

# INSPECTION REPORT

**THE SIR JOHN COLFOX SCHOOL**

BRIDPORT

Lea Area: Dorset

Unique reference number: 113852

Headteacher: Mr C Mason

Reporting inspector: Mrs P Gibbon  
19477

Dates of inspection: 14 - 18 February 2000

Inspection number: 186380

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 students:	11 to 18
Gender of students:	Mixed
School address:	Bridport Dorset
Postcode:	DT6 3DT
Telephone number:	01308 422291
Fax number:	01308 420036
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Alan Gilmour
Date of previous inspection:	4 December 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

### PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

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

### PART B: COMMENTARY

#### WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

1-25

**Good teaching and the outstanding range of high quality equipment and resources create the right conditions for effective learning and students attain above average academic standards.**

**The school cares for the students as individuals - form tutors know their students well and support their academic and personal development.**

**Students at Key Stages 3 and 4 have a broad and relevant curriculum that is enriched by the range of modern foreign languages.**

**The school's programme of support for students with special educational needs (SEN) is very effective; provision is excellent and students make very good progress.**

**The quality and good use made of information and communication technology (ICT) in all subjects are helping students' learning and progression through the key stages and into the sixth form.**

**The management team's clear vision and effective planning are leading to progressively more effective learning and higher attainment.**

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**26-35**

**The school's programme for systematically monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching in relation to students' attainment is not fully in place.**

**The inadequate planning of lessons by some teachers means that students do not always make best use of their time in the classroom, particularly during the final ten minutes.**

**Not all students have a positive attitude to learning although teachers work hard to provide an environment which gives students high aspirations and an ambition to succeed.**

**Provision for the spiritual development of students is not identified in all areas of the curriculum.**

**Although the quality of information sent to parents is good, the school does not achieve its aim to make all parents feel fully involved in their child's education.**

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

**36**

## **PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS**

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Sir John Colfox School is a mixed comprehensive for students aged 11-18. At the time of the inspection there were 964 students on the school roll with broadly equal numbers of girls and boys. Very few students are from ethnic minority heritage backgrounds and the few students with English as an additional language are competent English language users. The number of students known to be entitled to free school meals is below the national average for this type of school. The school lists 159 students on the register of students with special educational needs; this is above the national average.

The attainment of students on entry to the school at age 11 is broadly in line with national averages for the age group.

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

The Sir John Colfox School is a good and improving school that promotes effective learning and enables students to reach high levels of attainment. The school's strategic planning and efficient use of resources lead to high standards in all aspects of school life. The school has recently undergone considerable upheaval but visionary leadership and efficient management at all levels maintained the school routine well during the move to the new building. Overall, the strengths of the school far outweigh its weaknesses. The school gives good value for money.

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

- Good teaching helps students attain above average academic standards; the outstanding range of high quality equipment and resources helps to create the right conditions for effective learning.
- The school cares for the students as individuals - form tutors know their students well and support their academic and personal development.
- Students at Key Stages 3 and 4 have a broad and relevant curriculum that is enriched by the range of modern foreign languages.
- The school's programme of support for students with special educational needs is very effective; provision is excellent and students make very good progress.
- The quality and good use made of ICT in all subjects are helping students' learning and progress through the key stages and into the sixth form.
- Effective strategic planning by management at all levels and the clear vision of the senior team are leading to progressively more effective learning and higher attainment.

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

- The school's programme for systematically monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching in relation to students' attainment is not fully in place.
- The inadequate planning of lessons by some teachers means that students do not always make best use of their time in the classroom, particularly during the final ten minutes.
- Not all students have a positive attitude to learning although teachers work hard to provide an environment which gives students high aspirations and an ambition to succeed.
- Provision for the spiritual development of students is not identified in all areas of the curriculum
- Although the quality of information sent to parents is good, the school does not always achieve its aim to make all parents feel fully involved in their child's education.

*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 sustained improvement since it was last inspected in December 1995. However, there is still no collective worship and RE is not available to all students in the sixth form.

GCSE results have improved overall. The quality of teaching is better; in two thirds of the lessons seen the quality of teaching was judged to be good or better compared with a half so graded in the previous inspection.

Much more use is made of information about students' achievements to improve their learning in all areas of the curriculum. Subject departments are introducing a system of individual target setting for students.

Provision for ICT is now very good and enables students to access a PC in all areas of the curriculum; ICT is beginning to be used as an effective aid to learning at all key stages.

The quality of the school's strategic planning and managerial system, together with the outstanding facilities of the new building, means that the school is well placed to bring about further improvements in the standards that students achieve.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A
A-levels/AS-levels	C	C	D	

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

In the national tests for 14 year olds, results have been well above the national average in English, mathematics and science for the last three years. Taking all three core subjects together over the last four years, the performance of boys was better than that of the girls. Boys' results were well above whereas the girls' results were in line with the national average. In comparison with similar schools, the performance of students in the national tests in the core subjects at The Sir John Colfox School was above the average.

