

INSPECTION REPORT

PARK HIGH SCHOOL

Stanmore

LEA area: Harrow

Unique reference number: 102236

Headteacher: Mr. A. R. Barnes

Reporting inspector: Mr. Ross Maden
2793

Dates of inspection: 11th - 13th April 2000

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	12 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Elizabeth Clery
Date of previous inspection:	16 th – 24 th March 1995

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Park High School is a mixed comprehensive educating boys and girls in the age range of 12-16. There are 1135 pupils in the school with more boys than girls in each year group except for Year 9. The school population is stable. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is 11.1 per cent which is below the national average. Over half the pupils have English as an additional language but only 18 are at an early stage of language acquisition. The school is considerably over-subscribed, with most pupils coming from the local area of Stanmore and Kenton. There are 125 pupils on the special needs register which is close to the national average and 29 of these have statements which is also close to the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is slightly above the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Park High School is a very effective school and the number of strengths far outweighs its weaknesses. The school achieves high standards in most areas of its work. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. The behaviour and attendance of most pupils are good. The quality of teaching is consistently good and very good at Key Stage 3 with teachers having high expectations of their pupils. There are very good arrangements to support all pupils and the school has a strong partnership with parents and carers. The school is well led and has clear strategies for raising achievement. The school has made good progress since its previous inspection. It provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- GCSE results are well above the national average.
- Teaching and learning are good; they are very good at Key Stage 3.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and social development are very good.
- Provides high quality pastoral care.
- Offers an excellent range of extra-curricular activities.
- Leadership of the school is very effective, especially in monitoring and evaluating the school's work.

What could be improved

- The use of information technology to support learning by all subjects is weak.
- There is a lack of consistency in the quality of marking.
- Pupils with special educational needs do not make progress as quickly as other pupils in the school because there are some weaknesses in the arrangements made for them.
- Pupils' attainment in modern foreign languages in Key Stage 4 is not as good as in other subjects.
- The school does not comply with legislation in regard to religious education at Key Stage 4, information technology and the provision for a daily act of collective worship.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in March 1995 there have been significant improvements in the already high academic standards. In 1995, 56 per cent of pupils gained five GCSE grades A*-C and this increased to 64 per cent in 1999. Levels of attendance and the low levels of exclusion have been maintained over the same period. In tackling the key issues identified in the last inspection the governors have made good progress. Improvements in management accountability have been made. Improvements have been made in the evaluation of the work of the school. More time has been given to

the teaching of religious education and information technology but further improvements are required. The school has maintained its high standards and standards in religious education have improved. The failure to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils still remains unresolved. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection when there were some shortcomings in 20 per cent of lessons. These weaknesses have been tackled and only 3 per cent of lessons were judged unsatisfactory in this inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	A	B	A	A

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

Results in the 1999 National Curriculum tests for 14 year olds were well above average in mathematics, above average in science and close to the national average in English. Results in mathematics and, to a lesser extent in science, have improved over the past three years. Results in English are now similar to those in 1996. Girls gained better results than boys in all three subjects in 1999 but, on average over the last four years, there were only small differences between boys' and girls' results.

GCSE results were well above the national average in 1999 and have improved in line with the national trend over the last three years. The proportion of pupils gaining five grades A* to C is well above the national average and the proportion gaining five grades A* to G is above average. Boys and girls gain similar results at this stage. Pupils achieve well in GCSE examinations in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Results in 1999 were particularly good in mathematics, science, art, business studies, geography, information technology and physical education. Pupils' results in drama, French, German and history were not as good as in their other subjects. The school sets suitably challenging targets for performance in GCSE examinations which take into account the variation in levels of attainment of the different year groups entering the school.

In work seen during the inspection, pupils' attainment generally reflects that indicated by recent test and examination results. However, in history, most pupils are now achieving appropriate standards in relation to their prior attainment and there is no significant under-achievement. Attainment in modern foreign languages in Key Stage 4 remains below that in other subjects in the school but teaching is now usually good in these subjects and pupils' attainment is improving.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are keen to make progress in lessons and are enthusiastic about much of their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Standards of behaviour are high. Pupils are invariably polite and co-operative in class. Around the school they are orderly and considerate.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils have good relationships with adults and they support one another well in lessons. They are sensitive to the needs of others and willingly accept responsibility.
Attendance	Attendance is in line with the national average. Unauthorised absence is below the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall	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 97 per cent of lessons and was good or better in 76 per cent. Very good teaching was seen in 25 per cent of lessons. The quality of teaching is better at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4. The quality of learning closely matches the quality of teaching. Good and very good teaching are characterised by high expectations, the use of a variety of methods which actively involves pupils in learning, and good use of questioning to develop pupils' thinking and extend their knowledge and understanding. Lessons are well planned and pupils, particularly the average and higher attainers, are challenged appropriately. Effective use is made of whole class teaching and well organised group work.

