

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SWANSHURST SCHOOL**

Birmingham

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103514

Headteacher: Margaret Threadgold

Reporting inspector: Gulshan Kayembe  
2901

Dates of inspection: 2 – 5 May 2000

Inspection number: 186319

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-16 girls: 16-18 mixed
Gender of pupils:	Girls
School address:	Brook Lane Birmingham
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Fielding
Date of previous inspection:	11 – 15 December 1995

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school serves a wide area of Birmingham and is a comprehensive school for pupils aged between 11 and 18. It is essentially a school for girls, but the sixth form is mixed, although no boys were on roll at the time of the inspection. The attainment on entry is improving with pupils currently in Year 7 demonstrating good attainment when starting school. However, pupils in most year groups started school with below average standards of work particularly in mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is similar to most schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The number on roll is currently 1663 pupils, and the school is larger than most secondary schools. English is not the first language for over half the pupils, but only four are beginners. In 1999, the school was awarded Beacon status.

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

This is a good school and one which is particularly effective at enabling pupils to achieve well at Key Stage 4. Sixth form pupils also perform well given their prior attainment, which varies from year to year. At Key Stage 3, standards of work are improving, and pupils achieve satisfactory standards given their low attainment when they join the school, but they could achieve better. The quality of teaching and learning is good, the school is well managed and pupils' behaviour and attitudes are very good. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

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

- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Pupils reach high standards by the time they come to the end of compulsory schooling at the age of 16 and consequently achieve well in GCSE examinations.
- The school is very well led and there is a well-established culture of continuous search for further improvement.
- Pupils are well looked after with very good procedures for induction when they start.
- The curriculum enrichment and extra-curricular activities make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development as well as their learning.
- Art, drama, geography, information technology and physical education are strong areas of the curriculum.
- The work of non-teaching staff supports very effectively the work of teachers and makes a very valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school.

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

- Standards of attainment by the end of Key Stage 3, when pupils are in Year 9, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- The use of numeracy in mathematics and in other subjects across the curriculum.
- The school's accommodation and library resources.
- Meeting legal requirements for a daily act of collective worship and provision for religious education in the sixth form.

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

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

The school has made good progress in improving itself since the previous inspection in 1995. There has been good improvement in examination results, very good at GCSE level, although results have gone down in the national tests for 14-year-olds in English. The school continues to ensure that sixth form pupils achieve well given their previous performance at GCSE although

examination results at A-level have tended to go up and down. This has been due largely to variations from year to year in the academic potential of the sixth form intake.

There has been a marked improvement in the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and the provision for information technology, which are now both good. The management of the art department is now very good. Whilst the school makes appropriate provision for teaching religious education for many pupils in the sixth form, it still does not make appropriate provision for all. The school also continues to fail to meet the requirements for a daily act of collective worship.

The school has worked assiduously to improve attendance levels, and the considerable efforts of staff are now being rewarded with measurable improvement in this area. Although the overall attendance level was below average for the last academic year, current attendance levels are much better and similar to the levels found nationally.

Overall, the school has good capacity to continue to improve further. It is already focusing on improving the standards of work for pupils aged 11-14, and there are definite signs of improvement in English and science.

## 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	C	C	B	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
A-levels/AS-levels	D	D	E	N/A	

The table above indicates that pupils' performance was above the national average at GCSE but well below at A-level. When compared to similar types of schools, pupils did very well at GCSE. In 1999, in the majority of subjects, the proportion of pupils gaining a grade A\*-C was similar to the proportion nationally. Results in drama were very high, as they have been in past years, and geography and science results were above average. Results in mathematics and art show an improving trend but remained below average in art in 1999. Pupils in the sixth form do well in vocational courses. Those taking one A-level perform much better when compared to pupils nationally who also take one A-level.

In the national tests taken by 14-year-olds, the school's performance was below average in 1999. Results in English were well below average, and show a declining trend. In mathematics and science the results were below average. Overall, though, the school performed in line with similar types of schools. In mathematics and science, pupils' performance was better than that of similar schools, but in English it was lower. Inspection evidence largely confirms the test and examination results. By the age of 14, standards of work in English, mathematics and science are below expected standards, although standards are improving in English and science as a result of action taken by the school. Overall, pupils' achievements given their prior attainment are satisfactory, but there is scope for them to achieve better than this.

Attainment by the age of 16 is higher than usually found, particularly in science, drama and geography. The standards of pupils' work in art show a marked improvement on the examination

results of 1999 and are edging towards being better than standards found nationally. Overall, given their starting points, pupils' achievements are very good. Standards of work in the sixth form are currently better than the A-level results of the last three years, mostly due to an academically stronger sixth form, and are broadly similar to national standards. There is some very good quality of work amongst the ablest pupils. Work in vocational courses continues to be good.

