

INSPECTION REPORT

FARRINGDON COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Sunderland

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108858

Headteacher: Mr K Stitt

Reporting inspector: Mr C Sander
4151

Dates of inspection: 28th February – 2nd March 2000

Inspection number: 185684

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

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Allendale Road
Sunderland

Postcode: SR3 3EL

Telephone number: 0191 553 6013

Fax number: 0191 553 6017

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Cllr. P Gibson

Date of previous inspection: 27th November 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
Mr C Sander	Registered inspector
Mr J Griffin	Lay inspector
Mrs M Cureton	Team inspector
Mr T Howard	Team inspector
Mr J Knight	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Bench Marque Ltd
National Westminster Bank Chambers
Victoria Street
Burnham-on-Sea
Somerset
TA8 1AN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

Page

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

6

Information about the school
How good the school is
What the school does well
What could be improved
How the school has improved since its last inspection
Standards
Pupils' attitudes and values
Teaching and learning
Other aspects of the school
How well the school is led and managed
Parents' and carers' views of the school

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

11

- Rigorous monitoring, target setting and effective teaching contribute to rising standards at Key Stage 4.
- Very good leadership, effective delegation and very good staff development establish a shared commitment to high standards.
- Very high quality support and guidance contribute to good levels of achievement.
- Good teaching helps pupils become more confident and independent in their learning.
- Standards in information and communication technology are very high.
- The excellent curriculum supports very effectively pupils' personal development.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

16

- There needs to be more emphasis on target setting and more monitoring of progress from the start of Key Stage 3 in order to raise expectations and standards still further.
- The school needs to extend still further its partnership with parents.
- Attendance rates remain below the national average despite the school's best efforts.
- The school still needs to make provision for a daily act of collective worship.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

17

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

18

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Farringdon Community School is a very large, 11-16 comprehensive community school of 1550 boys and girls situated in a suburban area of predominantly post-war housing about three miles south west of Sunderland city centre. The school has increased in size since the last inspection and is over-subscribed. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school at the age of eleven is below average. One hundred and eighty pupils have special educational needs, a proportion below the national average. Fewer than one per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and no pupils have English as an additional language. Three hundred and eighty-seven pupils are entitled to free school meals, above the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Farringdon Community School is a good school. Very good leadership, effective management and good teaching are important features of its continuing success. Standards at Key Stage 4 are rising and are now well above average for similar schools. Pupils' personal development is promoted very well through the excellent pastoral arrangements, the very high quality and range of its curriculum and the very good provision for pupils who have special educational needs. The school's readiness to be self-critical contributes much to its effectiveness. Overall, its strengths significantly outweigh its weaknesses. The school's income is low; its achievements are high. It provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Rigorous monitoring, target setting and effective teaching contribute to rising standards at Key Stage 4.
- Very good leadership, effective delegation and very good staff development establish a shared commitment to high standards.
- Very high quality support and guidance contribute to good levels of achievement.
- Good teaching helps pupils become more confident and independent in their learning.
- Standards in information and communication technology are very high.
- The excellent curriculum supports very effectively pupils' personal development.

What could be improved

- There needs to be more emphasis on target setting and more monitoring of progress from the start of Key Stage 3 in order to raise expectations and standards still further.
- The school needs to extend still further its partnership with parents.
- Attendance rates remain below the national average despite the school's best efforts.
- The school still needs to make 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

The school has made good progress since its last inspection in November 1995. GCSE results have improved at almost twice the rate nationally. Boys are doing much better than before. The quality of teaching is better. The quality and range of courses are wider at Key Stage 4. The main areas for action identified in the last inspection have been addressed rigorously. Action to improve how pupils learn has been particularly successful. Standards in literacy across the school are improving. Results in English are now better at the end of both key stages. Taken as a whole, improvements have been more patchy at Key Stage 3. Attendance is no better and remains below the national average.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 14-year-olds based on National Curriculum test results.

