

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **NOADSWOOD SCHOOL**

North Road, Dibden Purlieu,  
Southampton SO45 4ZF

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116415

Headteacher: Mr John Samuels

Reporting inspector: Mr Alan Rawlings  
2557

Dates of inspection: 8 – 10 February 2000

Inspection number: 184832

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 - 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: North Road  
Dibden Purlieu  
Southampton  
Hampshire

Postcode: SO45 4ZF

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Alan Orme

Date of previous inspection: May 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Noadswood is a large school compared to other mixed 11-16 comprehensive schools. There are currently 1026 pupils on roll, which is more than when the school was last inspected. This is because an increasing number of families from outside the catchment area are now choosing the school. As a result, the school is now over-subscribed. Most pupils have advantaged backgrounds, although some do not. There are 195 pupils with special educational needs (SEN), which is about average; twelve of these pupils have a statement of SEN, which is below average. The school has also been adapted for pupils with physical disabilities and there are currently two pupils on roll. Numbers of pupils from ethnic groups are very low. The attainment of pupils when they join the school has been slightly above average but the Key Stage 2 test results of the Year 7 pupils who started in September 1999 were well above average.

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

This is a very good and highly effective school. A strong sense of professionalism from the staff, inspired by the dynamic leadership of the headteacher, creates an excellent atmosphere for learning. Standards are high compared with similar schools and continue to improve. Good teaching and an intelligent approach to securing improvement ensure that the school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils of all capabilities make good progress and achieve their full potential. The overall results at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) place the school in the highest 5% nationally.
- The impressive ethos has a highly motivating effect on pupils.
- The intelligent and dynamic leadership of the headteacher is a significant factor in the school's success.
- Pupils have an exceptionally good attitude to learning because of the good teaching and the excellent support they receive.
- The school goes out of its way to both consult with and involve parents in the education of their children.
- The school makes very good use of data and the results of its own evaluations to pinpoint what it should do to sustain a high quality of education.

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

- Some of the teaching does not have the pace or challenge, supported by good quality feedback, to move pupils' learning forward quickly enough; this is especially true of science.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1995. Since then, results at GCSE have continued to improve. Attendance levels have also risen and remain above average. Teaching is more consistent and now good overall. The school has responded appropriately to the issues identified from the last inspection. Forward planning is good and the school has a better long-term view of its priorities. Teachers are now more conscious of ensuring that work is well matched to the needs of pupils but a minority of lessons still do not significantly deepen pupils' understanding of the work. Recent improvements to computer facilities have been made but the growth of information technology (IT) across the curriculum is still not fully developed. Although the school does not yet hold a daily act of collective worship, when it does take place, it is of a good quality.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 14-year-olds based on National Curriculum tests and by 16-year-olds based on GCSE examination results.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
End of Key Stage 3 tests	B	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

Key Stage 3 test results have improved in line with the national trend and in 1998 were well above those of similar schools. Although they remain above average, the overall results in 1999 were adversely affected by English test data which, despite upgrading following a major remark by the examination board, are lower than the school expected. When Key Stage 2 results of these pupils are taken into account, it is judged that they have, in fact, made good progress between Years 7 and 9 in each of English, mathematics and science.

Results at GCSE have improved since 1995 in line with the national trend and remain very high, thereby placing the school in the top 5% of schools nationally. Some pupils take GCSE examinations early in a modern foreign language, mathematics, music, drama and art; this contributes to the high points score that is achieved. However, the percentage of pupils gaining 5+ A\*-G grades (99% in 1999), is also very high and within the top 5%. This means that pupils of all capabilities do particularly well at the school. A feature of the results is the generally consistent standard across subjects, although pupils did less well in science and English literature than in their other subjects. Standards of work seen in lessons and examples of coursework for these particular subjects are better than the examination results would suggest, especially in English. The school consistently meets its targets and the challenging figure of 64% for 5+A\*-C grades in 2000 may be exceeded.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have a very strong sense of purpose and display a positive work ethic. They are keen to do well and try hard to live up to the school's expectations of them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Exemplary.
Personal development and relationships	Very mature and responsible. Pupils value their own success and that of others.
Attendance	An improvement since the last inspection and remains above average.

