

INSPECTION REPORT

OUR LADY'S CONVENT HIGH SCHOOL

Amhurst Park, Stamford Hill.

London N16 5AF

LEA area: Hackney

Unique reference number: 100282

Headteacher: Mrs M A Dixon

Reporting inspector: Bernard Jones
18642

Dates of inspection: 27/03/00 - 30/03/00

Inspection number: 184484

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 to 18
Gender of pupils:	11-16 Girls, 16-18 Mixed.
School address:	6-16 Amhurst Park Stamford Hill London
Postcode:	N16 5AF
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Gerald Murphy
Date of previous inspection:	23 –27 January 1995

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Students' attitudes, values and personal development	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	11
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The standards achieved in the National Curriculum tests in Year 9 and in GCSE examinations are well above average and confirm the very good progress made by pupils.• A strength of the school lies in the consistently good teaching that takes place throughout all the subjects and across the age range.• The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by staff with management responsibilities. Together they provide a clear educational direction to the school's work.• Pupils are enthusiastic about their school. They behave very well and show very positive attitudes towards their studies.• The provision for pupils' personal development is very good, particularly in the areas of spiritual, moral and cultural development.• The school is very effective in bidding for and gaining additional funding to augment its resources and in using these resources effectively to raise standards.	
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	16
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The opportunities for pupils to develop skills in information and communication technology (ICT) in subjects throughout the curriculum.• The longer term strategic planning for school improvement.• The school's financial arrangements, in order to move to a position where the budget balances.	
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	16
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	17

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number of full-time pupils:	575 (smaller than average, nationally).
Pupils with English as an additional language:	36.6%, very high compared with the national average.
Pupils entitled to free school meals:	32%, above the national average
Pupils on the register of special educational needs:	14.4%, below the national average.
Average number of pupils per teacher:	14.1:1, well below the national average.
The attainment of pupils on entry at age 11 is average.	

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Our Lady's is an effective school and it provides good value for money. The very good leadership from the headteacher, allied to good support from other staff and the governing body, ensure a clear direction to the school's work. The improvement in standards and the creation of a strong Christian ethos lie at the heart of the school's efforts and there is a shared commitment to these ideals. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. As a result, a very positive climate for learning has been created and the school achieves high standards. The teachers are appropriately self-critical and positive in their approach to evaluating their work. They support fully the good systems and strategies that have been put into place to improve the work of the school further.

What the school does well

- The standards achieved in the National Curriculum tests in Year 9 and in GCSE examinations are well above average and confirm the very good progress made by pupils.
- A strength of the school lies in the consistently good teaching that takes place throughout all the subjects and across the age range.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by staff with management responsibilities. Together they provide a clear educational direction to the school's work.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their school. They behave very well and show very positive attitudes towards their studies.
- The provision for pupils' personal development is very good, particularly in the areas of spiritual, moral and cultural development.
- The school is very effective in bidding for and gaining additional funding to augment its resources and in using these resources effectively to raise standards.

What could be improved

- The opportunities for pupils to develop skills in information and communication technology (ICT) in subjects throughout the curriculum
- The longer term strategic planning for school improvement
- The school's financial arrangements, in order to move to a position where the budget balances.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and carers of students at the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in January 1995. Results in National Curriculum tests have improved significantly, and GCSE results have improved at a faster rate than the trend nationally. Sixth form provision is good, and while recent results have been below the national average amongst those students taking two or more GCE Advanced level subjects (GCE A levels), the students make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The quality of teaching has improved considerably and there is now a significant amount of very good teaching and this is having a positive impact on raising standards further. The school has responded well in addressing the issues raised in the last inspection report, although there is still some work to do in developing pupils' skills in the use of ICT. There are good systems in place to ensure the maintenance of high standards and the school has good capacity and commitment to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 14, 16 and 18 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Key Stage 3 tests	A	A	A	A*
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A*
A-levels/AS-levels	E	E	D	N/A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Results in the National curriculum tests for pupils aged 14 have been consistently well above average since 1996, showing an improving trend in line with the national trend. Compared with similar schools, the results are very high.

