

INSPECTION REPORT

**COLCHESTER COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL
FOR GIRLS**

Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115370

Headteacher: Mrs E Ward

Reporting inspector: Mr J Plumb
16930

Dates of inspection: 9th – 12th May 2000

Inspection number: 186229

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Grammar School

School category: Foundation

Age range of students: 11 to 19 years

Gender of students: Girls

School address: Norman Way
Colchester
Essex

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr A Blundell

Date of previous inspection: December 1995

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number of full-time students: 725 (smaller than average)
Students with English as an additional language: 27 (3.7%) (higher than in most schools)
Students entitled to free school meals: 8 (1%) (well below the national average)
Students on the register of special educational needs: 0
Average number of students per teacher: 16 (below average)
Attainment on entry is well above national average as this is a selective Grammar School

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Colchester County High School for Girls is an excellent school. Leadership is excellent. Teaching challenges students and standards are excellent. The school provides excellent value for money.

What the school does well

- Excellent leadership sets a clear direction for the school in raising standards
- Standards are excellent because of the challenging teaching
- Excellent attitudes, behaviour and personal development leads to very good learning
- The provision for foreign exchanges is excellent
- The school provides an excellent range of extra-curricular enrichment in the sixth form
- The school has an excellent careers programme
- The public relations programme is very effective

What could be improved

- The provision for core religious education in Key Stage 4 and at Post-16
- There is room for improvement in the school's communication with parents
- Accommodation in physical education, art and music

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There have been very significant improvements since the school's last inspection in December 1995. GCSE and A-level results have improved. The quality of teaching has improved. Improvements have occurred in all the areas for action identified in the last inspection except for the provision of core religious education. Deficiencies in the accommodation remain. The capacity for further improvement is excellent.

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 | | | | Key |
|--------------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|---|
| | All schools | | | Similar schools | |
| | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 1999 | |
| GCSE examinations | A | A | A | A | well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E |
| A-levels/AS-levels | A | A | A | | |

Results in the national tests for 14-year-olds have been consistently very high in relation to the national average in English, mathematics and science over the last three years. The national test results in 1999 were above those in similar schools for mathematics and science and closely matched with those of similar schools in English. Standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 9 are well above the national average. GCSE results have shown an improvement since 1995 and are well above the national average and also well above the average for similar schools. Results achieved place the school in the top five percent of schools in the country. In 1999 all students achieved at least 5 GCSE passes at A* - C. Standards in Key Stage 4 are very high in all subjects. A-level results were well above national average in 1999 and were also an improvement on the last two years. Some students achieved the highest marks in the country in their examination papers. Standards seen in a wide range of sixth form A-level subjects during the inspection were very high. Students with English as an additional language attain high standards.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Attitudes to learning are excellent. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Behaviour in and out of lessons is excellent. |
| Personal development and relationships | Personal development and relationships are excellent. |
| Attendance | Very good. It is well above the national average. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of students: | Aged 11-14 years | Aged 14-16 years | Aged over 16 years |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------------|
| Lessons seen overall | Very good | Very good | 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.

The teaching of English, mathematics and science in Key Stages 3 and 4 is consistently very good and often inspirational. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge inspires students to learn. The very best teaching occurs in the sixth form. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory. Teaching is at least good in 97 per cent of lessons and at least very good in 75 per cent. In 12 per cent of lessons teaching is excellent and inspirational.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | A very good curriculum except for core religious education in Key Stage 4 and at Post-16. Provision for careers education and extra-curricular activities are outstandingly good. |
| Provision for students with special educational needs | Procedures are in place. |
| Provision for students with English as an additional language | Very good provision. |
| Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | The provision for students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. |
| How well the school cares for its students | Procedures for monitoring personal development are excellent. Procedures for child protection are very good. Assessment is very good. |

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Leadership and management are excellent. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Governors are very effective. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The school's evaluation of its performance is excellent. |
| The strategic use of resources | The school makes excellent use of its resources. |

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The inspirational teaching• The expectation of high standards | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The lack of effective communication• Poor features of the accommodation |

