

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE TIFFIN GIRLS' SCHOOL**

Richmond Road  
Kingston Upon Thames

LEA area: Kingston

Unique reference number: 102602

Headteacher: Ms Pauline Cox

Reporting inspector: Mrs Sheila Browning  
1510

Dates of inspection: 3 – 6 April 2000

Inspection number: 186142

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Grammar
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Girls
School address:	Richmond Road Kingston Upon Thames Kingston
Postcode:	KT2 5PL
Telephone number:	020 8546 0773
Fax number:	020 8547 0191
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms Sandra Holdsworth
Date of previous inspection:	November 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
Sheila Browning	Registered inspector
Anne Bennett	Lay inspector
Michael Miller	Team inspector
Ian Newton	Team inspector
Philip O'Neill	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Open Book Inspections  
6 East Point  
High Street  
Seal TN15 0EG

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Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Tiffin Girls' School is a selective grammar school. It is about the same size as other secondary schools, with 862 girls aged 11 – 18 on roll. Pupils are of much higher than average attainment on entry reflecting the selective nature of the school. The percentage of pupils identified as having special needs is 1.6 per cent; this is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals, at 1.15 per cent, is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language, at 27.4 per cent, is very high. The school serves a wide catchment area. Pupils come predominantly from homes that are socio-economically above average and are from a wide variety of religious, cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

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

This is an outstandingly effective school. Pupils achieve excellent standards. Standards achieved in the sixth form are particularly good. The overall quality of teaching and learning is excellent. A successful teaching and learning partnership is established and sustained. Pupils' attitudes to learning are a particular strength. Behaviour, personal development and relationships are all excellent. Leadership and management are decisive and effective. The quality and range of the learning opportunities are very good. The provision for more able pupils is excellent. The school provides excellent value for money overall.

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

- Standards are very high. The proportion of pupils obtaining 5 or more GCSE passes at A\*-C is very high and for 5 or more GCSE passes at A\*-G is well above the national average. The average A/AS level passes for pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A levels or AS equivalent is very high.
- The overall quality of teaching and learning is excellent. The academic progress of pupils is most effectively promoted. There is a positive learning culture driven by high expectations in which pupils are expected to think and play a full part in their learning.
- The breadth of curriculum offered is very good with an extensive range of extra-curricular opportunities.
- Attendance is well above the national average.
- Leadership by the headteacher and senior management team is excellent. They exercise their complementary skills to very good effect. The governors carry out their role very well.
- The school promotes excellent standards of behaviour; the personal development of pupils and relationships in the school are excellent.
- The school provides excellent value for money.

#### **What could be improved**

- This is a very effective school; there are no significant weaknesses.

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has responded very effectively to the issues raised in the last inspection. Coherent whole school policies are implemented well. School planning clearly identifies future developments. Those in senior and middle management roles carry out responsibilities proficiently. Assessment is used effectively and informs subsequent planning for teaching and the learning of individual pupils. Challenging work supports more able pupils' progress both in class and at home. The school complies with the statutory requirements for special educational needs. A daily act of collective worship for all pupils is still not in place; this is a statutory requirement.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 and 18 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	A*	A*	A*	A
A-levels/AS-levels	A	A*	A*	n/a

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

In 1999, the proportion of pupils who achieved five or more GCSE passes at grades A\* to C was very high and for A\* to G was well above the national average. Results in the General Certificate for Secondary Education (GCSE) are consistently very high and show a rising trend. Results in the 1999 GCE A/AS level are consistently very high. In 1999, the proportion of pupils who achieved two or more A levels or AS equivalent was very high.

The 1999 national tests for fourteen-year-olds show that pupils' results are very high in English, science and mathematics. When compared to similar schools, standards in English and mathematics are well above average, and they are above average in science. Standards at the end of Key Stage 3 are well above the national average and are often excellent. Results are consistently high. Numeracy and literacy standards are well above the national average. Achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is above expectations for pupils of this age. They achieve well from a well above average level on entry to the school, and they make excellent progress. The accomplishment of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The progress that more able pupils make is excellent. Standards being achieved currently in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form are excellent. The standards achieved by the very able pupils admitted to the school ought to be very high, and in practice they certainly are.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to learning are a strength of the school. They sustain independent study and are responsive, mature and responsible.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around the school is excellent. Pupils show a mutual respect and value for each other and for adults.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are excellent. Pupils take advantage of the numerous opportunities to take on extra responsibilities, especially in the sixth form.
Attendance	Attendance is well above the national average.