In response to this good teaching pupils rise to the challenges presented by thinking hard, concentrating on tasks and demonstrating good skills in independent learning. Overall pupils make good gains in skills, knowledge and understanding. Good teaching of literacy skills ensures that pupils are able to respond to the reading and writing demands made by subjects across the curriculum. Teaching of numeracy skills is sound. There is insufficient use made of information technology to support learning across the curriculum. Appropriate homework is set to consolidate and extend knowledge and understanding. Marking is satisfactory overall but there is a lack of consistency in the quality of marking by teachers within subjects and across the school.

Teaching is consistently good in art, geography, history, mathematics, and music. In the small percentage of unsatisfactory lessons lack of challenge or poor class management were evident.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum at Key Stage 3 but there are some weaknesses at Key Stage 4. Not all pupils are receiving their full National Curriculum entitlement to information technology and at Key Stage 4 the amount of time for religious education is insufficient. Extra-curricular provision is excellent and the take-up by pupils very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is satisfactory overall but there are some weaknesses. In particular, the targets set for these pupils are not sufficiently precise.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	These pupils make satisfactory progress. There is a well-planned programme to support those pupils at the early stages of learning English. Teaching is supportive but assessment of these pupils' progress requires further development.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Members of staff and pupils form a caring, multi-cultural community. Opportunities for pupils' social development are excellent.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school shows a high level of care for its pupils and has very good support procedures in place. Child protection procedures are very good. The school provides a secure and safe environment and makes great efforts to care for its pupils through well-defined support procedures.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and his senior staff are very good. They provide the school with a clear vision for improvements and are well-supported by good pastoral and curriculum management.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are effective in fulfilling their responsibilities. However, the school fails to comply with requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship for all pupils, to ensure that all subjects use information technology to support learning and to provide sufficient time at Key Stage 4 for religious education to meet the requirements of the 'agreed syllabus'.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school are very good. In these tasks the school is well supported by the local education authority.
The strategic use of resources	The effective school development plan provides a clear direction for future improvements, but there has been a weakness in the lack of a long-term plan to support developments in information technology. In the main the school applies the principles of best value in its management and use of resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are making good progress • The quality of teaching is good • The school expects children to work hard • The school is well led and managed • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children getting the right amount of homework • Parents working more closely with the school

The parents' meeting with the inspectors was well attended and there was a good response rate to the parents' questionnaire. There is a very high degree of parental satisfaction with the aspects of the school that pleases parents most. The inspection findings fully support the very positive views of the parents. Inspectors judged that the homework set is relevant and effective, although marking is at times inconsistent. A minority of parents feel that the school does not work closely enough with parents but there is no evidence to support this. The school makes great efforts to strengthen links with parents that includes producing regular, high quality newsletters. Parents and teachers sign the 'Contact Book' and this is an effective means of communicating with parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

GCSE results are well above the national average

1. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment which are slightly above the national average. After two years in the school, they gain results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 which are above national figures. At this stage, pupils' achievement is rather better than might be expected. However, more importantly, pupils have laid a secure foundation of skills, knowledge and understanding on which to build when they move into Key Stage 4. During Years 10 and 11 pupils make good progress and achieve GCSE examination results which are significantly better than expected in relation to their attainment on entry to the school.

2. The average points score which pupils achieve in GCSE examinations is well above both the national average and the average for similar schools. The proportion of pupils gaining five grades A* to C is well above both the national average and the average for schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds. The proportion of pupils gaining five grades A* to G is above the national average and average when compared with similar schools. Hence, although the achievement of all pupils is good, the achievement of lower attaining pupils is not quite as good as that of middle and higher attainers.