Recent analysis of test and examination results carried out by the school indicates that girls from Pakistani backgrounds do not attain as well as girls from other ethnic origins. However, most achieve appropriately given their prior attainment.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good overall. Pupils like coming to school and are well motivated. As they mature pupils become even more focused on their work and attitudes in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form are very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in lessons, particularly from Year 10 onwards, and around the school. Pupils are polite and helpful. On the rare occasions when behaviour is poor, it is a result of weaknesses in teaching.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The girls are mature and responsible. They show respect for one another and willingly listen to others' views. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Below average for the last academic year, mostly due to high levels of authorised absence. Much of this is related to religious observances that parents and pupils wish to keep, and to extended holidays abroad. However, there has been significant improvement this year and attendance levels to date are satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is below the national average.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning was good overall, with 94 per cent of lessons being at least satisfactory. In 69 per cent of lessons teaching was good or better and in 29 per cent it was very good or excellent. The quality of teaching in art, dance, drama and geography is very good. As a result, pupils make very good gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills in these subjects. In mathematics, teaching tends to be satisfactory, although there is some good teaching. There are shortcomings in many mathematics lessons in the effectiveness of whole class teaching and in checking pupils' progress as they work, thus pupils do not make as much progress as they could. The quality of teaching and learning in English and science is mostly good, consistently so for pupils in Years 10 and 11, but is more variable for younger pupils. The teaching of literacy through subjects is satisfactory, but the teaching of numeracy skills is poor.

Good level of challenge, brisk, businesslike pace and high expectations are characteristic of good teaching. At its best, teaching is innovative and creative giving pupils the opportunity to be imaginative, to express and develop their own ideas and to extend their thinking and problem-solving skills. This helps them to learn at a good rate.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. The curriculum is broad and balanced at each key stage. There is an excellent range of after-school and curriculum enrichment activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall, currently there is a shortage in staffing leaving some gaps in support for pupils with statements. The provision is well managed and the targets set for pupils are realistic and clearly defined.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The learning support co-ordinator is well aware of the needs of pupils at the early stages of learning English and ensures that they are well supported. However, the school's policy and practice in developing pupils' literacy skills do not fully take into account the needs of those pupils who are fluent speakers of English, but whose written work and range and use of vocabulary particularly still require further development.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Satisfactory for spiritual development, but good for social and cultural and very good for moral development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is making increasingly good use of the rich range of data on pupils' performance. Arrangements for health and safety and child protection are generally good, although staff are not regularly up-dated on the procedures for child protection. In addition, insufficient attention is given to keeping pedestrians and vehicles separated in the traffic going in and out of the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and sets a very clear direction for future development of the school. With the support of senior managers, she has successfully established shared commitment to raising standards. Middle managers provide good leadership and management of their areas and value the support and guidance they receive from senior staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good overall. Governors are effectively involved in the work of the school. They are well informed about school matters and know the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are very good procedures for checking the work of the school and information from these is well used to improve provision. However, whilst good support and training are provided to teachers encountering difficulties, there are limited strategies in place to improve weak teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is good and a close eye is kept on how money is being spent. Whilst good use is made of learning resources and accommodation, there are too few books in the library and the nature of the accommodation and poor quality of buildings places restraints on the efficiency and effectiveness of use. The school has made good improvements to the internal décor and a carefully planned programme for repair and maintenance is in place. However, the extensive site means that, despite very prudent management of the budget, some rooms remain in urgent need of refurbishment and redecoration.

The school is making satisfactory progress in applying the principles of best value.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their daughters are making good progress.</li> <li>• The school expects girls to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• Their daughters like coming to school.</li> <li>• The school settles new Year 7 pupils in very well, and alleviates the concerns that many parents have because of the size of the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework – from discussions and information from parents, this seems to be an issue mainly at Key Stage 3.</li> <li>• Closer working relationships between parents and school.</li> <li>• Better information about how well their daughters are getting on.</li> <li>• Wider curricular choice at Key Stage 4.</li> </ul>

The positive views of parents are confirmed by the inspection findings. Parents' concerns are justified in relation to homework at Key Stage 3. Although there is regular setting of homework, frequently it requires pupils to finish off class work, which a number of pupils have already completed. Good quality information is provided on progress, and written information is provided more frequently than in most schools. Thus, parental concerns on this subject are difficult to justify. The school fosters good contact and relationships with parents through the information provided and the work of the heads of year. However, form tutors vary in the regularity with which they sign homework diaries or use them as an effective means of communication with parents. In addition, occasionally, information passed on to parents at a late stage does inconvenience some of them, such as late notice about a professional development day. The school has improved the range of options and the combinations of subjects it offers at Key Stage 4.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **The quality of teaching and learning is good**

1. The quality of teaching is good in the majority of lessons, and is an improvement from the time of the previous inspection when the teaching was judged to be sound with many good lessons. In this inspection, teaching was at least satisfactory in 94 per cent of lessons seen, good or better in 69 per cent and very good or excellent in 29 per cent. In about six per cent of lessons, the quality of teaching was less than satisfactory. There are no significant differences in the quality of teaching between the key stages, although in science and English, teaching tends to be better at Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3. In the sixth form, the quality of teaching is consistently good. The quality of learning closely matches the quality of teaching.
2. Teaching and learning in English and science are predominantly good, particularly at Key Stage 4, although there is a small but significant proportion of less than satisfactory teaching in science in Key Stage 3. In mathematics, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although sometimes good. In art, drama and geography the standard of teaching is very good and, as a result, pupils' make very good progress. Good use is made of information technology across the curriculum, leading to good standards of work in this area.
3. Characteristic features of good teaching include high expectations which lead to pupils being given work that stretches them and enables them to move forward in their learning at a good pace. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and this is usually well used to plan out clearly what pupils are going to learn and to structure content in a coherent and logical manner. As a result, pupils build their own subject specific skills and knowledge in a steady step-by-step manner. In some cases, as in art and drama, the depth and range of teachers' knowledge are extensive and very successfully used to enable pupils to take risks with their work, to experiment with new ideas and explore their feelings and views in order to widen their own knowledge and understanding. Teachers show good depth and range of subject knowledge when teaching sixth form pupils. They are adept at pitching the subject matter at the right level for A-level pupils so that it is suitably challenging and prepares them well for the rigours of higher education.
4. Many teachers are skilled in structuring work in such a way as to encourage pupils to work independently and to learn through active involvement with well thought out and structured tasks. In design and technology, for example, project work is carefully organised so that pupils are successfully guided through producing their own design ideas, anticipating and then solving potential construction problems in order to make good quality products. In a Year 11 science revision lesson, a number of well-structured activities were set out for pupils to carry out and thereby consolidate their understanding of key principles and ideas. The teacher worked very effectively with individuals or groups of pupils in order to ensure that they understood what they were doing and were drawing appropriate conclusions from their observations. A key feature of the effectiveness with which teachers structure work is the care and thought given to how pupils are to be taught learning skills such as using a range of texts to research information, how to analyse and probe for deeper meaning and how to solve problems. Pupils respond very well to these opportunities to work on their own or in groups. They approach tasks with maturity, and the discussions they have with one another are well focused on their work and indicate that they are putting effort into thinking about the problems or tasks they have been given. These features of their learning make a significant contribution to the progress pupils make. For instance, in a Year 11

