

# INSPECTION REPORT

**BISHOP CHALLONER CATHOLIC  
SECONDARY SCHOOL**

Basingstoke

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116478

Headteacher: Mr M. Whitty

Reporting inspector: Mr R. Palmer  
31198

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> May 2001

Inspection number: 186075

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2001

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:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Michael's Road Basingstoke Hampshire
Postcode:	RG22 6SR
Telephone number:	01256 462661
Fax number:	01256 810359
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A. Darroch
Date of previous inspection:	30 <sup>th</sup> October 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
31198	Mr R. Palmer	Registered inspector
19720	Mrs. D. Granville-Hastings	Lay inspector
23188	Mrs. V. Maunder	Team inspector
31986	Mr B. W. Medhurst	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Power House Inspections

Grasshoppers  
1 Anglesey Close  
Chasetown  
Burntwood  
Staffordshire  
WS7 8XA

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

## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
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	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>20</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Bishop Challoner Catholic Secondary School is a voluntary aided comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11 to 16 years. It is situated in the town of Basingstoke and is within the Diocese of Portsmouth. Most pupils transfer to the school from Roman Catholic primary schools in Basingstoke and Andover and from surrounding parishes. About 15 per cent of pupils are from non-Catholic religious backgrounds. The school is smaller than other secondary schools nationally. It is fully subscribed and operates a waiting list in all years. In January 2001, there were 645 pupils on roll, compared with 587 at the time of the previous inspection in 1995. Pupils come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The attainment of pupils when they enter the school at the age of 11 is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (around four per cent) is well below the national average. The proportion (5.5 per cent) of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than in most schools, but very few are at an early stage of learning English. Less than four per cent of pupils are of non-white ethnic background. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (18.4 per cent) is average and most of these have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils (1.7 per cent) who have statements of special educational needs is also average.

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

This is a good school that has some outstanding features. Standards of attainment are consistently well above the national average and represent very good achievement overall. The quality of pastoral care is a strength. Pupils of all backgrounds and levels of attainment are valued. Relationships among pupils and between pupils and teachers are very good and reflect an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. The very good and purposeful leadership of the headteacher and the very effective management and support provided by the governing body and senior staff are important and contributory factors to the very good quality of education provided. Pupils respond very positively to the high expectations set for them, work hard and enjoy their learning. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is very good overall. The school has considerably more strengths than weaknesses, manages its resources well and continues to provide good value for money. It has the capacity and the commitment to make further improvements. Parents justifiably have a high regard for the school and many more pupils want to attend than can do so.

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

- Pupils' attainment is well above the national average at the age of 14 and at the age of 16 and represents very good achievement overall.
- The very good teaching helps pupils to achieve high standards.
- The very good leadership and management of the head teacher, with very effective support from the governors and senior staff, provide a clear and purposeful direction for raising standards further, have maintained a positive ethos and have achieved good improvements.
- Within a caring and supportive environment, pupils have very positive attitudes to work and are justifiably proud of their school.

### What could be improved

- The school does not make sufficiently effective use of its very detailed information about pupils' attainment to set appropriate and realistic targets for pupils and departments to improve.
- Although attainment in science is above average, pupils do not make as much progress in science in Years 10 and 11 as they do in mathematics and English.
- The setting of homework is inconsistent and results in pupils sometimes having too much and sometimes too little homework.

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

### HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall improvement since the previous inspection in 1995 is good. The school has done well to maintain its previous strengths despite an increase in the size of classes caused by a much less favourable ratio of pupils per teacher. Results and achievement in external examinations taken by pupils at the ages of 14 and 16 remain high. The school continues to provide a very caring and positive environment for the all round education of all pupils. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and in the lessons observed was very good overall. Leadership and management continue to be very effective in setting a clear direction and in ensuring good improvements through regular reviews of all aspects of the school's performance. Progress has been good in dealing with the five key issues identified in the last inspection. The quality of education remains high; teachers now make more effective use of assessment to inform pupils about their progress and targets, but there is room for further improvement; the provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved and is now very good; the monitoring of progress towards meeting the school's targets is more effective, but still requires further improvement; finally, the punctuality of pupils to lessons and the system for checking registers are no longer causes of concern.

### STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	A	A*	A	B

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

Results in the national tests for 14-year-olds have been well above average in all of the past four years. They indicate good achievement when compared with pupils' previous attainment in the national tests taken at the age of 11. In 2000, results were well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. Compared with similar schools, results were above average in all three subjects. Both boys and girls gained well above average results in all three subjects. Pupils of above average attainment performed well in the national tests in 2000 with a well above average proportion reaching the higher levels. The trend in the average points scored in the national tests has been below the national trend over the last five years, mainly because the school's results in 1996 were very much higher than the national average. However, over the last three years the school's results have not only been well above the national average, they have improved at a faster rate than that nationally and are a good achievement. By the end of Year 9, standards of work seen in classes are currently well above average in English, mathematics and science.

GCSE results have been consistently well above the national average in all of the last four years. In 1999 they were very high. In 2000, the GCSE results were well above the national average and above the average for similar schools. When these GCSE results are compared with pupils' prior attainment in the national tests for pupils aged 14 in 1998 they represent very good achievement for pupils of all capabilities, including pupils with special educational needs. The progress made by pupils in mathematics was outstanding as shown by the high proportion of pupils who gained grades in the ranges A\*-C and A\*-A. Over the last three years, the total average points scored in GCSE examinations by boys has been very high and those scored by girls have been well above the national average. The GCSE results in 2000 represented very good achievement, when compared with pupils' average levels of attainment when they entered the school at the age of eleven. Around 50 per cent of candidates obtained GCSE grades A\* and A in history in 2000. Similar very good achievement was seen in history classes during the inspection. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in GCSE examinations. By the end of Year 11, standards seen in class were well above average overall. Standards in science were above average but not as good as the well above average standards in English and mathematics. In all subjects pupils achieve well because they have very positive attitudes to their work and in most subjects receive very good teaching and support.

The school sets very challenging, but not always achievable, targets for pupils and subject departments. It reached most of its targets for performance in external examinations in 2000 but fell short of its target for average total GCSE points scored per pupil.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy learning, apply themselves readily to tasks and concentrate well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. The number of exclusions is low. Pupils are very polite and friendly. The management of the few pupils with behavioural difficulties is generally good.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils of all levels of attainment and backgrounds mix well and respect each other's views. Relationships among pupils and between teachers and pupils are very positive.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above average. Unauthorised absence is very low.

## 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.*

The quality of both teaching and learning is very good in both key stages. The teaching was satisfactory or better in all of the lessons seen. It was good or better in 85 per cent and was very good or better in 54 per cent of all lessons. Pupils made good and often very good progress in the large majority of lessons observed because both teachers and pupils have high expectations; pupils have very positive attitudes to work and teachers use a variety of



methods to ensure that pupils maintain their concentration and interest throughout the lesson. The very good relationships between pupils and teachers assist learning. The quality of teaching is very good overall in English and mathematics and good in science; in all three subjects there is a small amount of teaching that is satisfactory. The teaching of literacy is very good and that of numeracy is good.

Learning is very good in most lessons because teachers plan their lessons very well. The start of lessons is purposeful. Pupils quickly become aware of the work and progress expected. They respond very positively to the suitably brisk pace and challenge of the work. They enjoy working independently and cooperate well with each other in paired and group work. Pupils have a generally good knowledge of their own learning and what they need to do to improve, although there are inconsistencies in the quality of marking in a few subjects. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because they receive very good teaching, care and support. Pupils of high attainment make good rather than very good progress because they do not always receive work of suitable difficulty, although in subjects such as mathematics and history the work is of appropriate challenge.

### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The broad and balanced curriculum meets statutory requirements and is well suited to the needs of all pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	These pupils receive very good teaching and support, which enable them to make very good progress. The individual education plans are very detailed, informative and are used well to support pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve very well because teachers prepare work of appropriate difficulty for them. They benefit from the close links with the local authority's support service for bilingual learners.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Pupils' moral and social development is very good; their spiritual and cultural development is good. A caring and Christian ethos is characterised by very good relationships and mutual respect among pupils and teachers.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pastoral care is very good. Teachers and other adults are very supportive of pupils' welfare and their academic progress. Suitable procedures for health and safety and for child protection are in place.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school has a good partnership with parents and communicates regularly with them.