3. In individual subjects, GCSE results in 1999 were particularly good in mathematics, science, art, business studies, geography, information technology and physical education. Results were not as good in drama, French, German and history. In history there are variations from year to year in the overall attainment of the group, depending on the aptitude and prior attainment of those pupils choosing to study this optional subject. In the last few years, relatively few higher attaining pupils have chosen to study history. Pupils in the current Key Stage 4 are achieving standards in history which are satisfactory in relation to their individual attainment at the end of Key Stage 3. Inspection findings confirm that there is under-achievement in modern foreign languages in Key Stage 4.

4. Boys and girls make similar progress through both Key Stages 3 and 4 and there are no significant differences in the GCSE results which they achieve. In lessons and in pupils' written work, there is little variation in the progress of pupils from different ethnic groups. However, pupils with an Asian background achieve better GCSE results than other groups of pupils in the school. There are some variations between subjects in the attainment of the highest attaining pupils; the proportions of pupils gaining grade A* are highest in mathematics, science, art and geography.

5. The major factors influencing pupils' achievement are the good quality teaching they receive, their own very positive attitudes to learning and the range of effective learning skills which they use. In particular, the school provides pupils with careful and well targeted preparation for examinations. For example, in music, pupils are introduced to imaginative and skilful techniques for dealing with aural examinations. There is plenty of help with revision available to pupils both formally in lessons, and in revision clubs and also informally when teachers are readily available to overcome difficulties and provide reassurance.

6. Most pupils have a range of good learning skills which enable them to make good progress and eventually achieve better examination results than might be expected. Pupils have particularly good listening skills so that they learn quickly and effectively in lessons

and maintain high levels of concentration in assemblies. Most pupils are confident speakers and volunteer extended answers to teachers' questions. Pupils have good reading skills; they spend time in the library and are enthusiastic about the books they read. In mathematics and science, pupils demonstrate good investigative skills. For example, in a mathematics investigation, higher attaining pupils worked quickly and perceptively to find the shape which would have the largest area for a particular perimeter. Pupils' skills in working independently are particularly well developed in geography where GCSE coursework is of a very high standard.

Teaching and learning are good; they are very good at Key Stage 3

7. At the time of the previous inspection 20 per cent of lessons were judged to have some shortcomings. In this inspection only 3 per cent of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory and therefore there has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching and learning is now a strength of the school, because of the consistency of good teaching across the school. There has been a reduction in the number of unsatisfactory lessons; over half the lessons seen were judged as good or better and a quarter of all lessons seen were judged to be excellent or very good. Provision for English, mathematics and science are good.

8. The characteristics of very good teaching include the high level of challenge in the tasks set for pupils. In many lessons, especially at Key Stage 3, pupils are fully challenged, especially average and higher attaining pupils. The level of questioning is rigorous, pupils are made to think and enjoy the challenge. For example, in a Year 9 mathematics lesson pupils were not daunted by the difficulties in the questions posed, or put off by errors they made. They smiled and put things right. In a Year 10 English lesson, very challenging tasks were set when pupils in groups were asked to consider quotations from fairy tales.

9. There is a very brisk pace to the best lessons and a good variety of tasks planned by the teachers. Teachers often take every opportunity to test pupils' understanding to ensure that they understood their work. This was especially evident in some Year 11 revision lessons when more than one teacher skilfully tested pupils' understanding of work they had previously studied. In Year 11 music lessons there was very good use of relating pupils' knowledge and skills to examination techniques.

10. In most lessons the quality of relationships between teachers and their pupils is very good. It is clear that teachers respect their pupils and in turn pupils demonstrate respect for their teachers. There is a good use of praise - in one geography lesson the teacher praised pupils for their behaviour in a previous lesson and said he would be writing to all their parents. It is the very good quality of relationships which allows teachers to concentrate on teaching and learning with little time having to be spent on managing pupils' behaviour.

11. One reason why learning is good, especially at Key Stage 3, is that pupils listen carefully and have the confidence to answer questions orally. They are not embarrassed if they give the wrong answer and are willing to ask questions and volunteer opinions when given these opportunities. Pupils make good progress in their lessons because they concentrate on tasks and demonstrate good skills in independent learning. Across all subjects pupils are given good opportunities for independent learning and they respond positively to these challenges.

12. Teachers make appropriate use of homework to support learning with most tasks set providing challenge. Homework is carefully monitored by form tutors checking pupils' contact books.