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

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

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	D	D	C	A

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

Results in the 1999 national tests for 14-year-olds were above the average for similar schools but below the national average for all schools. The trend of improvement over time has been broadly in line with the national picture. The performance of boys and girls was close to the national average in science but below it in English and mathematics. There has been a marked improvement in standards in English, particularly by the boys. In comparison with similar schools, standards reached in the 1999 national tests were above average. They were above average in the English and mathematics tests and well above average in the science tests. The percentage of boys and girls reaching above the national expectation in English and science was well above the national average for similar schools.

GCSE results have improved since 1995 at almost twice the national rate. In 1999, 40 per cent of pupils gained five or more grades A*-C, broadly in line with the national average. This was well above the average for similar schools nationally. Girls continue to perform better than boys but the gap has closed significantly. For the first time, both boys' and girls' results were close to the national average for their age groups. Standards have risen in many subjects over the last three years although results remain below the national average in some of them.

The proportion of pupils obtaining five or more A*-G grades at GCSE or GNVQ equivalent has been consistently well below the national average over the last three years. However, approximately 15 per cent of pupils gain other forms of accreditation at the age of 16, as part of the school's drive to ensure that the performance of all its pupils, including those with special educational needs, is accredited. The school's 1999 results exceeded its targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Nearly all pupils show positive attitudes. They are well motivated and want to succeed. Very occasionally, some lower attaining pupils show insufficient interest.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall standards are good. Nearly all pupils get on well with each other and with their teachers. They behave well around the school, despite the serious lack of social areas. The above average number of exclusions are part of an effective, positive strategy to improve the challenging behaviour of a minority of pupils.
Attendance	Attendance is below the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence has been consistently above the national average but has reduced through the concerted efforts of many staff.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of lessons seen. It was very good or better in 17 per cent of lessons and good in a further 50 per cent of lessons. In the two unsatisfactory lessons seen, poor behaviour was not well managed in one instance; in the other lesson, pupils made unsatisfactory progress because they were unclear about what they had to do.

At Key Stage 3, teaching was good in mathematics and English. In science it was satisfactory. At Key Stage 4, teaching was very good in mathematics and science. It was good in English. Examples of excellent teaching were seen in science and business studies in Year 11.

Teachers plan and organise their lessons carefully. As part of a whole-school literacy strategy, they pay particular attention to developing pupils' literacy skills in different subjects. The development of numeracy skills is not yet fully co-ordinated across all subjects. Teachers are particularly skilful in engaging the interest of their pupils by linking the lesson to what has been learnt previously or to the pupils' own experience. Many pupils show good levels of concentration and listen well to their teachers. They also work well with each other in pairs or small groups and many are developing a good degree of confidence in organising their own learning, particularly in the GNVQ courses at Key Stage 4. As some parents suggested, the disinterestedness and lack of self-discipline of a small number of lower attaining pupils can occasionally spoil the learning and interrupt the teaching.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is excellent. The range of courses at Key Stage 4 is particularly good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good leadership, management and teamwork, linked to good staff development and effective partnerships with parents, result in prompt identification of needs and highly effective provision.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The personal, social and health education programme is very good. Residential experiences contribute greatly to pupils' personal and social development. Pupils' moral development is very well supported. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Provision is very good. Tutors know, support and encourage their pupils well. This does much to promote positive attitudes and is helping to raise standards. The monitoring and mentoring of their progress is very effective at Key Stage 4. Successful strategies to address challenging behaviour are very effectively managed.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership. Key staff are experienced, effective managers. There is a shared commitment to raising standards and developing staff and pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well, particularly in promoting pupils' personal development and monitoring expenditure. They contribute satisfactorily to the strategic development of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	A strong emphasis on monitoring and evaluating standards is the hallmark of the school's very effective leadership and management. Rigorous development planning consistently targets improvements in teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very good use of its relatively low level of income. Priorities are well defined and funding accurately targeted to further improve teaching and learning. The school applies well the principles of best value in its decision making.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high levels of expectation. • The ease with which they can approach the school. • The degree of progress their children make. • Their children like the school. • The quality of the teaching. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current arrangements for parents' evenings. • Homework arrangements. • Sharper targets at Key Stage 3. • Some aspects of pupils' behaviour.