## 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 and effective management and is well supported by senior staff. The management in subjects is very good overall. Appropriate strategies for maintaining high standards have led to improvements in teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very effective, monitor progress carefully and set demanding targets for improvement. They carry out their responsibilities conscientiously and play an effective role in enabling the school to maintain and build on its very good standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well and sets challenging targets for improvement. Procedures for setting targets do not always result in realistic targets being set for performance in external examinations.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very effective use of its good staffing, accommodation and learning resources. Spending decisions are suitably related to the priorities listed in the school development plan. Good procedures are in place to seek value for money.

## 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>• The school expects all pupils to work hard and as a result, pupils make very good progress and examination results are high.</li> <li>• Caring teachers provide a high quality of pastoral care.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• The values promoted by the school are very good. Pupils are becoming mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Range of extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• The setting and quality of homework are inconsistent.</li> <li>• Some say that they are not well informed about pupils' progress.</li> </ul>

The vast majority of parents justifiably have very positive and supportive views about most aspects of the school's performance. Inspection findings strongly support parents' positive views. In respect of parents' views about possible improvements inspectors find that the range of extra curricular activities is good, but the active participation of pupils is restricted because of the small number of specialist staff in subjects such as physical education. Although the overall quality of homework is satisfactory, inspectors found inconsistencies in the setting and quality of homework. The school has already included the better provision of homework as one of the priorities in its plans for improvement. The school does communicate well with parents about pupils' progress, particularly in the case of underachieving pupils. However, the main reports to parents, though satisfactory and containing comments on pupils' attitudes to learning, are not always sufficiently informative in pointing out how pupils could improve.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**Pupils' attainment is well above the national average at the age of 14 and at the age of 16 and represents very good achievement overall.**

1. Pupils' attainment when they enter the school at the age of 11 is above average overall. At the age of 14, pupils' results in the National Curriculum tests are well above average. At the age of 16, pupils' results in GCSE examinations have been well above the national average for all of the last four years. The GCSE results represent very good progress over pupils' time in the school. In 1999, the school's GCSE results, as measured by the average total points scored per pupil, were in the top five per cent nationally.

2. Results in the national tests for 14 year olds over the last five years have improved faster than the national trend in mathematics and slower than the national trend in English and science. However, over the last three years, results in all three subjects have improved at a faster rate than results nationally. In 2000, results were well above average in English, mathematics and science for both boys and girls. When compared with the results of similar secondary schools, as defined by the proportion of pupils entitled to receive free school meals, the school's results were above average in all three subjects.

3. GCSE results fluctuate from year to year, reflecting the different levels of attainment of successive year groups, but are consistently well above the national average. When compared with the results obtained by pupils in similar schools in 2000, the school's results were above average. A better indicator of the school's performance in the GCSE examinations in 2000 is that, compared with their well above average prior attainment in the National Curriculum tests taken at the age of 14 in 1998, pupils' GCSE results were well above expectations and indicated very good progress during Years 10 and 11. Pupils' progress was excellent in mathematics, very good in English and satisfactory in science.

4. In 2000, the proportion of entrants gaining GCSE grades A\*-C was significantly above average in English language, mathematics, English literature, French, geography and history. It was above average in all other subjects except biology, chemistry, double award science and sports studies in which it was below average. The science results are distorted because a much larger than usual number of pupils, of a wide range of attainment, enter the separate examinations in physics, chemistry and biology, which subjects are generally taken by pupils of high attainment. Results were lower than the national average in chemistry and biology but represented satisfactory achievement. In physics, achievement in GCSE examinations was good because results were above average. Because many of the higher attaining pupils did not sit the double award course in science, results were understandably below the national average. However, the result of the school's current policy for entry of pupils to GCSE science examinations was that the proportion of pupils gaining at least one GCSE grade at A\*-C in a science subject in 2000 was above average.

5. The proportion of pupils gaining the highest grades A\* and A in GCSE examinations in 2000 was well above average in history and above average in mathematics, art and design, business studies, geography and religious education. Results in art and design were above average overall and were particularly pleasing for the school because the previous inspection had reported that there was underachievement in the subject among pupils in Years 10 and 11.

6. The best GCSE results were achieved in history in which pupils' grades were nearly 1.5 grades higher than the average grades that these pupils obtained in their other subjects.

7. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from very good care and support and make very good progress throughout the school. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language receive very good support and also make very good progress. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are well assimilated and make very good progress overall. Pupils who are gifted or talented achieve well but are not always working at full stretch. This is because they are not provided with sufficiently difficult work consistently in some subjects as occasionally seen in science and English.