religious education lesson, the very good group management of the teacher included an alertness to how each individual contribution could be used to inform whole class debate. This led to pupils assembling a wealth of information and successfully marshalling relevant evidence to support the views they were putting forward.

5. In the very best lessons, teachers are imaginative and creative in the way they teach, thus making lessons stimulating and enabling pupils to be equally imaginative and creative. In art, for example, Year 9 pupils were asked to undertake the development of an imaginary archaeological discovery. Very effective and stimulating methods were used in a geography lesson in Year 7 to develop intellectual curiosity and extend understanding. In history, pupils are asked to use their imagination to think about the past and to try to draw out evidence from a wide range of sources to support views about how life in different periods of history might have been different from today.
6. Another strength of the teaching is the use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding and to help them think through new ideas. Questions are used well to structure whole class discussions as well, and teachers are adept at involving the majority of pupils in these discussions. Brisk pace ensures that time is effectively used and, particularly in the best lessons, not a moment is wasted. As a result, pupils work at a good pace and are well disciplined in their own use of time.

#### **Pupils reach high standards by the time they come to the end of compulsory schooling at the age of 16 and consequently achieve well in GCSE examinations**

7. Pupils' performance in the GCSE examinations in 1999 was better than the performance of pupils nationally, and well above the performance of pupils in similar schools. The proportion of pupils who gained at least five GCSEs at grades A\*-G or one or more GCSEs at grades A\*-G was particularly good and much higher than the proportion in most schools nationally. It was very high when compared to similar schools. Pupils' performance in relation to five or more GCSEs at grades A\*-C was better than most schools. Overall, given their low prior attainment when they started GCSE courses in Year 10, pupils' achievements were very good by the end of the course in 1999. The school's value-added analysis through the scheme run by the Centre for Educational Management based at Durham University supports this.
8. Results from previous years indicate a very good trend of improvement in the GCSE results. There has been considerable improvement in the GCSE examination results since the previous inspection in 1995. Results in the majority of subjects are improving. In 1999, the GCSE results in the vast majority of subjects matched at least the results found in schools nationally. Drama results were very high, and in English literature, French, geography, music and science results were higher than the results of most other schools. Only in art, history and classical studies were results below average. However, in history and classical studies, the pupils taking the courses performed well in relation to their prior attainment. In art, the results were only marginally lower than national norms and are improving steadily. Looking at examination results over the last three years, in English, science, drama and French, pupils reach the highest grades, A or A\*, most frequently. Results in mathematics have improved over the last two or three years and are now close to national averages.
9. The inspection evidence confirms the good results achieved in 1999, with the trend of improvement continuing, particularly in art, where the work seen shows much promise. A particular strength of pupils' work in art is the extent to which they develop their own ideas based on a good understanding and a very personal interpretation of techniques or methods used by other artists. In science, pupils demonstrate good knowledge and

understanding of scientific facts and ideas, and their grasp of the processes of investigation is very secure. For example, pupils are adept at bringing in relevant arguments and ideas to justify particular hypotheses they are putting forward or proposing to test. In English, many pupils demonstrate good comprehension skills and are adept at finding information from written sources.

10. Evidence from an examination of pupils' written work and lesson observations indicates that pupils are making significant progress in Key Stage 4. This includes those with special educational needs. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are largely achieving as well as their peers, although girls from Pakistani backgrounds do not perform as well as other ethnic groups. However, many start school with lower attainment, particularly in English.
11. A number of factors contribute to the high standards pupils reach at the end of Key Stage 4. These include good teaching, very effective use of assessment information to track pupils' progress, and to provide support and guidance, including mentoring, as necessary and pupils' own very positive attitudes and disciplined approach to their work.

