

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Richard Lander School**

Truro

LEA area: Cornwall

Unique reference number: 112055

Headteacher: Mr. Trevor Coldman

Reporting inspector: Michael Chapman

Dates of inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> March 2000

Inspection number: 185630

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Tresawls Road Truro Cornwall
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J N Partington
Date of previous inspection:	October 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive with 1173 pupils. It has technology college status. There are 240 pupils on the register of special needs, which is broadly in line with the national average, but the proportion of pupils with statements is above the national average. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school covers the full range and is broadly average. There are few pupils from minority ethnic groups.

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

This is a very good school, with leadership of high quality. Teachers provide good quality opportunities for learning in the classrooms and in many extra-curricular opportunities. The working relationships are very good. Pupils are enthusiastic and skilled learners who are keen to make progress. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Across the ability range, the achievement of pupils is above average, and this results in above average standards at GCSE Level.
- There is notable achievement by pupils of all abilities in many curriculum areas, in particular science, music, art, drama and English.
- Teaching is of a very good standard overall, with some outstanding practice.
- The headteacher provides highly effective leadership, and the management team shows a collective determination to further school improvement.
- There is a strong, powerful ethos for learning, underpinned by very positive and supportive relationships between teachers and pupils. Pupils are given many opportunities to achieve, and their success is celebrated by all.
- The personal development of the pupils is well promoted through rich curricular provision and extra-curricular activities.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

- Monitoring of teaching quality is not yet systematic and leads to some inconsistencies of practice.
- The information and communication technology provision needs to generate further improvement in standards and models of learning in the different subject areas.
- Marking is inconsistent and in some cases does not give sufficient pointers for improvement.
- The use of tutorial time.
- Communications with parents.

*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 1995. All the key issues in the report of that inspection have been effectively dealt with. There have been clear improvements since then in many aspects of the school's work. Most notably, the quality of teaching has substantially improved, and there has been continued improvement in the standards achieved by pupils across most subjects. For example, a significant drop in performance in English at Key Stage 3 has been identified, and achievement here is now very good.

The school's commitment to continued improvement is shown in its approach to self-evaluation; its use of the Advanced Skills Teacher initiative to promote new and more varied styles of teaching and learning; its setting of targets for pupils' performance; and its commitment to the technology school initiative.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 year olds based on GCSE examination results.

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

<b>Key</b>	
<i>well above average</i>	<i>A</i>
<i>above average</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>average</i>	<i>C</i>
<i>below average</i>	<i>D</i>
<i>well below average</i>	<i>E</i>

Pupils arrive at the school with standards which are broadly average, and by the time they leave they attain standards that are above average. The improvement is most notable in the later years of schooling. Key Stage 3 results in mathematics and science are above average, but the most recent English results were below average. However, English standards observed by the inspection team were now above average in this age group. Results in public examinations are improving, and the school is setting appropriate targets for individuals and for the school as a whole. There is good achievement across the ability range in most subjects, and particularly so in science, English, art, music and drama.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have exceptionally positive attitudes to the school and to learning in general. These are a consequence of the very good teaching, and the productive relationships between teachers and pupils.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of pupils is very good. The school places trust in its pupils, and they respond with respect for the teachers and the school as a whole.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils and parents attest to the school's ability to develop pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. Pupils of all abilities are given opportunities to succeed. They are given responsibility and many good opportunities for personal development.
Attendance	Attendance is above average.

Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning, coupled with their good learning skills and supportive relationships with their teachers and peers, are key factors in the good progress they make in lessons.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

There is strong and effective teaching throughout the school. Ninety-eight per cent of lessons were of satisfactory or better quality, with only 2 per cent unsatisfactory. Forty-two per cent of lessons were very good or outstanding, and 71 per cent of lessons were good or better.

Care is taken to meet the differing needs of individual pupils, and tasks are well matched to previous attainment. Particularly good lessons were observed in science, English, music and art. Notable strengths were the high expectations of behaviour and attainment for all levels of ability, and the application of up-to-date subject knowledge. The inquisitive approach of pupils was encouraged and fostered by many teachers. In some subject areas the range of teaching styles was too narrow, although even here the enthusiasm of the pupils for learning was apparent.