13. Teachers are rigorous in the assessment of pupils' work. Marking is often supportive but, while there is good practice by some teachers in indicating clearly what pupils need to do to improve their work, this is not consistently applied by all teachers. Teachers' planning of lessons is very good. There is a good use, especially at Key Stage 3, of varied activities to maintain the brisk pace to most lessons. Less well developed is the use by many teachers of information technology to support learning.

Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are all very good

14. Pupils' attitudes towards their learning are very good. They come to school to learn and they are intolerant of pupils who misbehave. There is no evidence of an 'anti-swot' culture within lessons. Pupils take a great pride in doing well and are generous in their praise for the achievements of others. They work well in groups, for example in a Year 10 business studies lesson, pupils without fuss organised the allocation of tasks and spread responsibility evenly amongst themselves.

15. Pupils are very positive about their school. They believe they attend a very good school and that they are well served by the teaching and non-teaching staff. Pupils are treated with respect by adults and they are given numerous opportunities to take responsibility within the school. They are mature and confident and also warm and welcoming towards visitors.

16. Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good. In lessons it is very rare that teachers have to spend time managing pupils' behaviour. In the communal areas and in corridors pupils act maturely. They respond without fuss to the sensitive supervision provided by prefects and staff. At lunchtime they queue patiently to be served and eat their food in the dining hall with the minimum of fuss.

17. Pupils are confident that bullying is not tolerated within the school. If pupils have any concerns about bullying they have confidence in approaching either members of staff or the trained peer group counsellors. A striking feature of the school is the way pupils respect the values, beliefs and faiths of other pupils leading to considerable racial harmony. For example, a pupil in pain from bruised ribs was comforted by other pupils. There was genuine concern for his welfare and adult assistance was quickly sought.

18. The school provides very many opportunities for pupils to demonstrate initiative and personal responsibility. Pupils respond positively to these many initiatives. Elected representatives from each year group form the school committee and the findings from the committee do influence school decisions. The wide range of extra-curricular activities provide further opportunities for pupils' personal development. Senior pupils have the opportunity to become prefects. Older pupils are trained to help younger pupils. For example, they come in early in September to help new Year 8 pupils settle and work with them during the year.

19. The aims of the school are explicit: 'we encourage our pupils to be enthusiastic about learning and positive about the future; to have high self-esteem and be confident and successful in what they do; to have understanding and respect for others; to have the ability and desire to further their own development and contribute to the society in which we live.' These aims are fully realised at Park High School.

Provides high quality pastoral care

20. The detailed staff handbook provides very good guidance for all teachers on issues of pastoral support and guidance. In particular the personal effectiveness group is effective in supporting those pupils who for a variety of reasons are not fulfilling their potential in school. Pupils may, for example, find decision-making a problem, experience a lack of confidence or find forming relationships difficult. Teachers who become part of the group are supported so that they can develop their knowledge and understanding of the needs of the pupils. This strategy is regarded as positive by both pupils and staff. For example, a Year 10 pupil asked to be put on report as he felt his behaviour was slipping. This was not an unusual occurrence as pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves.

21. In school committee meetings, pupils have discussed the need for greater support for those pupils who are experiencing difficulties in relation to bullying. The school committee suggested that some of these problems could be addressed with the help of their peers. Peer supporters are carefully selected and follow a detailed training programme. Pupils commented very positively about the value they placed on having access to peer supporters.

22. In promoting and monitoring good behaviour, all staff are expected to treat pupils with respect. A strength of the school is that good relationships with pupils are not confined to teaching staff. All members of the school community, including non-teaching staff, work well together as a team to provide a positive ethos. Considerable efforts are made to provide pupils with opportunities to take responsibilities within the school. There is a rigorous selection procedure to become prefects. There are currently 150 prefects and the post is open to all who merit it. Senior prefects need to undergo an interview and write down the reasons why they should undertake this role. Pupils take these responsibilities seriously and in a mature way. One pupil with behaviour problems wanted to become a prefect so he was given the role of 'sub-prefect' and was given several responsible jobs to do. He responded positively to these opportunities. There is a very positive ethos within the school and providing so many pupils with responsibilities is a very effective strategy for promoting good behaviour.

