

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **ST BEDE'S RC HIGH SCHOOL**

Ormskirk, Lancashire

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119792

Headteacher: Mr Philip Entwistle

Reporting inspector: Mr Ken Madrell  
11839

Dates of inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> May 2000

Inspection number: 183973

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: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 11 - 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: St Anne's Road  
Ormskirk  
Lancashire

Postcode: L39 4TA

Telephone number: 01695 570335

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr R Larkin

Date of previous inspection: October 1994

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is a voluntary aided mixed Roman Catholic comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 16. The majority of pupils come from Ormskirk but the school also draws from a wider catchment area with pupils from Tarleton and Aintree on the current roll. There are 620 pupils on roll making this smaller than the average comprehensive school, although it is larger than at the time of the last inspection. The school is popular and demand for places exceeds those available. Although the overall attainment of pupils on entry is above average the school successfully caters for a wide range of ability. About 10 per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special needs, of which three per cent have statements of special educational need. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including those with statements, is below the national average. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language and fewer than one per cent of pupils are of none white UK heritage. About 7.5 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is below the national average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

St Bede's is a very good and effective school which is well led. It succeeds in creating a very positive climate for learning in which the pupils display excellent attitudes, behaviour and relationships with their teachers and with each other. Very good teaching leads to high standards of academic achievement. The school provides very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Very committed and effective leadership by the headteacher and senior staff.
- High standards attained by pupils at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 in comparison with national averages and the averages for similar schools.
- The provision of an ethos in which pupils display excellent attitudes, behaviour and relationships.
- Very good teaching by well qualified and enthusiastic staff.
- High levels of support for staff in their professional development.
- Very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The provision of a high quality curriculum.

#### **What could be improved**

- The clarity of the intended outcomes in the school development plan.
- The role of middle management in ensuring consistency of approach to departmental planning and aspects of monitoring and evaluation.
- The setting of learning objectives in lesson plans.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made good progress since its last inspection in November 1994. High standards of pupils' attainment have been maintained at both key stages and in some subject areas there has been improvement. The leadership and management of the school have been strengthened with the appointment of a new deputy headteacher and several new heads of subject departments. The quality of teaching is better. Good progress has been made in all six areas for action identified in the previous inspection report. Teaching approaches and resources have been developed to ensure there is a closer match to pupils' capabilities and strategies are being implemented to challenge the more able pupils. The curriculum has been revised to ensure there is equality of access for all pupils. Planning and evaluation are developing but greater consistency across all departments is now required. A framework for homework has been implemented and pupils in Year 7 have been issued with homework diaries. The school has revised its assessment and reporting arrangements and policies have been developed by all departments. Health and safety matters have been addressed.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 year olds based on average point scores<sup>1</sup> in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Key Stage 3 tests	A	A	A	B
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

At Key Stage 3 results in the national tests for 14 year olds have been consistently well above the national average in comparison with all schools in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools with a low number of pupils entitled to free school meals the combined results of English, mathematics and science are above average. However, when the subjects are looked at separately mathematics and science results are well above average and in English they are above average.

The school's average total GCSE point score per pupil is already at a high level and has improved since the previous inspection. This is rising at a rate below the national trend. In 1999 and also during the previous three years the results of both boys and girls were well above the national average for all schools and for similar schools. A particular strength of the school is the number of pupils who gained five or more A\*- G and one or more A\*-G grades in their GCSE results. In these two areas pupils' results are very high in comparison with both the national average and the average for similar schools. These results place the school within the top five per cent of all schools. Overall, GCSE results are particularly strong in English Language, English Literature, mathematics, history and design & technology. The school's targets for improving performance in GCSE grades and average points scores at GCSE are relatively modest but are appropriate within the context of the existing high levels of pupils' performance. The school is on course to meet its targets.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	In both key stages pupils display excellent attitudes to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Standards of behaviour in classrooms and around school are excellent. The school has developed effective policies and procedures to promote good behaviour and to combat bullying.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships among pupils and between pupils and teachers are excellent.
Attendance	Attendance is well above the national average for secondary schools. Unauthorised absence is well below the national average.