The methods of the literacy project are more apparent than is the case with the numeracy project. However, pupils' literacy and numeracy are promoted well through the curriculum.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A particular strength is the richness of the curriculum, a consequence of careful planning supplemented by a wide range of extra-curricular provision.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision and progress are very good. All pupils are encouraged to seek support where needed, and provision for pupils with particular needs is well focused and carefully documented in their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Appropriate provision is made for the few pupils with English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision is made in the opportunities for pupils to take on responsibility, the abundance of cultural opportunities, and the spiritual aspects of many lessons. Clear moral values are promoted through the structure of relationships in the school and the planned programme of lessons and assemblies.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The quality of care is very good. There is careful monitoring of progress, both academic and personal.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, and at Key Stage 4 it provides appropriate choice as well as ensuring that all pupils follow a broad core. The curriculum is greatly enriched by the very good range of extra-curricular activities, including trips, visiting groups, clubs and revision groups. The school maintains very good links with its feeder primary schools, and this promotes a smooth transition for pupils.

The school's information and communication technology provision has been substantially improved as a result of its technology school status, but further work is needed to ensure that the use of information and communication technology is maximised across all areas of the curriculum.

The school has a family atmosphere in which pupils are unafraid to raise concerns, and there is strong trust in teachers.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led. There is a strong sense of common purpose amongst the senior management team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The school has a highly effective governing body which is keenly interested and committed to the continuing improvement of the school. Good use is made of their expertise.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is becoming increasingly confident in self evaluation, particularly as a result of the gaining of technology school status. Further work is needed to tie curriculum priorities into clearly identified improvements for pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used effectively and strategically, and very good use is made of the grounds and the wider locality to promote learning. The senior management team is large for the size of the school but it has a strong collective impact. The substantial resourcing of information and communication technology is leading to demonstrable improvements in pupils' learning, but all aspects of this investment require close monitoring.

The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, who is given good support by his senior staff and governors. The school has clear educational objectives and uses all the resources available to it to achieve these objectives. Both the school and governors are well aware of the principles of best value and are applying them in all areas of the school's work.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• The children make good progress in their learning, and the teaching is good.</li> <li>• The children enjoy school.</li> <li>• There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• The school helps their children to become mature and responsible adults.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications with the school.</li> <li>• The partnership with parents.</li> <li>• The quantity of homework.</li> <li>• The welcome parents receive when visiting.</li> </ul>

Evidence gathered during the inspection supports the very positive views of most of the parents. This is a school where there are very close relationships between pupils and teachers, and as a result it is rarely necessary to involve parents in solving any difficulties that arise. This can give rise to parents feeling that they are excluded from playing an active part in the life of the school, or that the school is over-defensive. They wish to have a greater role in the learning partnership, and the school must look at ways to ensure that this happens. Inspectors found that homework was set regularly and was used to supplement the work done in the classroom. Inspectors found the school to have a very welcoming atmosphere, but there is clearly a need to ensure that parents always feel warmly welcomed.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**Across the ability range the achievement of pupils is above average and results in above average standards at GCSE Level. There is notable achievement in many curriculum areas, in particular science, English, music, art and drama.**

1. Pupils do well at Richard Lander School. The ability range of pupils when they start at the school is average, with the proportion of high attainers being roughly matched to that of low attainers. By the time pupils leave the school the achievement of high, middle, and low attainers is above average.

2. High attainers in English are working towards A/A\* grades and writing some highly perceptive texts. English results at Key Stage 3 were well below the performance of the rest of the school last year, but this was not borne out in the team's observations. Particularly striking work by Year 9 pupils was observed. For example, a scrutiny of the work of higher attaining pupils showed a number of examples of pupils writing at GCSE grade B/C Level. In work on Steinbeck's 'The Pearl', for example, one pupil wrote, 'To them the pearl was evil, but the pearl was not evil, it reflected the other man's evil and greed.' The pupil concludes 'The pearl acts as a catalyst... It shows that it doesn't matter how simple your life is and how well the community get on with each other, there will still be conflict over someone having something better than them.' Further observation of work of middle and lower attainers in English confirmed that standards in English at the end of Key Stage 3 are now above average, with examples of lower attainers achieving standards which are average and above. Intervention by the senior management in this department has paid dividends in terms of improved pupil performance.