GCSE examination results over the last three years show that the proportion of students obtaining 5 or more GCSE passes at grades A\*-C was well above the national average. The proportion of students obtaining 5 or more GCSE passes at grades A\*-G was also well above the national average. In 1999, students' results were again well above the national average. The average GCSE point score per pupil was well above the average for similar schools. In comparison with the national picture, the rise in the school's average total of GCSE point score per pupil was above the national trend. When compared with students' other results in the A\*-C grades, art and design, design and technology, drama, English literature, German and religious studies are significantly higher. The school is particularly successful in the number of students with special educational needs who achieve 5 or more GCSE passes at A\*-G grades.

GCE A/AS level results show that, on the basis of average points score, the school was below the national average in 1999 for students entered for two or more GCE A levels, although the results were above the national average in individual subjects. Point scores are averaged across all pupils in the sixth form so the low points score is due, in the main, to the number of students taking only two GCE A levels or a combination of one A level and another course. On the basis of the average for last three years, the point score was close to the national average.



## STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most students are well disposed to learning and want to do well. Teachers work hard to promote intellectual curiosity and initiative but some students at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 lack keenness and ambition; they do not always appreciate the personal effort they have to make.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	In general, high standards of behaviour, in and out of the classroom, ensure that students can learn in a supportive atmosphere. Occasionally, unacceptable behaviour by a minority of students holds back the learning of others. The few students who succumb to unsociable behaviour are carefully monitored and helped to improve their attitude.
Personal development and relationships	Students are given many opportunities to participate in school activities; they work well together and relationships between students are supportive. Relationships between adults and students are constructive and encourage higher aspirations.
Attendance	Attendance is in line with the national average for secondary schools. Unauthorised absence is well below average. Punctuality of a small minority of students at the start of the day is unsatisfactory.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	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.*

Teaching was satisfactory or better in almost all lessons seen. It was good or better in two-thirds and very good in one-fifth of all the lessons. In the best lessons, very good planning, effective questioning and high expectations lead to students learning at a good rate.

The small number of lessons with less effective teaching occurred in English, French, mathematics and science; however good and very good lessons were noted in all these areas.

Most teachers provide a variety of activities for students at all levels of attainment but sometimes fail to ensure that students concentrate and learn throughout the full 60 minutes of the lesson.

Students with SEN make very good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	All students have a broad and balanced curriculum enriched by an extensive programme of language studies. The use of ICT across the curriculum is motivating and stimulating.
Provision for students with special educational needs	The school identifies students with individual learning and other needs at an early stage and provides for them very well. The programme for very able students slipped during the move but is now being re-established.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The whole curriculum, including the personal and social education programme, helps students to develop an understanding of moral, social and cultural issues. Students' spiritual development is less well provided for; assemblies do not always have a spiritual element and not all subjects of the curriculum offer opportunities for students to consider and reflect upon questions of meaning and value.
How well the school cares for its students	Care and guidance are a strength. Students are treated as individuals and the school is ambitious for its students. Form tutors and subject teachers know their students well and support their progress and personal development

The school has made an impact on students' attitudes, which leads to higher attainment and maturing personal development. The school is failing in its statutory duty to provide for a daily act of collective worship and a programme of religious education in the sixth form.

## HOW THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and deputies have a clear vision of the direction the school must take to meet its objectives and the managerial skills to achieve their aim. With the senior teachers, they lead the school very well and are good at long-term planning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are supportive and involved in all aspects of the school. They are aware of the strengths and weaknesses but do not fulfil their statutory responsibility in providing for collective worship and RE in the sixth form.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Senior managers, heads of department and pastoral heads have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school monitors the impact of policies on the quality of learning but does not yet systematically monitor or evaluate the quality of teaching, although some subject departments have started the process. Results of national tests and public examinations are analysed and appropriate school targets set.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning and administration are very good. The school has appropriately prioritised plans for development. Resources and equipment are of a very high standard and are used efficiently to aid learning.

The school gives good value for money

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• students make good progress</li><li>• good quality teaching</li><li>• school helps students become mature and responsible</li><li>• school is approachable</li><li>• children like school</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• information to parents</li><li>• involvement of parents</li><li>• behaviour</li><li>• consistency of homework</li></ul>

The number of parents responding to the questionnaire represented some 20% of the total number of students in the school. Parents are mostly very pleased with the school and the education it provides. Inspection findings support this view. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire thought they were kept well informed about the progress of the students and that the school worked closely with the parents. Inspection findings supported this view in that the quality and frequency of the communication with parents are good.