The school places a high priority on personal development. It has successfully created an ethos in which pupils display excellent attitudes to their work and conduct themselves in an orderly and mature manner.

<sup>1</sup>

The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in another school. At Key Stage 3 the level attained by each pupil, for example, in mathematics, is given a score. A Level 4 = 27 points, a Level 5 = 33 points and so on. Therefore the average points score in mathematics is worked out by adding up all of the points based on the level attained by pupils and then dividing by the number of pupils who took the test. Therefore, a school whose average points score for mathematics in the end of Key Stage 3 tests is greater than 33 is one whose pupils are performing above that expected for their age. The calculation is similar for the GCSE points score. The only difference is the value of the points assigned to an individual grade, for example, an A\* grade is worth 8 points, A is 7 points, B is 6 points and so on until grade G which is worth 1 point.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall	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 very good quality of the teaching contributes strongly to the very good quality of pupils' learning and to the very good progress they make. Teachers have very good specialist knowledge and understanding and show enthusiasm for their subjects. They establish high expectations for work and behaviour. Although at least satisfactory, and often better, aspects of planning require improvement.

During the inspection in English and science all teaching was at least satisfactory. In two-thirds of all lessons seen it was good or better. Teaching was very good in history.

Teaching of basic skills is very good, literacy is well developed and the school is making good progress in supporting pupils with the development and application of information technology.

The school makes very good provision for the teaching of those pupils with special educational needs. Teaching strategies are being implemented to challenge the more able.

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons seen. It was good or better in nearly three-quarters of the lessons and very good or excellent in about one-third. At Key Stage 4 teaching was good in all lessons and in over half it was very good or excellent.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. All pupils have access to a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. The quality and range of learning opportunities is a strength of the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is early identification and very good support for pupils by experienced and dedicated staff.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school is successful in delivering its mission statement and aims, in which a high priority is the promotion of spiritual, intellectual, moral and social growth.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Form teachers and heads of year provide very effective support and guidance to pupils. The school has developed appropriate procedures that ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. Arrangements for child protection are in place.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other senior staff	Very good. The headteacher and senior management team provide good direction to the work of the school. There is a very high commitment to achieving the aims of the school. Teamwork is well established and staff are well motivated. Roles and responsibilities and systems of communications are clearly defined in the staff handbook. Aspects of planning require further development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very effective in fulfilling statutory duties. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The governing body provides good support with shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has an excellent system of teacher appraisal. Procedures for monitoring, evaluating and development of teaching are very good.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very good use of the limited resources available. Financial management and planning are very effective. The school provides very good value for money. An excellent example of the use of additional funding is that provided by the West Lancashire Education Business Partnership to support under-achieving pupils.



The school makes good use of information to compare its standards and provision with other schools. The school challenges and consults about the services it provides. The creation of the pupils' council is a new dimension to this process. All departments are provided with a budget, additional funding for specific projects is available through a bidding process. The school successfully manages to balance the costs against the effectiveness of the resources and services it buys.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

A meeting was held for parents on Monday 15 May. Fifty-three people attended. Questionnaires were sent out to all parents. A total of 160 were returned.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good progress and examination results.</li> <li>• Teachers' very good knowledge of their pupils.</li> <li>• The very good ethos.</li> <li>• Excellent standards of behaviour.</li> <li>• Parents' own confidence in approaching the school.</li> <li>• The improvement being made by the school.</li> <li>• A strong sense that pupils leave the school as well educated and well balanced individuals.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The level of challenge for the more able.</li> <li>• The amount and quality of homework.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching in one subject.</li> <li>• The quality of school reports.</li> </ul>

Parents are mostly very pleased with the work of the school and the education it provides. Inspection findings support parents' overwhelmingly positive view.

There were mixed views expressed about how the school is supporting the more able pupils. The inspection team found that the school has identified able pupils in each year and that departments are responsible for developing and implementing strategies to support these pupils.