23. The heads of year have a central role in ensuring the effectiveness of pastoral and academic monitoring. They have all been trained in child protection issues and follow the local education authority's guidelines, although the governing body has yet to formally adopt these procedures. Heads of year identify pupils with erratic attendance records and those pupils whose attendance is falling and they work well with the education social worker. They try for early intervention and to spot potential disaffection before it happens.

Offers an excellent range of extra-curricular activities

24. The school provides a very wide range of clubs, societies, activities and events. There are particular strengths in music, sports and drama. What makes this a particular strength of the school is the large number of pupils who support these activities. The number of pupils who stay on after school each evening is very high. It is not only the formal extra-curricular activities which pupils support well. Many pupils are to be found in

the library at break, lunchtime and after school. Many Year 11 pupils and their teachers stay on after school to complete GCSE coursework. Pupils are very appreciative of the time given voluntarily by teachers.

25. There is significant curriculum support provided especially for Year 11 pupils. Many study in Club 11 which is an opportunity to revise for examinations in an informal manner. This is supplemented by opportunities to revise during holiday periods. Business partners also work with senior pupils on issues of time and stress management.

26. There are daily arrangements for pupils to meet with the peer support group. Form captains meet regularly as do members of the school committee. Opportunities are provided for pupils to go ice skating and bowling in the evenings. Many pupils take part in the annual school play, the various concerts and musical performances, and there is a high level of participation in out-of-school team events.

27. There are other opportunities to widen pupils' experiences such as the Year 8 Park High project supported by national companies. A Year 9 project focuses on art and the environment. Year 10 pupils undertake work experience and there are many trips and visits to places of interest both locally and abroad.

The leadership of the school, especially in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school

28. The school benefits from strong and purposeful leadership. The headteacher, ably supported by his two deputy headteachers, provides the school with a clear vision of sustained developments. These three have created a very positive climate for school improvement and are aware of the areas that need to be tackled.

29. There is a confidence to regularly review the way the school is led and managed at all levels. For example, a new senior management team has been formed following a restructuring exercise. This involved the appointment of a new senior support member of staff and as a result the management of finances and the administration of the school is very efficient. There is a clear strategy to involve all staff in management processes, particularly in encouraging high achievement and good relationships.

30. Critical reflection is routine and based on very good formal and informal communications. The headteacher describes the school as a very open school where staff and pupils speak their minds. Pupils feel very comfortable in approaching the headteacher and other senior staff if they have any concerns.

31. There is extensive monitoring of the school's performance which includes detailed analysis of Key Stage 3 National Curriculum assessment data, GCSE data and, in conjunction with the local education authority, detailed analysis of value added at both key stages. Attendance, exclusions, bullying and thefts are all carefully monitored.

32. Evaluation of the school's work was a weakness during the previous inspection. Now it is a strength. There are detailed and high quality annual departmental reviews. Realistic evaluations have been carried out to measure progress against the department priorities related to the school development plan. These findings are used to set targets for the next year and details of the evaluations are, as a matter of course, reported fully to the governing body. In turn the governing body receives detailed information on the evaluation of the work of the school and governors are confident in their knowledge about the strengths and weaknesses.

33. In school research is a particular strength. A considerable amount of pupil tracking is conducted by heads of year and by research groups. The findings from these research groups are reported back to the whole school and developments for the future are clearly based on well researched findings. For example, the work of developing effective literacy strategies was based on the detailed research by a group of teachers. Similarly the equal opportunities policy and strategies were based on the evaluation of the school's work in this area.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The use of information technology to support learning by all subjects is weak

34. Most pupils have at least satisfactory and often good levels of capability in using information technology for presenting their work in many subjects. Surveys within the school indicate that a very high proportion of pupils have access to computers and the Internet at home. Opportunities are also provided at lunchtimes and after school for pupils to have access to the school's computer facilities. Several pupils indicated that they preferred to use computers at home in preference to the school's equipment on the grounds that many of the school machines are outdated. Most pupils enjoy using computers, especially for presenting work. The ratio of pupils to computers is 14:1 which is much higher than the national average and indicates a relative shortage of computer equipment in the school.

35. The school makes adequate provision for pupils to develop their information technology skills in timetabled lessons during Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 4 many pupils follow the popular option course in business and information studies when their information technology skills are further developed. The popularity of this course restricts access by other departments to use information technology to support learning. Some departments have their own information technology resources particularly design and technology, art and music. However the contribution from other subjects is a weakness. There is little evidence to show that many departments actively seek to use information technology to support learning within their departments or that all departments make a contribution to developing pupils' capabilities in information technology. The limited use made by departments is restricted to pupils practising fairly low level word processing skills.