There were 628 completed questionnaires. Thirty-five parents attended the pre-inspection meeting. The vast majority of parents hold a positive view of the school. Inspection findings support this view and would place the quality of teaching still higher in the order of the school's strengths. The parents are right in identifying the need for sharper annual targets at Key Stage 3. Homework is well organised within subject faculties but the inspection findings confirm that the programme needs to be better co-ordinated across the school. The inspection findings did not support the concerns about pupils' behaviour and lack of respect. There was only one lesson seen in which behaviour seriously hindered learning, and relationships between pupils and adults were found to be good. The school has tried various organisational arrangements for parents' evenings. The annual provision of both tutor-led and subject-based parents' evenings is a strong feature of the school's partnership with its parents. However, there is a need to examine again how these arrangements might make best use of the time available.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Rigorous monitoring, target setting and effective teaching contribute to rising standards at Key Stage 4.

1. GCSE results have got steadily better since the last inspection. The percentage of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades has risen from 31 per cent to 40 per cent. This is almost twice the national rate of improvement. Standards at GCSE are now close to the national average for all schools. Standards are well above the average for similar schools nationally.
2. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more grades A*-G has been consistently well below the national average. This is a misleading statistic. It does not include the range of alternatively accredited courses, such as the certificate of achievement, that approximately 15 per cent of pupils follow and in which they achieve a good degree of success. The school places a very high priority on ensuring that the learning of all pupils is accredited at the age of 16. The GCSE average points score rose from 28 in 1995 to 36 in 1999. This was just over twice the rate of improvement nationally and indicates that overall standards are also rising significantly. The school has targets to do even better. Although it is proving difficult to increase the percentage of pupils who gain at least one GCSE grade in the range A*-G, there is a strong determination to do so.
3. 1999 was a significant year in the history of the school. For the first time both boys' and girls' results were close to the national average for their age groups. When the school was inspected in 1995, twice as many girls as boys were gaining five or more GCSE grades A*-C. In 1999 the gap narrowed to six per cent.
4. GCSE results in many subjects show an improving trend although standards frequently remain below the national average. Comparisons with pupils' standards when they started at the school indicate that they achieve well by the age of 16. Over the last three years, results have risen in English, mathematics, science, art and design, dance, design and technology, French, information systems, history and physics. In 1999, GCSE results were above the national average in art and design, business studies, English literature, French, Spanish, vocational studies and information systems.
5. The school has established highly effective arrangements to monitor individual pupil's progress towards challenging targets. All pupils are monitored and mentored as they prepare for their GCSE examinations. School targets are translated into subject targets and are also expressed as individual pupil targets. All teachers use this information to ensure that pupils are challenged to succeed to the very best of their abilities. The headteacher provides excellent leadership in this work. He manages most effectively the detailed database of pupils' performance and uses it most successfully to indicate what is expected of both pupils and teachers. This helps to raise the shared expectations of both teachers and pupils. In this way, it fulfils the school's mission to achieve partnership in education.
6. During the autumn term, nearly 20 per cent of pupils exceeded their current targets and Year 11 pupils are currently reaching standards similar to those achieved at GCSE in 1999. A particular strength of the school's approach to target setting is that it includes a continuous striving to do better. The target is a minimum; the expectation is that it will be exceeded.