8. Standards of work seen in classes were well above average in Key Stages 3 and 4. The school sets very challenging targets for improvements in external examinations. It did not reach one of its targets in 2000 because the target set for pupils' overall attainment, as measured by their average total GCSE points score, was unrealistically high.

9. Standards are well above average in literacy and numeracy and above average in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils make effective use of these skills to enhance their knowledge, skills and understanding in many subjects.

10. The school's policies to encourage high achievement among boys are successful. Boys' results in external examinations at the age of 14 and at the age of 16 are usually above or well above the national average.

11. Pupils in Year 11, who are identified as borderline candidates for GCSE grades A\* and A and for grades C and D receive special mentoring, which is valued by pupils and their parents and has been successful in improving these pupils' performance.

12. The school has done particularly well to maintain high standards of attainment even though its provision of staffing has worsened since the last inspection. The ratio of pupils to each teacher has increased considerably from 16.5 to 18.4 and the average size of classes has risen from 22 to 26 pupils. The increased number of pupils on roll has created a few difficulties in respect of accommodation, which result in some lessons occurring in non-specialist rooms and so restricting the range of learning opportunities slightly for a few pupils.

### **The very good teaching helps pupils to achieve high standards.**

13. The overall quality of teaching and learning observed was very good. The teaching was at least satisfactory in all of the lessons seen; it was good or better in 85 per cent and very good or better in 54 per cent of lessons seen. The overall quality of teaching seen in Key Stages 3 and 4 was very good in English and mathematics and good in science. In English, a substantial proportion of the teaching was very good and occasionally excellent. However, a small proportion of teaching in English was uninspiring, though satisfactory, and pupils made good progress because they paid very good attention in class and worked in a very positive manner.

14. Teachers have very high expectations for pupils. They ensure that the large majority of pupils learn very well and quickly in most classes. In a very good English lesson for pupils in Year 7, for example, pupils of all levels of attainment made excellent progress as a result of being constantly challenged to think and to produce detailed oral explanations of their work on metaphors and similes. Throughout the lesson, which was conducted at a very fast and appropriate pace, there was a buzz of excitement as the pupils responded very eagerly to the teacher's encouragement and praise. Through their perceptive and articulate answers to the

teacher's teasing questions, pupils showed that they had a very good understanding of how to develop their work on descriptive writing. Their written work showed very good improvements in the construction of sentences and a very good understanding of the use of alliteration. The teacher's marking was constructive and thorough and contained very good advice to pupils about how they could improve in line with their potential attainment.

15. Standards in art and design, which were unsatisfactory in Key Stage 4 at the time of the previous inspection, have improved considerably and are above average because the very good teaching now provides pupils with a strong motivation to achieve well. In a Year 11 art and design class, the teacher used her enthusiasm and good knowledge of her subject to stimulate pupils' interest in coursework and to present pupils with very good opportunities to develop their own individual talents and skills in the subject. In previous work, pupils had extended and deepened their knowledge and understanding of different artists and of textiles in different cultures. Pupils used their skills of research independently and thought carefully and creatively about the development of new ideas. The teacher very effectively supported pupils' learning through very good use of probing questions. She helped them to become confident by her sensitive use of praise and reassurance. Relationships between the teacher and the class were very good. Pupils' responses to the teacher and the work were so positive that not only did the pupils spend the lunchtime working on their projects they stayed behind after school for two hours to complete the tasks.

16. Pupils of the highest levels of attainment consistently receive work of sufficient challenge in a few subjects such as history and mathematics. This is reflected in the outstanding GCSE results obtained by high attaining pupils in the GCSE examinations in 2000 in these subjects. However, in most subjects their achievement is good rather than very good, because they are not always presented with work of appropriate difficulty to ensure that they work at full stretch, as seen occasionally in science.

17. In most lessons, pupils learn very well because teachers provide a very clear outline of the lesson's aims and provide a good range of timed activities and targets. Teachers carefully place the content of the lesson in the context of past and future learning. Quick, but thorough revision of previous work then follows, using probing questions and relevant discussion. Because pupils have very good skills and confidence in speaking, most teachers make very effective use of the discussions in class, in pairs or in groups to help pupils to progress at a fast rate.

