

INSPECTION REPORT

NOTRE DAME RC SCHOOL

Derriford, Plymouth

LEA area: City of Plymouth

Unique reference number: 113552

Headteacher: Sister Maureen Lomax

Reporting inspector: Mrs Viola Hola 4359

Dates of inspection: 20 – 23 March 2000

Inspection number: 184935

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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: | Girls and some boys in the sixth form |
| School address: | Looseleigh Lane Derriford Plymouth Devon |
| Postcode: | PL6 5HN |
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| Appropriate authority: | Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Sister Edith Brash |
| Date of previous inspection: | 22 May 1995 |

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|------------------|----------------------|
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Notre Dame Roman Catholic School is a comprehensive school of average size with 654 girls in Years 7 to 11 and 160 students (134 girls and 26 boys) in the sixth form. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school at age 11 is average overall. In 1999, fewer than 10 per cent of pupils had reached levels on entry that were above average and about a quarter were below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is 11.5 per cent; this is below the national average of 18.7%. 1.5 per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and four pupils have English as an additional language. Ninety-four pupils (11.5 per cent of all pupils) are entitled to free school meals; this is broadly in line with national averages.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Notre Dame is a good school that is heavily over-subscribed. Pupils make good progress overall. Progress is particularly good in Years 10 and 11 and good in the sixth form. Pupils respond very well to the school; their attitudes, behaviour and attendance are all very good. They develop well both academically and personally. GCSE results are very good. The sixth form is cost-effective and results are above average. The main reasons for these positive outcomes are good teaching, the provision of a good range of learning opportunities, sound leadership and management and very good support from parents. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is successful in enabling pupils to make good progress overall.
- The school fosters pupils' 'all round' development well and sets high expectations of work and behaviour.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- The school has developed some good methods of self-evaluation and for monitoring academic performance (although further work is required in these areas).

What could be improved

- The school should keep a closer check on pupils' progress, throughout the school, and particularly in the first three years. *
- Planning for the continued improvement of the school needs to be strengthened further *
- The school's programme of health and safety checks should be more clearly defined and understood by staff. The school should keep good records of the checks, outcomes and actions taken.

*

items marked with an asterisk feature to some extent in the school's current development plan.

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. GCSE results have fluctuated but, overall, there has been a steady improvement in GCSE results. The rate of improvement is in line with the national rate. The percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSE grades A*-C was 47.3 per cent in 1994 and in 1999 it was 59.2 per cent. National Curriculum test results for pupils aged 14 have not shown a similar improvement; the trend here is below the national trend. The quality of teaching has also improved. In 1995, teaching was satisfactory or better in 87 per cent of lessons and in 2000, teaching was satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of lessons.

In responding to the key issues identified in the last inspection, the school has made good progress in some areas but limited progress in others. The school has produced a clear and detailed written statement of educational aims and objectives. Reasonable progress has been made in increasing the challenges and opportunities provided for the most and least able. Considerable improvements have been made in mathematics, in management and teaching. The management skills of staff have been developed. The school has recently invested in improving considerably resources for information and communication technology (ICT) but further work is required to extend teachers' skills in ICT. Progress in reviewing and refining processes for school improvement has been limited although the recently established working party is beginning to make progress here. There are still inconsistencies

across the school in the use of test and examination results to judge and extend pupils' progress. Accommodation continues to be a problem for the school, given the current number of pupils on roll, which is higher than the building was planned to hold. The comments made in the last inspection report concerning shortcomings in the facilities for science, physical education, technology and music still apply now. Matters of health and safety are being addressed but procedures need to be more rigorous or swift and more clearly understood by staff. Improvements have been made in the school, beyond those mentioned as key issues in the last report, most notably in provision for pupils with special educational needs. Overall improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 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 |
| GCSE examinations | A | A | A | A* |
| A-levels/AS-levels | A | A | B | |

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

In 1999 the results in National Curriculum tests, taken by pupils at the age of 14, were average compared with all maintained schools and above average compared with similar schools.* Overall results, based on average point scores, were better in English and science than in mathematics. The proportions of higher attaining pupils (Level 6 and above) were different in the core subjects; below average in English, close to the average in mathematics and above average in science. Results in the National Curriculum tests have fluctuated slightly in the last three years: the trend in the school's average point score for all core subjects together (English, mathematics and science) was below the national trend. GCSE examination results compare very well with national averages and also extremely well when compared with similar schools. In 1999, results in the following subjects were significantly higher than national averages: art, science, technology, English, geography and history. In most other subjects, results were broadly in line with averages. The school expects to achieve its GCSE targets concerning percentages of pupils obtaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C in 2000, 2001 and 2002 of 57 per cent, 60 per cent and 61 per cent respectively. These targets need to be more challenging. A-level results are generally good and average points scores are above national averages.