7. Good teaching was a frequent feature of the lessons seen at Key Stage 4. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Twenty per cent of lessons were very good or excellent. Good teaching was seen in a further 55 per cent of lessons. Very good teaching was seen across the full range of attainment. It is a strength of the teaching that all pupils are valued equally and great care is taken to adjust the methods and organisation of lessons to meet the needs of particular pupils. Teachers not only know their subjects well, they know their pupils well also.
8. Some excellent teaching was seen in Year 11. In a science lesson for lower attaining pupils, the pace was brisk but the teacher confirmed that pupils understood the concept of refraction. The meaning of important words was carefully established and good use made of pupils' own experience to develop fuller understanding. Humour, enthusiasm and high expectation bred confidence and success. A similar emphasis on ensuring a clear understanding of technical terms was seen in a business studies lesson. Excellent teaching again challenged pupils to respond with rigorous accuracy when using the vocabulary of financial processes. This first stage of the school's literacy strategy is being implemented consistently. It is helping to raise standards.
9. Much of the good teaching seen at Key Stage 4 really encourages pupils to think carefully and creatively. Teachers frequently make good use of questions at the start and plan opportunities for discussion at an early stage of a lesson. This gets pupils involved by hooking their interest. By encouraging pupils to work together, they ensure that they remain involved and, in the best teaching, the lesson closes with a well managed review of what has been learned. Teaching methods really do help pupils to concentrate. Considerable progress has been made in promoting pupils' confidence to work things out for themselves. In some of the best teaching seen at Key Stage 4, for example in design and technology, science, information technology and GNVQ intermediate level courses, the very careful structuring of the lesson provided a firm framework within which pupils were encouraged to think for themselves and make decisions.

Very good leadership, effective delegation and very good staff development establish a shared commitment to high standards.

10. The school's success in raising standards owes much to the headteacher's very skilful leadership. The way in which the school uses the information that it gathers about pupils' standards has improved significantly since the last inspection. His close involvement in establishing challenging targets and monitoring pupils' progress towards them, leaves no one in any doubt about what is expected of them. His vision of what the school can achieve is strongly supported by a very well managed database of pupils' previous achievements and future targets. Teachers are kept regularly informed about how well pupils at Key Stage 4 are doing and the roles of tutors, subject teachers and mentors in explaining these expectations to pupils are well co-ordinated. The school's determination to raise standards is thus shared most effectively amongst all those involved.
11. The key objectives of the annual school development plan are very clear. Success in all aspects of the school's work is linked explicitly to improvements in teaching and learning. The annual planning cycle enables subject departments to link their departmental objectives to whole-school priorities and to define challenging targets. The delegation of responsibility promotes a high degree of initiative amongst subject leaders and also promotes the professional development of members of their teams. Heads of subject are encouraged to decide with their subject teams how best to organise pupils' learning and allocate expenditure to meet these targets. They show a very high level of commitment to raising standards and lead their teams well. For example, in food technology, standards have been improved by a rigorous review that

involved the support of external agencies. The decision by the science faculty to purchase a new course book for Key Stage 3 has contributed to improved standards. Key Stage 3 co-ordinators in mathematics, science and English are making significant contributions in the school's developing literacy strategy and the well managed arrangements to meet pupils' special educational needs gain much from the commitment and initiative of the link teachers within subject faculties.

12. Highly effective staff development helps subject leaders and their teams to meet very successfully the demanding targets that are delegated to them. The school has recently achieved Investor In People status for the third time. It places a high priority on investing in staff development and evaluates rigorously its results. The links between appraisal and staff development are very strong and individual needs are identified and analysed to create an effective staff development programme. The monitoring of teaching and learning through regular direct observation is an important feature; shared practice results in improved practice, leading to better results.
13. The induction arrangements for newly qualified teachers are also very thorough. They go well beyond the requirements of both national and local guidelines. Each newly qualified teacher has both a subject and a senior manager mentor. Their teaching is observed on three occasions during each half term and this is linked to regular reviews. The induction of other newly appointed staff is also very well managed, including opportunities to spend time at the school prior to taking up their appointment. In these ways the school works very effectively to ensure that its teachers have a strong, shared understanding of what is expected of them. As a result staff development is closely linked to raising standards.

Very high quality support and guidance contribute to good levels of achievement.