In none of the lessons seen was the attitude or behaviour of the pupils ever less than satisfactory. In nearly three lessons out of five it was very good or excellent; this is quite remarkable. A particular strength of the school is the way that the pupils develop a commitment to their learning, which is reflected in, for example, the consistently good attendance levels across all five years and their attitude to work generally. Exclusions are rare and below average overall. This is a school with a strong sense of mutual respect.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 11-14 years	Aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall	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.*

Teaching is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. It was satisfactory or better in 96% of the lessons seen. One third of the lessons were good and a further 22% were very good or excellent. A common feature of all lessons is that they are well planned. Because teachers are conscientious and pupils have a very positive attitude, lessons are very productive. Even on the very rare occasions when teaching falters, pupils try to maintain their learning, which is mostly good. An overriding reason why pupils succeed is that they concentrate well. They can even sustain their efforts over some of the two-hour practical lessons when teachers ensure that the work is sufficiently varied and well paced. Pupils with SEN receive excellent support and there is an effective programme of literacy support for those who need it. Numeracy skills are also addressed appropriately.

Teaching in English and mathematics is very good. Common features of each are the challenging questions pupils are asked, linked to thorough and informative marking of work. Teaching in science has improved significantly since the last inspection and is always satisfactory; sometimes it is very good. However, some science lessons are too preoccupied with completing set tasks at the expense of extending pupils' learning or deepening their understanding; this limits the progress that these pupils could make. Lessons seen in modern foreign languages (MFL), whilst always satisfactory or better, were not of the outstanding quality reported in the last inspection, because of staff changes.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. At Key Stage 4, there are excellent opportunities to study a wide range of subjects. Higher-attaining pupils can also study pre-sixth form courses. Pupils appreciate this very good opportunity of working at a higher level. The use of IT is still developing.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent. Pupils are very well supported throughout the school and achieve creditable examination results.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. A particular strength is the social development of pupils. There are missed opportunities for pupils to reflect more deeply on issues in lessons and tutor periods.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Extremely well. Tutors and heads of year combine exceptionally well to ensure that pupils fulfil their potential.

Pupils benefit from the wide range of courses that they follow throughout their time at school. Nearly all pupils study two languages and there are excellent opportunities in mathematics, art, music and drama for them to take examinations when they are ready, before moving on to further studies. Extra-curricular provision is good, especially in music. IT facilities have been improved recently and pupils take a General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) in the subject. The school is now in a better position to further develop IT in subjects following recent improvements to computer facilities.

The quality of support for pupils' academic work and personal development is a strength of the school. There is an impressive system of regular monitoring of pupils' work linked to personal interviews, and regular feedback to parents. Pupils are fully involved in discussions about their own progress.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The intelligent and dynamic leadership of the headteacher is a significant influence in the school; his senior staff ably support him. Middle managers are given clear guidance to help them do their job well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well informed and are particularly active in ensuring that the quality of the curriculum and standards are maintained.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is exceptionally good at using a wide range of methods to judge its effectiveness and pinpoint where any action is necessary.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes sensible decisions about the use of resources and always plans with the long-term benefits of the school in mind.

Key features of the leadership and management of the school are the openness and professionalism of staff, the consistency with which policy is implemented and the focus on improvement. The observation of classroom practice is well advanced in the school and this, combined with the effective analysis of performance data, ensures that the school can focus and act on the areas that would improve standards. Resources are managed well and the school is mindful of the principles of best value in the use of resources.

## **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school expects pupils to work hard and helps them to make good progress.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school is very approachable and responds well to questions or problems.</li> <li>• The school promotes a good standard of behaviour and maturity amongst the pupils.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is sometimes too much homework.</li> <li>• Parent consultation evenings are crowded and can lack privacy.</li> </ul>

The questionnaires and comments from those parents who attended the meeting were very supportive of the school and matched the findings of the inspection team. A minority of parents was concerned about the pressure of homework especially on pupils who were studying for a large number of examinations. This may be true for individuals but, overall, seems not to be a problem for most pupils. The team is unable to comment on the consultation evenings but notes that with over one-fifth more pupils on roll now, these events will attract more people, which might have an impact on the way that they need to be organised.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**Pupils of all capabilities make good progress and achieve their full potential. The overall results at GCSE place the school in the highest 5% nationally**