Standards of work seen during the inspection match recent test and examination results. The quality of work shows that pupils are making faster progress at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. Standards in literacy and numeracy are generally satisfactory except for a minority of pupils. Pupils listen well and the more able are very articulate. Most pupils are confident and willing to engage in discussion and ask questions and this has a positive influence on their learning.

* based on percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Very good. Pupils approach their studies with interest and work diligently, sometimes with considerable enthusiasm. Most enjoy school and respond positively to the opportunities offered. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Pupils' behaviour is of a high order. They show considerable courtesy in lessons and around the school. |
| Personal development and relationships | Pupils have friendly relationships with each other, staff and visitors. There is a strong sense of community within the school. Pupils are given and take responsibility and contribute well to the life of the school and wider world. |
| Attendance | Attendance is good and above the national average. Unauthorised absence is below average. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | aged 11-14 years | aged 14-16 years | aged over 16 years |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Lessons seen overall | Good | Very 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 quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of lessons observed. Teaching was good in 65 per cent of lessons, and very good or just occasionally excellent in a further 24 per cent of lessons. Teaching was unsatisfactory in 4 per cent of lessons. The figures for learning are very similar. Teaching and learning are strongest in Years 10 and 11 (pupils aged 14-16). The main strengths in teaching are good classroom management, cordial relationships, good subject knowledge and lesson planning. Teachers set high expectations of work and behaviour. In most lessons, tasks and resources are chosen well to meet the different needs of all pupils. Many teachers display questioning skills of a high order and provoke pupils effectively to give their views or share their thoughts. In particular, all of these strengths are features of teaching in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science at all stages. In a few lessons, insufficient account is taken of pupils' learning from their primary school, from previous years or lessons. In the very few unsatisfactory lessons, the activities provided do not enable pupils to make sufficient progress or relationships are strained with instances of poor behaviour. The skills of literacy and numeracy are generally taught well. Many teachers make use of some good strategies for developing pupils' writing skills in different subjects. Teaching at Key Stage 4 is particularly good because, in addition to possessing strengths listed above, most teachers are effective in explaining to pupils what they need to do to improve their marks and grades. Pupils are diligent and work with good concentration. They enjoy challenge and value the chance to learn through interesting ways, for example, with visiting theatre workshops or dance companies. Most pupils are well organised and make good use of the school planning diaries.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Good. National Curriculum requirements are met. There is some limited but good vocational provision in Years 10 and 11. A good range of subjects is provided in the sixth form. Time for mathematics and PE in Years 10 and 11 is below average. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is provided. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) | Good. Pupils with SEN are well supported in lessons and are appropriately integrated in all areas of the curriculum, often with tasks specifically designed to meet their needs. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good overall. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. Provision for cultural development is good and for spiritual development it is sound, although some subjects miss opportunities for promoting it in a planned way. The well-planned PSME (personal, social and moral education) programme contributes well to this area of the school's work. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Pupils receive good personal support. The school is very effective in monitoring and promoting good attendance and behaviour. There are some good elements in the monitoring of pupils' academic performance but overall, systems for this need to be applied with greater consistency across the school. Checking on and dealing with matters of health and safety needs to be undertaken with more rigour. |