The school has established a clear policy on homework. This policy is published in the Handbook of Information for parents. The setting of homework is a responsibility for subject teachers. Homework is set frequently but not on the same day each week. It is set when required to support pupils' classwork. Form teachers have the responsibility to make regular checks on homework. Observations of lessons showed that teachers were setting homework and monitoring that it had been done. In Year 7 pupils keep a homework diary. Samples of these were seen and they demonstrated that normally homework was set on a regular basis. Many departments have implemented the good practice of pupils recording the homework in the back of their exercise books.

A few parents raised concerns about the quality of teaching in one area of the curriculum. There was insufficient evidence collected to substantiate this view. The school has effective systems to monitor, evaluate and support teaching and has implemented strategies to address this area of concern.

The inspection team feels that the quality of reporting to parents is good. In Years 7 and 8 there are two formal contacts a year with parents, one meeting and one written report. In Years 9, 10 and 11 there are three contacts a year, two written reports and one parents' meeting. Teachers will meet with parents at other times of the year, either at the request of the parents or the school. There are two types of written report. A record of achievement contains a detailed report on each subject and the improvement targets set by the pupil. Pupils in each year receive a record of achievement. In Years 9 and 10, a second written report is sent at the end of the year to inform parents about examination performance. In Year 11 a report is sent home after the mock examinations. These reports contain the examination mark, an effort grade and a brief written comment by each subject teacher.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Very committed and effective leadership by the headteacher and senior staff**

1. The headteacher is a very effective leader and provides good direction to the staff of the school. He is strongly committed to raising standards, the personal development of pupils, improving teaching and supporting pupils with special educational needs. These are all reflected in what the school does well. He is very well supported by a deputy headteacher and two senior staff and together they form the senior management team. This team works very effectively with the heads of department, subject and pastoral staff together with other full and part-time members of staff in the school. Teamwork is a well developed practice. Examples of very effective teamwork are seen in the co-ordination of special educational needs and the ICT development team.
2. The school has a highly committed governing body. The chair of governors provides good leadership to his colleagues and together they successfully fulfil their statutory responsibilities as governors. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and work closely with the headteacher. Governors are successful in holding the school to account for its standards and in acting in the capacity of critical friend. However, although consulted, they are less actively involved with the process of development planning.
3. The headteacher, governors and staff have agreed a mission statement and set of aims for the school. These have been successfully implemented to create a highly positive ethos. The pupils gain very high standards of attainment in examinations and their personal development is excellent.
4. Routine management is effective. The staff handbook provides clear guidance to staff on the roles and responsibilities of members of the teaching staff and on systems of communication. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching is well established through the system of teacher appraisal together with further observations by the headteacher and deputy headteacher.

#### **High standards attained by pupils at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 in comparison with national averages and the averages for similar schools**

5. The attainment of pupils at the time they come to St Bede's from their primary school is slightly above average. By the time they reach the age of 14 and when they leave the school at 16 pupils achieve standards that are well above national averages overall. Pupils make very good progress in their learning and continually improve the quality of their work. This was reflected in the lessons and work seen during the inspection. Overall the presentation of pupils' work is very good and often outstanding. In English there is a good range of written work in which the pupils demonstrate mature insights into literature. In both English and history the quality of written work is very high and teachers give their pupils excellent guidance. In mathematics and science the quality of written work is also very good. In mathematics there is a wide range of tasks which develop pupils' thinking. For example, from an early age the practice of giving pupils short investigational assignments has started to build up their skills and ability and by Year 11 strongly supports their GCSE coursework. In science pupils' written work demonstrates good

use of technical language and scientific method.