In the 1999 GCSE examinations, the proportion of pupils obtaining five or more passes at grades A*-C was well above the national average. The proportion obtaining five or more passes at grades A*-G and one or more such passes was very high compared to the national average. Based on figures for the last six years, the trend in the school's results has been rising at a rate faster than the national trend and in 1999 the targets set by the school were exceeded. When compared with similar schools, the results are very high.

In the work seen during the inspection, the standards pupils attain at Key Stages 3 and 4 reflect the examination results. There are no weak subjects and the work seen was, overall, in advance of the level expected normally. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of abilities that reflect a comprehensive intake and the majority of pupils' attainment level is average at this stage. They make very good progress through both Key Stages 3 and 4 to attain higher than average examination results.

The results at GCE A level in 1999 were below the national average and just below that obtained at the time of the last inspection. A number of factors combined to reduce the students' point score to a level below the average. The number of candidates has trebled in the period as the school has expanded its sixth form provision in line with its Mission Statement to provide such opportunities. As a result, a larger proportion enter the sixth form than is usual in other schools. Students are enabled to study subjects at GCE A level in which they attained grade C in GCSE. Most other schools expect pupils to have attained grade B in a subject before studying it at GCE A level. In addition, a minority of pupils who were amongst the highest attainers at GCSE left to join sixth forms at local colleges. Finally, a minority of students persevered with their studies in the face of difficult social problems, some taking three years to complete their course and this had an adverse effect on the average point score. When account is taken of their prior attainment, the GCE A-level students made good progress.

In the work seen during the inspection, standards in the sixth form are in line with course expectations. Where students have been given the opportunity to join a course with less than the recommended GCSE grade, they too are making good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Notwithstanding other reasons for the lower than national average performance in the past, the school has identified a relative weakness in otherwise good teaching that has led to too great a dependency of GCE A level students upon their teachers. An initiative has just been put into place to address this weakness along with procedures to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness. This represents a good response from the school in line with their positive approach to evaluating the areas they need to develop and improve.

PUPILS' AND STUDENTS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very positive. Pupils in all years see the school as a place where they learn, succeed and enjoy their education.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well in and out of classes. They are courteous and show respect for each other and their teachers.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. They take a mature approach to their work and accept responsibility willingly. Relationships between staff and pupils are commendable and relationships between different groups of pupils are very good.
Attendance	Pupils' attendance is above average and punctuality is good.

Pupils and students enjoy attending the school. They are proud of the school's achievements. They respect and speak highly of their teachers. There is a purposeful atmosphere in lessons and pupils behave very well. The positive relationships between pupils and with their teachers are strengths of the school. This is reflected in the ways in which pupils help each other, for example where sixth form students give assistance to younger pupils in developing their reading skills.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	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 overall quality of teaching is good across all subjects and throughout the age range. A strength of the teaching lies in the consistency of good teaching augmented by a significant amount of very good teaching and on occasion some teaching of the highest standard. There has been an improvement in the teaching since the time of the last inspection. During the inspection, there was no unsatisfactory teaching observed, 71 per cent of teaching was good, a further 29 per cent very good and four per cent was of the highest order. The school has identified a relative weakness in otherwise good teaching in the sixth form. An approach is currently being tried to reduce students' dependency on their teachers and to encourage them to take more initiative in their studies. Well-planned procedures have been put in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the change in raising standards.