Pupils' mature approach to their work and their excellent relationships with staff and their peers create an outstanding environment for their education.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-13 years	aged 14-16 years	aged 16-18 years
Lessons seen overall	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

*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 is good or better in 97 per cent of lessons of which 69 per cent are very good or excellent. The skills of communication, including literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are taught effectively. Teaching of basic and higher order skills is very good. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of their subjects. Planning and teaching methods are very good. Teachers present challenging activities and make excellent use of questioning to promote pupils' learning, knowledge and understanding. Teacher expectations of what pupils can achieve are high; the quality of interaction, debate and discussion promotes learning powerfully, and the overall quality of pupils' learning is excellent. The school meets the needs of all pupils well. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and more able pupils is very good.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Broad, balanced and relevant. Provision is made for particular groups by giving maximum opportunity for choice especially at GCSE and A/AS level. Extra-curricular provision is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.



Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Spiritual provision in class teaching is very good but pupils do not experience a daily act of collective worship. Moral provision is a considerable strength, with very strong moral and ethical views. The ethos is excellent. Social provision is excellent; pupils are fully involved in many important aspects of school life. There are numerous opportunities for leadership and responsibility. Cultural provision is excellent and the school successfully celebrates the cultural diversity of the girls.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Provision for the care and support of pupils makes a major contribution to their development. Pupils are involved in their own target setting. Pupil specific targets are too generalised and lead to girls doing more work, rather than better quality and focused work.

The curriculum is good. Extra-curricular provision is wide ranging. Provision to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety, and for support and guidance for pupils is very good. Parents think very highly of the school, and the partnership promotes the education of pupils very effectively.

#### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, governing body and all staff create an excellent ethos. Members of the senior management team work effectively together. The quality of management across the curriculum and in pastoral areas is very good. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching, learning and the curriculum are well developed and highly effective in maintaining standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfil their responsibilities. Almost all statutory requirements are met, but the school does not offer a daily act of collective worship. Governors are very supportive and are actively involved in the strategic and decision making processes. They are well informed of the school's performance, strengths and weaknesses and are therefore effective.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a clear and accurate view of its work and has analysed what works well and why.
The strategic use of resources	Very good use of staff, time, resources and of accommodation. The principles of best value are integral to the school's systems and procedures. The school gives excellent value for money.

The headteacher and senior key staff provide decisive and strong leadership and management. The governors' role in shaping the direction of the school is well developed. Staffing and resources for learning are very good overall and accommodation is good. Provision for the library and for ICT is much improved. Best value principles are applied stringently to the school's use of resources, and spending is effectively monitored.

## 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>• Behaviour is good.</li><li>• Girls make good progress.</li><li>• Girls like school.</li><li>• The school helps girls to be mature and responsible.</li><li>• The school is well managed and led.</li><li>• The teaching is good.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Working more closely with parents.</li></ul>

The inspection team confirmed the parents' positive views of the school. The catchment is widespread, but the school is aware there is a need to develop ways to work more closely with all parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**Standards are very high. The proportion of pupils obtaining 5 or more GCSE passes at A\*-C is very high and for 5 or more GCSE passes at A\*-G is well above the national average. The average A/AS level passes for pupils entered for 2 or more GCE A-levels or AS equivalent is very high.**