18. In a very good history lesson in Year 9, pupils of all levels of attainment in a class containing pupils of a wide range of capability developed their skills in historical enquiry and gained a deeper understanding of aspects of the First World War, directly as a result of the teacher's very effective use of a range of teaching strategies and her very good planning. The lesson began briskly with a brainstorming activity that clearly demonstrated that pupils had acquired a very good knowledge and understanding of relevant historical events. Pupils were made to think carefully about why the war was continuing beyond the expected time. They enhanced their understanding by watching appropriate video excerpts. Through playing a 'trench warfare' game, pupils gained a very good awareness of the deprivations of life in the trenches and of the scale of deaths and casualties in the war. The teacher successfully used excerpts from an anti-war film and other resources for learning such as poems, oral accounts, information from the Internet, pictures, and written texts to stimulate pupils' thinking and to maintain their interest at a high level. Pupils undertook their tasks with considerable enthusiasm and competence, as shown when they used each source to identify for which aspects the source was appropriate. Pupils enjoyed the responsibility of finding things out for themselves. They benefited from the close monitoring and timely interventions of the teacher, who ensured that all pupils were able to look critically at the sources of evidence and to assess their reliability.

19. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers make very effective use of the well-written individual education plans to ensure that the work is well matched to pupils' needs. In several subjects, teachers supplement these plans with relevant and individual targets for pupils' learning in that particular subject. The learning support assistants provide very good care and support for these pupils. In a history class in Year 8, for example, pupils with special educational needs were making very good progress because the teacher and the support assistant had earlier discussed the content and aims of the lesson and the most effective way to deploy the support. The teaching of pupils who have hearing impairment is also very good because the special educational needs department has worked effectively with the local authority's support services to assist in the identification of the particular needs of these pupils. This has resulted in a much-improved learning environment for these pupils, whose achievement has improved because the pupils and teachers and support assistants make effective use of the audio aids now provided.

20. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language receive very good teaching because the coordinator for special educational needs has established a very effective link with the local authority's support service for bilingual learners and has arranged suitable support for these pupils with the appropriate teachers in subject areas. As a result of the school's good practice in teaching these pupils, the New Opportunities Fund is supporting the provision of a languages' club at the school.

21. Pupils acquire very good skills, knowledge and understanding in the different subjects and improve their basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The teaching of literacy is good across the school and sometimes is very good. Pupils' standards of speaking, listening, reading and writing are very good and teachers encourage them to use their skills in literacy and oracy to enhance their work in all subjects. Pupils answer questions eagerly in class and can discuss their work sensibly and articulately. In science lessons, teachers often use their good knowledge of the subject to give pupils clear explanations of scientific terms and make good use of the displays of key words to assist pupils to spell and write accurately.

22. The teaching of numeracy is good. Pupils use their good and often very good mathematical skills well in many subjects. In a science lesson in Year 11, for example, pupils showed good problem solving skills and used their knowledge of statistics to make sensible predictions and to work out the probability of genetic features occurring in offspring.

23. Teachers encourage pupils to use ICT to extend their learning. Pupils use the Internet effectively to develop their skills in research and to improve their examination skills, as seen when pupils were answering mathematics questions from a website. Pupils make good use of the ICT corner in the history room, which contains helpful information about suitable websites to be contacted to obtain sources of evidence.

24. The progress and achievement of pupils were at least satisfactory and usually good or very good in all of the classes observed. Standards are high because pupils have very positive attitudes to their work and are very keen to learn. Pupils work hard, show interest in carrying out classwork and homework and concentrate very well. They readily answer questions in class and display very good social skills, for example in grouped and paired work.

**The very good leadership and management of the head teacher, with very effective support from the governors and senior staff, provide a clear and purposeful direction for raising standards further, have maintained a positive ethos and have achieved good improvements.**

25. The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good. They are important and contributory factors to the school's very good achievements and its deservedly very good local reputation. He leads by personal example, is a visible presence around the school and has a very good knowledge of the pupils. His own teaching is very good, as seen in an English lesson with pupils in Year 11, in which pupils worked at a very fast rate with considerable enthusiasm and made very good progress in their writing development. Through regular visits, formally and informally, to watch other teachers in action, he provides good support and encouragement and proceeds both to commend and to spread among other teachers the good and often very good practice observed.