6. In 1999 pupils' results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 were well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Although they were broadly in line with the previous year, the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels fell slightly in English but increased in science. When compared with similar schools with a low number of pupils entitled to free school meals they were above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. Over the past three years the performance of boys and girls has been well above the national average at the end of Key Stage 3.
7. In most subjects pupils achieve high standards in public examinations at the age of 16. Again over the past three years pupils have achieved results well above the national average. Although the trend of success is rising at a rate below that nationally, it is already at a high level and has improved since the time of the last inspection. In 1999 64 per cent of pupils gained at least five A\*-C GCSE grades compared with 48 per cent nationally. Over the broader range of A\*-G grades GCSE results were very high and placed the school in the top 5 per cent of all schools in England. In 1999 99 per cent of pupils gained five or more passes at grades A\*-G compared with 88.4 per cent nationally. As in previous years all pupils left the school with at least one GCSE pass. Overall, GCSE results are particularly strong in English Language, English Literature, mathematics, history and design and technology. In 1999 the results in art and information technology were below those of other subjects in the school and below the national average. The school has identified the shortcomings and strategies have been implemented to raise standards.
8. The school makes very good use of information from primary schools, National Curriculum tests and other forms of assessment data. Such information is used to identify pupils with special educational needs and the more able pupils. It is also the basis for allocating pupils to teaching groups. Early identification of pupils, curriculum organisation and very good teaching ensure that pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
9. The school has identified those pupils who are more able. All teachers know who these pupils are and subject departments are developing strategies to support them. For example, in a Year 10 science lesson the planning contained extension activities for the more able pupils. In history teachers provide additional textbooks and after school sessions. In mathematics groups are not only set on the basis of ability, but lunchtime challenge classes are available for the most able. In English the work of the most able pupils that was sampled was also of a challenging nature. Potential under-achievers are helped through a programme of additionally organised sessions through the West Lancashire Education Business Partnership. This programme is very successful in supporting pupils' learning of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, in supporting the development of social skills and in increasing their confidence.

### **The provision of an ethos in which pupils display excellent attitudes, behaviour and relationships**

10. The mission statement and aims of the school have been successfully implemented to create a positive ethos for learning. It fosters in pupils a sense of personal adequacy and worth, self-confidence, personal responsibility, self-discipline and a sensitivity to and tolerance and respect for the beliefs, opinions, customs and capabilities of others.

The school is a safe and secure environment for learning. Staff and pupils take a pride in their school. It is very well maintained and there is an absence of litter and graffiti. The quality of display is high.

11. Teachers know their pupils well and are highly committed to ensuring that they have a good all round education. Form teachers and heads of year play a key role in monitoring and supporting pupils' academic and personal development. Subject teachers provide pupils with excellent advice and guidance. Pupils have confidence in their teachers.
12. Pupils display excellent attitudes to their work. Attendance levels are high and punctuality to school and to lessons is very good. Very good teaching provides interesting lessons for the pupils. They concentrate well and demonstrate very good listening skills. Clarity of explanations and tasks ensure that pupils are clear about what is expected of them. Pupils respond well and are able to work positively in whole class exercises, in groupwork and individually. They are good at using a range of individual study skills and learning strategies. Presentation of work is of a very high standard. Pupils demonstrate a good level of proficiency with the use of information technology and a readiness to use it both in class and at home. In lessons and around school pupils act in a mature and sensible manner. They are keen to answer questions and to praise the work of the school.
13. The school has successfully implemented policies and procedures to promote good standards of behaviour and to combat bullying. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is excellent. Pupils are courteous and considerate. They are trustworthy and respectful of the property of others.
14. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers are excellent. In classrooms pupils work well in pairs and in groups. They show respect for the views of others. A major event during the week of the inspection was the Year 8 Newspapers in Education day. This event clearly demonstrated the very good relationships that the school is developing in its pupils. The pupils worked very effectively in groups with members of the community. At the end of the day there was genuine warmth for the help given by members of the community and to those pupils who had won the competition.