3. Achievement in science is particularly noteworthy, with consistently good results at Key Stage 3 and GCSE. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well. For example, pupils in a top Year 10 science group made rapid progress in their lesson. They demonstrated high attainment in their very good understanding of osmosis and diffusion in the transport of water in plants, and in their ability to give a detailed account of leaf structure and function. Similarly, very good achievement is evident in the work of lower attaining pupils in Year 11. Their work is of a good standard, and shows understanding of some quite difficult concepts. Examples of these are the half-life of radioactive elements, the use of isotopes as tracers, and genetic mutation and its role in evolution. There is careful collective planning by the department and a consistency of approach which provides a wide range of interesting and challenging activities, underpinned by an investigational approach. The teaching is of very good quality overall, and teachers take care to make the work relevant. There are high expectations of performance, and learning takes place at a rapid pace. An effective programme of regular testing is used to monitor and promote pupils' progress, and this is appreciated by parents.

4. Achievement in music is high, both in performance and in work in class. Parents and pupils regard the musical performance with pride, and choral performances seen during the week were of a high standard. The achievement is a direct result of the teaching input. For

example, in a Year 9 session on melody, the teacher's tremendous subject knowledge and love of the subject led to high achievement. The teacher had the rapt attention of his class throughout in work involving complex sequences and difficult rhythms. There was a clear summation, and the pupils kept a record of their achievements.

5. In art, the achievement of the pupils is evident on the walls, around the school corridors, outside the school, in the art room, and in the pupils' work. Great use is made of three-dimensional work, and there are many excellent displays of pupils' work and that of pupils from contributory schools. A very wide range of materials and techniques is in evidence. The work in art is driven by an appreciation of the local environment, and by a belief in the capability of all pupils and the ability of the teachers to relate the work to the visual environment of Cornwall, as well as to make good use of art from different cultures.

6. Good standards in drama were observed amongst Year 9 pupils, who were developing a role-play based on Macbeth. They were able to evaluate critically their roles and select and identify the particular strengths of the performance. As in many classes observed in the school, the pupils applied themselves extremely well, even without constant supervision from the teacher.

7. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs is good because the teaching is clearly matched to ability. Pupils know their targets. Teachers take trouble over their marking, making many positive comments, and the setting of tasks is very well informed. All teachers can access the special educational needs register when needed, using the computer network. Teachers are careful to match work to prior attainment, and pupils' progress is further aided by the good quality support from learning support assistants.

**Teaching is of a very good standard overall, with some outstanding practice.**

8. The teaching observed during the inspection was of a very good standard overall. Of the 45 lessons observed, all but one were satisfactory or better, with almost three quarters being good or better. Of the latter, a third of lessons were judged very good, and a fifth were outstanding. Outstanding teaching was observed in English, science, and music. Particular features of the good teaching are a sense of joy and fun; active, committed teaching; challenging questioning based on good up-to-date subject knowledge; and excellent relationships with the pupils. Pupils were clear as to what was expected of them, and of what they could expect in terms of learning gains.

9. The overwhelming impression given in lessons is that learning is an enjoyable, even joyous, experience from which all pupils can derive a sense of achievement. Joy is particularly a feature of the work in art and music. In art, a highly stimulating environment is provided, and there is very wide range of extremely imaginative work in progress. The teaching is very active, with careful attention given to refining, explaining, demonstrating and questioning.

10. This active approach was a feature of many lessons. For example, Year 7 pupils were encouraged to develop their confidence in mathematics by demonstrating solutions to the rest of the class, answering probing oral questions, and being challenged to consider different methods. At the end of the lesson all pupils felt a sense of achievement, as a result of the

effective use of direct teaching and a clear summary which picked out what had been learnt. Similarly, in a Year 9 science session on forces, the teacher deployed a range of different teaching strategies to encourage pupils to think the problem through and to hypothesise.

11. The impact of commitment was shown in an outstanding Year 9 science session, where the teacher showed tremendous energy and enthusiasm. It was made clear that there was no time to lose and pupils responded with alacrity. The careful sequence of interesting activities had time-targets, and pupils were encouraged to answer in detail and write in their own words. They were trusted, and they responded to that trust by higher levels of application.

12. A sense of fun featured in many lessons, for example in the humour employed in music lessons, and a lovely Year 9 German session, where the teacher discussed the age of pupils. There was much fun and much learning when pupils guessed the ages of the teacher and support assistants, in German naturally, and pupils used numbers confidently and liberally.