1. Pupils achieve very high standards, well above national averages in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 and in GCSE examinations, even after taking account of the selective nature of the school and the pupils' abilities on entry to the school. Since approximately 40 per cent of pupils come from the private sector, end of Key Stage 2 national test scores are not available. The school uses National Foundation for Educational Research test scores to establish ability levels on entry. Standards were higher than national averages at the time of the last inspection and they continue to improve, keeping pace with the national trend. Results are consistently high. When compared to similar schools, results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 are well above average.
2. All pupils follow nine full GCSE's and one short GCSE course and all pupils enter the examination for at least five GCSE subjects; the great majority take the full range of examination subjects. The proportion of pupils obtaining the highest grades in GCSE examinations last year in English, mathematics and science were well above national averages. In 1999 there was a significant increase in the number of A\* and A grades at GCSE, and 99.9 per cent of entries achieved A\* to C grades in all subjects taken. Almost half of the pupils entered for English language, biology, chemistry, physics, art and design, geography and history, achieved A\* grades in those subjects. With the exception of design and technology, the majority achieved A\* to B grades in all subjects taken. The average total GCSE points score per pupil shows a rising trend. Results were much higher than national standards. The school also features at the top of the performance tables for the local education authority for both GCSE and A-level tables. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very good results.
3. Results in A-level in most subjects are excellent and are well above average for selective schools. In the sixth form, most pupils take three A-levels, some do four or an A/S. Results have been consistently high. In 1999, the percentage of pupils who achieved two or more A-levels or AS equivalent was very high, and 77 per cent of pupils achieved A-B equivalent grades. The strongest subjects in 1999 were art, English, religious education, mathematics, psychology and geography. The pass rate was 99.1 per cent. The school sets challenging targets for improvement, and if current rates can be maintained almost all pupils will gain A\* in all GCSE subjects by 2008 and almost all A-level results will be grade A by 2010.
4. Overall standards of attainment in lessons are very high indeed at both key stages and in the sixth form. A significant amount of excellent work is evident throughout the school and particularly in the sixth form. The standards achieved are related directly to the quality of teaching and the progressively challenging activities presented to pupils. The school promotes a positive climate in which a successful teaching and learning partnership is established and sustained.
5. Standards of literacy are particularly high, and pupils' excellent command of language

gives them a secure foundation for their work in many subjects. For example, some excellent accounts were seen in a Year 9 English lesson acting out Act 2 scene 5 of Romeo and Juliet, where a very convincing characterisation was given of the nurse. In Years 7 and 9 storytelling activities, pupils developed their own stories based on different beginnings and surprise endings. The language used was vivid and rich, full of description. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and speak highly of the support they have received which has enabled them to reach their full potential. High standards in science are built partly on a foundation of good literacy. Pupils in Year 9 showed a very good knowledge of scientific vocabulary in a lesson discussing the role of cells in photosynthesis and Year 11 explained quickly and accurately how to apply Fleming's left hand rule. In a sixth form biology lesson, pupils engaged in a healthy debate introducing new ideas of their own about colour vision and different types of cells, and advanced their knowledge of genetics.

6. Standards of reading are excellent. Pupils demonstrate a great independence and breadth in reading, for example when researching topics and, in Year 7, preparing book reviews for a class presentation. When studying texts from other cultures, in Year 11, pupils made significant advances in the exploration of prose, poetry and drama. They showed rapid advances and extracted meaning beyond the literal. Pupils show a very high level of appreciation of the work of many different authors.
7. High quality communication skills are much in evidence and underpin much good learning and the achievement of the school's excellent standards. For example standards of writing are very high. There is some exemplary work, for instance, in science in the illustration and description of the classification of vertebrates at Key Stage 3. In history, geography and art there are some excellent research studies. At the end of Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, there is an excellent range of writing. There is good evidence to show that pupils are well supported in extending their ideas and their writing is excellently structured and is underpinned by wide reading. Note-taking skills are excellent; pupils select, compare, synthesise information and draft and redraft their work.
8. Pupils are numerate and apply and use mathematical ideas well in many areas of the curriculum and particularly in science. In a year 9 test, pupils demonstrated secure knowledge and understanding of decimals, ratios and fractions. At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils showed a very good knowledge of mathematics, they quickly and accurately interpreted information given as a series of simultaneous inequalities and investigated real life problems involving two variables and illustrated them graphically. Sixth form pupils have a good understanding of trigonometric fractions, sine, cosine and tangent. They correctly evaluate ratios and understand negative angles.
9. Pupils' ICT skills are excellent and ICT is very well used to support work in other subjects such as English, science, history, geography and art. Work indicates that pupils have above and often well above average skills on entry. Year 7 pupils produce text for an A4 page layout, enhanced by a picture that they have image scanned. During Key Stage 3, pupils create their own web pages using a commercial package. They improve their personal expertise and focus well on the technical production. Throughout the school, skills in word processing are well developed. At the end of Key Stage 4, presentation skills continue to be good. Year 11 pupils consider ethical issues concerning ICT and the processes of development of the Internet.
10. Pupils demonstrate secure use of ICT for independent research; they interpret and define briefs for projects extremely well. They are very proficient users and discuss