Inspection findings support parents' positive views of the school. Parents' concerns about the accommodation are justified. Communication with parents could also be improved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Excellent leadership sets a clear direction for the school in raising standards

1. A significant factor in the success of Colchester County High School for Girls is the excellent leadership provided by the senior management team and the governing body, and especially by the headteacher. The headteacher brings a very clear vision of excellence for all to the school. This enables all students to achieve excellent academic standards and also for the talents of every individual to be realised in the extra-curricular activities of drama, dance, music and sport.
2. The governing body uses its committees very effectively to establish priorities and to set realistic and challenging targets, which result in school improvement. They already have a draft policy for the new government requirements in relation to performance management. There are effective systems to ensure that teachers are well supported in submitting their evidence for threshold assessment. The headteacher is very approachable and consults all staff effectively. Because of her consultation with staff she is able to provide the governing body with very good quality information about the school so that governors can make informed decisions to manage improvements in the quality of education provided for students. Careful and detailed attention has been paid to the new specification for Post-16 students to take effect from September 2000.
3. The outstandingly good ethos and strong sense of belonging to a very special school community contributes to the very high standards achieved. Teachers are committed to and care about every student and so provide teaching that puts demands on them and enables them to achieve their very best. The teachers know the personalities of the students and use their knowledge of what motivates them very effectively when planning their teaching.
4. The members of the senior management team lead by example and present exemplary role models of hard work and they also convey a joy for teaching when in the classroom themselves. Their lead encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning and this is a major strength of this outstandingly good school. The school successfully builds students into mature young adults who are confident and independent. They are very well prepared to manage confidently in an adult world with all of its demands and challenges. Alongside excellent academic achievement, students also become very good citizens who care about the success and welfare of others.

Standards excellent because of the challenging teaching

5. The standards achieved by students at the school are well above the national averages in the national tests for 14-year-olds and in the GCSE and GCE A-level results. GCSE and A-level results position this school in the top five per cent of schools in the country. This is an exceptional achievement. In the national tests for 14-year-olds, results have been well above national averages in English, mathematics and science for the last three years (1997 – 1999). The national test results at age 14 in 1999 were above those from similar schools in mathematics and science and in line in English. This reflects the decision on the part of the school not to enter students for the higher tier papers and is not a reflection on the students' ability as evidenced by

the standards of work seen in the current Year 10 classes. The school does not wish to constrain the curriculum in Key Stage 3 by teaching solely to the requirements of the National Curriculum tests but desires to be broader in the programmes of study offered to gifted and talented students.

6. GCSE examination results have improved year on year since 1995 and the results in 1999 were well above the national average and also well above the average for similar schools. A-level results in 1999 were also well above the national average. The school is very successful in the number of students who attain the highest GCSE grades A*- A and in the number of A-level students who achieve the highest marks in their papers in the whole of the country. Students performed less well in GCSE Latin and German than in their other subjects in 1999. The German results were a one-off 'blip' as in the previous three years results had been high in German. At A-level the results in Economics were disappointing. All other subjects achieved exceptionally high grades at both GCSE and GCE A-level.
7. The standards of work observed in lessons during the inspection were well above the national average. This is because of the challenging teaching based on excellent subject knowledge that puts high demands on all students and motivates them to learn at a very good rate. Teachers have successfully created a learning environment in which students have a thirst for learning and also are very keen to take responsibility for their own learning. The outstandingly good relationships between teachers and students contribute very significantly to the very high quality learning.
8. Students' literacy skills are excellent. They are fluent and confident readers for pleasure and are able to research very complex information using a wide range of texts and the internet in lessons and for homework. Students speak with clarity and use a rich vocabulary to express themselves, for example in a Year 11 English lesson where they expressed their personal responses to poetry and in a Year 11 biology lesson where groups of students explained their experiment to the whole class. Their language is fluent and very accurate. They have an excellent grasp of the technical words used in their different subjects. The debating society and many other opportunities given to students for public speaking make a very significant contribution to students' speaking and listening skills. Students are encouraged to evaluate their own work and performance in front of their peers at the end of almost all lessons and because this is managed so sensitively it builds their confidence and self-esteem as well as contributing to their development of speaking skills. Writing is also of a very high standard and there are examples of writing for a wide range of purposes in English. In a practice examination question in a Year 13 English literature lesson, students showed that they had grasped a clear understanding of the significance of the tone and movement of spoken language to express irony. Students throughout the school are very skilled at analysing language in their English lessons. There are many examples of high quality writing across a range of subjects. Forms of writing include detailed note-taking in science, creative writing in English and excellent explanation of complex and philosophical concepts in the examination religious education work.
9. Students' numeracy and information and communications technology skills are also excellent, and are developed well across all subjects. There are examples of excellent use of computers to develop data handling skills in geography and monitoring skills are developed very well in science. Students' measuring, weighing and predicting skills are developed very well in chemistry, physics, physical education and design and technology. In a Year 11 physics lesson students were able to calculate the speed of a satellite with ease by drawing on their prior learning about a formula using