- 1 Key Stage 3 test and GCSE results are well above the national average. These results are continuing to improve at the same rate as nationally, even though they have a higher starting point; this is good.
- 2 In English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 3, both boys and girls do very well overall and much better than in similar schools. However, there has been an unusual fluctuation in the English results, which are inconsistent with the school's expectations. In 1999, following a substantial remarking of papers by the examination board, English test results were reassessed upwards but remain lower than the school expected. When the prior attainment of these pupils in Key Stage 2 tests is taken into account, their progress in each of English, mathematics and science is, in fact, judged to be good.
- 3 GCSE results are influenced by the fact that some pupils can take a large number of examinations; this has the effect of increasing the total point score. Even allowing for this, pupils still achieve very high standards in relation to similar schools; this places the school in the highest 5% nationally. Between 1994 (which was the examination data used on the last inspection) and 1999, the percentage of 5+A\*-C grades has risen from 50% to 58% and the average total points score from 42.4 to 51.5. The percentage of pupils gaining 5+A\*-G grades has also risen from 95% to 99% with every pupil now gaining at least 1+A\*-G grade, or equivalent. These figures also place the school in the highest 5% nationally and are a strong indication of the success that pupils of all capabilities enjoy at the school.
- 4 A feature of the school's results is the generally consistent standard across subjects. Although pupils did less well in science and English literature than in their other subjects in 1999, standards of work seen in lessons and coursework for these particular subjects are better than the results would suggest. This is especially the case in English where, for example, there were many examples of pupils making good progress through rigour in the drafting of their work. In 1999 there was a significant gap between the 5+A\*-C grades of boys and girls at GCSE, however this was consistent with expectations for the group and is not significant. It is generally the case that, in those subjects where pupils achieve well compared with their other subjects, the relative performance of boys and girls is equally good. Examples are in geography, business studies and physical education (PE).
- 5 It is significant that the Year 11 pupils interviewed were enthusiastic about their achievements so far and were anticipating further success in the summer. Those who had taken examinations early were largely appreciative of the additional challenge posed by the new courses. This is especially true when, for example, they provide a springboard for post-16 studies, such as for the boy who was taking additional mathematics and intended to go on to Advanced Level in the subject. Nearly all pupils take two modern foreign languages (MFL) at GCSE and higher-attaining pupils can also take A/S Levels, such as in drama. As a matter of policy, the school maintains a broad curriculum for all pupils from Year 7 to Year 11, thereby giving all pupils the opportunity to fulfil their potential across a range of

areas of experience. The recent introduction of a General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) in information technology (IT) and a short course GCSE in religious education (RE) is an indication of how seriously the school takes its approach to the statutory curriculum at Key Stage 4.

- 6 The school takes particular care to support pupils with special educational needs (SEN) or who experience difficulties with learning at some point in their time at school. The overall provision is excellent. At the parents' meeting, individual parents were very complimentary about this aspect of the school. This is also reflected in the comments of pupils. For example, a Year 11 girl who had been helped to overcome a reading problem and a Year 11 boy with a statement of SEN who expected to gain at least five GCSE grades at A\*-C.
- 7 Standards of literacy and numeracy are generally well above average. Pupils listen intently to each other and their teachers. When given the opportunity, they give extended, articulate answers as in the Year 9 lesson on "Romeo and Juliet". Written work is often presented well, especially when advice is given on structure such as in the Year 7 essays on the Peasants' Revolt. Graphical work is presented with attention to detail, including the accuracy of scales. Basic number manipulation is good, such as the Year 9 middle-attaining girl who solved the equation  $2.5x = 20$  in her head. However, pupils would benefit from more frequent exposure to the use of approximation skills and being expected to tackle mental arithmetic calculations without resorting to a calculator.
- 8 There were many examples in lessons of pupils achieving well. In a Year 10 English lesson, a lower-attaining group of boys was planning an essay on the short stories of Oscar Wilde. They were all able to write sensible notes and organise them into short bullet statements. The teaching kept them focused on how to improve further with guiding comments (such as "If you don't use quotes then you will only get a grade D"). In a Year 7 science lesson on friction pupils developed a good understanding of the effect of unbalanced forces on the movement of objects. They achieved well because the teacher in this particular lesson used challenging questions to the whole class and in small group work to generate a pace to the learning. In a Year 8 history lesson with a higher-attaining group, pupils had to work out for themselves, using a good range of resources, the complex reasons for the downfall of James II. In all these lessons, common features were the good planning by teachers, the active manner in which they interacted with pupils to make them think and the depth of their questioning to extend pupil learning.