knowledgeably differences between commercial web browsers. All pupils enjoy the use of Email facilities, and undertake additional research enquiries. Creative and imaginative thinking are well developed and lead to high standards in many areas, for example in art, music, drama, physical education, history, geography, religious education and investigative science.

**The overall quality of teaching and learning is excellent. The academic progress of pupils is most effectively promoted. There is a positive learning culture driven by high expectations in which pupils are expected to think and play a full part in their learning.**

11. Standards of teaching overall are excellent, and are similar to those reported in the last inspection. Teaching is good or better in 97 per cent of lessons, of which 69 per cent are very good or excellent. The quality of teaching is uniformly high throughout the school. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of their subjects, and are keen to share this with pupils. They are flexible and versatile. The skills of communication, including literacy, numeracy and ICT are taught effectively. Teaching of basic and higher order skills is very good. Planning is excellent and is a strong feature. Lessons are carefully planned and prepared and extension tasks especially for more able pupils are detailed, appropriate and thorough. Teaching methods are often excellent.
12. Much of the excellent learning which occurs is in response to the challenges set by teachers. They present challenging activities and make excellent use of questioning to promote pupils' learning, knowledge and understanding. Teacher expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. The high quality of interaction, debate and discussion promotes further learning. The management of pupils is excellent. They are stimulated by the teaching and are encouraged to be pro-active and participate in their learning and become active learners in all respects. In a Year 13 psychology lesson, for instance, pupils were successfully encouraged to extend the breadth of their reading and this had a very significant impact on the depth of their understanding. Pupils are very good listeners, both to teachers and to each other, and they respond positively to each other's views and opinions and develop very good critical skills. Teachers successfully and skilfully use questioning to reinforce learning. The uses of recapitulation and specific terminology are particularly good. Teachers make the pupils reflect and think before they teach them to establish what they already know and ensure that they are engaged. In a Year 9 history lesson the targeted monitoring of the class consolidated and extended pupils' understanding of the rise of Hitler and the Nazi Party. Teachers persistently test for understanding. They use a variety of successful techniques and approaches to hold and maintain pupil interest.
13. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to engage in discussion, give presentations and debate with each other and their peers. In a Year 13 English lesson, pupils thoroughly enjoyed their work and a strength of the teaching was the productive use of the pupils' ideas through very good brainstorming, recording and progressive challenging of their views. Pupils are effectively encouraged to work independently and they work productively and with maturity. In a Year 11 ICT lesson, the open approach to and targeted questioning of pupils when sampling examination questions ensured that they justified their statements and approaches thereby significantly enhancing the quality of learning.
14. The school meets the needs of all pupils well. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and more able pupils is very good. Time is used well, and lessons

are often at a brisk pace, as for example in a Year 7 mathematics lesson, when pupils were questioned in a 'quick fire' fashion, but not in a threatening way and they responded positively. Resources are used well.

15. The pupils' positive attitudes to learning are a particularly strong feature. They are competitive, have very high expectations and have a commitment to high standards themselves. In talking with pupils, they said that they appreciated the intellectual challenge and stimulation of working together. They enjoyed the challenge of having to persevere. The high quality of teacher-pupil relationships makes a strong contribution to establishing the pupils as active learners. The school has worked hard at the teacher-learner partnership. Teachers are good role models and treat pupils with respect, which is returned. Pupils feel secure and have the confidence to discuss issues with teachers. Teachers use praise well and readily celebrate pupils' effort and achievement. During the inspection, there were several occasions when the pupils spontaneously clapped or praised their peers for excellent effort, presentation or performance. In discussion, pupils said how much they appreciated the time that teachers take to explain their progress and what they might do to improve.