#### **Very good teaching by well qualified and enthusiastic staff**

15. The quality of teaching is very good and displays many very strong and positive features that support pupils' learning. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and an understanding of learning. They are confident with the subject matter and use questioning effectively to help pupils understand and to extend their thinking. For example, in a Year 7 English lesson the teacher adopted a lively approach to the teaching of similes and metaphors. Questioning was used effectively to help pupils develop their understanding of the terms and how poets use figurative language to provide different perspectives on reality.
16. It is clear that teachers enjoy working with the pupils. In a Year 10 French lesson the teaching was lively and entertaining, humour was used to good effect and the teacher's enthusiasm was communicated directly to the pupils. In a Year 10 geography lesson and a Year 9 science lesson the personal experience of the teachers provided a stimulus to the pupils. In the geography lesson the teacher spoke from first hand experience about a visit he had made to the Cameroons. In the science lesson the teacher made reference to a television programme, describing how she knew the producer and announcing that she had invited him to the school to

meet the pupils. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson pupils showed real interest in the way complex mathematical formulae are used to solve practical problems. In design and technology lessons pupils' responses to real and relevant practical tasks were very good. Teachers worked closely with pupils, they listened carefully and used effective questioning and resources to extend their pupils' thinking.

17. The management and organisation of pupils is excellent. Teachers establish high expectations for standards of behaviour and the quality of work. Relationships in classrooms are excellent, there is much mutual respect between teachers and pupils and good habits of work are established and developed. Teacher explanations hold pupils' attention and involve them in their work. The organisation of the work and the grouping of pupils are carried out effectively. Examples of effective management and organisation of pupils were seen in most lessons. It was especially strong in English, science, design and technology and history.
18. Teachers use a very good range of methods and resources that enable pupils to make good progress with their learning. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson the introductory tasks aimed at getting pupils to think about two and three - dimensional shapes was very effective in stimulating them to discuss problem solving of geometric shapes. Many teachers successfully used explanations and questioning to promote learning. Good examples of such were seen in a Year 9 mathematics lesson on numeracy, a Year 8 music lesson on composing a fanfare and in a Year 10 French lesson on designing a local guide. In science explanations and demonstrations were a strong feature and in two lessons they were excellent. In one Year 10 chemistry lesson an excellent demonstration was given on the cracking of hydrocarbons in which good attention was paid to the details of the process and pupils of all abilities were challenged. In a Year 10 biology lesson pupils were highly motivated by their teacher's lively and amusing explanations and the range of practical investigational work they had to do. Information and communication technology was used effectively in a Year 7 history lesson in which pupils were recording the causes and consequences of the Black Death and in a Year 10 design and technology lesson on circuits. In many lessons very good use was made of textbooks, teacher-produced resources, photographic slides and the overhead projector. Teachers are very imaginative with the use of resources. In a Year 8 history lesson census material was used to help pupils understand the growth of towns during the Industrial Revolution. In a Year 10 French lesson the teacher used a suitcase and contents during a lively and entertaining session on vocabulary. In a Year 10 biology lesson a piece of broccoli and a Hoover tube were used to illustrate the lungs and windpipe.

### **High levels of support for staff in their professional development**

19. Many of the improvements in the quality of teaching have come about as a result of the schools' commitment to professional development. Recently this has been recognised with the award of the Investors in People status. The school has a clear policy and set of procedures for staff development. There are good systems to record and evaluate in-service training. All staff are entitled to training for either their own professional development to enable them to perform their duties more effectively, or to enhance the development of the school. The co-ordination of staff development is very well led by a member of the senior management team. There is an appropriate annual programme for the use of in-service training days that are used to address whole school issues. Departmental development plans identify subject specific training needs.

20. The school has a very effective system of teacher appraisal. All staff are appraised on an annual cycle by their line manager. Staff speak very highly of the professional opportunities they are given and of the way in which they take part in the process to identify their individual needs. The appraisal system is being extended to meet changes in government legislation. An interim policy was implemented in June 1999 and further changes will be implemented for the next school year.
21. All new staff have an induction programme tailored to their own needs. There are regular meetings with their line managers and training opportunities are made available. A specific and rigorous induction programme has been put in place for newly qualified teachers. This programme meets the requirements for support and assessment of new teachers and provides a full programme involving the induction tutor, head of department and other members of the teaching staff.
22. The school has developed an initial teacher training (ITT) partnership with Liverpool Hope University College and with Edge Hill College. The programme involves nearly all subject areas. Subject staff have been trained as mentors and have developed skills of observation and support. As such this has a positive impact on the development of their own knowledge and skills as teachers and on their colleagues in the department. The co-ordination of the ITT programme is very well organised by a member of the senior management team. Students are supplied with induction information, are integrated into the school community and are provided with a structured introduction into teaching. Throughout their placements they are given sympathetic professional and pastoral care. It is a measure of the success of the mentoring arrangements and support systems that students who have experienced difficulties elsewhere have been able to prosper and develop at St Bede's School.