There is a lack of consistency in the quality of marking

36. Most teachers mark pupils work regularly and with care. The school's policy as outlined in the staff handbook provides appropriate principles for assessment. However a key principle in the school's policy is 'to enable staff, parents and students to work together to maximise opportunities for individual students progress and achieve as much as they can.' It is in this aspect of the work of the school where there is a lack of consistency both within departments and across the school. There are some very good examples of marking where teachers clearly indicate what pupils need to do to improve their work. For example, 'what is missing from this piece of work to gain the highest mark is....'. Too often a pupil receives a piece of work marked with a satisfactory grade accompanied by the words 'well done' or 'good effort' and there is no indication to the pupil what he or she has to do to improve the work.

Pupils with special educational needs do not make progress as quickly as other pupils in the school because there are some weaknesses in the arrangements made for them

37. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils with special educational needs and they are enabled to make satisfactory progress. However, most pupils in the school make good, rather than satisfactory, progress in relation to their prior attainment and so there is scope for improvement in the rate of progress made by pupils with special educational needs.

38. Pupils with special educational needs are taught in mixed ability groups for most subjects. Teachers are aware of the particular needs of these pupils and generally provide appropriate learning materials in order to make the lesson activities relevant and accessible. In some lessons, pupils receive additional support from learning support teachers or assistants. Where this support is provided, it is sensitive and effective. However, in other lessons, there is no additional support and, although teachers try hard to provide the required support, it is often, particularly in English and history, not enough to ensure that pupils with special educational needs make the best possible progress.

39. There is a programme of individual learning for pupils who have particular difficulties with literacy. This involves pupils being withdrawn from their lessons for short periods to work individually using the computers in the learning support department. The department plans these arrangements carefully to minimise the disruption to learning in the various subjects from which pupils are withdrawn. Pupils concentrate well in these lessons and make good progress.

40. Pupils who are on stages two to five of the register of pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans to guide their work. These plans give a satisfactory indication of the difficulties which pupils experience and list some targets for improvement. These targets are not sufficiently precise and cannot be used effectively to monitor and measure pupils' progress. The subject departments contribute to the identification of pupils' needs and report on the progress which pupils make. However, there are no arrangements for them to contribute targets to the individual education plans in order to provide a sharp focus on exactly what individual pupils need to achieve next.

41. The proportion of pupils gaining five grades A* to G in GCSE examinations is average compared with similar schools. This represents satisfactory achievement. However the achievement in this respect is not as good in comparison with similar schools as the achievement at grades A* to C which relates to higher attaining pupils. Several pupils gain one grade A* to G but not five such grades and this is an area where further improvement is possible. The school does not yet make enough use of the assessment information it has on the group of pupils with special educational needs to determine appropriate targets for entry levels and examination success for these pupils in each subject.

Pupils' attainment in modern foreign languages in Key Stage 4 is not as good as it is in other subjects

42. Attainment in modern foreign languages has been below that in other subjects in the school in recent years, mainly as a result of staffing difficulties in the department.

43. Over the last few years there have been gradual, significant improvements in the staffing situation and the school has also taken other appropriate steps to improve pupils' attainment in languages. For example, the curriculum has been adjusted so that pupils now study only one modern foreign language in the available timetable allocation in Year 9. This provides pupils with a more secure basis of knowledge and understanding from which to study the language in Key Stage 4. Pupils in the current Year 9 who wish to study a second language may do so in additional lessons, outside the normal timetable. The department has also adjusted its arrangements for grouping pupils in Key Stage 4 and pupils are now taught, where possible, in groups of broadly similar ability. The improvements in staffing have resulted in teaching in modern foreign languages which is now usually good. These changes have been successful in gradually raising pupils' attainment and producing improvements in their GCSE results. In 1999 the proportions of pupils gaining grades A* to C in modern languages were around the national average in French and Spanish, though still well below average in German.

44. In spite of these improvements, there remains significant under-achievement for pupils in Key Stage 4. Pupils' examination results are not as good as their results in other subjects. There are weaknesses in some pupils' knowledge of basic vocabulary which indicate that they have not made secure progress in earlier years. Some pupils still express concern about their learning in languages. The department is not yet successful in establishing confidence in, and positive attitudes towards, modern foreign languages among all pupils.