**The breadth of curriculum offered is very good with an extensive range of extra curricular opportunities.**

16. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. Provision beyond the basic curriculum is effective. The curriculum for Years 7 to 11 has been in a state of transition and the completed model is now in place. In Key Stage 3, all pupils follow a common curriculum of English, mathematics, science, design and technology and two languages, French and German. In Year 8 pupils take on an additional language and all girls in Years 8 and 9 study Latin. Pupils in Key Stage 3 study a balanced curriculum including history, geography, art, music drama, physical education, religious education, a personal, social and health education programme (PSE) within the tutorial system and discrete ICT which includes library and study skills. In addition to the related themes within the PSE programme, discrete careers modules including structured work experience, computer-aided guidance and option preparation are all timetabled for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. Homework is set and is seen as essential support for work done at school.
17. Provision is made for particular groups by giving maximum opportunity for choice, especially at GCSE and A/AS level. The school tries hard to ensure that opportunities are maximised for pupils to follow their strengths, talents and interests whilst at the same time ensuring a broad, balanced curriculum. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are offered an element of choice through a limited option scheme. They take a common core of subjects comprising English language, English literature, mathematics, dual award science, taught by subject specialists in biology, chemistry and physics, a modern foreign language, design and technology, physical education and health education within personal and social education, careers and religious education. Pupils may select a combination of options. Whichever they choose it will lead to nine full course GCSEs and one short course GCSE.
18. Pupils entering the sixth form are normally expected to have a minimum of five GCSE passes grades A\* to C including English, mathematics, science and a foreign language. In the sixth form there are five option blocks; most students take three A-levels. Some do four or an A/S. There is a personal, social and health education programme (PSE) as well as a joint general studies programme with Tiffin Boys School which provides additional breadth to the curriculum. Students are offered computer-aided higher education guidance and an opportunity to participate in Young Enterprise. Over 80 per

cent of students regularly volunteer to participate in Young Enterprise and last year Tiffin won twelve out of the thirteen trophies, sweeping the board. Pupils additionally participate in a range of sports in school and there are a number of off-site activities. About a third of the pupils successfully take part in and complete the Community Sports Leader Award.

19. The school is well advanced in its planning for the forthcoming changes to the A-Level examination system for all post-16 students in September 2000. The school has shaped its curriculum offer well, based on information received so far.
20. Within the curriculum, basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are covered and taught well. Higher order skills are also addressed well. Since the last inspection there have been definite improvements in the quality of the schemes of work, all of which are now fully in place. This has led to improved consistency of planning and has impacted positively on standards. Good line management, in terms of the improved heads of faculty structure with defined responsibilities for monitoring of the curriculum, has also had an effect on improving provision, teaching and learning and standards. There is good planning in subjects and it shows coherence and consistency. The National Curriculum is fully in place.
21. Extra-curricular opportunities are wide ranging and extend throughout the school. They include: in music over eleven different ensembles, numerous sporting activities, medics society, book club, art club, creative writing workshop, debating club, Christian Union, road safety quiz team, Young Enterprise, T'ai Chi, Junior Chess, public speaking and Amnesty International which is run by the sixth form. In addition to this there are numerous educational trips and visits. The majority of the school takes part in one of a range of trips to destinations which have included Stratford upon Avon, the Isle of Wight, Bruges, China, France, Rome, United States of America, Eurostar to Paris, rock climbing, caving, canoeing and wind surfing. Levels of participation are high and the curriculum is greatly enriched by this area of school life.
22. The provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision, is very good overall. Spiritual provision in class teaching is very good especially in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, in terms of opportunities for reflection and discussing issues. In English, art and music there are good examples of planned opportunities for developing spirituality, such as reading aboriginal poetry, art from different periods and listening to Bach in music. Moral provision is a considerable strength, with very strong moral and ethical values. In English, science and PSE pupils are informed about and discuss moral and ethical issues. Pupils are aware of those less fortunate and whole-school efforts have raised over £ 2,000 for charity in a single day. Tutor groups raise nearly £6,000 a year for charity. The ethos is excellent. Social provision is excellent; pupils are fully involved in many important aspects of school life. There are numerous opportunities for leadership and responsibility. Cultural provision is excellent. The school successfully celebrates the cultural diversity of the girls.