A feature of the good teaching is the high level of expectation that teachers maintain with regard to pupils' behaviour and effort. As a result, pupils develop good learning habits. For example, teachers are rigorous in their demands that pupils do their homework and prepare themselves adequately for regular subject testing. Teachers know their subject areas well, know well the examination requirements and ensure that their teaching is relevant in preparing pupils for their examinations. They plan and prepare well and require pupils to play their part by coming to lessons expecting to work hard. Often the pace of lessons is very high and pupils are challenged to keep up. In this respect, teachers use time targets within lessons very effectively. There is a shared commitment amongst the teachers to demand the best that each pupil can achieve. The small numbers in the school help the teachers to know the pupils well and they build on this with a good system of monitoring pupils' progress. The good teaching allied to the active promotion of good learning habits has resulted in the above average standards obtained from pupils who come into the school with average levels of attainment.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced. The system of placing pupils into ability sets works very effectively and helps teachers to plan to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. There is a good range of popular extracurricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes good provision by ensuring that pupils are taught in smaller groups and receive additional support. They make very good progress as a result.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language.	Good provision is made, including good procedures for identifying pupils who need support and effective methods to monitor their progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision is made. A strong Christian ethos permeates the work of the school and spiritual development is very good. So too is moral development. Pupils are taught well to appreciate the richness and diversity of the different cultures in our society. Social development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has good child protection procedures in place. There are very good procedures in place to monitor and support the development of individual pupils.

The school has a good curriculum in place. It meets the needs of pupils well, for example in the way in which it modifies the number of GCSE subjects taken by lower attaining pupils in order to give them more time to spend on improving their literacy and numeracy skills. Standards of care are high and the school provides a safe, secure and friendly environment for its pupils,

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by the senior management team and other staff with management responsibilities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body makes a good contribution to much of the work of the school, particularly related to administrative and financial functions and monitoring overall standards. It needs to develop further its work relating to individual subjects and the curriculum as a whole.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is a strength of the school. Good quality analysis is a feature of much of the improvement that has taken place. The school monitors and evaluates its work carefully and to good effect.
The strategic use of resources	The school constantly seeks and obtains the best value possible in its spending and the use of its resources. It is very effective in gaining additional funding. The school provides good value for money.

The headteacher leads in a quiet assured manner that is very effective. The school is rigorous in its approach to self evaluation and takes great care to fulfil its mission statement. In achieving good value for money, the school is alert to its budget deficit and has implemented well planned strategies so that it is already on the way to a position of balancing the budget within the next three years.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils are expected to work hard and do their best.• The good progress made by pupils.• The way in which the school helps pupils to become mature and responsible.• The fact that their children enjoy going to school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school could provide a more interesting range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection team confirmed the positive views held by the parents. The team found that the school provides good extracurricular opportunities for pupils with a range of clubs, and sporting and musical events. These are augmented by good links with the Catholic community in this country and abroad as well as visits to support curriculum studies.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The standards achieved in the National Curriculum tests in Year 9 and in GCSE examinations are well above average and confirm the very good progress made by pupils.