### **The impressive ethos has a highly motivating effect on pupils**

- 9 This is a school where there is attention to detail at a number of levels. Adults give many important messages and signals about what is expected of pupils. When this combines with the time that they then give to pupils and their learning, the result is a place where pupils want to learn, and indeed do learn and succeed. For example, tutors are usually responsible for pupils throughout their time at school and meet regularly with each of them to discuss their work and identify personal targets. These may be linked to their work or their attitude to work. A Year 9 boy spoke highly of these sessions and how they have helped him focus more on his studies and improve his concentration in lessons.
- 10 The school environment is smart with virtually no litter. Thought is given to the public areas and how they can be enhanced, such as with the photographic celebration of

the various drama and music events in the main reception area. Although the hall is well used during the day, care is taken to ensure that at lunchtime and breaks pupils have somewhere to sit and relax or eat in a tidy environment. New chairs for some classrooms are currently being purchased. They are more expensive but are comfortable and promote a good posture in the pupils. The school is open to pupils at breaks; they treat this privilege with respect. Small but important touches enhance the environment such as the places for pupils to hang jackets in practical areas, personal lockers and, outside the library, shelves to store bags. All these examples show that the school considers pupils' everyday needs.

- 11 Pupils are also listened to. The school council is an important point of contact between pupils and staff. Changes to the school uniform for girls were made after discussions in the school council. Evidence from the inspection suggests that all pupils wear their uniform with a certain degree of pride. Arising from a suggestion in the school council, senior pupils now act as mentors to junior pupils. Many also help out with the various extra-curricular clubs and activities.
- 12 The headteacher and all key staff have a visible presence in the school; they know the pupils and the pupils know them. Relationships are friendly and teachers willingly give their time to pupils – a view endorsed by the pupil interviews. Guidance to staff on how they should go about their job is thorough. The staff handbook includes a section with self-evaluation questions for heads of department, heads of year, form tutors and class teachers. These set a high professional tone that was reflected in the work of teachers during the inspection.
- 13 There are regular half-school assemblies and also year assemblies. These play an important role in reinforcing school values and expectations. For example, in the Year 9 assembly, which was based on the theme of personal commitment, an important dual message was conveyed about the need for teachers and pupils to work hard for their mutual benefit. Parents agree that the school's ethos leads to the development of mature and responsible young people.

### **The intelligent and dynamic leadership of the headteacher is a significant factor in the school's success**

- 14 The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, which is reflected in all the documentation. Although it is described as "traditional" in the prospectus, the school is not led in a traditional way. There is a strong sense of partnership between the headteacher and deputies who all maintain a high profile about the school and know what is going on. The headteacher and other key staff are approachable and set a high personal professional standard. The staff handbook includes detailed guidance on teaching and what the various roles in the school entail. Staff that are new to the school are full of praise for its contents.
- 15 Many of the approaches in the school are quite imaginative, for example, the presence of two pupils on the governors' curriculum committee and the staff mentors attached to new heads of department to ensure that the school ethos is understood and that appropriate support is initially available. This school is one where maintaining good quality teaching and learning is seen as important, fuelled by the headteacher's own research in this country and abroad. An extensive programme of classroom observation is in place involving both senior and middle managers. It is significant that, in the recent re-accreditation process for 'Investors in People' status, the assessor commented on the positive attitude of staff to the

monitoring of teaching quality. The school's professional development programme is well managed and training links well with the school's priorities.

**Pupils have an exceptionally good attitude to learning because of the good teaching and the excellent support they receive**

- 16 During the inspection no lessons were seen where the attitude or behaviour of the pupils was anything less than satisfactory. In nearly three lessons out of five it was very good or excellent; this is quite remarkable. The fact that pupils are committed to learning is reflected in, for example, their concentration over the two-hour practical lessons and the consistently good attendance levels across all five years. Behaviour is exemplary; exclusions are rare and below average overall. Parents agree that the school expects pupils to work hard and make good progress. Senior pupils reflected positively on the way that in Years 7 to 9, teachers develop in them good work habits but, as they grow older, there is more of a sense of personal responsibility for learning.
- 17 Teachers develop this very positive attitude to learning in two main ways: through the personal support and guidance they give pupils and through the quality of their teaching. There is also a full-time counsellor who can provide additional individual support.
- 18 Tutors and heads of year combine exceptionally well to ensure that pupils fulfil their potential. The system of eight-weekly reviews, individual sessions with tutors, tutor meetings with parents and subject consultation evenings form a comprehensive support package. Pupils have their own copy of reports to which they can refer in the one-to-one work. In one tutor period when profiles were being completed, individual pupils readily identified how they had improved and how the profile process had helped. Senior staff also mentor Year 11 pupils during their final, and potentially stressful, examination year. The recent appointment of key-stage co-ordinators has improved further the capacity of the school to maintain an overview of an individual pupil's learning through classwork, homework and behaviour checks. It is significant that most pupils interviewed in Years 9 and 11 knew their current achievements and what their target grades were for the forthcoming tests or examinations. The academic and personal support of pupils is a strength of the school.
- 19 Teaching is good overall and has improved since the last inspection. In the core subjects, teaching in science has improved significantly and is always satisfactory; sometimes it is very good. In English and mathematics, pupils are particularly well motivated because of the very good overall quality of teaching. In some instances, for example, in the Year 10 mathematics lesson on linear equations, pupils were given responsibility for their learning by selecting the questions they should tackle at the level of difficulty they judged was appropriate for them; this included their choice of homework that night. It was clear from conversations with the pupils that they responded very well to this trust and knew that the teacher's monitoring of their work would spot if they made things easy for themselves.
- 20 Teachers give an excellent role model by preparing their lessons well and sharing with pupils what they intend pupils will learn. Whilst some senior pupils feel it to be unnecessary that they record what they will learn, for the majority of pupils, especially younger ones, it is a good focus for them. In the Year 7 badminton lesson, for example, it was helpful that pupils evaluated their ability to deliver a long