### **Attendance is well above the national average**

23. The attendance rate at the school in the 1998/9 academic year was well above the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence at the school, in the same year, was well below the national average. This has a positive impact on progress and attainment at the school. Punctuality is good throughout the school. Procedures to promote good attendance are clear. Problems of attendance are noted and are followed up by pastoral staff. Registers are monitored on a regular basis. The school complies with legal requirements. Pupils who are absent through ill health are well supported by the school. The school is very sensitive and alert to the needs of pupils, particularly any who suffer from stress due to pressure of work and their own expectation of how well they should do.

### **Leadership by the headteacher and senior management team is excellent. They exercise their complementary skills to very good effect. The governors carry out their role very well.**

24. The leadership provided by the governors and management focuses on the continued improvement of educational standards and provision for all pupils. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. She has a very clear vision, drive and high expectations for all. Leadership is decisive but recognises the value of consultation and negotiation with all partners. Together with the senior management team and governing body, all of which have undergone considerable changes in membership, she has maintained an excellent ethos. Management is consultative and encourages staff to participate fully. Pupils and parents are informed on most matters and are also encouraged to contribute their views to the decisions made.

25. The senior management team is a strong and effective one. Its members exercise their complementary skills to very good effect. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and are carried out efficiently. Senior managers are given considerable responsibility to manage different aspects of the school. Together they provide an overall direction and a shared and common purpose. There are two main routes through which developments are implemented, managed, monitored and evaluated; these are the Academic and Pastoral Boards. Both are operationally effective and both are concerned with whole school policy and procedures. The infrastructure is strong. The academic board has curriculum oversight and is responsible for monitoring, through the line management structure, resources and plans for major developments. It is the forum used to discuss, advise and implement decisions relating to the academic interests of pupils, including the aims, organisation and ethos of the school. It also provides a good forum for constructive criticism, leading to a positive feedback mechanism in the teaching process. The pastoral board has a wide brief encompassing in Key Stage 3 the oversight of new entrants and induction, in Key Stage 4 oversight and option choices, in the sixth form oversight and university briefing. All year leaders are involved with parental consultation, records of achievement and pastoral issues, such as oversight of pupils' personal and social development.

26. Improvements and development planning are well established and are well supported by the restructured senior management and pastoral teams. A departmental structure along loose faculty lines secures very effective monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and of the curriculum. Departments that were giving concern have gained new leadership. The quality of teaching throughout the school is consistently high. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently improved through a policy of professional staff development with evaluation based on statistical evidence, such as



examination results and feedback from pupils and parents together with staff's own critical evaluation. Given the excellent nature of the outcomes this is manifestly most effective. The development of such systems together with the commitment of staff gives grounds for high confidence that the school will continue to improve.

27. The governing body is well informed and hardworking. It successfully carries out its role as critical friend to the school. An appropriate committee structure is in place and governors operate effectively and review the work of the school. Regular reports on the progress made since the last inspection are in place. All the issues raised in the last inspection have been addressed with the exception of a daily act of collective worship. The governors are well informed about standards and the quality of education provided through relevant documentation, meetings and regular presentations by senior managers and heads of faculties.