**The school is very well led and there is a well-established culture of continuous search for further improvement**

12. The headteacher provides very clear-sighted leadership which is well grounded in high expectations and in seeking to provide the highest standards of education for pupils. There is a well-established culture of self-evaluation and critical self-review whereby staff are not afraid to question what they do and to seek better ways of doing it. Successful teamwork amongst staff and shared commitment to the school's aims are hallmarks of the leadership not only of the headteacher, but also of that provided by the members of the senior management team. These leadership qualities have led to pupils achieving well in the sixth form and very well in Key Stage 4. Although the same level of improvement since the previous inspection is not yet evident in the end of Key Stage 3 test results as at GCSE, the school is well aware of this and is in the process of tackling the issues, with some measure of success already evident in science and English.
13. The management of the school is well structured with very good delegation of key responsibilities to staff at various levels in the organisation. These responsibilities are clearly defined and there are good systems to ensure that staff are accountable for what they do. That there is a deputy headteacher in charge of school improvement is a measure of the school's commitment to raising standards as high as possible. This role has been key in developing the school's rich range of data on pupils' performance and is now effectively helping and supporting staff to make the best use of the data to help improve pupils' performance, particularly at Key Stage 3.
14. The roles of heads of department have been well developed through the line management links with the deputies, and they have a clear remit to develop their subject areas as well as members of staff within their departments. All heads of department provide active and informed leadership to their subject teams. They show clear awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in their areas and are working purposefully towards tackling weaknesses where they impact on pupils' learning. In geography, for example, the role of the head of department has been a key one in raising and maintaining high standards of attainment. In art, the very good leadership of the head of department has brought about considerable improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. The roles of heads of year are equally clear, although their workload is heavy because the role of form tutors has not evolved as fully as it should. The school is currently working on this.

15. Systems for checking the quality of the work of the school are very good, and there is good involvement of the heads of department in observing teachers and providing constructive feedback. On the whole the school's monitoring is of good quality and helpful to the further development and improvement of teaching and learning. However, a relatively new head of mathematics has not yet established a schedule of lesson observations of teachers in the department. This would be a useful step towards further improving the quality of teaching and learning and hence standards of work in the area, especially in numeracy.
16. The school, through its self-evaluation and thorough quality assurance procedures accurately assesses its strengths and identifies where improvement is needed. Shrewd planning, in consultation with governors, ensures that the school generally tackles the issues successfully. For instance, the school has been very systematic in its approach to dealing with the issues arising out of the previous inspection, and has made good progress as a result. There is good awareness of the reasons why pupils are not achieving as well in Key Stage 3 as in Key Stage 4 and a number of strategies have already been put in place to improve the situation and help pupils to reach higher standards. Those in management positions provide very good support and professional development to teachers encountering difficulties or demonstrating weaknesses in some aspects of their teaching. However, there are limited strategies in place to improve the quality of teaching when support and professional development do not lead to sufficient improvement.
17. Overall, the school's determined and sustained drive to provide pupils with the best opportunities for learning and reaching the highest standards they can has been a key factor in its success.

#### **Pupils are well looked after with very good procedures for induction when they start**

18. The pastoral care provided by the heads of year, under the leadership of the heads of upper and lower school and the sixth form, is good. Pupils are well known to staff and there is a high level of concern for their well-being. Parents commented at the meeting with inspectors on how effectively heads of year kept a close eye on each pupil. They were impressed by the commitment of heads of year who would make helpful telephone calls, often in their own time, to home if there was a problem. Parents also commented on the high quality of induction for pupils when they first arrive at the school. Many pupils and their parents are initially daunted by the sheer size of the school but feel reassured by the care and attention given to new Year 7 pupils. The system of grouping pupils by age in the three main buildings, that is having a lower school, upper school and sixth form block, also helps to settle in new pupils.
19. The expectations of behaviour are high and there are very good procedures for ensuring that they are met. The school has established high standards of behaviour and an ethos where consideration and concern for others are effectively fostered. There are clear and well-known codes of behaviour and a very well staged set of sanctions when pupils do not conform to expectations. As a result behaviour is very good and there are few exclusions.
20. The school has worked very hard in trying to improve attendance and has put many useful initiatives into practice. These include a system for rewarding 100 per cent attendance and making effective use of the home school link worker and the education welfare officer. In order to reduce absence due to the observance of religious holidays, the school has also where possible held staff training on such days. These initiatives are now beginning to have a positive impact, and attendance for the current year to date is satisfactory.

21. Good care is provided for pupils with special educational needs. The learning support centre is usually available for these pupils during out-of-school hours with help available for homework. Regular liaison with specialist outside agencies is also maintained.
22. There are good systems for assessing pupils' progress. There is a rich range of data available, including test data from primary schools as well as data generated by the school itself. The school is making very good use of this data at Key Stage 4 to inform planning and particularly for monitoring individual pupils' progress and setting targets. The data is increasingly being used for similar purposes at Key Stage 3. Improvements in science, for example, are currently being driven by extending the use of data to monitor progress in Key Stage 3 and to intervene where pupils are not doing as well as they should.
23. Child protection procedures being operated in the school are good. The child protection officer is well trained and conducts the role in a very professional manner. There is very good liaison with staff and outside agencies to ensure that pupils receive the best support and care possible. However, the written guidance for staff is somewhat brief and, although key staff such as heads of year are well-informed on child protection matters, there has not been regular up-dating for all staff on the procedures. Staff new to the school are provided with suitable training and are effectively briefed on child protection procedures.