and short service against clear criteria. One way in which teachers aid learning is by ensuring that pupils have time to think and that they are not anxious about possible failure. In a Year 11 mathematics revision lesson on three figure bearings, a pupil was invited to “talk us through it” in a successful attempt to get him to explain his thinking; other pupils listened politely. A similar approach was used with a Year 10 group solving linear equations. In both instances, the teachers gave pupils the confidence to explore ideas. In a Year 9 drama lesson, the teacher guided pupils’ ideas in the effective use of masks to convey emotion and feeling. Pupils were again given space to develop techniques and were then extremely supportive of each other’s contributions. This was also the case in the Year 8 poetry lesson when, after selected compositions had been read out, there was spontaneous applause and murmurs of “well done” from other pupils, which added to the overall positive ethos of the lesson.

- 21 In the same way that tutors help pupils focus on personal targets, there are examples of good marking and feedback that help pupils to focus on specific targets in their individual subjects. This has a motivating effect as it helps pupils understand what to do next. Marking is good in mathematics and history but some of the best practice is in English. Pupils also agreed that English is one of the strongest areas for high-quality feedback, both orally and in writing. The sample of pupils’ work revealed some excellent practice, such as in the Year 9 English book where the teacher complimented the pupil on achieving level 7 (which is well above average) and then identified three helpful additional points on which the pupil could focus to improve. Whilst marking is sound overall, the quality varies.

### **The school goes out of its way to both consult with and involve parents in the education of their children**

- 22 The school is unusually proactive in seeking the views of parents. This was a strong area in the last inspection and some parents at the meeting felt that it was now even better. Every opportunity is taken to link with parents and involve them in their child’s education and the work of the school in general. Traditional means of communication are very good such as the regular high-quality newsletters, frequent reports on pupils’ progress, information in homework diaries and day-to-day contact on any matters of concern. Parents agree that in this latter area in particular the school is very approachable and responds well to questions or problems.
- 23 Every opportunity is taken to seek views of parents on aspects of the school. A questionnaire produced by Keele University is sent every two years to a random 25% sample of parents. There are also more specific reviews such as on pupil reports and the evaluation of a GCSE support evening for Year 11 parents. The most recent initiative is a parent ‘focus’ group. All the evidence suggests that parents are listened to and feedback is given.

### **The school makes very good use of data and the results of its own evaluations to pinpoint what it should do to sustain a high quality of education**

- 24 Through the school’s own evaluation processes and use of external advice, including the Local Educational Authority (LEA) and other agencies, the school has a good range of independent information about its performance. It also analyses an extensive set of performance and other statistical data that is used to pinpoint where improvement could be made.

- 25 The school uses cognitive ability test data alongside key-stage test data to help measure the progress that pupils make in their time at school. This forms the basis for the target grades that are identified for pupils and has been refined recently through a sharper focus on attainment levels at Key Stage 3. The school can identify quickly where individual pupils may be underachieving or making good progress; these principles are also applied to monitoring the performance of individual staff. Departmental analyses are thorough and the SEN co-ordinator also monitors the performance of pupils with SEN in examinations. Overall, this is a data-rich school that makes intelligent use of the information to secure improvement.

## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

**Some of the teaching does not have the pace or challenge, supported by good quality feedback, to move pupils' learning forward quickly enough; this is especially true of science.**

- 26 This inspection has confirmed the school's view that it has progressively lifted teaching quality to at least a competent standard across the school. However, given the excellent ethos and attitude of pupils, there is scope for ensuring that more of the teaching is consistently good rather than satisfactory. Common weaknesses in those lessons that were otherwise satisfactory are:
- a relatively slow pace to learning with few new ideas introduced
  - an absence of demanding questions that extend pupils' thinking and deepen their understanding
  - marking that does not give pupils enough feedback on how well they are doing.
- 27 One or more of these features was often present in satisfactory lessons across the subjects. However, all three features usually characterised the satisfactory teaching in science. Although only five MFL lessons were seen, and all were at least satisfactory, these were not of the outstanding quality reported in the last inspection. This is because of staff changes.
- 28 Marking is sound overall but the quality varies. The sample of pupils' work across English, mathematics and science identified weaknesses in science when compared with the other two subjects, especially the good quality in English. Some pupils also commented on this variation. The main weaknesses are a tendency towards superficial comments with little diagnostic feedback and an absence of any points for improvement.
- 29 Lessons were seen where pupils were productive and the work was completed but they were not moved on to more challenging activities soon enough. In a French lesson, too much time was spent copying out exercises using the past tense. In a geography lesson, which involved the gathering of data for later analysis, work was only monitored to ensure pupils completed what had been set. Some higher-attaining pupils marked time, as they were ready for the next stage.
- 30 Opportunities were also missed to extend learning through good, progressive questioning of pupils. In an art lesson where pupils were making coil pots, although the work was monitored well, there was little discussion about the quality of individual pieces as work progressed. In a science lesson on hydrocarbons, pupils



who asked for help were seen but others were not. Consequently the pace was set too much by pupils and a few individuals slipped into conversations about unrelated matters. In a history lesson on the Munich crisis, the pace slackened because the questioning was not as clear as it should have been.

- 31 There was also a contrast between lessons where pupils had to think deeply about the implications of what they were being taught and those where opportunities for reflection were missed. For example, in an RE lesson with senior pupils on divorce much of the time was spent writing from a worksheet with very little dialogue or discussion. Whilst the purpose of Thought for the Day in tutor sessions is to provide moments for reflection, in some cases this part of the tutor period was over in a matter of seconds.
- 32 The school benefits from the fact that many pupils have a computer at home on which they can do their homework or GCSE coursework if appropriate. Examples of good practice were seen as in the Year 11 graphics and mathematics lessons, but it is recognised that the use of IT in subjects, as distinct from taught lessons, is improving but not yet satisfactory. The examination of subject work-schemes suggests that IT opportunities have been identified to enhance pupil learning. However the sampling of pupils' work and conversations with pupils indicate that practice is still patchy. The school has recently improved its computer facilities, which should now enable this key issue from the last inspection to be fully addressed.

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

- 33 In order to maintain current high standards in the school, governors and senior management should take the following action:
- Increase further the proportion of good and better teaching by:
    - ensuring that teachers make more use of good quality questioning so as to deepen pupils' understanding and their ability to think about and reflect on their learning
    - improving the quality of marking and feedback to pupils to a more consistently high standard
    - securing the above improvements in science, in particular.

(Governors should also ensure that the planned growth in the use of IT in subjects is accelerated now that appropriate computers are available).

## 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	20

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	21.9	32.7	41.8	3.6	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
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1026
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	68

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	12
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	195

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	1.1

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	87	96	183

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	53	60	61
	Girls	77	74	73
	Total	130	134	134
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	71 (87)	74 (74)	73 (77)
	National	63 (65)	62 (59)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	30 (63)	53 (51)	32 (41)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	63	64	74
	Girls	90	86	87
	Total	153	150	161
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	84 (80)	83 (83)	88 (80)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	46 (46)	53 (52)	50 (39)
	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	98	106	204

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	49	97	98
	Girls	70	105	107
	Total	119	202	205
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	58 (64)	99 (99)	100 (99)
	National	46 (45)	91 (90)	96 (95)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	51.5 (50.1)
	National	37.8 (36.8)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	6
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	0
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### ***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	17	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 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	58.45
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.6

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	365

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77.1
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	23.9
Key Stage 4	20.9

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998 - 1999
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	£
Total income	2176998
Total expenditure	2238802
Expenditure per pupil	2327
Balance brought forward from previous year	-13193
Balance carried forward to next year	-74997

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	1026
Number of questionnaires returned	295

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	36	56	7	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	50	3	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	64	3	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	62	15	2	1
The teaching is good.	34	61	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	42	11	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	33	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	31	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	31	56	11	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	55	42	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	48	5	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	52	7	3	9