1. The school has improved to a good degree in this important aspect of its work since the last inspection. The leadership and management have made a positive impact since that time in putting into place systems and strategies to promote higher standards of teaching and learning. This has led to higher standards of attainment and higher achievement from pupils of all levels of ability. As a result, in the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3, the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 and above was well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics. The proportions of pupils reaching Level 6 were well above average in science and above the national average in English and mathematics. The average points score obtained was well above the average in science and above average in English and mathematics. Overall, taking all core subjects together, the results were well above the national average and the improving trend was broadly in line with the national trend. In comparison with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, pupils' results were well above average in English and very high compared with the average in mathematics and science. Overall, the results were very high.
2. In the 1999 GCSE examinations, the proportion of pupils obtaining five or more passes at grades A*-C was well above the national average. The proportion obtaining five or more passes at grades A*-G and one or more such passes was very high compared to the national average. The total GCSE point score per pupil was very high compared with the national average. Based on figures for the last six years, the trend in the school's average GCSE point score was above the national trend. When compared with similar schools, the results are very high at each of the benchmarks and overall. A strength in the provision is seen in the good level of consistency of results across subjects. The results at A*-C were significantly above the national average in English language, science, French and Religious Education. In all other subjects they were above average apart from Spanish where the results were below the average.
3. In the work seen during the inspection, the standards pupils attain at Key Stages 3 and 4 reflect the examination results. There are no weak subjects and the work seen was, overall, above the level expected normally. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of abilities that reflect a comprehensive intake. Overall, the attainment level of the majority of pupils' at this stage is average. They make very good progress through both Key Stages 3 and 4 to attain examination results that are well above average and better results than their attainment levels on entry would suggest. In 1999 the targets set by the school for performance at GCSE were challenging and were exceeded.
4. The results at GCE A level in 1999 were below the national average and just below that obtained at the time of the last inspection. A number of factors combined to reduce the students' point score to a level below the average. The number of candidates has trebled in the period as the school has expanded its sixth form provision. The school promotes continuing study into the sixth form for all pupils, in line with its Mission Statement. As a result, a larger proportion enter the sixth form than is usual in other schools. Students are enabled to study subjects at GCE A level in which they attained grade C in GCSE. Most other schools expect pupils to have attained grade B in a subject before studying it at GCE A level. In addition, a minority of pupils who were amongst the highest attainers at GCSE in 1997 left to join sixth forms at local colleges. Finally, a minority of students persevered with their studies in the face of difficult social problems, some taking three years to complete their course and this had an adverse effect on the average points score.
5. The small numbers taking individual courses in 1999 makes comparisons unreliable. However, the strongest performing subjects were mathematics, biology, modern foreign languages and

design and technology. The subjects that performed poorer than others were physics, chemistry, psychology, computing and business studies. When account is taken of their prior attainment, students made good progress. In the work seen during the inspection, standards are in line with course expectations. Where students have been given the opportunity to join a course with less than the recommended GCSE grade, they too are making good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The school has evaluated its performance carefully and is attempting to improve GCE A level results further. Notwithstanding other reasons for the lower than national average performance in the past, the school has identified a relative weakness in otherwise good teaching that has led to too great a dependency of GCE A level students upon their teachers. As a result, a whole school approach has been initiated to widen the teaching strategies to be used throughout the school, in order to give pupils a greater degree of independence and opportunity to take more initiative. The initiative has just been put into place along with procedures to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness. This represents a good response from the school in line with their positive approach to evaluating the areas they need to develop and improve.

6. The skills of literacy and numeracy are well developed. Literacy skills are higher than the average. Throughout the age range, speaking and listening skills are well developed, most noticeably in the sixth form where students are required to use appropriate technical language when discussing their work. Writing skills are good and pupils write for a range of audiences across the curriculum, and show a good awareness of the need to modify their writing according to the audience for whom it is intended. Handwriting is of a good standard and work is well presented. Pupils respond well in this respect to the high expectations of their teachers. Similarly, in response to their teachers' demands, pupils maintain a record of their reading. This skill is judged to be important and reading aloud is a common feature in classes. The skill is well developed and reading skills are above average. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with their skill development in literacy, assisted by the close support they receive in small classes and additional specialist support where it is deemed necessary. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. Their individual needs are carefully assessed on entry to the school and procedures for monitoring and intervening to support are good.
7. Levels of numeracy by the end of Key Stage 4 are above the level expected nationally. The level of competence in dealing with the everyday demands of numeracy is well above that expected. Pupils handle number and measurement well, whether mentally, orally or in writing. Calculators are used accurately and appropriately. Spatial concepts develop well through work on shape and in three-dimensional work in art, for example. Pupils make good sense of information presented to them numerically and graphically and handle statistical information in everyday contexts well. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in line with their peers.

A strength of the school lies in the consistently good teaching that takes place throughout all the subjects and across the age range.