### **Very good provision for pupils with special educational needs**

23. There is very good management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) manages the team of teachers, support staff and external agencies involved with the programmes very effectively. She knows her pupils well and has a clear understanding of their academic and personal needs. The special needs governor, who is also a member of staff, works closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator and her team. All aspects of the Code of Practice<sup>2</sup> have been implemented. Pupils at Stage 2 and above<sup>3</sup> have an individual educational plan (IEP). These plans are very well constructed and contain clear and precise targets and teaching strategies. The school has established very good links with parents; they are very supportive and always attend the annual review.
24. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Very effective systems are in place to identify pupils when they start the school in Year 7. The special educational needs co-ordinator has developed strong links with the primary schools and will visit each pupil who has an educational statement. All teachers use the information from the individual education plans to plan and deliver lessons. For pupils who are on Stages 3 to 5 there is additional provision though a balance of in-class support and withdrawal. The quality of provision is very good.

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<sup>2</sup> Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

<sup>3</sup> Stages of special educational needs range from Stage 1, when limited additional support is provided for pupils entirely from within the school, to Stage 5, which ensures that a pupil has a statement outlining his or her needs and shows what additional and specific support that pupil will receive. Stages 3, 4 and 5 involves external specialists as well as staff within the school.

## **The provision of a high quality curriculum**

25. The provision for the National Curriculum at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 meets statutory requirements although in Year 9 time for music and art is less than the national guidelines. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. The school is continuing to improve the quality and range of learning opportunities. At Key Stage 3 all pupils follow a course in personal, social and health education (PSHE). Drama is taught through the English department, which also teaches pupils how to use and develop their library skills. All pupils study German as a second modern foreign language in Years 8 and 9. At Key Stage 4 all pupils undertake work experience and follow a careers education and guidance programme. A GCSE course in information technology has recently been introduced and the school is planning to implement two new GCSE courses, one in drama and the other in physical education. The curriculum at both key stages is relevant to the needs of the pupils and meets their interests and aptitudes.
26. The curriculum is enriched through a range of extra-curricular activities and enrichment programmes. A major initiative is the programme to support under-achieving pupils. Through this programme a small group of pupils is identified in each year group and provided with a programme to develop their key skills. At Key Stage 3 there is an emphasis on literacy and numeracy. In many lessons teachers emphasise the importance of developing their subject vocabulary and in most cases they also use and develop pupils' understanding of number. At Key Stage 4 a greater emphasis is placed upon careers education and the development of social skills. Most departments offer a range of curriculum enrichment activities. For example, the history and geography departments have a well developed programme for fieldwork, the modern languages department organises visits to France, the PE department offers numerous sporting opportunities and an outdoor pursuits programme for all Year 7 and 8 pupils and the science and technology departments have established a programme of visits to local industries. The technology department also leads a residential study visit to the Centre for Alternative Technology in North Wales and has established a close partnership with a local firm.
27. The school also provides a range of specific events aimed at providing stimulation and challenge for the pupils. During the week of the inspection a superb two-and-a-half-hour concert was staged. Players were mainly pupils from the school, but in the development of community links several musicians from nearby primary schools also took part. The overall quality of musicianship and ensemble playing was very high. Other examples of successful events include the use of theatre groups and the Newspapers in Education day. These programmes of curriculum enrichment are very good and do much to improve the quality of learning for the pupils.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **The clarity of the intended outcomes in the school development plan**

28. Since the previous inspection the school has moved forward with improving the school development plan. The existing plan is firmly based upon the school's mission statement. It has two principle aims, one curriculum and one on personnel and resources. Under each aim there are statements of what will be done. An example of such a statements is – "to further develop the Work-Related and Careers Education and Guidance Programme and to finalise a co-ordinated Scheme of Work for Key Stages 3 & 4." The plan is supported by a statement on how it will be monitored and evaluated and by a set of detailed appendices. To provide more

guidance the statements under each of the principle aims need to be specific so that it is clear exactly what will be achieved and by what date. Currently in several instances there is no information on who is responsible for leading the development and who will monitor and evaluate it. Planning could be further improved by specifying the resource requirements.