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher and other key staff have, overall, sustained high standards in the school and created a shared vision and positive atmosphere for work and learning. The production and use of school improvement plans has not been sufficiently thorough in recent years, although there have been some good specific improvements, in mathematics, ICT and SEN, for example. Most heads of department and heads of school are effective in their work. There are shortcomings in business studies, including economics. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Governors know the school well, are very supportive and have worked energetically, particularly in an attempt to improve accommodation. They have not, however, attended to all their legal duties, for example, in agreeing and publishing targets for pupils' performance, in setting performance targets for the headteacher, and, importantly, in currently ensuring that health and safety checks are conducted regularly and effectively. They have not ensured that the plan for the school's development is well constructed or effectively implemented. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Generally satisfactory but a mixture of strengths and weaknesses. The strongest elements are the reviews of the work of departments. Some good strategies exist to evaluate pupils' work and these provide, indirectly, useful insights into teaching. Evaluation of pupils' progress is not conducted systematically. Direct monitoring and evaluation of teaching is not undertaken. Monitoring and evaluation of the provision and outcomes in ICT is not yet adequate. |
| The strategic use of resources | The committed, hard working and effective staff are deployed well. Accommodation is very tight and generally used well but there are shortcomings in a few areas. Resources for learning are adequate and managed well. Senior staff and governors make sound spending decisions but these have not always been linked sufficiently to a coherent school development plan. The school applies the principles of best value in making purchases. |

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's expectation of hard work from pupils • The progress made by pupils • Most pupils like school • Good teaching • The school is well led and managed • The school's help in making pupils become mature | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would value better information about pupils' progress |

Parents expressed their praise for the way in which the school welcomes pupils into Year 7 and if they join the school at a later stage. Praise was also given for the way in which the school fosters harmonious relationships, cares for the development of the whole person and eliminates any signs of bullying. Some parents picked out art and music as strengths.

The strengths identified by parents were also found to be strengths by the inspection team. Inspectors agree that reports to parents could be improved. Most give good information about pupils' attitudes to work and some give learning targets for the future. Not all reports give sufficient information about pupils' attainment and progress. The school is in the process of redesigning its report format.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The school is successful in enabling pupils to make good progress overall.

1. Standards are high by the age of sixteen because the school promotes good progress, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
2. Progress at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory in the main, although systems for checking individual progress are not yet sufficiently robust. Where teachers keep a close check on progress, in science for example, pupils achieve well, higher and lower attainers alike. Progress in lessons is good in many other subjects, for example, art, technology, geography and music. Progress in modern foreign languages is variable and linked to the quality of teaching.
3. Progress at Key Stage 4 is very good and pupils of all abilities achieve well. Pupils learn faster at Notre Dame School than in many other schools with similar results at the end of Key Stage 3. However, current rates of progress in business studies are too slow. Examples of very good progress in lessons at this stage were seen in a food technology lesson where pupils were working on a 'cook-chill' project, a geography lesson on Brazil, a literacy support group and a drama lesson using shadow work and masks.
4. Progress in the sixth form is good in most subjects; there are currently some concerns about students' progress in economics. Often, a supportive tutorial style, enables sixth-form students to discuss their work in an atmosphere of constructive criticism and this has a positive effect on their learning. A good example of this was seen in an A-level music lesson.
5. Procedures for checking progress at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form are better than those at Key Stage 3 because teachers generally have a very good understanding of the examination assessment criteria used at these later stages.
6. At all stages, pupils make satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy. Pupils' listening skills are developed well and this enables them to learn not only from the teachers but also from each other. In many subjects, pupils are asked to explain their methods or ideas to the class and most do this confidently, using correctly subject-specific vocabulary. Pupils are willing to engage in discussion and ask questions and this has a positive influence on their learning. Reading and writing also develop well. The school has put into place some effective strategies to promote pupils' writing skills, for example, in providing them with 'writing frames' which help pupils to structure their work and ideas in many different subjects areas and for different purposes. Progress in numeracy is satisfactory, although interpretation of graphs when used in subjects other than mathematics is weak for some pupils at Key Stage 3. The school is currently working to encourage all subjects to promote numeracy skills as part of a whole school approach. Progress in science is good overall. Pupils acquire a body of scientific knowledge well. Their investigative skills do not develop at the same good rate throughout the school, although an emphasis given to this area in Years 9 and 11 generally ensures that pupils are adequately prepared for tests and examinations.
7. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make particularly good progress as a result of effective provision for them; they are supported well by subject teachers, by support assistants and in small group work. Most subject teachers choose questions carefully to challenge pupils with SEN but without risk to their confidence or self-esteem. The management of SEN is effective and contributes positively to the progress pupils make. The special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) provides good guidance to other members of staff and ensures that individual education plans (IEPs) are devised well to support pupils' learning. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored.