distance and time.

10. The challenging teaching based on excellent subject knowledge is the main reason why this is an outstandingly good school. Teachers enjoy teaching and seeing students grow in their learning. The high quality teaching and learning results in excellent standards of achievement throughout the school and across almost all subjects. Teaching is brisk, activities are timed and expectations are always high. Questioning focuses on extending students in their learning. Activities are interesting and exciting. In a Year 7 music lesson the teacher used her extensive expertise and excellent teaching skills to enable the students to identify the technical features of recorded music and through them identify the date of composition. These students identified polyphony, fugue and canon and they were able to explain the relationship between them. The standards in this class were well above expectations for age.
11. Short-term lesson planning is excellent. In a Year 9 biology lesson the teacher planned a range of interesting investigations involving the dissection of a pig's heart. Challenging deadlines were set for each group of students. At the end of the lesson there was very good collaborative learning as each group shared their findings with the whole class and enabled them to obtain a fuller picture about how the heart works.
12. Other significant contributory factors to the very good teaching are the use of group discussion and the effective use teachers make of questions to provoke thought and to test out students' understanding. In a chemistry lesson for Year 13 the erudition in the teacher's questioning showed that he provoked thinking well beyond the requirements of the A-level syllabus.
13. Students make very rapid gains in their learning because teaching is interesting and puts demands on them in a secure learning environment. Students are taught the creative language and practical skills required to enable them to make very significant gains in their subject knowledge and to deepen their understanding of complex concepts. They are productive learners who can solve problems for themselves and they do so very calmly and with enjoyment. Students are keen to do well and are strenuous in their efforts to do so. Through very good quality support from the teachers, students are guided in what they need to do to improve their own work. The practical tips given to help them answer examination questions in greater depth contribute well to the excellent examination results.

Excellent attitudes, behaviour and personal development leads to very good learning

14. Students' attitudes are excellent. They are very enthusiastic and keen in their approach to their work. Excellent relationships between teachers and students form the basis of every teacher's class management style and these lead to a situation of mutual and respectful equality, happily enjoyed by all. The use of irony by Petruchio to describe Katherina in Shakespeare's play 'The Taming of the Shrew' was explored by a group of Year 13 students and their teacher in a spirit of fun and enjoyment. These outstandingly good relationships enable teachers to relax with their students and contribute to very good and often excellent learning that takes place in lessons and these in return result in very high standards of achievement. In a Year 13 mathematics lesson the excellent relationship between the teacher and the students enabled the teacher to make excellent use of the analogy of a driving test to skilfully explain the difference between the concepts of geometric and binomial distributions in the context of very complex probability problems. Outstandingly good relationships are noticeable outside of lessons. In the tennis tournament with another school that took place during the week of the inspection, the students played with enthusiasm and the relationships

with the other team showed 'sportswomanship' at its very best. In the orchestra and choir rehearsals, excellent relationships between teachers and students contribute to the development of students' confidence and from that to their playing and singing with greater enthusiasm and freedom. Attitudes expressed by students are excellent because they feel that they are valued as individuals and that teachers genuinely care about them.