**The curriculum enrichment and extra-curricular activities make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development as well as their learning**

24. The school provides a rich range of activities both within the curriculum and also outside school hours, that is at lunchtimes and after school. Over half the pupils take part in some form of extra-curricular activity during their time at the school.
25. Various curricular areas have strong links with external organisations which are used to provide extensions to the curriculum and offer pupils a much wider range of activities than normally seen. For example, the music and drama departments regularly participate in educational projects by various professional musical organisations, such as the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, or theatre companies such as Tamasha. These projects have given pupils very good opportunities to work with professionals in order to improve their own performances.
26. There is a significant programme of out-of-hours study which is well co-ordinated. The school is looking closely at the impact of this provision on the attainment of pupils who attend. Data collected so far indicate that there is a good correlation with pupils' performance in GCSE examinations and their participation in the out-of-hours study. The school also works closely with the University of the First Age in order to share ideas and good practice with other schools.
27. The school has a relatively advanced programme for gifted or talented pupils. There are clear criteria for identifying such pupils and a very full and well-organised programme of enrichment activities in order to promote the academic standards of gifted and talented girls. The activities undertaken include joint ventures with pupils from other schools, which serves to provide further stimulation and challenge for the girls at the school.
28. The majority of departments put on lunchtime or after school clubs, and there are revision classes for pupils preparing to take GCSE examinations. The science department also runs a revision class after school for pupils in Year 9, who are preparing to take national tests. A wide variety of sporting activities, drama rehearsals and orchestra and choir practices provide pupils with a full and varied programme from which to choose.

29. Discussion with pupils indicates that they value and appreciate the extra-curricular activities that are provided, and feel that staff work hard on their account. The range of opportunities for taking responsibility, such as being a prefect and peer tutoring through the University of the First age, is good and contributes well to pupils' personal development.

**Art, drama, geography, information technology and physical education are strong areas of the curriculum**

30. Factors common to these areas include high quality curricular provision, very successful leadership and management characterised most of all by very high expectations and a readiness to embrace new ideas that will challenge pupils' thinking, and very good teaching and learning leading to high standards of attainment.
31. Art and information technology were both subjects highlighted as areas requiring significant improvement in the previous report. There has been good progress in both since then. The use of computers in subjects across the curriculum is now well developed and most staff have at least sound skills in the use of information technology. The area is well resourced and this means that pupils have easy and regular access to the use of information technology. As a result, their standards of work are good and they make regular use of computers to support work in other subjects. There is good evidence around the school particularly of computers being used to present information and to record, analyse and handle data. The sixth form have their own information technology provision in the sixth form centre and use it regularly and well to help with coursework. The use of computers and key skills in using information technology are well integrated into vocational courses.
32. The art department is now very well managed and offers an exciting and stimulating curriculum. Imaginative and creative approaches to teaching have led to a significant improvement in pupils' standards of work. Although this has yet to be demonstrated through public examinations such as GCSE, the quality of the work seen during the inspection gives every indication that the department is well on its way to exceeding national expectations. The department is expecting to at least match national averages in GCSE examinations this year, and there is good potential that these will be exceeded. Certainly, the extent to which pupils' thinking and own ideas are stimulated by the work of other artists and their own personal interpretations of this work means that they take their own ideas several steps further to create something unique to them. As a result, they extend their own imagination and creativity and produce work of a high standard. This is a feature of classes throughout the school, not just examination classes. Work is vibrant and well composed. There is a very thorough approach to teaching skills as well as developing ideas. Overall, the members of the department work as a close knit and coherent team bubbling with ideas and good practice which is readily shared. The high level of mutual respect for one another's expertise between members of department is a key element of its success.
33. GCSE results in geography have been rising at a good rate over the last few years and were significantly above average in 1999. There is a well-balanced curriculum in place which puts due emphasis on the teaching of processes and ideas as well as knowledge. The department is well focused on developing pupils' thinking skills and this contributes to the good standards of work produced by pupils. The very good quality of teaching is characterised by very well structured activities which enable pupils to solve problems for themselves, and to engage in discussion and debate in order to tease out salient arguments to back up their views, for example on migration. Very well-managed questioning of pupils probes and extends their thinking enabling them to develop secure knowledge and understanding. The expectations of the department's performance by the

head of department are high, and there is rigorous checking of its work in order to ensure that it is as good as possible.

34. The drama department has consistently reached high standards of work in examinations. The curriculum in drama provides pupils with very rich opportunities for their cultural, moral and social development. As with art, there is an imaginative and creative approach to teaching. There are very high expectations of pupils' performance and they are given the skills and the confidence not only to express their feelings and views, but to go beyond themselves to explore the feelings of others in order to then enact them for their peers. Very good links with theatre companies provide pupils with rich opportunities to work with professionals. Awareness of the diversity of cultures represented in Britain today is well developed through work with Asian companies such as Tamasha and in giving pupils valuable opportunities to work on bi-lingual plays. Regular drama productions help to extend pupils' skills and knowledge of dramatic performance as well as the technical aspects such as lighting, costumes and stage management.
35. The provision for physical education and also dance is a strength. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and pupils are very enthusiastic about both physical education and dance activities. The teaching places very good emphasis on the quality of performance and on pupils making their own evaluations of how well they are performing. Teachers point out very effectively where good techniques are being applied in physical activity and how pupils can improve their skills. In a Year 9 dance lesson, for example, the use of a video followed by probing questioning by the teacher led to pupils developing a good practical understanding of how to use musical rhythm and put pace into a dance sequence.
36. The physical education department participates regularly and successfully in competitions with other schools. For example, Year 9 pupils reached the semi-final in the Kings Norton netball league and the under 13 basketball reached second place in the Millennium tournament. A number of pupils are also selected to represent the school in national competitions or play for clubs outside the school. For example, a Year 9 pupil was chosen recently to represent the Birmingham under 15 hockey team. There are regular clubs and after school activities in physical education and dance which are well attended by pupils. In dance, there is considerable curricular enrichment through links with outside artists and companies. Many of these experiences encompass a variety of cultures, such as Indian contemporary dance, work based on the Greek myths. The school has been involved in a project based on Giselle with the Birmingham Royal Ballet. Next term a hip hop artist will be coming to the school to work with pupils in Year 9.