8. Pupils receive teaching that is always satisfactory and more often of a good standard. There is a significant proportion of very good teaching and some teaching of the highest quality. This represents an improvement in provision since the last inspection. The impact of the generally good teaching allied to the active promotion of good learning habits has resulted in the above average standards obtained from pupils who come into the school with average levels of attainment.
9. A feature of the good teaching is the high level of expectation that teachers maintain with regard to pupils' behaviour and effort. As a result, pupils develop good learning habits. The pupils find the benefit of this approach when taking examinations. At both Key Stages 3 and 4 they achieve high levels of success in their examinations. Teachers are rigorous in their demands that pupils do their homework and prepare themselves adequately for regular subject testing. The use of homework is good and used constructively to take pupils' work forward. It is marked conscientiously and this is appreciated by pupils and parents alike.
10. In the best lessons, teachers are prepared to use a variety of approaches to engage their pupils. For example in a Year 9 mathematics lesson, pupils were stimulated by open-ended questions

that led them to discuss rather than simply give answers. This was followed up by pupils working in pairs, where solutions were debated and the work was consolidated. The pupils were interested and the teacher ensured that they enjoyed the work, were challenged and they achieved success.

11. Teachers know their subjects well and know well the examination requirements of their subjects and ensure that their teaching is relevant. In a Year 12 English lesson, the students respected their teachers' expertise as they were guided towards a deeper understanding of the role of women in society in the time of Thomas Hardy. Three of the five students in this lesson with English as an additional language benefited clearly from the opportunities given to debate their views and receive the positive encouragement to extend the vocabulary used.
12. Teachers plan and prepare well and require pupils to play their part by coming to lessons expecting to work hard. In a Year 9 science lesson, very good planning ensured a variety of activities along with time for consolidation and revision. The teacher's use of question and answers kept the pupils concentrating. Answers were used as a springboard to extend pupils' knowledge and to take their work further as they learned from the answers of others.
13. Often the pace of lessons is very high and pupils are challenged to keep up. In this respect, teachers use time targets within lessons very effectively. In a Year 8 French lesson, a high attaining set was fully engaged for an hour-long period where the pace of work never dropped. Questions were fired at individuals, answers taken up and used to produce further questions. The class was required to listen to taped French conversation of pace and content much higher than expected for their age. There was no hiding place in this class and pupils responded to the challenge with enthusiasm and made great strides in their language acquisition.
14. There is a shared commitment amongst the teachers to demand the best that each pupil can achieve. The teachers know the pupils well and match their teaching material accurately to the pupils' needs. Thus pupils with special educational needs are challenged, work hard and make very good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language make very good progress with their language development as well as working at the right level for their ability in subjects across the curriculum. The school is relatively small and the small numbers help the teachers to know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses and they build on this with a good system to monitor pupils' progress
15. The school has seen a need to widen the range of styles used in order to help pupils to become more independent and to take more initiatives in their learning. The school has identified that students in the sixth form have previously suffered from too great a dependency on their teachers and work has recently started to give pupils throughout the school opportunities to make a more active contribution in lessons. This is being implemented successfully and represents a change of emphasis for some teachers, and the senior managers are evaluating its impact carefully.

The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by staff with management responsibilities. Together they provide a clear educational direction to the school's work.

16. The leadership in the school is effective in moving the school forward. The response to the last inspection report has been very positive and sufficient improvements have been made. There are good systems and strategies in place to raise standards further and the school has good capacity for further improvement. The Headteacher has a quiet, assured manner that is used very effectively in leading the school. The good level of support given by other staff with management responsibilities and the wholehearted support of the governing body help to ensure that the school maintains its aim of continued improvement and higher standards. The quality of leadership at middle management level is good and in a number of subjects, the heads of departments demonstrate very good leadership. There are effective managerial practices in place.
17. The governing body has a good working knowledge of the school's principal strengths and

weaknesses and the issues that need to be addressed in order to raise attainment further. Governors are sufficiently involved in the strategic management of the school, in producing the school development plan and in contributing to major decisions. Their role in contributing to the evaluation and monitoring of the work of the school in these areas is undertaken effectively. Their work relating to curriculum development in general and standards in subjects are areas that are currently underdeveloped. The school governors are successful in ensuring that statutory requirements are met.