14. The school places a high priority on supporting and guiding the personal and social development of all its pupils. The leadership of the pastoral faculty is very good and its organisation supports the strong links between subject leaders and heads of year. Team work is strong, both amongst heads of year and within the respective year teams of tutors. This results in a highly effective programme of personal, social and health education and a good level of support for individual pupils. Careers education is particularly well managed. Approaching 60 per cent of pupils go to local colleges at the age of 16. This is above average for the local area.
15. The school is particularly skilful in addressing and managing the challenging behaviour of a small number of its pupils. The decision to exclude a pupil is always considered most carefully as part of a positive strategy for improvement with the full support of the governing body. The pastoral committee of the governing body meets each month to review this aspect of school life. When a pupil is excluded, the aim is always to subsequently include the individual once more in the life of the school. These successful strategies help to ensure that the learning of other pupils is not disrupted and that learning attitudes improve.
16. Allocated funding is well targeted within the very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The special needs co-ordinator leads very effectively a team of five full-time teachers. Provision is further co-ordinated through the link teachers in each subject faculty. Individual education plans are well written and well used in lessons. In a Year 11 mathematics lesson, for example, this enabled the teacher to support pupils' excellent progress without any additional support, whilst in a briskly paced Year 11 science lesson, excellent teaching enthused pupils in learning about waves and radiation.

17. Links with parents are strong and a member of the special educational needs department attends all parental consultation evenings. The special needs co-ordinator also attends the annual reviews of pupils in the year before they enter the school. This ensures a very good degree of continuity.

Good teaching is helping pupils become more confident and independent in their learning.

18. Pupils of all abilities are now much more confident in organising their work than they were at the time of the previous inspection. They are now much more ready to express their own ideas. This was a feature of many lessons seen at both key stages. In a Year 7 mathematics lesson, middle-attaining pupils confidently developed their own methods of presentation, whilst in a Year 9 food technology lesson, the teacher encouraged higher attaining pupils to think for themselves as they developed a soup recipe. In a Year 10 health and social care lesson, pupils were investigating the local provision of services. The way in which the teacher structured the various tasks encouraged pupils to show initiative as they decided on various lines of enquiry.
19. The introduction of a range of GNVQ courses at Key Stage 4 has led many teachers to encourage pupils to plan for themselves how they will tackle a particular task and decide what resources they will need to help them. Such good teaching was seen in a Year 11 GNVQ intermediate manufacturing lesson. Pupils approached confidently the first stages of a design brief for a batch production product, using the range of resources available within the workshop as they so wished. They were able to sustain good levels of concentration, with the teacher skilfully timing his interventions to support their further progress.
20. Effective in-service training is helping teachers to become more skilled in using questions and planting ideas to get pupils to think about what they have to do. The science faculty is successfully adapting its curriculum to support the development of thinking skills. The humanities faculty makes very good use of educational visits to promote pupils' research skills, and various activities within the school's wider programme of residential trips further help pupils to gain in confidence.
21. The development of the school's resource centre is also encouraging pupils to use information technology to find things out for themselves by using the Internet or commercial software.

Standards in information and communication technology are very high.

22. The school has made very good progress since the last inspection in developing its resources and increasing teacher expertise in the teaching of information and communication technology. Pupils have opportunities to use information technology across a wide range of subjects. This is a particularly strong feature within GNVQ courses where, as part of the development of key skills, pupils use spreadsheets, create graphs, interrogate databases and develop their word processing skills in completing their project work.
23. Between the ages of 11 and 16, all pupils are taught information and communication technology for one hour each week. The effective teaching of a very well planned course means that by the time they reach Year 9, many are already starting the GCSE course and standards across the entire year group are well above average by the age of 16.
24. Standards are very high by the end of Key Stage 3. In 1998, 82 per cent of pupils achieved the national expectation. This was well above the national average of 56

per cent. More than half of the pupils reached standards that were above the national expectation. Results were even higher in 1999. The percentage achieving the national expectation increased by a further five per cent and there was a similar degree of further improvement in the percentage of pupils gaining above the national expectation. Six per cent of pupils gained Level 8.