**The work of non-teaching staff supports very effectively the work of teachers and makes a very valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school**

37. The school values the work of non-teaching staff and their contribution to the academic and personal development of pupils. This is evident in the investment that is made in having, for example, a full time nurse who provides counselling services as well as medical, and a home-school link worker who works closely with parents. The work of the home-school link worker has been invaluable in helping parents from minority ethnic backgrounds develop confidence in the school and in enabling their daughters to take a greater part in school life.
38. Learning support staff, called integration assistants at the school, provide good support to pupils with learning difficulties and those who are beginners in English. They ensure that they are well briefed about the difficulties pupils are encountering and are therefore successful in helping to make a positive difference to their learning and academic achievement. There is good teamwork between integration assistants, the special

educational needs co-ordinator and special needs teachers. This results in the integration assistants being well deployed and their work being valued.

39. Office staff are efficient and helpful and make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school. They are well managed by the finance and administration officer who also carries out the financial administration efficiently and effectively so that staff and governors are always aware of their financial position. Governors praise the high quality of financial information produced by the finance officer in order to help them monitor spending. The extensive school site is well managed and looked after by the site manager and his team of staff. The walls are free of any graffiti and the school is clean and free of litter. Technicians for science and technology provide good support to these areas, at times under difficult circumstances given the large site and the number of buildings they have to serve.
40. The school has promoted very effectively the contribution of non-teaching staff to the quality of educational provision for its pupils so that they are effective partners within this educational provision. Non-teaching staff were included, for example, in the school's work with Investors in People.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Standards of attainment by the end of Key Stage 3, when pupils are in Year 9, particularly in English, mathematics and science**

41. Pupils' performance in the National tests taken by 14-year-olds was lower than that found in most schools in 1998 and 1999. Although results have been improving in mathematics and science, they remained below average in 1999. There has been a distinct decline in the English results which were well below average last year. When the results of 1999 are compared with similar types of schools, pupils' performance is satisfactory. It was good, in fact, in mathematics and science but below the standards found in similar schools in English. Given that pupils start school with below average results in National tests for 11-year-olds in mathematics and science, their achievement in these subjects by the end of Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. There is some underachievement in English, as pupils' attainment on entry is higher than in mathematics and English based on National tests for 11-year-olds. However, the greater demands of the use of formal English and the range of vocabulary by the time they are 14 places many pupils for whom English is not their first language at a disadvantage. Nonetheless, there is scope for pupils to perform better than they are currently doing in the tests at the end of Key Stage 3.
42. Inspection findings reflect a similar picture to the results of the most recent tests, although there has been some improvement in the standards in English and science as a result of measures put in place by the school to improve pupils' attainment. In other subjects, pupils' attainment is generally better, although there are some weaknesses in the provision for modern foreign languages, particularly in the second modern foreign language.
43. A variety of different factors impact on pupils' attainment in Years 7 to 9. These include a weakness in homework. Too frequently, pupils are asked to finish off work begun in class. This does not provide sufficient challenge to extend or apply what pupils have learned in lessons, especially when some have already finished the work in class.
44. In mathematics, there are a number of key shortcomings in teaching, such as lack of effective whole class teaching. There has been a tendency for the department to focus on ensuring that pupils can do the correct mathematical processes even if they do not really understand how the process actually works. Not enough time is spent ensuring that all the pupils understand underlying mathematical ideas through discussion, skilled questions to

challenge the pupils, and other techniques of whole class teaching. In a typical mathematics lesson, there is a short introduction by the teacher, followed by an overlong period when the pupils are working on their own, when many of them are simply copying an automatic process, and making little progress in developing their understanding. Thus, when the solution to a problem does not follow a set pattern taught by the teacher, pupils are unsure as to what to do. Another weakness in teaching is the extent to which pupils' work and how they are coping with it are assessed in lessons. Hence, in many cases, pupils leave a lesson not having understood key ideas or applying methods incorrectly, and this has not been picked up by the teacher. Examination of pupils' written work indicates too low expectations of pupils' presentation, which is often poor. This inhibits the development of clear understanding of mathematical solutions. For example, work in pupils' books is too poorly organised and presented to be of significant help in revision for tests.