15. In a Year 11 biology lesson the students listened attentively and were spellbound as the teacher explained the significance of gene therapy in the context of learning about cystic fibrosis. Students respond very well to interactive work with their teachers, exploring the nuances of text analysis in English literature, discussing the views of different cult members in religious education and through participating in role-play about satellites in physics. Their strong mutual respect for peer performance is evident in the manner in which they discuss each other's work on tonal coloration in art and individual ensemble work in music.
16. The behaviour of students of all ages is excellent. About the school they are courteous and go out of their way to help visitors who have difficulty in finding their way around the building. Parents confirm that they are very pleased with standards of behaviour. Students' commitment to school is confirmed in the very good attendance and the exceptionally high numbers who participate in the wide and rich range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school. They behave in a very mature way, particularly in the sixth form, and are sensitive to one another's views and feelings. The speeches made by the two departing head girls at a whole-school assembly reflected maturity and confidence and were also very moving. Because teachers structure their lessons effectively and have high expectations of work and behaviour, the students respond by sustaining high levels of concentration. Students' excellent behaviour makes a very significant contribution to their very good learning and the high standards achieved through the school. This was particularly evident in a Year 10 personal, health and social education lesson (PHSE) where students developed confidence in interview situations because the pace of the teaching was brisk and students were challenged to be confident and assertive yet in a polite and courteous manner.
17. Students' personal development is excellent. Through skilful teaching students are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. This was evident in a Year 12 English lesson on 'The Handmaids Tale' as students were able to verify that the events of the novel had happened in history by independently using a variety of web sites, including the web site of the United Nations. Through a range of responsible duties students are given opportunities to develop leadership, management and interpersonal skills of the highest order. Their excellent personal development is reflected in a very high level of 'reading around the subject' in history, their willingness to experiment in art and in science and their articulation and fluency in explaining the techniques involved in playing music to a large audience. Personal development is particularly apparent in the self-disciplined way in which a Year 11 biology class could be relied upon to work on five different experiments in the laboratory in an organised, safe and productive manner with the minimum of direct supervision as a revision activity for their forthcoming GCSE examination. Students' personal development is also very well developed through opportunities to speak in public, organise charity events and by older students providing mentor support for younger students in a number of subjects such as science.

The provision for foreign exchanges is excellent

18. The school makes excellent provision for foreign exchanges in Key Stages 3 and 4. Arrangements for foreign exchanges in the sixth form are highly effective. Musical exchanges with a German school are an outstanding feature of the extra-curricular provision in all key stages.
19. There is an excellent and long-standing link with the Liebigsschule in Giessen, Germany. Students from Colchester County High School for Girls visit the school in the summer term of Year 10 and German students make their reciprocal visit in the autumn. The 55 students in the school symphony orchestra visit the Liebigsschule on a biennial cycle to perform with their choir and orchestra. The German school makes reciprocal visits to Colchester biennially, bringing both choir and orchestra to perform in concert, to give joint and separate performances with Colchester High School. Staff of both schools work in collaboration to agree programmes and rehearse the students. A rousing performance of 'Zadok the Priest' was the climax of a previous visit, a work previously unknown in the German school. As a result, students of both the schools now amiably claim Handel as their countryman. Musical exchanges thus have a palpable and positive effect on students' social, musical, linguistic and cultural development. Students and staff make durable friendships from such visits.
20. In Year 9, 35 students have this year had the opportunity to take part in an exchange to Hochfelden, Alsace. Students stay with families and spend some of their stay as tourists and some days in the French school. This makes a very significant contribution to their cultural development. French students will be welcomed back in Colchester. It is intended to make this an annual event.
21. In the sixth form there are excellent but more informal facilities for student exchanges which are largely organised to fulfil individual requirements. The school arranges for about six students a year to visit Germany as part of a well-established work experience project. Individual arrangements are made for those who wish to undertake work experience in France. These opportunities for work experience placements overseas are excellent and prepare students very well for coping with the future expectation of being flexible enough to work in different European countries. There is the possibility of students spending a year in a German school. Foreign students also visit Colchester for extended visits, particularly Post-16.

