for all within an ethos of very good relationships and numerous opportunities for the pupils' personal development. He is seen, rightly, as being able to be very supportive to staff and "to keep them on their toes". A key element in his approach has been to ensure that everyone gets the basics right. For example, that the principles of good teaching are understood and shared by all; that the pupils know what is expected of them; and that policy decisions are implemented with a high degree of consistency. A good example of this was the decision that in Years 7 to 9 boys and girls would sit together in their lessons. They do. Another is the high degree of consistency with which the school's disciplinary procedures are carried out by the staff. The result of this consistency is that the teachers can focus their energies on their teaching and are not undermined by different approaches and interpretations. The emphasis on good teaching and high expectations of what all pupils can achieve is now paying dividends. This can be clearly seen in the well above average results being achieved by pupils who arrive in the school with average results.

6. The headteacher is also seen, again rightly, as being able to delegate well, setting the expectations and then letting staff get on with the job, giving them full responsibility for planning and implementing improvements. In this he is very ably supported by the senior managers and by the other staff with management roles. Crucial in this has been the restructuring of the senior management team to take into account the key issues facing the school. For example, the appointments of senior managers to take the lead on the development of ICT and on the support for pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties plus those who are particularly able. The combination of the status given to these roles and the performance of those in post have contributed to the emergence of both areas as key strengths of the school. The whole senior management team, including the deputy head (see below) and the heads of pupil and staff development, work very well together.

7. The school has very effective procedures in place to monitor and evaluate its performance. The deputy head has led this most capably. The key vehicle for this has been the "team reviews" of subjects, year teams, whole-school aspects, e.g. ICT, and support staff teams. Typically, these reviews have been concentrated into one week. They have, for example, included two observations of lessons taught by each teacher in the team, discussions with the team manager and sampling of pupils' work. The latter has focused on overall standards and the implementation of school policy, e.g. the pupils' presentation of their work, the use of key words. As a result the school is very aware of both its strengths and any relative weaknesses. It has taken effective action to remedy the latter, for example the improvement in the teaching and standards attained in mathematics which were criticised in the last report and which are now very good. In addition, the school has very

effective systems for analysing information on the pupils' performance and in using this to set challenging targets for subjects and for the overall results at the ages of 14 and 16.

8. Very good management of the school's finances has enabled the school to achieve very good outcomes on below average funding. The forward planning of expenditure is thorough and patterns of spending are monitored with a high attention to detail. For example, the costs per pupil of specific subjects and of specific spending plans in these subjects in each year. The principles of "best value" are very well understood and applied. This is so, for example, in both the comparison of expenditure patterns with schools of similar size and in the award and review of contracts. For example, unhappy with the standard of cleaning provided by a contractor, the school terminated the contract and has set up its own cleaning team. The result is a more cost-effective operation and a cleaner school.

9. The governors provide a very good level of support to the school. They have a very good knowledge of the school, informed both by regular visits and by their involvement in reviewing the performance of subjects and by their scrutiny of proposals and developments, such as the arrangements for the review of teachers' performance.

The quality of the provision for the pupils with special educational needs enables them to achieve at a level well above that which might be expected given their initial difficulties.

10. The provision for pupils with special needs is a strength of the school. The problems identified in the previous report, such as weaknesses in assessing the pupils' needs, inconsistencies in how the teachers used the individual education plans and weaknesses in how the teaching assistants supported pupils have all been successfully dealt with. Learning difficulties are now identified accurately through a good range of indicators such as nationally recognised ability and reading tests. These are also used to make clear judgements of the pupils' subsequent progress. The teaching of individuals and small groups is very good. Where pupils are withdrawn from lessons to improve their reading and writing, work is clearly linked to what the rest of their class is doing. For example, in one such session observed, the lesson was based on the same content but had a greater focus on understanding difficult words and in providing greater support for the pupils in structuring their own writing. A number of pupils have also been identified who have behaviour problems. The school helps these pupils to cope in lessons and in their contacts with teachers and pupils, by counselling them on how to respond. The teaching assistants now provide consistently effective help to pupils in lessons. The results which pupils with special needs achieve at GCSE reflect the very good support they have received. All achieved five or more GCSE grades at G or above. Most achieved grades well above what might have been expected given their learning difficulties.

The provision for ICT in Years 7 to 9 is very effective, enabling most pupils to achieve beyond the expected levels for their age.

11. The school has responded very well to the issues raised at the time of the last inspection, when the standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and its use by the pupils were judged to need improvement. Since that time, very good leadership and management of the subject has ensured that ICT has been effectively integrated within the wider curriculum. Teachers across all departments have made a strong commitment to their own training and development so that they now teach ICT well. As a result, not only has the pupils' attainment in ICT risen, but their ability to apply their skills in their other subjects has helped them to extend their learning in these subjects.