45. There are whole school policies on teaching literacy across the subjects of the curriculum. However, the school is at an early stage of putting them into practice. Nor do the policies give sufficient guidance on the issues of literacy for pupils whose first language is not English. Whilst the needs of those who are beginners in English are well catered for through the learning support department, the needs of those who appear to be fluent speakers are not fully met, and this has more impact in holding back their learning at Key Stage 3 than 4. Their control of formal language and use of expression for formal purposes at Key Stage 3, for example, are underdeveloped. Within the English department, there has been a tendency to focus more on literature than on language. Whilst this has led to good development of pupils' understanding of texts, it has not extended enough pupils' understanding and own use of language. However, under the leadership of a relatively new head of department, this is changing.
46. In science, there is a small but significant proportion of less than satisfactory teaching. This has an impact on the quality of pupils' work and the standards achieved. Examination of pupils' written work indicates that, in contrast to Key Stage 4, pupils are less adept at linking evidence from experiments and observations to scientific theories. Put simply, they do not draw conclusions from scientific evidence in sufficient depth and detail. Work also reveals in some cases a big difference between the amount of work completed by lower and higher attainers. In a number of cases, lower attaining pupils have poorly presented work which is very limited in quantity as well. The gap is wider than that found say in English or in the work of pupils of different levels of attainment in Key Stage 4 science work. Whilst some teachers have very high expectations of pupils, overall, there is scope for these to be consistently high across the science department at Key Stage 3.
47. There are two main factors in lower attainment in modern foreign languages. Firstly, although there is evidence of good teaching, there is also some weakness in teaching which relates mainly to lack of sufficient pace and challenge. The senior management team and head of department are aware of these weaknesses and are trying to tackle the issue of extending the high expectations espoused by the majority of modern language teachers to all members of the department. The second factor relates to the curricular provision. The second modern foreign language is introduced in Year 9, which is rather late when compared to most other schools. This does not give pupils who want to continue with it at Key Stage 4 a good enough grounding before moving on to the demands of the GCSE course. The late introduction of a second language is further exacerbated by alternating it between German and Spanish from one year to the next. This results in a lack of continuity of teaching for teachers and in promoting continuous development and enhancement of the curriculum.
48. Other factors impinge on standards of work in Key Stage 3. These include early stages in development of the use of data to track and monitor progress and set targets in some

subjects. There are examples of some very good practice in how this data has been used. In art, for example, analysis of data indicated that the performance in GCSE examinations of pupils who were coming to the after school art club was significantly better than that of pupils who did not attend. In many cases the pupils who did not attend were unable to do so due to long journeys home. The art department therefore produced a special art resource pack for these pupils to work with at home. This initiative is having positive benefits in the quality of work being produced by pupils currently in Key Stage 4.

49. Pupils' attitudes, although good and often very good in lessons, are occasionally less than satisfactory, usually because of weaknesses in teaching. Pupils in Key Stage 3, particularly amongst lower attaining groups, are not as mature or self-disciplined as those in Key Stage 4, and where weaknesses in teaching give them an opportunity to waste time or to misbehave, they occasionally give in to the temptation.

### **The use of numeracy in mathematics and in other subjects across the curriculum**

50. Not enough attention is paid to teaching numeracy in mathematics and other subjects, and there is no numeracy policy in place as yet although there is a useful statement on numeracy in the school handbook. As a result, pupils' numeracy skills are poor throughout the school. For example, in an art lesson, the teacher needed to show a significant minority of pupils how to draw a circle and then divide it up into six equal parts. There does not seem to be a clear policy on the use of calculators. Pupils are too over reliant on the use of calculators and are unaware when the answer produced is wrong. This is because their understanding of the decimal system, place value and of fractions is weak.
51. The lack of a policy for numeracy across the curriculum means that in some cases teachers overestimate the capabilities of pupils when using number with them. In these cases, teachers find themselves suddenly having to teach an aspect of numeracy they had not planned for. Overall, in mathematics lessons, numeracy is not reinforced adequately enough and strategies to build it up systematically as pupils move through the school are lacking. For example, pupils do not know number facts such as tables and are unused to handling mental arithmetic problems.

### **The school's accommodation and library resources**

52. The school has two main library bases, one for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 and one for the sixth form. In both cases, the number of books, both fiction and non-fiction, is not sufficient to support pupils' academic development in most subjects of the curriculum. Although there are useful library resources in most departments, the library stock is inadequate for a school of this size. The school is aware of this. There has been a good amount of spending on books recently, although this has gone mostly towards beginning to replace a considerable tranche of books disposed of not long ago due to their age and poor condition. The development of the libraries as a learning resource for pupils has been hampered by the lack of a full time librarian. The school is in a position to appoint a new librarian and has given great thought and consideration to the job specification in order to ensure that the person appointed will be able to develop the libraries as community learning centres which are open to pupils in out-of-school hours.
53. Another area where the school has spent considerable money is on accommodation. The previous report criticised the lack of an on-going programme of repair and refurbishment. The school has tackled this issue well and the budget is very prudently managed in order to secure regular funds each year to improve a particular part or parts of the school. Most of this has been spent on the internal fabric of the building, but the school has also matched funding provided by the local education authority for some of the external repairs and

improvements to the buildings themselves. Despite this, some parts of the school remain in considerable need of repair or refurbishment, such as the art department for example. In addition, other areas are not adequate for the needs of the curriculum or pupils. This is the case with the accommodation for music, where there are no practice rooms.

54. Although the overall availability and condition of the accommodation are satisfactory, the appearance of much of the external buildings is rather uninviting and does have an impact on the extent to which the environment is stimulating and aesthetically pleasing. A small number of parents commented on this as well. In addition, the walkway in and out of school is too closely aligned to the drive used by motor vehicles. Particularly at the start and end of the school day and sometimes at lunchtimes there is not sufficient separation of pedestrians from vehicles. This presents a health and safety hazard.
55. Whilst the internal buildings are clean and litter free, and most of the grounds are well kept, there is a problem of litter in some parts of the grounds, particularly behind the lower school building. Caretaking staff are conscientious about picking up litter, but were a little short-handed due to staff absence during the inspection.