26. Governors and key staff provide very effective support and work closely with the head teacher to ensure that the school continues to meet the clearly stated and appropriate aims of the school's mission statement. There is a friendly and very caring ethos in which all pupils and staff are valued and work together very well in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Under the purposeful and sensitive guidance of the headteacher, the school has maintained high standards of attainment despite budgetary restrictions in recent years that have resulted in an increase in the pupil to teacher ratio and a rise in the average size of classes since the previous inspection in 1995.

27. The head teacher and governors are constantly looking to achieve a very high quality of performance in all aspects of the school's work. They set out a very clear educational direction for the school and have very high expectations of staff and pupils. Parents, governors, pupils, teachers and many parents commented favourably about the positive and caring work of the headteacher.

28. A direct result of the sensitive and caring style of management at all levels in the school is the very good quality of relationships between teachers and pupils and among pupils. Occasionally, the behaviour of a small number of pupils is inappropriate, but such instances are well managed by teachers and other adults in the school, so that the quality of learning is not adversely affected. In their discussions with inspectors, many pupils said that they enjoyed school and were keen to respond positively to the academic and personal challenges presented to them. They said that they were proud to belong to the school and felt safe and secure in the family atmosphere of this small school in which they knew all the teachers and the teachers knew and respected them. They felt that the teachers cared well for pupils of all capabilities and backgrounds. Pupils of ethnic minority background and pupils for whom English is a foreign language are very well assimilated and their achievement is of a similarly high standard to that of other pupils.

29. The leadership and management of subjects are good overall and are very good or better in a few. For example, the outstanding leadership and organisation of the mathematics and history departments ensure that the expectations of pupils and teachers in these subjects are very high. These departments make very effective provision of curricular, teaching and learning resources to enable pupils to achieve excellent external examination results. Across all subjects there is a shared vision of pursuing the highest possible achievement for pupils of all backgrounds and levels of attainment. Teachers in all subjects show the capacity and commitment to raise standards further.

30. There are many very positive outcomes from the leadership and management at all levels in the school. The morale of staff, pupils and governors is high. Parents have a great deal of satisfaction with most aspects of the work of the school, particularly its academic standards and the quality of care provided. Pupils' achievement, as measured by performances in public examinations, is well above expectations overall, based on pupils' previous attainment. With very few exceptions, pupils are happy at school and proud to belong to it. Pupils know that they are expected to work hard and they respond very positively

to try to achieve well. Teachers in all subjects are committed to further improving the quality of teaching and learning and benefit from a good programme of staff development. The support and administrative staff provide valuable assistance that enables teachers to concentrate well on their main task of teaching.

31. Procedures for evaluating the school's performance and planning for improvement are good. The outcomes of these procedures are good overall. The headteacher, governors and senior managers regularly monitor data relating to the school's performance and have a very good awareness of the school's current strengths and weaknesses. However, the school recognises the need for better precision in setting appropriate targets for pupils' and all departments' performances in external examinations, through more effective use of information about pupils' prior attainment and other relevant assessment data. In 2000, the school met most of its targets for performance in public examinations. Performance targets set for the current year are appropriately challenging and more realistic than previously.

32. Governors carry out their responsibilities very effectively and are actively involved in the work of the school. They are well informed about the performances of subjects, monitor developments closely and track progress carefully. They work closely and well with the school's leadership team and show an interest in the all round development, as well as the academic success, of all pupils. The work of the governing body is strength of the school and is another important factor in the school's maintenance of high standards.

33. Through the commitment and hard work of staff at all levels, the school has made good progress since its last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is very good. Attainment in public examinations remains well above the national average and represents very good achievement based on pupils' prior levels of attainment when they entered the school.

34. Progress in dealing with the five key issues identified in the last inspection is good overall. The school continues to hold high expectations and staff work well as a team to enable pupils to achieve high standards within a very positive learning environment. There have been improvements in the use of assessment to give pupils better information about their progress and to set targets for improvement, though there remains a need for greater consistency among teachers in the use of assessment to promote learning and for the school to be more effective in setting realistic targets for achievement in GCSE examinations. The policy on special educational needs has improved, is very effective and, through the development of numerous initiatives, such as the very good compilation and use of individual education plans, helps to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are very well assimilated and make very good progress in all years. The governors and the school's leadership group and financial administrators now monitor more closely the progress towards meeting the proposals outlined in the school's development plan and apply the principles of best value to their spending decisions. Progress on meeting the last key issue has resulted in a reduction in the delay caused to the start of lessons, through the use of a system of warning bells. Parents justifiably continue to hold the school in high regard as shown by the lengthy waiting list for entry in all years. The school has the capacity and the shared commitment to improve further.