12. Standards in Key Stage 3 are now well above average. Almost four-fifths of the pupils reach or exceed the expected levels for 14-year-olds. They apply their skills confidently in a wide variety of tasks, often independently. In a food technology lesson, for example, Year 7 pupils used the Internet with the ease with which once they might have used a textbook to research healthy eating. In an electronics project, Year 9 pupils showed how they could find, select and edit graphics using a sophisticated range of ICT tools. As a result of the ICT skills learned in Years 7 to 9, the pupils routinely deepen their understanding during later GCSE courses. For example, the work of one Year 10 pupil cleverly incorporated images discovered on the website of an American art museum to analyse features of Plains Indian culture.

13. A strength of the provision is the teaching of keyboard skills during morning tutorial times, starting early in Year 7. The skills include text formatting, page layout and investigating Internet sources. These sessions ensure a basic level of competence for all. Later in the year all pupils follow a sequence of ICT lessons within design and technology. This builds productively on their elementary skills to include other applications such as databases. As a result, the pupils, including those who find learning difficult, are able to participate fully in lessons where ICT is used. For example, where once paper and pencil methods were used, the pupils now use special computer programs to gain clear insights into the underlying concepts of geometry and algebra. Even low attaining Year 7 pupils are thus able to write their own procedures for repeating steps that produce images of regular polygons. In this way their rate of learning is noticeably increased.

14. The subject is very well managed. The timing of the ICT teaching is well organised across all subjects to provide a balanced experience for all pupils and a manageable use of computers. ICT topics are carefully planned to be included in the work of other subjects. In this way the teaching and assessment of the key aspects of ICT takes place through English, science, mathematics, design and technology and geography. The skills and knowledge required by the National Curriculum are well taught as distinct elements integrated within the teaching of other subjects. The realistic contexts in which this work takes place lead to good understanding of ICT. The teachers assess the pupils' work accurately and reliably by using straightforward criteria, based securely on the National Curriculum.

15. Additional opportunities to use computers are provided at lunchtime and after school so that the facilities are fully used, contributing to further development of the pupils' competence. A significant component of a recent Year 9 project for gifted and talented pupils resulted in their learning specialist programming skills, which they used successfully to prepare and link pages for the school's web-site. Effective steps are taken to provide for equality of opportunity. For example, specialist equipment enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. A girls-only session helps to avoid any tendency for boys to have more than their fair share of time with the facilities.

The school provides very good opportunities for personal development through its programme of extra-curricular activities.

16. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to extend their learning and widen their experiences through activities outside the regular timetabled curriculum. There is a high level of participation in these activities. The range of activities on offer includes: sporting activities, outdoor pursuits and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award; numerous trips and visits, including residential and exchange visits; school drama productions and concerts; masterclasses and extra tuition in many subjects.

17. The school provides a wide variety of sporting activities. It was recently presented with the national Sports Mark Award for the second time. Many pupils are involved in school

teams. Teams compete with frequent success in matches with other schools and in local, regional and national championships. Over 40 pupils have recently been either champions in Somerset, or have represented the county in a range of sports, for example netball, soccer, table tennis, trampolining and swimming. One boy recently competed at international level in athletics, representing Wales in the decathlon.

18. A large number of pupils take part in the school's annual drama performance and Christmas concert. The number of pupils currently active in the choir and orchestra is, however, considerably less than in previous years and the range of musical activities on offer does not match those in sport. The school has recognised this and has put money into subsidising instrumental lessons to encourage more pupils to learn to play and to come through with the skills to participate eventually in the orchestra.

19. The school organises a wide range of trips and visits, including theatre visits, field trips and a number of 'social' trips. Camps for Years 7 to 10 are regularly organised. During these camps the pupils enjoy a variety of outdoor pursuits, such as canoeing, rock climbing, horse riding and mountain cycling. They also participate in many educational visits. Exchange visits to Germany, France, and the Czech Republic are organised, also skiing and water-sport trips abroad. About 80 pupils in Years 10 and 11 very successfully take part in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

20. To extend and deepen knowledge and understanding for the most able pupils, many subjects are offered in masterclasses. Examples include archaeology in the Quantock Hills; learning to set up a web site; a poetry conference; and drama at the Bristol Old Vic Theatre. Many departments organise on-going 'clinics' to help pupils with homework and coursework, and also provide formal revision sessions before public exams. During summer terms, an 'enrichment week' is organised in which a variety of different activities are arranged, including visits to places of general interest; a canal walk; and a 'Health Day' with outside speakers. The Young Enterprise Scheme provides very good experience in business practice for 25 pupils in Year 11.

The high level of care and support has a very positive impact on the pupils' academic progress and personal development.

21. This is a school that values its pupils and has an ethos of 'not giving up' on them. The school's aim of 'our pupils come first' is central to the work of the pastoral team. The pupils say staff are very approachable. They feel that they can turn to their tutors if they are in difficulty or are upset.

22. Tutors and heads of year closely monitor the pupils' attendance and any unexplained absences are swiftly followed up. They track the records of pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern. Heads of year make early contact with home if pupils with irregular attendance are not in school. This very careful monitoring has resulted in high rates of attendance and very low rates of truancy throughout the school. The vast majority enjoy coming to school.