#### **Meeting legal requirements for a daily act of collective worship and provision for religious education in the sixth form**

56. As at the time of the last inspection, the school assemblies are usually of good quality with good involvement of pupils in leading them. However, there are not enough assemblies for each year group to meet the legal requirements for a daily act of collective worship. In addition, not all the assemblies seen provided pupils with an opportunity for reflection or prayer.
57. The school has improved its religious education provision, which was an issue at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form at the time of the previous inspection. There is good provision now in Key Stage 4. Appropriate provision is available in the sixth form through the general studies course, but not all pupils are able to take advantage of it. Many of those in Year 12 and some in Year 13 who are taking A-levels are unable to take the general studies course because of timetabling clashes with one or more of their A-level courses. Hence legal requirements are not quite fully met.

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

58. In order to improve the quality of education and to improve pupils' standards of attainment the headteacher, senior staff and governors should:
- (1) Raise standards of attainment in Key Stage 3 so that pupils achieve as well as they do in Key Stage 4 by:
- Effectively putting into practice the whole school literacy policy which includes guidance for supporting pupils whose first language is not English;
  - Effectively developing pupils' use of formal English language and widening their range and use of vocabulary;
  - Improving the quality of whole class teaching and the use of on-going assessment during lessons in mathematics in order to improve pupils' understanding of mathematical ideas and their problem-solving skills;
  - Improving the quality of pupils' presentation and organisation of written work in mathematics;
  - Ensuring that there are consistently high expectations of all pupils in the science and modern foreign languages departments;

- Tackling effectively the issues of the stage at which the second modern foreign language is introduced and the policy of alternating between Spanish and German as the second modern foreign language;
  - Putting in place further strategies to deal with weaknesses in teaching when support and professional development do not lead to sufficient improvement;
  - Further developing the use of the rich sources of data available for monitoring and setting targets for individual pupils;
  - Using homework effectively and systematically to extend and reinforce pupils' learning at Key Stage 3.  
(Paragraphs 16, 41-49)
- (2) Effectively develop pupils' numeracy skills by:
- Putting into place a policy on numeracy across the curriculum;
  - Developing to a satisfactory standard pupils' mental arithmetic skills in mathematics;
  - Identifying clear expectations for progressive development of numeracy skills as pupils move through the school;
  - Setting an appropriate policy on the use of calculators.  
(Paragraphs 50-51)
- (3) Increase the number of books in the library to a suitable level.  
(Paragraph 52)
- (4) Continue to seek ways of improving the quality of the accommodation by:
- Seeking financial support from the local education authority;
  - Refurbishing and carrying out maintenance work in the art department;
  - Putting in place effective measures to separate pedestrian traffic from vehicular traffic on the walkways out of the school;
  - Putting in place measures to reduce the amount of litter behind the lower school block.  
(Paragraphs 53-55)
- (5) Ensure that legal requirements are met in relation to the requirement for a daily act of collective worship and provision for religious education in the sixth form.  
(Paragraphs 56-57)
59. In addition to the above key issues for action the school should also include the following minor issue in the action plan:
- (1) Reinforce the otherwise good provision for child protection by replacing the current brief statement in the staff handbook with comprehensive written guidance and ensuring that there is annual briefing for staff on the procedures.  
(Paragraph 23)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	65
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1.5	27.6	40.0	24.6	4.6	1.5	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7-Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1449	214
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	584	N/A

Special educational needs	Y7-Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	50	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	357	2

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	921

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	47
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	80

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.7
National comparative data	7.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
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	0	294	294

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	146	160	142
	Total	146	160	142
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	50 (60)	54 (47)	48 (45)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	14 (29)	32 (24)	21 (22)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	164	182	193
	Total	164	182	193
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	56 (55)	62 (53)	66 (67)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	24 (29)	47 (34)	30 (31)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	0	275	275

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	139	269	274
	Total	139	269	274
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	50.5 (49.6)	97.8 (96.5)	99.6 (98)
	National	46.3 (44.6)	90.7 (89.8)	95.7 (95.2)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	40.3 (37.5)
	National	37.8 (36.8)

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

### 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	0	37	37

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	0	9.6	9.6 (13.2)	0	6.5	6.5 (6.0)
National	17.7	18.1	17.9 (17.6)	2.7	2.8	2.8 (2.8)

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate	
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	23	91.3
	National		72.9

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	77
Black – African heritage	11
Black – other	5
Indian	131
Pakistani	623
Bangladeshi	44
Chinese	9
White	574
Any other minority ethnic group	189

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	4	2
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-Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	93
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.9

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	519

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.2
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7-Y13**

Key Stage 3	27.0
Key Stage 4	22.5

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1998/99
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Total income	3912850
Total expenditure	4033532
Expenditure per pupil	2448
Balance brought forward from previous year	130312
Balance carried forward to next year	9630

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	1633
Number of questionnaires returned	175

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	46	43	9	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	47	49	4	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	39	12	1	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	46	15	5	2
The teaching is good.	37	51	5	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	41	13	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	37	6	3	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	34	4	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	29	42	19	4	6
The school is well led and managed.	33	43	9	2	13
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	37	7	3	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	39	6	2	15

### **Other issues raised by parents**

The choice of subjects and combinations of some subjects in options for Key Stage 4 was not felt to be wide enough by a few parents.

Concerning the issues of closer working partnership with parents, a number at the meeting with inspectors felt that form tutors did not make enough use of homework diaries to communicate with parents.