The school provides an excellent range of extra-curricular enrichment in the sixth form

22. The school provides a wide and diverse range of excellent extra-curricular activities in the sixth form, which successfully serve to widen students' horizons, help them to develop maturity, inculcate a sense of responsibility, and sharpen their judgement. Their personal development is very well promoted by courses on such issues as money management, first aid and personal safety. They have the opportunity to learn Greek and take the opportunity up. They have excellent opportunities to improve their information and communications (ICT) skills. There are field trips supporting a range of subjects, for example geography, modern foreign languages and biology, some of them abroad. Students regularly take part in engineering and technology competitions. Students meet to perform music in the school symphony orchestra, string and wind ensembles and the senior choir. They take part in regular music workshops and participate in musical competitions. Students produce and organise a wide variety of

plays ranging from 'The Revenger's Tragedy' to 'Cinderella'. In the Shakespeare workshop, they tackle a new play each week. By the end of the sixth form, those who attend have had some acting or directing experience of every one of Shakespeare's plays. This is an outstanding opportunity for them and it contributes very significantly to their very good learning in English literature. Students were able to take part in the Royal Academy Outreach programmes last year, with the model and teacher supplied by the Academy. Students organise and participate in a wide range of societies, such as the debating society, Christian union, history society and societies for those planning careers in medicine, veterinary medicine and psychology.

23. Students gain in maturity and develop their sense of responsibility both in the wider community and in the excellent opportunities they are given to help those younger than themselves; for example sixth form students run the string, wind and recorder ensembles for the junior students and they help in a wide range of extra-curricular physical education activities. This makes a very significant contribution to their excellent understanding of what constitutes good citizenship. Students run the school bank. A trained member of the sixth form, under staff supervision, runs a weekly drugs awareness clinic. Students work to support one local and one overseas charity, and currently finance the education of a boy in India. As part of the school's 'Link' course, students help in nurseries, old people's homes and in a women's refuge.
24. The excellent standard of career advice on offer is enhanced by visits to universities and academic conferences. A stimulating range of visitors is invited to speak at the school. Students have outstandingly good opportunities to undertake management training exercises. They participate in activities such as 'Young Enterprise' which hones their entrepreneurial skills. Some gain experience of journalism by taking part in the press committee. Sixth-form students have excellent opportunities for residential experience, such as the symphony orchestra residential weekend and the 'Learn to Surf' weekend. There are frequent and valuable educational visits to foreign countries. These activities build students' confidence and self-esteem and enable them to express their wide range of rich talents and gifts.

The school has an excellent careers programme

25. The school has a very well organised careers programme for students between Years 9 and 13. The head of careers co-ordinates an excellent programme for Year 9 form tutors, a programme that includes an explanation of options in the curriculum and which introduces students to the school's careers resources. A particular strength of the school is the 'Working World' programme in Year 10. All students in this year group participate in a two-week work placement, which is preceded by meticulous preparation and followed by a comprehensive evaluation. Students in Years 10 and 11 also learn a wide range of personal communication skills, thereby developing self-confidence and a good ability to project themselves in the outside world both to their own benefit and that of the school. The careers programme in the sixth form encourages students to research possibilities for careers and higher education, and sixth-formers build up a comprehensive and highly effective personal profile. Those studying a modern foreign language can do work experience abroad, and this is an outstanding opportunity for students to further both their academic and personal development. The effectiveness of the school's careers programme is such that at whatever stage students leave the school, they are very well prepared for life outside both in terms of personal development and their awareness of all the career possibilities open to them.