**Within a caring and supportive environment, pupils have very positive attitudes to work and are justifiably proud of their school.**

35. The vast majority of pupils and parents express pride in their school because it provides a very good quality of education that enables most pupils to achieve their potential, within a secure, friendly and very caring environment. They know that the school continues to have high standards of attainment and high expectations and is justifiably held in high regard



locally. Of the 206 parental questionnaires returned, 96 per cent reported that the school expected pupils to work hard and 62 per cent strongly agreed with this view.

36. The quality of pastoral care is very good. The school provides pupils with very effective personal support and guidance through its team of experienced and committed tutors and heads of year. Pupils value the system of mentoring, particularly when it is used to counter underachievement. Good formal and informal communication among staff ensures that they are aware of the needs and successes of individual pupils. The mutual respect and trust between pupils and teachers and other staff make a firm base for this support. Suitable procedures to deal with first aid or sickness are in place and are enhanced through the good provision of a state registered nurse.

37. Pupils respond very well to the school's very caring approach. They show their enthusiasm and very positive attitudes to school through good attendance and considerate and courteous behaviour. They have a commitment to work hard to achieve high standards, display tolerance and respect for the feelings of others and show a readiness to cooperate well with each other and with their teachers. They willingly engage in the wide range of school activities and appreciate the virtues of this small school in which pupils and adults are well known to each other.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**The school does not make sufficiently effective use of its very detailed information about pupils' attainment to set appropriate and realistic targets for pupils and departments to improve.**

38. The school has collected a considerable and very useful amount of information about pupils' academic and personal performance. This information is used well by teachers to match the work set in class to the needs of most pupils and particularly for pupils with special educational needs. The information is also used effectively in most subjects to set suitable targets for improvement for most pupils and for the departments.

39. However, there are three shortcomings in the school's procedures. Firstly, the information gathered from the assessments of pupils' work and potential have not been analysed thoroughly enough to identify the learning needs of the highest attaining pupils in most subjects. The result is that except in subjects such as history, mathematics and geography these pupils do not always work at full stretch. This accounts in part for the wide variation among subjects in the proportion of pupils obtaining GCSE grades A\* and A.

40. Secondly, the school has not looked carefully enough at the different levels of attainment of successive year groups and has unwisely determined some of its targets on a simple year-on-year improvement. For 2000, for example, the school did not meet some of its targets for performance in external examinations because it had set targets on this basis. The target for pupils' total average total GCSE points' score was wildly optimistic and not surprisingly, the school was well short of reaching it. Pupils' actual performance in the GCSE examinations at the age of 16 showed that, when compared with their prior attainment at the age of 14, they had actually made well above average improvement when compared with the progress made by pupils of similar prior attainment nationally.

41. Thirdly, the quality of marking varies from excellent to satisfactory. The result of this is that in those classes in which the work is carefully, consistently and conscientiously marked, pupils receive very clear feedback, advice and encouragement about how they can improve their work and accordingly progress at a more rapid rate than pupils whose work is more cursorily marked. This was noticed in a scrutiny of pupils' written and coursework in English, which revealed an inconsistent approach by teachers. Most of the teachers had provided very detailed and thorough marking that clearly indicated pupils' strengths and weaknesses in respect of the particular pieces of work done. In a few books however, the teacher's marking consisted only of a very brief comment and lacked constructive advice or indications of targets towards which pupils should work.

**Although attainment in science is above average, pupils do not make as much progress in science in Years 10 and 11 as they do in mathematics and English.**

42. Pupils' attainment in science, as measured by results in the national tests for pupils aged 14, has been well above the national average in all of the past four years. It has been similar to attainment in mathematics and in some years has been above that in English. However, by the age of 16, the proportion of pupils gaining at least one GCSE grade at A\*-C in science has been above average, whereas in the other two subjects the proportion has been well above average.

43. When compared with their results in the tests for 14 year olds in 1998, pupils' GCSE results at grades A\*-C in 2000 represent excellent progress in mathematics, very good progress in English but satisfactory progress in science. Although pupils' overall attainment in science is above average, the GCSE results at grades A\*-C in 2000 were below average in biology, chemistry and double award science but above average in physics.