**The school promotes excellent standards of behaviour; the personal development of pupils and relationships in the school are excellent.**

28. The school promotes excellent standards of behaviour. Great emphasis is placed on self-discipline and consideration for others. The school rules, which are kept to a minimum, are clearly known and understood by pupils. Regular attendance, punctuality, and the prompt production of homework are expected of pupils, and parents are asked to help in ensuring that a daily routine is established. All parents have signed the home-school agreement. The behaviour of pupils is excellent both in and out of lessons and strongly contributes to the high standards achieved. The pupils are very aware that teachers have high expectations of them and are clear about the rules of the school. Teachers know the pupils well and praise their efforts and achievements. During the inspection, there were several occasions when pupils readily praised each other's efforts. For example, in a Year 11 drama lesson, pupils worked very effectively and collaboratively in their groups. They readily shared their different talents and were generous in their praise for what worked well. Pupils are very serious about their work but they are also good humoured. In a Year 13 mathematics lesson, pupils were highly motivated and were very good at helping one another, and shared their complementary skills. In a Year 11 English lesson, looking at 'The Bunyip', an aboriginal legend, pupils were very focused and showed an increasing capacity for independence in their work. In a Year 13 history lesson, pupils confidently and fully participated in a discussion about the Wars of the Roses. They showed very high levels of thinking and analysis as real historians.

29. There have been no exclusions from school. There is a clear anti-bullying policy but in discussions pupils said they were not aware of any issues regarding bullying. Good procedures are in place.

30. The personal development of pupils and relationships in the school are excellent. Pupils are confident and assured. Their attitude to learning is a strength. They are eager to learn, and concentrate, enjoy and sustain learning. In a Year 13 psychology lesson, discussion was lively and informed with a real eagerness to learn and test out ideas. In a Year 7 ICT lesson, finishing at lunchtime, all the pupils remained to complete their work well into the lunch break. Pupils are stimulated by the challenges and activities presented to them. They are trustworthy, and form constructive relationships. There are numerous planned opportunities for them to take on extra responsibilities and pupils show high levels of maturity. A strong feature of the sixth form is the way that students accept responsibility. They help run 'The Tiffin Kit Bag' shop, the head girl occasionally takes over assembly, and many sixth formers help

organise and run various extra-curricular activities, and care for younger pupils. During the inspection, rehearsals for the school play, Into the Woods by Sondheim, were under way; pupils had responsibility for lighting, sound, costume, backstage and direction. They engaged most professionally. The prefect system is effective and popular amongst pupils and the school officers enjoy real responsibility. School officers and prefects have job descriptions and apply for posts of responsibility on an interview basis. Their areas of responsibility are varied within houses, the library, games, music, ICT (and a technical support prefect who trains younger pupils). Pupils in Year 11 and the sixth form have produced a year book, and themselves negotiated with a commercial printer for production. Each form is represented on the School Council, which is chaired by the head girl. The School Council is seen by the pupils to be a very useful mechanism for instituting changes and improvements. It has its own agenda and substantial budget which has been used to improve the school environment and increase specific resources for curriculum areas.

31. The form tutor and head of year play a vital role in tracking pupils' personal development. Pupils maintain a record of achievement during their time at school. Teachers have a good knowledge of their pupils, and this and the tutor consultation days held twice a year help track pupils' personal development. The school encourages pupils to be involved in their own target setting. This is a recognised developmental area of the school. The school acknowledges that present pupil-specific targets can be too generalised and lead to girls doing more work rather than better quality and focused work. It is addressing this.

**The school provides excellent value for money.**

32. The school provides excellent value for money. A very careful approach is taken to budgeting. Governors and managers continually seek to improve cost effectiveness. The integration of planning for improvement and financial planning is achieved through a clearly communicated development plan. It identifies school priorities which are costed and link with departmental development plans. The sixth form is very cost effective. The financial planning and administration are excellent. The principles of best value (comparison, challenge, consultation and competition) are applied well to the school's use of resources. The school is smoothly run and it is efficiently organised.
33. Specific grants are used effectively for their designated purposes; for example, the standards fund has been spent on ICT development and training support for staff. Other major initiatives include a successful bid to Sport England for over £500,000 of lottery funds to construct a floodlit all-weather pitch for hockey/football, together with resurfacing of netball and tennis courts plus a new floodlit netball court. Changing and toilet facilities were substantially remodelled. A major ICT initiative involving policy, training and infrastructure development is in place. Two new computer rooms have been built with a third refurbished. An ICT technician, portable laptops and new PCs are in place. The school raised over £100,000 by its own initiative and fund-raising efforts to implement this. The school is further committed to raising £50,000 annually for ICT investment in addition to staffing and maintenance costs, which form part of its devolved budgetary provision. The specific grant for information and communication technology is well focused. Decisions regarding its implementation and on-going training of staff are being successfully delivered and are supported by a carefully planned maintenance programme. Improvements such as better toilet facilities, new sound systems and sports facilities were funded by the parent school association.
34. The school has set up two limited companies, The Tiffin Girls School Company – a charitable trust – and The Tiffin Kitbag Company Ltd – a limited company selling uniform and other school equipment.