25. The proportion of Year 11 pupils entered for information systems or information technology examinations at GCSE has risen steadily over the last three years. Half of the year group entered in 1997, two-thirds did so in 1998 and three-quarters in 1999. From this year, all pupils will enter. A very high proportion of Year 11 boys and girls achieve well above average standards. In the 1999 GCSE information technology examination, 94 per cent of pupils obtained grades A*-C, nearly twice the national average. More than one-quarter gained grade A. This was three times the national average. All pupils obtained a grade in the range A*-G.
26. Very high standards were also achieved in the previous two years. In 1998, every one of the 197 pupils entered obtained grades A*-C. One third of these pupils gained grades A or A*. This was three times the national average and marked a still further improvement on the very good results in 1997 when 87 per cent of pupils gained grades A*-C.

The excellent curriculum supports very effectively pupils' personal development.

27. The school seeks at all times to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that is relevant to the needs of all its pupils. It provides a particularly effective programme of personal, social and health education. This is managed through a pastoral faculty that is led superbly. Heads of Year and their teams of tutors place a high priority on achieving consistently high quality in the teaching of the programme. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, pupils made well-prepared presentations on health issues as a result of which they gained confidence in public speaking and appreciation of the value of team work as well as knowledge and understanding of the issues through the research they had undertaken.
28. There is a good range of subjects offered within a variety of combinations at Key Stage 4. This meets very well the full range of abilities. Effective setting arrangements also support pupils' good progress. Three modern foreign languages are offered and there are opportunities for pupils to choose to study the three separate sciences. There is a developing provision for GNVQ courses. Approximately one-third of the current Year 10 is following one of these courses that are offered at both foundation and intermediate levels; a significant increase in the numbers studying for these qualifications in Year 11. The range of courses offered and the skill with which they are taught do much to increase pupils' motivation and confidence.
29. Pupils' personal and social development is very strongly promoted through the excellent opportunities offered for residential experience between the ages of 11 and 16. These provide a very good range of opportunities, both in this country and abroad, to undertake a good range of problem-solving and team-building tasks and examination revision activities that encourage pupils to take responsibility and co-operate with each other in an unfamiliar setting. These qualities lie at the heart of the school's mission to achieve partnership in education.
30. Pupils' personal development is also very well promoted through the very thorough careers education and guidance that is provided for all pupils. Through a well-planned programme of careers conventions, work experience and a wide range of visits, pupils develop a very good understanding of the opportunities available beyond the age of

16. This promotes mature attitudes when making well-informed decisions about their future.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

There needs to more emphasis on target setting and more monitoring of progress from the start of Key Stage 3 in order to raise expectations and standards still further.

31. In the 1999 statutory national tests, overall standards were above average for similar schools. Higher attaining pupils did particularly well in English and science. Overall, in comparison with all schools nationally, standards were below average. Over the last four years, results have been below the national average. In the work seen during the inspection, higher attaining pupils were reaching well above average standards in mathematics and above average standards in science and English. A knowledge of National Curriculum levels was more evident in the work of higher attaining pupils in English and science. This was not consistently so in mathematics. The setting of targets and an indication of National Curriculum levels were not evident consistently in the work of lower attaining pupils.
32. There are teachers in each of these subjects who have a special responsibility for Key Stage 3. Each has developed a range of strategies to improve standards further. For example, in science, a newly adopted commercial scheme is helping to raise standards, and regular testing at the end of each topic is confirming pupils' National Curriculum levels. In English, good links with local primary schools are helping to establish shared understanding of standards when pupils first join the school. Pupils are then made aware of National Curriculum levels as part of their involvement in individual target setting. Greater emphasis on mental mathematics, the development of revision guides and the provision of additional lessons are important features of its strategy to raise standards. There is, however, no co-ordinated whole-school strategy to set targets for the end of the key stage and the otherwise very good schemes of work do not identify the expected standards for the end of each year. Establishing firm targets based on the school's developing benchmark data would support a more consistent expectation of standards.
33. Fluctuating standards are a feature of the statutory teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 in pupils' other subjects. Whilst standards continue to rise in information technology, they have declined in history and fluctuated in technology, modern foreign languages and geography over the last three years. Pupils are insufficiently aware of the National Curriculum level at which they are currently working and do not have precise targets expressed as National Curriculum levels.
34. Some parents have expressed the view that pupils in Year 7 are insufficiently challenged. There is insufficient evidence to confirm this view but they are right in identifying the need for sharper annual targets at Key Stage 3.