The school fosters pupils' 'all round' development well and sets high expectations of work and behaviour.

8. The school has produced a strong 'mission' statement in which a clear commitment has been given to developing pupils both academically and personally. The school is successful in meeting the aims of the mission statement.

9. The school operates as an effective community and prepares pupils well for their next steps in education. The first point in the school's mission statement speaks of the school community within the Roman Catholic tradition striving to prepare young people for life and promoting Christian ideals. Through activities at school and with other partner schools, the school develops in pupils a sense of belonging to a wider family and an understanding of individuals' and nations' interdependence. A well-planned programme for personal, social and moral (PSME) education contributes well to preparing pupils for their next steps in life, for example, in helping them to make subject or career choices or discussing with them the social and moral issues which may be faced now or in later years. Through the PSME programme and in other ways, pupils at Notre Dame develop as confident young people who engage willingly in conversation with each other, their teachers and visitors. The sense of community is also promoted through giving pupils opportunities to support one another as peers or across different age ranges, for example, through the school council or through the system of sixth-form school prefects or Year 11 student attachments. In lessons, pupils are often required to collaborate over tasks and they do this effectively.
10. The educational ideals of the founding Sisters of Notre Dame are alive in the school today. They are articulated through the second point of the mission statement, 'We value the uniqueness and respect the worth of each member of our community regardless of ability or background enabling each one to achieve full potential.' The school has developed effective systems of recognising a wide range of achievements. For example, certificates of recognition are awarded regularly to pupils and these indicate each one's achievements in work, attendance, responsibilities undertaken, sport, service and personal development. The student personal planners contain records of pupils' activities and achievements. Most pupils keep these planners well. Although academic progress is good in the school, systems for evaluating if pupils do indeed achieve their academic potential are not yet fully in place.
11. The third and final point in the mission statement speaks firstly of a caring and challenging environment. The school cares well for its pupils and they learn in an atmosphere of support. Pupils are known well by their teachers, tutors, heads of year, heads of schools and other members of staff. Many members of staff contribute effectively to looking after pupils' well being: for example, administrative and supervisory staff, library staff as well as teachers and senior managers. Relationships are good. Staff work calmly, visibly but unobtrusively to maintain good order and promote good behaviour. Pupils' behaviour is of a high order. They show considerable courtesy in lessons and around the school. In general, the school provides appropriate challenges through which pupils can grow academically and personally. Most teachers plan their lessons effectively and provide stimulating tasks; occasionally, however, tasks are undemanding. The school makes good arrangements for trips, visits and visitors to enhance the curriculum and provide additional interest or challenge; pupils appreciate these opportunities and thrive, for example, when inspired by visiting dance or theatre companies. Pupils are encouraged to make good use of the library and develop their independent learning skills. Pupils' attitudes to work are good and often very good; this can be attributed partly to pupils' and parents' own expectations but also in high measure to the ethos in the school. Prompt starts to lessons are expected and achieved, and pupils are expected to be well organised and work diligently with good concentration. Any shortcomings in work and behaviour are swiftly and effectively dealt with.
12. The school takes care to include all pupils in a full range of activities and live out the final part of the mission statement where 'teaching and learning, equal opportunities and individuality are valued'. The school works well to foster individual interests, for example in art, technology and music.

The quality of teaching is good overall.

13. Teaching at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form is good and it is very good at Key Stage 4. The main reason for the higher quality of teaching at Key Stage 4 is teachers' very good understanding of GCSE Programmes of Study and how GCSE examinations are marked and graded. This enables them to focus clearly and well on pupils' individual learning needs and provide work that is appropriately matched to those needs. Teachers at Key Stage 4 frequently give pupils good advice about how to improve, either through written comments or verbally. The best teaching also ensures that pupils act on this good advice; good examples of this were seen in mathematics, art and technology, at Key Stage 4 or at other stages.