13. Very good subject expertise is a strength across the school. For example, in an excellent Year 11 English literature lesson it enabled the teacher to give really useful guidance and clear and interesting explanations. Another example was a very good drama lesson, where the teacher gave very clear explanations which promoted good achievement. In a Year 11 GCSE sports studies theory session, very good subject knowledge enabled the teacher to handle all the pupils' responses on fitness and to ask probing and challenging questions of them. Clear and effective questioning is a strength of the good teaching. For example in a Year 9 English lower set the teacher combined good quality questioning with a demonstration of the use of tone which helped pupils to recognise the motives of the characters in Macbeth. This led to good gains in understanding paradox and the desire for power.

14. The very good relationships are a great strength which runs through all aspects of the work of the school. For example, in a Year 10 geography session on tourism such relationships led to pupils persevering in their work. The teacher enthused the pupils with very good specialist knowledge and accurate, current information which pushed the pupils' learning forward. While teachers hold high expectations of behaviour, they are able to maintain relaxed and friendly relationships with pupils. Similarly, pupils have clear expectations of what will be achieved in terms of learning, a feature which is well supported by the teachers' effective assessment of the pupils' gains in learning.

15. In most lessons, pupils are given some responsibility for their own learning and are encouraged to develop a range of learning skills. For example, in a Year 9 science lesson, pupils were given responsibility for marking their own answers in a short test, which meant that maximum use was made of the time available. Learning was very effective in a Year 8 lesson where pupils were developing a design brief to make wind socks. This was because pupils were developing their creative skills and were not confined to doggedly following the teachers' work. They experimented with different designs with enthusiasm, and by the end of the lesson were keen to show off their designs.

16. In a Year 10 lower set working on food studies, the syllabus was made clearly accessible to pupils with special educational needs. There was a good balance of activities, and pupils were able to make links between the theory and practical work and to come up with evaluative comments. The careful planning at all levels ensured that pupils of all abilities moved forward rapidly.

17. Overall, there are major strengths in the teaching. They arise out of the commitment of teachers and result in a high quality of relationships that support good learning. The quality of teaching could be further strengthened by a focus on the specific things that individual teachers do well. Where teaching was less inspiring it was where there was too much reliance on text book based approaches. Example were in some mathematics sessions, and in a number of information and communication technology sessions where not enough opportunity was taken to match the challenges of the lesson to the needs of the pupils.

**There is highly effective leadership provided by the headteacher, governors and the management team both senior and middle show a collective determination to improve the school.**

18. The leadership of the school conveys a clear determination to improve. This is evident in small things, such as staff's attention to detail when they are touring the building and, on a larger scale, in the determination to develop the school's accommodation, resources, and key learning targets. The headteacher is closely involved in all aspects of school life. He is visible and well known to pupils, who find him approachable but also greet him with respect. His energy is apparent in many aspects of school life. It is perhaps most apparent in the quality of relationships in the school. It is clear that the productive relationships between pupils and teachers mirror the positive role model displayed by the headteacher and senior staff.

19. The determination to improve is reflected in a well thought out school development plan. Effectively, it is in two parts, one referring to the technology school initiative and the other referring to the whole school. Appropriate targets are set in both sections. The strongest part of the planning is in the technology school sections. Here the planned activities are clearly evaluated in terms of the benefit for pupils. However, some of the subject area plans contained within the whole school plan confuse completion of a routine task with success in developing the quality of work in the subject. Activities must have a justification in terms of pupil benefits or they are not worth doing.

20. The clear focus on raising standards is illustrated by the use made of the Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) initiative. An Advanced Skills Teacher has been seconded to the management team with a brief to develop new teaching and learning methods. The target areas for this intervention are determined by work he is involved in, namely the analysis of school performance data. Overall, the school uses data very well to track pupil achievement and to identify wider issues, though more use could be made of the data to identify issues of individual teacher performance.

21. The intelligent use of data has already led to effective action. For example, in English a decline in performance at the end of Key Stage 3 was identified. An action plan was developed which clearly targeted the issues for improvement in the department. Staffing changes took place. Senior managers, including the headteacher, put in extra support. For

example, the head is teaching in the English department and the Advanced Skills Teacher is working on underachievement by boys. There are still issues to be considered within the department, such as the varying quality of marking, but at the time of the inspection the work of Year 9 pupils in this subject was of a high standard.