35. The match of qualifications and experience of teachers to the demands of the curriculum and the age range of pupils is very good. Budgetary reductions outside the school's control led to the need to replace several senior and middle manager post holders. This, with a further reduction of teaching staff and increased teaching load, enabled the school to make substantial savings so that the budget could be balanced. The staff profile has changed and there is a good balance of relatively inexperienced and experienced staff. The arrangements for the professional development of staff are good, as are the arrangements and support for new staff.
36. The governing body is well informed of the schools' performance in all areas. It makes good use of statistical data of performance results, including comparison with other schools. This information is used to target spending and focus on school improvement. The school finds the 15 most successful girls' state schools nationally to be a better cohort for comparison than using the nationally declared similar schools benchmarks. The school has a very good level of resources for the curriculum overall. It has developed some imaginative ways of funding additional physical education training and peripatetic music teaching. Approximately 120 pupils have private individual instrumental music tuition. The library is a good learning resource, which is in constant use and is well managed. The number of computers is very good. Excellent use is made of the information and communication technology suites, including CD ROM and Internet access.
37. There has been major investment in improving the school's facilities. The adequacy of the school's accommodation, although currently satisfactory, is improving. Since the last inspection a number of improvements have taken place. These are a refurbished science laboratory, art rooms, a new ICT suite, changing rooms and toilet facilities. Consequently the working environment has been improved. This is an outstandingly effective school which provides excellent value for money. Although contextual factors for pupils in the local environment are very favourable, unit costs of the school are average, standards are excellent, the overall standard of teaching and learning is excellent, the quality and range of learning opportunities are very good, and pupils' attitudes, behaviour, personal development and relationships are all excellent.

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

38. This is an exceptionally effective school with no significant weaknesses. The following minor shortcomings should be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan:
- (1) Implement a daily act of collective worship, a statutory requirement and was a key issue in the last report which has not been successfully addressed. (Paragraph 27).
  - (2) Meet statutory requirements in full for reporting to parents in the Annual Report; a sentence has been omitted recording the progress made by pupils with special educational needs.
  - (3) Make pupil-specific target setting in Key Stages 3 and 4 more effective in focusing subsequent effort on improving the quality of pupils' work. (Paragraph 31).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	68
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
22	47	28	3	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– Y13
Number of pupils on the school's roll	862
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	6

Special educational needs	Y7– Y13
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	20

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	27.4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.0
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	1.1

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	n/a	120	120

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	118	118	118
	Total	118	118	118
Percentage of pupils At NC level 5 or above	School	98 (100)	98 (100)	98 (100)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)

Percentage of pupils At NC level 6 or above	School	98 (97)	98 (99)	93 (97)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	120	120	120
	Total	120	120	120
Percentage of pupils At NC level 5 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils At NC level 6 or above	School	98 (88)	99 (91)	95 (25)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	4
Indian	159
Pakistani	12
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	34
White	552
Any other minority ethnic group	63

### 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	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

## **Teachers and classes**

### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – 13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	47.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.15

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	205

### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	73.9
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### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13**

Key Stage 3	27.3
Key Stage 4	22.8
Sixth form	18.1

## **Financial information**

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	2001623
Total expenditure	2019197
Expenditure per pupil	2412
Balance brought forward from previous year	37263
Balance carried forward to next year	19689

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	862
Number of questionnaires returned	206

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	28	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	33	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	37	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	45	9	1	1
The teaching is good.	55	37	4	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	43	7	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	52	37	5	3	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	15	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	41	14	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	69	24	3	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	32	4	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	34	10	3	2

### Other issues raised by parents

No other significant issues were received by parents.