### **The role of middle management in ensuring consistency of approach to departmental planning and aspects of monitoring and evaluation**

29. The heads of department for mathematics and design and technology have written very good examples of departmental development plans. Such plans clearly define the areas for development, actions to be taken, timescales, resources needed, success criteria, staff responsible and staff training needs. In other departments, although many of these headings are mentioned in the plan, they lack precision and do not clearly identify what is to be done, by whom and when. Such plans are also weaker on monitoring and evaluation; they do not indicate who is to evaluate them or how it is to be done. Greater consistency of practice between all departments is needed. The school's senior management team could review how they as senior colleagues act as critical friends to heads of department and subject leaders.

### **The setting of learning objectives in lesson plans**

- 30 There have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. An area for further development is the planning of learning objectives. These are statements of exactly what it is that the teacher wants the pupils to learn by the end of their lesson. It is therefore a statement of the purpose of the lesson and should be told to all pupils. In their planning many teachers define either broad lesson aims or summarise the content of material to be covered. Good examples of the planning of learning objectives were seen in science and English. For example, in a Year 10 science lesson the plan defined that by the end of the lesson pupils would learn: how to detect carbon dioxide gas; how to do an experiment that shows plants as well as animals give out carbon dioxide gas; the position and structure of the breathing system; and the function (job) of each part of the breathing system. There is a need to ensure that learning objectives are shared with the pupils. At the end of the lesson teachers should review the progress made against the objectives and to use this information as part of the assessment to inform the way they plan their next and subsequent lessons.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

31. The school should now:
- (1) more clearly define the intended outcomes in the school development plan;
  - (2) strengthen the functions of middle management to ensure consistency of approaches to departmental planning and aspects of monitoring and evaluation;
  - (3) improve the planning and use of learning objectives in lessons.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

40

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

22

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
5.0	30.0	37.5	22.5	5.0	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 – Y 11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	620	N/A
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	46	N/A

#### Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	21	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	66	0

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.0
National comparative data	7.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	1.1

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	49	53	102

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	39	43	42
	Girls	43	40	42
	Total	82	83	84
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	80 (90)	81 (81)	82 (86)
	National	63 (65)	62 (59)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	40 (70)	55 (54)	35 (45)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	39	42	42
	Girls	42	41	42
	Total	81	83	84
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	79 (93)	81 (83)	82 (90)
	National	64 (62)	64 (63)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	48 (65)	57 (49)	43 (51)
	National	31 (30)	37 (37)	28 (30)

*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
	1999	60	56	116

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	34	59	60
	Girls	40	56	56
	Total	74	115	116
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	63.9 (63.1)	99.1 (94.2)	100 (100)
	National	47.8 (46.3)	88.4 (87.5)	93.9 (93.4)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	46.6 (43.0)
	National	38.0 (36.8)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	617
Any other minority ethnic group	1

### Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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 – Y 11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	36.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.2

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	5.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	108

### Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.0%
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### Average teaching group size: Y7– Y11

Key Stage 3	24.2
Key Stage 4	20.5

## Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	1,356,232
Total expenditure	1,368,476
Expenditure per pupil	2,111
Balance brought forward from previous year	2,740
Balance carried forward to next year	-9,504

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 25.8%

Number of questionnaires sent out	620
Number of questionnaires returned	160

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	46	49	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	48	4	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	50	3	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	49	18	5	0
The teaching is good.	43	55	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	55	10	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	36	4	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	36	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	34	52	9	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	49	43	1	3	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	48	3	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	42	23	4	8

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents expressed the view that they were very pleased with the all round achievement made by the pupils during their time at the school. They leave the school well educated both academically and in terms of their personal development.