The school needs to extend still further its partnership with parents.

35. There are many strong features in the way that the school keeps its parents well informed. The opportunity to meet annually with the form tutor as well as with subject teachers is particularly useful. The involvement of parents in the annual reviews of pupils who have special educational needs is particularly effective. The involvement of parents within the careers guidance arrangements is promoted strongly. Parents are kept well informed of school events through regular newsletters and an excellent annual newspaper.

36. There are, currently, insufficient opportunities to consult with parents about homework and the organisation of parents' evenings. To improve further the very good features of its partnership with parents, the school needs to consult more regularly with them concerning the effectiveness of these aspects of school life.

Attendance rates remain below the national average despite the school's best efforts.

37. The school has made very determined efforts to improve attendance. The level of unauthorised absence has reduced but overall attendance remains below the national average. During 1999, average attendance was below 90 per cent in Years 9, 10 and 11. It was below 85 per cent in Year 10.
38. Attendance is closely monitored by the school but it has been without the support of a regular educational welfare officer for the last year. It has a well-planned strategy of involving parents and does not shrink from seeking prosecutions when all other avenues have been exhausted.
39. There is a need now to seek contact with other schools in the region who have achieved significant improvements in their attendance levels to see what additional strategies might be adopted.

The school still needs to make provision for a daily act of collective worship.

40. This is the one issue arising from the previous inspection that has not been resolved. The serious lack of suitable space makes it extremely difficult for the school to fulfil this statutory requirement, despite careful consideration of a range of possible solutions.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Farringdon School is a good school that already meets the needs of its pupils well. In order to become even better it should:

- Develop a co-ordinated approach to target setting across all subjects at Key Stage 3.
- Consult more frequently with parents to improve the effectiveness of the arrangements for homework and parents' evenings.
- Consult with other schools that in similar circumstances have successfully reached levels of attendance that are at least in line with the national average.
- Continue to seek ways by which it might accommodate the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	47
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	13	50	28	4	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1550	
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	387	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	28	
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	180	

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	9.3
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	2.4
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	146	160	306

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	72	76	79
	Girls	102	76	76
	Total	174	152	155
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	57 (56)	50 (55)	51 (54)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	24 (25)	27 (31)	20 (23)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	60	63	93
	Girls	99	73	122
	Total	159	136	215
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	52 (50)	44 (57)	70 (70)
	National	64 (61)	64 (64)	60 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	30 (17)	21 (26)	24 (25)
	National	31 (30)	37 (37)	28 (30)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	148	156	304

GCSE results		5 or more grades A*-C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	49	120	135
	Girls	71	135	148
	Total	120	255	283
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	40 (37)	85 (82)	93 (92)
	National	47.8 (46.3)	88.4 (87.5)	93.9 (93.4)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	36 (33.2)
	National	37.8 (37.0)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	1546
Any other minority ethnic group	2

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	106	6
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	93.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	490

Deployment of teachers: Y7– Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	70.6
---	------

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	24.1
Key Stage 4	19.2

Financial information

Financial year	1998-1999
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	3249062
Total expenditure	3219011
Expenditure per pupil	2100
Balance brought forward from previous year	-89515
Balance carried forward to next year	-59464

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1550
Number of questionnaires returned	628

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	28	61	8	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	51	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	47	13	4	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	57	15	5	2
The teaching is good.	31	51	13	3	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	51	13	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	46	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	39	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	30	50	13	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	33	51	6	2	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	36	54	6	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	48	8	2	9