14. Many teachers display questioning skills of a high order and provoke pupils effectively to give their views or share their thoughts, for example, in a Year 9 mathematics lesson on loci and a Year 8 lesson on smoking, as part of the personal, moral and social education programme (PSME)
15. Classroom management is good and teachers have high expectations of work and behaviour. Teachers are welcoming and lessons are conducted in a cordial manner and with brisk pace.
16. Teachers' subject knowledge and lesson planning are good. In most lessons, tasks and resources are chosen well to meet the different needs of all pupils and also to vary the way in which pupils learn, through role play, discussion or with visiting speakers or groups, for example. A music lesson in Year 7, for example, required pupils to engage in a range of tasks, listening, composing and signing, all extremely well planned, resulting in high quality work from pupils and giving them a great sense of satisfaction. Other examples of good planning include a Year 8 ceramics lesson in which pupils studied cubism, a Year 9 mathematics lesson on statistics and a Year 11 English lesson on poetry.
17. The skills of literacy and numeracy are generally taught well. The school, through a literacy working group, has identified and promoted a number of strategies for developing pupils' literacy skills. For example, many teachers make use of some good strategies for developing pupils' writing skills in different subjects. They provide pupils with 'writing frames' that help pupils to structure their ideas; examples of this were seen in mathematics and geography in Year 9. The school is embarking on a similar project for numeracy, so that pupils' numeracy skills can be developed in a systematic way across the curriculum. With a few exceptions, teachers, on the whole, do not yet make good use of information and communication technology (ICT). Provision for ICT has recently been enhanced and not all members of staff are familiar with the new resources or confident in using them in their subjects.

The school has developed some good methods of self-evaluation and for monitoring academic performance

18. The school makes use of some good strategies through which its work can be evaluated and improved as necessary. Further developments are required to extend this good work.
19. One of the strongest contributions to self-evaluation is the school's process of departmental reviews. Each department or section conducts a self-review as a team. The reviews result in the production of mostly high quality reports that comment clearly on the education provided and test and examination outcomes, as appropriate. The reports also highlight areas for further development. Governors receive and consider these reports. The report findings have not, in the past, been used in a systematic or consistent way to draw up the whole-school development plan, although elements of the reports were included in the whole-school plan. The school is currently working to link more closely the whole-school development plan with departmental plans.
20. Another positive feature of self-evaluation is in the discussions held between individual pupils and senior members of staff. One subject discussed is the use of the student planner by pupils. The main purpose here is to develop pupils' learning skills and personal organisation and to check that each pupil is receiving appropriate support and guidance about their work. An additional outcome is that senior managers are able to monitor the setting of homework, the use of the planner in recording pupils' achievements and also to note any contact with parents and deal with queries or concerns. Other items discussed include progress in subjects studied with the identification of specific problems or success areas.
21. In the last few years, the school has adjusted the role of tutors, heads of year and heads of house. They are currently developing their role as academic mentors as well as taking care of pupils' personal development. This is a positive move. These members of staff understand how crucial their role is in looking at pupils' overall performance, across subject areas and supporting pupils to achieve their best. This system is still at an early stage of development but already, some useful work has been undertaken in examining the progress of individuals and also of whole year groups.
22. Senior managers have a good understanding of the quality of teaching in the school; they know where strengths and shortcomings are located. Departmental reviews, pupils' planners and other documents or sources yield useful information for senior managers about teaching but, overall,

systems for monitoring teaching need to be more rigorous.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The school should keep a closer check on pupils' progress, throughout the school, but particularly in the first three years.

23. Until recently the school has not kept sufficiently detailed information about pupils' attainments and has therefore not been in a good position to judge the rates of progress in learning, particularly at Key Stage 3. Information about pupils' attainments is now being compiled and good data exist for the current Years 7 and 8. Data for other years exist but information was not assembled in the past to the current level of detail. The school must ensure that it can, for itself, make secure judgements about progress at Key Stage 3 and elsewhere.
24. Teachers generally make accurate assessments of pupils' attainments and use this information to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. The question 'Is progress fast enough?' is posed concerning individuals and groups, but the answering of the question is not under-pinned by a rigorous whole-school process of analysing pupils' performance. The school is now aware of the existence of some national statistical material that aims to support schools in dealing with this question. Much better use should be made of existing assessment information and strategies available in the school and nationally to analyse pupils' progress and identify their next steps in learning.
25. The school has fulfilled the legal requirement to set targets for pupils' performance at GCSE. However, target setting processes are generally weak and need to be developed, understood by staff and used to raise further pupils' standards and achievements. Current targets need to be more challenging.
26. The school provides regular reports to parents. Written reports are completed to varying degrees of detail and not all give sufficient information about pupils' attainment and progress. Most give good information about pupils' attitudes to work and some give a clear indication about learning targets for the future. The school provides good opportunities for verbal reports to be given at parents' evenings or by appointment if this is required. Some parents would value better information about pupils' progress.