The public relations programme is very effective

26. The school gives a high priority to celebrating student achievements through a very effective public relations programme. Academic, cultural and sporting successes are regularly and favourably reported in the local and national press. The public relations co-ordinator and a group of sixth-form students are very proactive in collating and preparing items for publication and these are submitted to the local and regional press and frequently published. The school is very successful in ensuring that its many qualities and achievements, such as its outstanding public examination results, receive extensive coverage and give the school a high profile.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The provision for core religious education in Key Stage 4 and at Post-16

27. The provision for GCSE and A-level religious education that is delivered by a subject specialist is very good. Although there has been some improvement in the statutory provision of core religious education in Key Stage 4 and at Post-16 the position of the subject remains weak as at the time of the previous inspection.
28. The locally agreed syllabus for religious education states that five out of seven Programmes of Study must be delivered at Key Stage 4. Two of these Programmes of Study are delivered very effectively by a specialist religious education teacher. The school makes an attempt to deliver the other three Programmes of Study across the Key Stage 4 curriculum in a number of subjects. However, there is no mapped curriculum plan for these modules and no co-ordinator to oversee the programme. There is no formal monitoring to ensure that these Programmes of Study are delivered. This results in the provision for core religious education in Key Stage 4 being insecure. The modules become subsumed, as they are not a priority in the subjects identified as a vehicle for their delivery.
29. There is no curriculum map for the statutory post-16 religious education and once again no co-ordination and this is an unsatisfactory position. The senior management team is not totally clear about the position of core religious education in the curriculum in Key Stage 4 and at Post-16 but recognise that the status of this statutory subject must be raised.

There is room for improvement in the school's communication with parents

30. Overall, the school has good methods of communication between school and home but a significant minority of parents is convinced that they do not have sufficient information on how their daughters are progressing and do not feel that they can air such concerns satisfactorily.
31. The school demonstrates throughout a clear commitment to students' independent learning and this is a key feature of the successes which parents recognise and celebrate. For students up to GCSE level, form tutors conduct discussions with parents at parents' meetings held once a year on the full range of subjects studied providing a complete picture of progress across the curriculum. This system is well thought out, with good staff training to support tutors in conducting these parents' meetings and supplementary opportunities for parents to consult subject teachers.

However, it is apparent that not all parents are convinced of the benefits of this approach and the school needs to continue to tailor the system to parents' needs and to demonstrate the advantages more fully in the future. At the moment a small minority perceive that their concerns are not heard, welcomed and acted upon.

Accommodation in physical education, art and music

32. Although the school's hard play area for physical education is very good, indoor accommodation is barely satisfactory. The limitations of the multi-use gymnasium and lack of sports hall facilities have a detrimental effect on the range of activities and learning opportunities available to students. Changing accommodation is limited, resulting in the shower cubicles being used as changing space instead of their proper function. During the inspection students were using the gymnasium area both to change for games and for a theory lesson. The organisation of teaching strategies is restricted by the lack of a dedicated classroom base to provide a strong identity for the subject and to store and display class materials and resources.
33. The art accommodation is limited for the larger class sizes in Key Stage 3. The students' high levels of respect for each other's painting and drawing studies make movement around the restricted space possible. However, the opportunity to take part in three-dimensional clay modelling is limited because desk surfaces are inadequate and there are no dust extraction vents.
34. In music the rehearsal facilities are completely inadequate for the range of choirs and instrumental groups operating in the school at present. Good musicians must be regularly turned away from choirs and orchestras because of lack of space. This is having an adverse effect on standards of ensemble playing at competition level. The lack of sound-proofing of the music rooms causes continual disruption to learning especially at A-level where students need to listen with care and concentration. Lack of a recording space and proper equipment means that recording of students' performance for examination purposes are sub-standard. The provision of sound-proof practice rooms would further improve standards of individual performance, allowing more students to practise their instruments without interruption. The damp atmosphere of the major demountable building used for music and the presence of fungus in the roof are a health and safety hazard. Lack of storage space leads to deterioration of expensive instruments and causes disruption to the reception area of the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The school should now:

- i. Improve the quality of provision and raise standards in the core religious education programmes in Key Stage 4 and at Post-16 by:
 - ensuring that the Programmes of Study are planned and delivered in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus; and
 - making sure that there is a co-ordinator for the core religious education programme who has responsibility for monitoring the delivery of the programme.
- ii. Improve the quality of communication with parents particularly over the rationale for the significant change in the arrangements for parent/teacher evenings so that all parents understand the benefits of the new arrangements.
- iii. Pursue the provision of improved accommodation for physical education, art and music.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 60 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students | 30 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 12 | 63 | 22 | 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 students

| Students on the school's roll | Y7 – Y11 | Sixth form |
|---|----------|------------|
| Number of students on the school's roll | 532 | 193 |
| Number of full-time students eligible for free school meals | 8 | 0 |

| Special educational needs | Y7 – Y11 | Sixth form |
|---|----------|------------|
| Number of students with statements of special educational needs | 0 | 0 |
| Number of students on the school's special educational needs register | 0 | 0 |

| English as an additional language | No of students |
|---|----------------|
| Number of students with English as an additional language | 27 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of students |
|--|----------------|
| Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 1 |
| Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 3 |

Attendance

| Authorised absence | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 5.8 |
| 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

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year | 1999 | N/a | 107 | 107 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above | Boys | N/a | N/a | N/a |
| | Girls | 105 | 107 | 106 |
| | Total | 105 | 107 | 106 |
| Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above | School | 98 | 100 | 99 |
| | National | 63 | 62 | 55 |
| Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above | School | 92 | 100 | 96 |
| | National | 28 | 38 | 23 |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above | Boys | N/a | N/a | N/a |
| | Girls | 106 | 106 | 107 |
| | Total | 106 | 106 | 107 |
| Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above | School | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | National | 64 | 64 | 60 |
| Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above | School | 100 | 98 | 100 |
| | National | 31 | 37 | 28 |

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 1999 | N/a | 96 | 96 |

| GCSE results | | 5 or more grades A* to C | 5 or more grades A*-G | 1 or more grades A*-G |
|---|----------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Numbers of students achieving the standard specified | Boys | N/a | N/a | N/a |
| | Girls | 96 | 96 | 96 |
| | Total | 96 | 96 | 96 |
| Percentage of students achieving the standard specified | School | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| | National | 46.3 | 90.7 | 95.7 |

| GCSE results | | GCSE point score |
|-------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Average point score per pupil | School | 73.3 |
| | National | 40.3 |

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

| | | | | |
|---|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 1999 | N/a | 94 | 94 |

| Average A/AS points score per candidate | For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent | | | For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent | | |
|---|---|--------|------|--|--------|-----|
| | Male | Female | All | Male | Female | All |
| School | N/a | 31.0 | 31.0 | N/a | 5.8 | 5.8 |
| National | N/a | 18.1 | 17.9 | N/a | 2.8 | 2.8 |

Ethnic background of students

| | No of students |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | |
| Black – African heritage | |
| Black – other | |
| Indian | 15 |
| Pakistani | 3 |
| Bangladeshi | 1 |
| Chinese | 7 |
| White | 689 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 10 |

Exclusions in the last school year

| | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | | |
| Black – African heritage | | |
| Black – other | | |
| Indian | | |
| Pakistani | | |
| Bangladeshi | | |
| Chinese | | |
| White | | |
| Other minority ethnic groups | | |

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 40.0 |
| Number of students per qualified teacher | 16.0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 5.4 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 234 |

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

| | |
|---|------|
| Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes | 76.2 |
|---|------|

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

| | |
|-------------|------|
| Key Stage 3 | 24.9 |
| Key Stage 4 | 22.7 |

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|---------|
| Financial year | 1998/99 |
|----------------|---------|

| | £ |
|--|-----------|
| Total income | 2,025,558 |
| Total expenditure | 2,094,953 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,922 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 260,040 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 190,645 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 805 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 273 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 54 | 38 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 66 | 30 | 1 | 0 | 3 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 55 | 40 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 33 | 49 | 14 | 4 | 1 |
| The teaching is good. | 45 | 45 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 23 | 44 | 19 | 12 | 2 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 40 | 41 | 11 | 5 | 3 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 83 | 16 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 20 | 44 | 22 | 10 | 5 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 45 | 41 | 4 | 2 | 8 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 51 | 44 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 32 | 47 | 14 | 2 | 7 |

Not all columns in the above table add up to 100 because some parents return questionnaires with some questions left unanswered

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents were concerned about the loss of contact with the boys' grammar school in Colchester.