22. The senior management team, while very effective, is overly large for a school of this size, and it is not clear that all the roles defined are managerial. However, the headteacher has a clear view that managers must be agents for change in the classroom. This perspective will need to inform any future restructuring. Governors have a keen appreciation of the issues facing the school and provide intelligent support. They give value to the school as critical friends and supporters in the community.

**There is a strong, powerful ethos for learning, underpinned by very positive and supportive relationships between teachers and pupils. Pupils are given many opportunities to achieve, and their success is celebrated by all.**

23. Throughout the day, inside and outside school hours, there is a bustle of purposeful activity in the classroom and on the corridors. Pupils behave very well, and they are able to act responsibly when unsupervised. In all lessons, there is a consistent expectation that there will be a positive learning experience. In the best lessons pupils respond with enthusiasm and rapt attention. For example, in music - a particular strength of the school - inspectors were privileged to observe various musical moments, including a performance by the choir in the park. The quality of the singing was excellent, as were the relationships within the choir and with the teacher, who treated the pupils as fellow musicians. Extensive opportunities to succeed are also provided in art, and achievement is celebrated in the excellent displays and installations around the school. Even where a limited range of teaching strategies is being used, pupils remain well behaved and work attentively. For example, in a Year 10 mathematics session pupils showed signs of boredom but there was no lack of attention and pupils still achieved above average standards.

24. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers are trusting and very supportive, and pupils are enabled to raise any concerns or lack of understanding, which can be dealt with there and then. The relationships are based on good communication between teachers and pupils, such that pupils know what has been achieved and what has to be done.

25. For example, pupils in Year 11 in discussion commented that they always knew how well they were doing. The additional support demonstrates commitment to the pupils. The school provides a number of revision centres, for example in maths, science and technology, which are open in the school holidays. Many teachers provide drop-in sessions and go out of their way to help pupils in difficulties. Pupils commented that teachers are approachable and that they considered them to be like friends or family. They felt that the school had a pleasant atmosphere which was geared towards learning. Pupils were given responsibilities in the life of the school and felt they were part of the school and that their opinions would be respected. Assemblies are used well to celebrate the full range of academic and non- academic success.

**The personal development of the pupils is well promoted through rich curricular provision, both taught and extra-curricular.**

26. One of the most striking features is that pupils of all ages are keen to explain that they are proud of their school. A group of Year 11 pupils praised the way in which they had been given many opportunities to succeed. These opportunities included such experiences as taking part in Young Enterprise Schemes, which were clearly taken very seriously as an exercise in management and leadership, and understood in this context by the pupils. The many clubs and societies cover a wide span. There are many sports activities, but also such opportunities as environment clubs and recorder clubs. Pupils in the environment club voluntarily remove litter in their lunch hour, and are involved in a number of planting programmes. The site itself is remarkably free of graffiti and vandalism, with many creative touches such as murals and statues and a range of different gardens.

27. The curriculum also includes a regular programme of personal development lessons, which contribute in a more formal way to pupils' personal development. For example, very good teaching in a personal development lesson in Year 9 used high quality relationships and an interesting, well informed and supportive delivery to encourage pupils to listen and think very carefully. This enabled them to start to make informed decisions about their option choices.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**Monitoring of teaching quality is not yet systematic and leads to some inconsistencies of practice.**

28. The school has made clear its intentions to improve the monitoring of teaching quality. An audit of departmental practice reveals a range of approaches to the monitoring of teaching. Some departments have launched a programme of systematic observation, on a line management basis in the case of science, and on the basis of peer observation in the case of mathematics. In other departments knowledge of the teaching strategies is based on discussion and on casual, incidental observations. This means that many heads of department are unaware of the specific strengths deployed in lessons. For example, in mathematics most lessons are effective and pupils make satisfactory progress. In some lessons in the school the work is stimulating, with pupils gaining confidence through teachers' explanations and questioning, combined with good use of demonstrations by pupils. In others, however, there is little variation in teaching style, and lessons, while effective, tend to become dull and repetitive by comparison.