23. The school has very good systems for predicting the potential of each pupil and then tracking their progress through from Year 7 to GCSE. This is based on thorough analysis of data from reading tests and other national tests. Assessments of each pupil's progress are compared twice yearly to their predicted performance. The pupils then agree specific targets with their tutors for the next part of the year. The impact of the procedures has been to raise the expectations of pupils and their teachers alike and has made a key contribution to the very good results achieved.

24. Relationships are based on mutual respect and all members of the school community understand the clear guidelines on behaviour. The result is that the pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. For example, the pupils are allowed to eat and socialise in the classrooms at lunchtime without close supervision. They behave extremely well and there is practically no litter, graffiti or damage to property.

25. There are clear and constructive systems in place to help pupils overcome difficulties with their behaviour. Tutors, heads of year and heads of subjects are kept well informed if a pupil's behaviour is causing concern and give helpful support and guidance. Occasionally a pupil will be removed from lessons because of his or her disruptive behaviour. During this period of internal exclusion, a member of the pastoral team works closely with the pupil to devise ways of improving his or her behaviour. Through this intense support, the risk of exclusion is often 'nipped in the bud'. The number of pupils excluded is below that found in schools of similar size.

26. There are very good systems in place to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety. The health and safety committee is vigilant of any potential hazards and effectively co-ordinates health and safety issues. Arrangements for child protection are very good. Staff are regularly reminded of procedures and a clear policy is in place. The school has good arrangements for first aid. The full-time nurse co-ordinates first aid and is based in the well-equipped medical room.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The reports to parents on their children's progress do not give enough information on their strengths and weaknesses and on how they should improve.

27. The school provides, as required, an annual written report to parents on their children's progress. The inspectors looked at a sample of reports written for parents of pupils in Years 7 to 10. Typically, the reports provide grades [A-E] for attainment and effort and a comment from the teacher in each subject. Most of the end of Year 9 reports also contain a National Curriculum level achieved. In general, however, the attainment grade is in relation to the other pupils in the year and does not refer to national expectations. The Year 10 reports, for example, do not give parents information on likely GCSE grades. The strength of the teachers' comments is that they are positive and encouraging. The weakness is that, more often than not, they focus mainly on attitudes and effort. They give little information on either strengths or weaknesses or of the standard being achieved in relation to national criteria. For example, many comments are along the lines of "conscientious, enthusiastic approach", "has made good progress", "has gained in confidence during the year". Occasionally, the comments are confusing, e.g. "Struggles with (this subject) but (his/her) confidence has vastly improved", or are simply not clear, e.g. "has flair in the aesthetic activities". Very few reports give brief but precise advice on how to improve.

28. There are exceptions to the above and a basis of good practice upon which the school can build. For example, comments such as "excellent understanding of rules and tactics ... able to coach and umpire to a good level", "needs to make sure that she backs up her arguments with evidence". One of the key strengths of the teaching in the school is the quality of the teachers' ongoing comments to the pupils on how they can improve their work. The point that inspectors are making here is that to share some of this in the annual report to parents can only strengthen the parents' ability to support their children. Senior managers will need to provide both advice and examples and to monitor the reports for quality before they are issued.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

(1) Improve the quality of the annual written reports to parents, by:

- including in the reports brief but precise information on strengths and weaknesses and on how to improve;
- using selected National Curriculum or GCSE criteria in the comments;
- providing advice and examples of good practice;
- monitoring closely for quality and consistency.

(See paragraphs 27 and 28.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	49
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	22	57	16	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7– Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1073	
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	97	

Special educational needs

	Y7– Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	16	
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	138	

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	8.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	1.0

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	111	116	227

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	70	80	80
	Girls	101	97	87
	Total	171	177	167
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	75 (65)	78 (74)	74 (69)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	40 (31)	56 (42)	46 (38)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	62	83	84
	Girls	92	97	93
	Total	154	180	177
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	76 (74)	80 (78)	79 (74)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	40 (42)	59 (43)	47 (38)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	71	94	165

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	41	71	71
	Girls	71	94	94
	Total	112	165	165
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	68 (62)	100 (99)	100 (100)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	49 (48)

	National	38 (38)
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	2
White	1068
Any other minority ethnic group	

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	28	2
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7– Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	54.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7– Y11

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	518

Deployment of teachers: Y7– Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	78.2
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Average teaching group size: Y7– Y11

Key Stage 3	28.1
Key Stage 4	22.4

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	2,298,579
Total expenditure	2,302,308
Expenditure per pupil	2,247
Balance brought forward from previous year	80,709
Balance carried forward to next year	76,980

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1073
Number of questionnaires returned	430

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	50	8	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	47	48	3	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	54	7	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	53	12	3	2
The teaching is good.	39	53	3	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	50	18	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	40	7	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	33	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	23	55	14	3	5
The school is well led and managed.	50	39	3	1	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	52	7	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	47	7	2	9

Other issues raised by parents

A small number of parents felt that they had not received the level of response expected when contacting the school about a problem.