Compliance with legislation in regard to religious education, information technology and the provision for a daily act of collective worship

45. There is insufficient time for religious education at Key Stage 4 for the school to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The National Curriculum requirements for all subjects, except physical education, to use information technology to support teaching and learning are not being met.

46. The quality of school assemblies is good. Assemblies make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social developments. The school has a detailed policy to celebrate religious festivals and recognises that there is a significant number of pupils from different faiths within the school. Many of these religious festivals are celebrated in school, in particular the Chinese New Year, Christmas, Divali, Id al-Fitr and Rosh Hashana. Parents appreciate the recognition of these festivals not only in school but also in the regular newsletters. However, not all pupils attend assemblies on a daily basis and there is no provision for pupils to receive a daily act of collective worship either within tutor groups or in assemblies.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. In order to raise standards even higher, the governors and headteacher should:

- (1) Ensure that all subjects use information technology to support learning by:
 - improving the access for pupils to use up-to-date information and communication technology equipment;
 - identifying within schemes of work the opportunities for subjects to use information technology to support teaching and learning and to make a contribution towards the development of pupils' information technology capabilities.(Paragraphs: 34, 35)
- (2) Improve the consistency in the quality of marking by:
 - ensuring that all teachers indicate clearly to pupils how their work can be improved.(Paragraph: 36)
- (3) Improve the arrangements for pupils with special educational needs by:
 - ensuring that teachers contribute specific subject targets to individual education plans;
 - using assessment information to determine appropriate targets for entry levels and examination success at Key Stage 4;
 - ensuring that pupils with special educational needs receive sufficient support in lessons where currently no additional support is provided.(Paragraphs: 37-41)
- (4) Raise standards in modern foreign languages by:
 - maintaining and building on recent improvements in the quality of teaching;
 - consolidating pupils' knowledge of basic vocabulary;
 - improving pupils' confidence and developing positive attitudes towards modern foreign languages among all pupils.(Paragraphs: 42-44)
- (5) Ensure compliance with legislation by:
 - ensuring that all pupils receive their full National Curriculum entitlement to information technology;
 - meeting the requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship
 - ensuring pupils receive sufficient time for religious education at Key Stage 4 to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.(Paragraphs: 45-46)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	61
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	23	51	21	3	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	Y8 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1135
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	126

Special educational needs	Y8 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	29
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	125

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	627

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.7
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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	164	122	286

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	109	117	105
	Girls	104	95	85
	Total	213	212	190
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	75 (67)	75 (72)	66 (59)
	National	63 (56)	62 (59)	55 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	19 (26)	52 (42)	22 (27)
	National	28 (22)	38 (36)	23 (29)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	122	92	102
	Girls	111	73	90
	Total	233	165	192
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	81 (86)	58 (64)	67 (58)
	National	64 (60)	64 (64)	60 (61)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	39 (53)	37 (36)	29 (23)
	National	31 (28)	37 (37)	28 (29)

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	150	123	273

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	89	140	148
	Girls	86	118	122
	Total	175	258	270
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	64 (56)	95 (93)	99 (96)
	National	46 (46)	90 (87)	95 (93)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	45 (42)
	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	18 66.7
	National	41.4 (38.5)

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	25
Black – African heritage	22
Black – other	27
Indian	523
Pakistani	17
Bangladeshi	6
Chinese	10
White	113
Any other minority ethnic group	82

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	6	0
Black – African heritage	2	0
Black – other	3	0
Indian	7	0
Pakistani	0	1
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	11	2
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: Y8 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	64.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y8 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	431

Deployment of teachers: Y8 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.8
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Average teaching group size: Y8 – Y11

Key Stage 2	25.9
Key Stage 3	22.6

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	3 017 204
Total expenditure	3 013 950
Expenditure per pupil	2 655
Balance brought forward from previous year	15 817
Balance carried forward to next year	19 071

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1135
Number of questionnaires returned	179

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	47	9	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	57	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	55	6	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	52	11	3	2
The teaching is good.	34	59	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	53	8	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	45	6	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	33	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	32	56	10	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	38	55	2	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	53	4	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	49	5	1	7