29. In history there is no monitoring of teaching and no involvement in terms of information and communication technology. In one history session there were satisfactory outcomes in spite of the limited teaching strategies, because of the good subject knowledge of the teacher, but in another history session in Year 10 the level of challenge was insufficient. In this lesson, despite good relationships, not enough account was taken of the different levels of attainment in the class. Teaching strategies and resources were limited, and the pace of learning was insufficient.



30. Overall, it is clear that there are many strengths in the teaching. In some cases these are particular skills, such as the kind of questioning that develops pupils' capacity to think. These skills are not innate, but can be learnt by others. The precondition is to identify teachers who are deploying them effectively, and to ensure that they are sharing their approaches with teachers who may well have complementary strengths.

31. This requires a clear analysis of individual strengths and weaknesses, based on good knowledge which is derived from observation and performance data.

**Marking is inconsistent and in some cases gives insufficient pointers for improvement.**

32. In many subjects marking is very helpful. In English, for example, most of the marking is of an appropriate standard, though some is less diligent. The best marking identifies points for praise, picks out strengths and weaknesses, makes clear judgements, and provides explicit pointers for improvement. In history, pupils have an assessment book which contains constructive comments, but notebooks are sometimes unmarked or lacking in such guidance. In mathematics, some marking is encouraging and directs pupils to points for improvement, for example in the presentation of investigations. A lot of marking in this subject is self marking of text book exercises. Reliance on marking by pupils has the danger that a keen appreciation of pupils' understandings and misunderstandings will be less apparent.

33. In most other subjects the marking seen was at least satisfactory.

**The information and communication technology provision needs to generate improved standards and models of learning in different subject areas.**

34. The school has invested heavily in information and communication technology. There is a well resourced central block of information and communication technology rooms. The equipment is appropriate and up to date. Most of this investment occurred at the beginning of the year and the impact of it is beginning to be felt across the school. However, at present the standards of information and communication technology are generally below average. As a general rule, the younger the pupils, the more appropriate is the standard they are achieving. No information and communication technology lesson observed was unsatisfactory, but few were of good quality. The pace of learning in these lessons was not in line with the brisk pace observed in many lessons in other subject areas, mostly because the subject knowledge of the teachers was often faltering. Teachers were not always aware of the resources available to them, eg. projectors for whole class demonstration. More than once, pupils completed the required work before the end of the lesson, without further extension work being planned for them.

35. The management of the area is divided between a number of members of the teaching staff, so that one person is responsible for strategy and purchasing, another for the teaching of information and communication technology, another for the management of the teaching, and another for the training of the teachers. Notwithstanding the fact that the information and communication technology equipment is new, the pace of staff training needs to be raised and the use of the resources needs to be more closely monitored. In discussion with pupils, and in lessons there is evidence of demonstrable improvements in pupils' learning. There is a clear determination in the school to use information and communication technology to promote new styles of learning, but the area needs more clearly defined leadership if this is to be successful.

## **Use of tutorial time**

36. Tutorial sessions in the school are of 15 minute duration in the morning, with a brief five minute registration in the afternoon. The morning session has to deal with a variety of issues, from day-to-day administrative matters to 'thoughts for the day'. The latter are carefully planned sequences of thinking points for pupils to reflect upon, which are linked to a weekly theme. In the week of the inspection the theme was fairness. The thoughts for the week are an important part of the school's approach to collective worship and pupils' personal development. A number of tutorial sessions were observed. In the best sessions good use is made of the time. For example, in the five-minute lunchtime registration, a Year 7 group followed up their morning discussion and were asked to recall their earlier thoughts. Had they noticed any changes as they went through the morning? Only a few minutes were taken up, but the impact on the pupils' social awareness was noticeable. In the best sessions important issues were raised and discussed. However, too often it was clear that this was not a regular practice and pupils were unused to discussion in this context. They looked surprised and remained silent. In some sessions, teachers struggled with surprised pupils to discuss important concepts of morality. For example, in a Year 10 session on 'We harm the chances of justice every time we behave in an unjust way' pupils listened well but not one offered a comment. The pupils clearly found the theme daunting.

37. They then moved on to work experience, at which point the pupils gave far more response and feedback. In another Year 10 session the pupils were positive in their comments about justice, as a result of the teacher's efforts. In other sessions the time was passed with administrative matters. In the last report mention was made that this time was not well used. The pace of learning in these sessions does not match that of the rest of the curriculum. Clearly some of the teaching staff need more training to have the confidence to engage in discussion on matters of morality and justice.