18. The school development plan is an effective working document, but currently addresses development over the period of one year only and this is a weakness. The priorities identified have taken full account of the previous inspection and developments since that time and they provide a clear direction to the school's work. The plan is formulated on the basis of sufficiently wide consultation.
19. The ethos of the school is good, reflecting the school's commitment to high achievement and to providing a Christian education for all its pupils. The school's mission statement gives direction to its work in all areas and a very good process is in place to set targets that are accurate and serve to encourage staff and pupils. There is a full range of policies in place that reflect the school's aims and direct its day-to-day work. The school is largely successful in meeting its aims. Pupils are very well behaved in class and enjoy positive relationships with each other and with their teachers. The quality of teaching is monitored effectively and has been successful in ensuring good standards. The work of heads of department in monitoring the curriculum and setting targets is now well developed, particularly relating to pupils' performance in public examinations.
20. Central to the life of the school is a commitment to raising achievement among all pupils, regardless of their prior levels of attainment. The school management is very supportive of special educational needs, and the special educational needs coordinator provides good leadership and clear educational direction. Day to day routines run effectively, documentation is efficiently kept and statutory requirements are met. These pupils make very good progress in line with that of their peers. The school has a smaller proportion than average of pupils with special educational needs and the same is true of the proportion of pupils at the top end of the ability scale. The school tests all its pupils using standardised tests and these confirm that there are few pupils of very high levels of ability. Nevertheless, the school has identified its most talented and gifted pupils in each year and plans are well advanced to extend and enhance their curriculum. At present they make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils with English as an additional language receive good levels of provision and the coordinator provides good leadership. Pupils' records are maintained carefully and their development is monitored closely and to good effect and they make very good progress.

Pupils are enthusiastic about their school. They behave very well and show very positive attitudes towards their studies.

21. Pupils enjoy attending the school. They show a very good commitment to their studies and usually work very hard during lessons. Pupils also work hard at home and are conscientious in their approach to homework. Behaviour in lessons is very good. The majority of pupils take a pride in their own work and are proud of the school's achievements. They speak enthusiastically about their school life and the good friendships they make in school. Pupils' attendance levels are above the average and they are generally punctual. Many of these positive features are generated by the good relationships between staff and pupils and the good relationships that are actively fostered between pupils.

The provision for pupils' personal development is very good, particularly in the areas of spiritual, moral and cultural development.

22. The school provides abundant opportunities to enhance pupils' spiritual development. There is a strong Catholic ethos present. This combines effectively with the values of the Servite founding order, which are promoted actively and purposefully. School assemblies are generally well organised and led and they are supplemented by regular Masses and prayers. Across the

subjects, teachers take the opportunities that arise to instil an appreciation of human accomplishments, for example in art and in science. Pupils are firmly taught to distinguish between right and wrong. They are also given good opportunities to debate issues where they have to confront different opinions about values and mores, for example in history and English literature. The school has a rich diversity in its cultural make up. It purposefully celebrates this diversity, builds upon the unique experiences of its pupils and generates very good relationships between groups of pupils. As a result there is a good atmosphere in lessons and pupils feel secure and free from any sort of harassment.

The school is very effective in bidding for and gaining additional funding to augment its resources and in using these resources effectively to raise standards.