Planning for the continued improvement of the school needs to be strengthened further.

27. The drawing up and use of plans for the future development and improvement of the school have not taken place thoroughly in recent years. The last inspection report of May 1995 identified shortcomings in development planning processes. The school made some progress in reviewing and refining these processes soon after the last inspection following the creation of the school's mission statement. Further progress was impeded, however, when the school went through a period of financial difficulty during which the senior management team was reduced as part of the strategy to cut expenditure.
28. During the time of financial difficulty, development plans identified many appropriate areas for improvement and some of these were dealt with successfully. Examples are improvements in mathematics and provision for pupils with special educational needs. Other areas, such as assessment and information technology, were not improved as quickly as intended, partly due to shortages in funds and partly because of inconsistencies in approach in different departments. Departmental plans did not always reflect the whole-school plan. During this time, budget setting was undertaken without the benefit of a realistic and well-constructed plan; the close alignment of the budget to a plan was clearly a difficulty for the school. The governors, senior staff and bursar have worked effectively to bring the school budget out of a deficit position.
29. The school has begun a process of reviewing again its approach to school development planning; this process has not been completed. The emerging plan and the process by which it is being constructed are improvements. Governors currently have too limited a role in the creation, monitoring and evaluation of the plan. The departmental reviews are a strong element of the process. The school should ensure that it makes use of all the self-evaluation strategies that exist in compiling the school improvement plan.

30. The senior management team is now back to full strength with a headteacher and two deputy heads. This and the creation of a school development planning group have set the school back on course to create a thorough and coherent plan for school improvement.

The school's programme of health and safety checks should be more clearly defined and understood by staff. The school should keep good records of the checks, outcomes and actions taken.

31. Governors do not currently have a robust system for ensuring the health and safety of the school although, until August 1999, there was a governor who took a specific interest in this area. Health and safety checks are undertaken over some specific matters, such as the safety of electrical equipment. Overall, however, too much reliance is placed on staff to come forward to report any concerns. There is currently no systematic procedure to ensure that all necessary routine checks are undertaken, neither are the outcomes of checks carefully recorded including actions taken, if required. A more public coherent system needs to be in evidence.
32. The last inspection in May 1995 raised, as a key issue, the matter of health and safety and asked that the school 'ensure that health and safety requirements are fully met and monitored'. The school has not responded fully to this key issue.
33. The inspection team of March 2000 raised concerns about the dust in one of the technology rooms. The technology teacher and head of department have also raised this concern. The school has not responded with sufficient urgency to the concern about the lack of dust extraction, although action has been taken to move the wood-sawing machine close to a position where a dust extractor could be fitted.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

34. In order to raise standards further, and to improve further the quality of educational provision in this good school, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- **Keep a closer check on pupils' progress, throughout the school, but particularly in the first three years.**
 - a) assemble and analyse data about pupils' attainments on entry to the school so that a clear baseline is established against which progress can be measured;
 - b) use this baseline information and other data to predict the attainment of individuals and groups and set realistic but challenging targets;
 - c) continue to compile information about attainment, as has been started in Years 7 and 8 so that secure judgements can be made about the rate of pupils' progress across each key stage throughout the school;
 - d) make any necessary changes to teaching or to the curriculum in the light of lessons learned from analysing statistics on pupils' attainment;
 - e) provide in-service training for staff who lack the necessary skills or experience in using assessment information to monitor, evaluate and promote progress;
 - f) ensure that reports to parents include sufficient comment about pupils' attainment and progress in all cases.

 - **Strengthen the planning processes for improving the school.**
 - a) establish and state clearly how the school improvement plan is to be arrived at, who is to be involved and at what stage;
 - b) ensure that the outcomes of the school's existing and future self-evaluation processes are used to celebrate success and to identify targets for improvement;
 - c) state clearly in the plan how, when and by whom it is to be monitored and evaluated; keep to the schedules for monitoring and evaluation; ensure that staff and governors are appropriately involved in this;
 - d) ensure that the school development plan is central to budget setting;
 - e) ensure that departmental development plans are closely linked with the overall school development plan;
 - f) work with greater rigour to ensure that agreed policies, practices and developments are indeed implemented consistently in all areas of the school.