## **Communications with parents.**

38. Parents were overwhelming in their support for the school, in the parents' meeting, responses to the questionnaire, and letters to the registered inspector. In particular, they were very pleased with their children's progress in school. They said their children were happy and that relationships between pupils and teachers were excellent. The pupils commented in a similar vein, some stating that they regarded the school and its teachers as part of their family. The pupil-teacher relationship in the school is so strong that the relationship between parents and school looks weaker by comparison. Information from the school is well presented and parents are kept informed of the many events. The concern expressed by parents focused upon informal contacts with the school.

39. The school's adeptness at resolving the concerns of pupils sometimes left parents feeling excluded. They also felt the school was sometimes overly defensive in its response to suggestions from parents. As they saw it, the very success of the school should enable it to adopt a more confident approach with parents, inviting suggestions and welcoming constructive criticism. The school needs to consider other informal methods of drawing parents into the life of the school.

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

40. In order to raise standards further the governors, headteacher, senior management, and all school staff need to:

- Establish a consistent system for monitoring individual teaching quality which involves the use of lesson observation and performance data;
- Rationalise planning, provision, delivery and training of information and communication technology in the school so that it delivers its maximum potential to improve teaching and learning;
- Ensure that a consistent approach is adopted towards marking by all teaching staff, with appropriate monitoring by heads of curriculum areas and senior management;
- Ensure that tutorial time is used effectively, particularly in relation to 'thoughts for the day';
- Adopt a more confident approach to communication with parents, and investigate and implement new approaches to strengthen this aspect of the relationship between school, parents, and pupils.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	7

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9.5	33.3	30.9	23.8	2.3	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*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	<b>Y 7 – Y 11</b>
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1173
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	134

<b>Special educational needs</b>	<b>Y 7 – Y 11</b>
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	52
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	240

<b>English as an additional language</b>	<b>No of pupils</b>
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	<b>No of pupils</b>
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	30

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	<b>%</b>
School data	7.5
National comparative data	7.9

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	<b>%</b>
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	129	122	251

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	61	98	96
	Girls	78	85	74
	Total	139	183	170
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	55	73	68
	National	63	62	55
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	13	44	24
	National	28	38	23

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	81	88	105
	Girls	99	89	93
	Total	180	177	198
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	71	70	79
	National	64	64	60
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	31	41	41
	National	31	37	28

*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	118	104	222

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	64	106	114
	Girls	72	102	104
	Total	136	208	218
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	61	94	98
	National	46.3	90.7	95.7

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	41
	National	37.8

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

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

*Ethnic background of pupils*

	<b>No of pupils</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	2
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	8
White	1137
Any other minority ethnic group	5

*Exclusions in the last school year*

	<b>Fixed period</b>	<b>Permanent</b>
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	26	1
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:**

**Y 7 – Y 11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	61.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.2

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff:**

**Y 7 – Y 11**

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	598

#### **Deployment of teachers:**

**Y 7 – Y 11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	83
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#### **Average teaching group size:**

**Y 7 - Y 11**

Key Stage 2	25.9
Key Stage 3	20.9
Key Stage 4	20.6

### *Financial information*

Financial year	<b>1998/1999</b>
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	<b>£</b>
Total income	2683063.00
Total expenditure	2713548.00
Expenditure per pupil	2352
Balance brought forward from previous year	48495.00
Balance carried forward to next year	18010.00

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

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	1173
Number of questionnaires returned	280

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	36.0	53.0	9.0	1.0	1.0
My child is making good progress in school.	39.0	52.0	6.0	1.0	2.0
Behaviour in the school is good.	29.0	58.0	7.0	0	6.0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22.0	57.0	18.0	2.0	1.0
The teaching is good.	27.0	62.0	6.0	0	5.0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24.0	46.0	22.0	8.0	1.0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49.0	36.0	10.0	4.0	1.0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	46.0	48.0	4.0	0	1.0
The school works closely with parents.	26.0	47.0	18.0	5.0	4.0
The school is well led and managed.	33.0	53.0	5.0	1.0	8.0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32.0	56.0	7.0	0	5.0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38.0	51.0	5.0	0	6.0