23. Additional funding has been obtained from the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant, the Education Action Zone, the Standards Fund, the Excellence in Cities initiative, and from gaining Language College status. It is to the credit of the leaders in the school that in bidding for and obtaining these grants, they have not lost sight of the immediate aims of the school in promoting improvement and raising standards. In utilising the funds from these initiatives, the school has been most prudent and has ensured that best value is obtained. For example, the new suite of computers has been obtained at a very competitive price because the school was assiduous in pursuing the best value from a wide range of options. The result is that the school is now in a good position to meet the issue of providing good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in the use of information and communication technology.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The opportunities for pupils to develop skills in information and communication technology

(ICT) in subjects throughout the curriculum

24. Standards in information and communication technology are broadly in line with the average but are not as high as they could be. The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection and the courses offered in ICT at Key Stage 3 are satisfactory. In Key Stage 4, apart from those pupils taking a GCSE option in ICT, the pupils' experiences are reliant upon the contributions made by teachers in other subject areas. These contributions are not sufficiently planned, organised or monitored. As a result, pupils' experiences are not consistent and subjects do not add enough to pupils' learning in this important area. The school has identified this as an area to develop and the additional resources in computer hardware and software, allied to the staff development that has taken place, have ensured that it is now in a good position to make rapid progress

The longer term strategic planning.

25. The school development plan is a good document that addresses the priorities identified by the school as needing action in the next year. The school management and the governing body have a good awareness of the longer-term priorities. The latter however are not incorporated formally into the school development planning process. The inclusion of the longer-term aims into the school development plan is needed to maintain a strategic view of the school's priorities and help them plan to meet future needs of school.

The school's financial arrangements, in order to move to a position where the budget balances.

26. The school has an historical problem with its budget that dates back some five years when the school was under-funded. Latterly, appropriate action has been taken to improve the situation and move to a position where the budget is balanced. A new finance officer has been appointed and strategies have been agreed with the local education authority to reduce the deficit. The school is now implementing well-considered plans to set in train changes targeted to bring the school into balance in three years.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To raise further the standards of work and the quality of education provided, the governors and senior management team should:

- Improve pupils' standards in information and communication technology at Key Stage 4 by ensuring that teachers use computers in all subjects to improve the development of pupils' ICT skills in a planned and purposeful manner.
- Improve the school development plan by adding the longer term aims to ensure a strategic view is maintained regarding the school's development.
- Ensure the current initiatives to reduce the budget deficit are implemented effectively, so that the budget is brought into balance within three years'

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	25	42	29	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	451	124
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	135	12

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	8	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	83	1

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	179

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.7
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.4
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	0	96	96

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	79	67	72
	Total	79	67	72
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	82 (76.5)	70 (57.6)	75 (81.2)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	32(45.9)	43 (36.5)	42(48.2)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	72	72	65
	Total	72	72	65
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	75 (75.9)	75 (60.9)	68 (80.5)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	40 (39.1)	43 (34.5)	46 (48.3)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

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	0	92	92

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	0	0	0
	Girls	58	92	92
	Total	58	92	92
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	63.0 (68.2)	100 (98.9)	100 (100)
	National	46.3 (43.3)	90.7 (89.8)	95.7 (95.2)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	50.4 (51.7)
	National	38 (37)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	N/a
	National		N/a

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		1999	4	61

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	21.0	12.7	13.1 (12.8)	0.5	3.7	3.4(2.1)
National	17.7	18.1	17.9 (17.6)	2.7	2.8	2.8 (3.8)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	19 (28)	89 (71)
	National		82.5 (80)

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	99
Black – African heritage	153
Black – other	0
Indian	21
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	4
White	271
Any other minority ethnic group	24

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	0
Black – African heritage	7	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	3	0

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	40.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	132

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.4
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	21.4
Key Stage 4	18.8
Key Stage 5	16.2

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	1640257
Total expenditure	1707897
Expenditure per pupil	2955
Balance brought forward from previous year	46944
Balance carried forward to next year	-20696

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	575
Number of questionnaires returned	240

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	36	1	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	67	31	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	64	29	4	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	56	37	4	2	1
The teaching is good.	55	40	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	30	5	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	27	7	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	82	17	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	54	38	4	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	62	32	2	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	35	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	39	14	2	10