- **Establish and conduct a more clearly defined programme of health and safety checks and keep good records of the checks, outcomes and actions taken.**
 - a) identify a replacement governor for health and safety;
 - b) establish a central record of all health and safety checks and keep good notes of checks, outcomes and actions taken;
 - c) ensure that staff are aware of the school's procedures for maintaining high levels of health and safety;
 - d) complete the improvements in the design and technology room to eliminate concerns about dust extraction.

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 | 32 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 2 | 22 | 42 | 31 | 4 | 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 | 654 | 160 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | 94 | - |

| Special educational needs | Y7 – Y11 | Sixth form |
|---|----------|------------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 14 | 1 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 88 | 4 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 4 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 47 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 44 |

Attendance

| Authorised absence | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 6.8 |
| National comparative data | 7.9 |

| Unauthorised absence | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.5 |
| 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 | N/A | 126 | 126 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above | Boys | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| | Girls | 103 | 78 | 79 |
| | Total | 103 | 78 | 79 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above | School | 82 (67) | 62 (60) | 63 (65) |
| | National | 63 (65) | 62 (60) | 55 (56) |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above | School | 16 (33) | 38 (33) | 28 (34) |
| | National | 28 (35) | 38 (36) | 23 (27) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above | Boys | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| | Girls | 100 | 81 | 89 |
| | Total | 100 | 81 | 89 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above | School | 79 (85) | 64 (70) | 71 (69) |
| | National | 64 (61) | 64 (64) | 60 (61) |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above | School | 35 (50) | 40 (39) | 26 (31) |
| | 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 | N/A | 130 | 130 |

| 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 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| | Girls | 77 | 125 | 127 |
| | Total | 77 | 125 | 127 |
| Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified | School | 59 (63) | 96 (98) | 98 (98) |
| | National | 46.3 (44.6) | 90.7 (90) | 95.7 (95) |

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

| GCSE results | | GCSE point score |
|-------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Average point score per pupil | School | 46 (45) |
| | National | 37.8 (N/a) |

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 | 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 | 53 |

| 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 | 7.7 | 18.7 | 18.0 | 0 | 2.3 | 2 |
| National | 17.7 | 18.1 | 17.9 | 2.7 | 2.8 | 2.8 |

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 | N/A |
| | National | N/A |

| International Baccalaureate | Number | % success rate |
|---|----------|----------------|
| Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied | School | N/A |
| | National | 82.5 |

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 2 |
| Black – African heritage | 1 |
| Black – other | 5 |
| Indian | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 2 |
| White | 802 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 2 |

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 | 13 | 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 – Y13

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 48.7 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 16.7 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 5 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 121 |

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

| | |
|---|-------|
| Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes | 75.0% |
|---|-------|

Average teaching group size: Y7– Y11

| | |
|-------------|------|
| Key Stage 3 | 26.8 |
| Key Stage 4 | 21.8 |

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| Financial year | 1998-99 |
|----------------|---------|

| | £ |
|--|-----------|
| Total income | 1,792,249 |
| Total expenditure | 1,735,914 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2192 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | -18,043 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 38,292 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 814 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 342 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 41 | 53 | 5 | 1 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 50 | 44 | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 36 | 50 | 8 | 1 | 6 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 31 | 54 | 11 | 1 | 3 |
| The teaching is good. | 41 | 52 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 32 | 47 | 17 | 2 | 3 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 54 | 37 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 65 | 31 | 2 | 0 | 1 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 34 | 45 | 14 | 3 | 5 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 47 | 44 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 53 | 41 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 30 | 43 | 15 | 1 | 11 |

Other issues raised by parents

Parents at the parents' meeting and in some letters expressed their praise for the way in which the school welcomes pupils into Year 7 and also those who have joined from other secondary schools. Praise was also given for the way in which the school fosters harmonious relationships, cares for the development of the whole person and eliminates any signs of bullying. Some parents picked out art and music as strengths.