44. Expectations for pupils are high because a large number of pupils study three separate science subjects in the time usually allocated to two subjects. Occasionally, pupils are unsuited to the demands of completing these courses successfully, find the work too demanding and do less well in their science examinations than in many of their other subjects. The department is rightly reviewing the curricular provision for science in Years 10 and 11 to ensure that pupils are following courses suited to their individual needs. It is also considering the appropriateness of the examination syllabuses currently being studied. In a good attempt to raise standards the department has helped pupils to improve the quality of their coursework for the GCSE examinations.

45. The scrutiny of pupils' work in science showed that a few of the highest attaining pupils in science were not always covering the work in suitable depth to ensure that they would gain the highest possible grades in GCSE examinations. They did not readily link their work in science to everyday life, for example, by not relating their work on photosynthesis to the environment or factors in farming.

**The setting of homework is inconsistent and results in pupils sometimes having too much and sometimes too little homework.**

46. Although the overall quality and quantity of homework are satisfactory, teachers are inconsistent in the amount they give and in the frequency with which they set it. The school has correctly identified the better provision of homework as one of the priorities in its plans for improvement.

47. At the pre-inspection meeting for parents, a few said that they valued the meeting held by the school that was designed to help them to assist pupils to manage their time effectively. Several parents commented about the inconsistencies in the setting of homework. A small number felt that there was too little, with one parent saying that a pupil in Year 11 completed all his homework for the week on one evening. Most felt that overall the amount of homework was satisfactory but pointed out the variations from day to day. For example, some parents referred to homework for up to four subjects being set for completion by the following day and the need for a more rational timetable for homework.

48. Not all teachers follow the set timetable for homework. Accordingly, pupils sometimes have little homework to complete and at other times they have too much to complete by a given deadline. A few pupils in Years 10 and 11 said that they got round the problem of too much homework by prioritising their work, which meant that they completed all the homework in the subjects they felt were most important to them and tended to skimp the rest. Because pupils have very responsible attitudes to their work, want to please their teachers and to achieve well, they sometimes feel under pressure. This pressure could be alleviated by the implementation of a properly enforced timetable for homework and through the development of a more effective and careful monitoring system to ensure that both the amount and the quality of homework were appropriate for all pupils.

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

49. To raise further the standards of work and the quality of education provided, the school should include the following key issues in its action plan.

- (1) Make more effective use of the very detailed information about pupils' attainment to set appropriate and realistic targets for the whole school and for all pupils and departments.  
(Paragraphs: 39-41)
- (2) Implement strategies to increase pupils' progress in science throughout Years 10 and 11, so that attainment in science more closely matches the higher standards currently obtained by pupils in English and mathematics by the age of 16, by improving the curricular provision for science and matching the policy for entry to GCSE examinations more closely to pupils' individual needs.  
(Paragraphs: 42-45)
- (3) Improve the consistency and quality of homework by implementing a timetable for the setting of homework and monitoring its use.  
(Paragraphs: 46-48)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	39
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	51	31	15	0	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	645
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	25

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	118

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	41

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	1.1

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	62	62	124

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	47	56	49
	Girls	58	48	48
	Total	105	104	97
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	85 (81)	84 (85)	78 (82)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	47 (36)	60 (57)	52 (50)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	48	56	51
	Girls	59	48	52
	Total	107	104	103
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	85 (89)	84 (78)	83 (86)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	47 (58)	60 (49)	54 (50)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (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
	2000	48	70	118

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	31	45	46
	Girls	48	70	71
	Total	79	115	117
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	67 (72)	97 (100)	99 (100)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score	School	50

per pupil	National	38.4
-----------	----------	------

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	8
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	8
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	4
White	608
Any other minority ethnic group	15

### ***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	14	1
Other minority ethnic groups	2	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)	35.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.4

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	363

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	73.8
---	------

#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	27.9
Key Stage 4	23.2

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	1 573 371
Total expenditure	1 557 803
Expenditure per pupil	2 408
Balance brought forward from previous year	4 480
Balance carried forward to next year	20 048

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	645
Number of questionnaires returned	205

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	50	6	4	1
My child is making good progress in school.	40	50	7	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	58	8	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	47	17	7	4
The teaching is good.	42	51	4	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	41	15	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	27	7	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	34	2	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	36	47	12	4	1
The school is well led and managed.	51	37	5	3	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	47	3	3	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	36	19	9	8