However, the view of some parents is that the school does not always involve them fully in the work of the school. Parents' views of the standard of behaviour in the school also vary. Some parents are concerned that unacceptable behaviour by a few is disturbing the learning of other students. Inspectors found behaviour to be generally very good and that the few instances of unacceptable behaviour were dealt with promptly and firmly. Homework was seen to be set appropriately for the age and ability of the students but some homework diaries were not completed properly and some students had not finished their homework on time.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**Good teaching and the outstanding range of high quality equipment and resources create the right conditions for effective learning and students attain above average academic standards.**

1. A combination of skilful teaching and well-chosen, good quality resources encourages students to work hard and aspire to high standards of attainment. The standards achieved by the students at the school are high, and are well above the national average in both the national tests for 14 year olds and in the GCSE examinations. The standard of work seen in lessons during the inspection was also high. Managers and teachers create a favourable climate for learning and students respond with good work.

2. The effective use of resources to motivate and stimulate learning was consistent in all areas of the curriculum and particularly good in sixth form lessons. A very good example of equipment and resources being used to support and extend learning occurred in a geography lesson with Year 11, where aerial photographs and satellite images of the Brecon Beacon area helped students in identifying geographical features and land use patterns. This carefully planned and tightly structured lesson enabled students to make rapid progress, and the support given to individual students meant that misunderstandings and inaccuracies could be rectified quickly.

3. The overall good quality of teaching leads to effective learning in the majority of lessons. Teachers plan a variety of tasks and activities to extend students' thinking and understanding and have high expectations of what students will achieve. In a Year 9 design and technology lesson, the teacher's lively presentation, clear board work, and well-prepared, ready-to-hand resources convinced the students that they could complete their assignments successfully. In addition, the very good display of previous work around the room was motivating and students responded enthusiastically with high quality work of their own. Teachers encouraged students to improve their literacy skills by drawing attention to the use and correct spelling of subject specific words and phrases.

4. Skilful questioning by the teacher to test students' understanding of the topic is a characteristic of many successful lessons. Teachers are good at using discussion with groups of students to provoke thoughtful responses and use their own wide knowledge and understanding of the subject to enthuse and inspire students. In a sixth form NNEB course, students learned much about employment issues through an informal debate unobtrusively conducted by the teacher. Students are given a clear view of how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve or, as for instance in some Year 11 lessons, reach their GCSE target grades.

5. The staff work together well. Prior to and during the move there is evidence of close team work which ensured that the main business of the school carried on regardless of the mechanics of the move and all the executive decisions that had to be made.

6. Teachers are committed, conscientious and want to improve their own techniques which help to promote learning through an on-going professional development programme linked to the school development plan. Heads of department know their department's

strengths and weaknesses and plan accordingly to develop teaching and learning strategies to improve attainment.

**The school cares for the students as individuals - form tutors know their students well and support their academic and personal development.**

7. The school has an effective and very supportive pastoral system with appropriate procedures which support the school policy of treating academic and personal development as whole. The positive, all-embracing approach is 'achievement orientated', which students understand and appreciate. This is particularly effective in the SEN department where all members of staff are concerned to support all aspects of the students' performance. All members of staff involved in the system, from form tutors, through heads of year to the heads of upper and lower school, are in accord and fully committed to the school policy. Appropriate child protection arrangements are in place and the school gives care and attention to health and safety issues.

8. The rewards system, initially developed in the SEN department, acts as an inducement to positive behaviour and achievement in both personal development and academic achievement. Students, including those formerly identified as disaffected, spoke enthusiastically of how they were saving points towards a special privilege, or for useful articles such as books or pens.

9. Morning tutor periods are usually used well by teachers to follow up individual issues or concerns or to bring items of news, such as the lunchtime programme of extension work. This was originally devised as an able students' enrichment programme but all pupils are encouraged to join. In the most effective sessions, tutor-time is also used to check homework diaries, however in some subject lessons there was evidence of incorrectly entered homework assignments and diaries not having been checked for some time. In the main, the tutor period is a purposeful, but not spiritual, start to the day.

10. Parents spoke warmly of the recent Year 7 induction programme. They thought that the move from primary to secondary education had been eased considerably by the sensitive introduction and the year head's personal knowledge of the newcomers.

11. The integrated assessment system gives the school the means to track pupil performance. Teachers' individual marking and the school performance analysis make students aware of what they have to do to improve; for instance, in many lessons they are informed about their level of attainment in relation to the National Curriculum and GCSE or GCE A level grades. Students are thus helped towards becoming responsible independent learners. Particularly good use of this form of encouragement occurred in design and technology, English, French and German, and in history and geography. Where students are identified as falling below expected standards, special intensive study groups are devised such as the Year 11 three-week course in study skills and examination techniques. Timely career advice, enlivened by a balloon debate, as well as helping Year 9 students plan their courses for Key Stage 4, demonstrated the difficulties of decision-making.

12. Relationships within the school are good; students feel supported by staff and by each other. Older students help younger ones, for example Year 11 students join in the lower school tutor periods and sixth formers support in the SEN department and participate in the sports leadership awards. Membership of the school council by form representation

allows all students to be involved in the running of the school and gives them a sense of responsibility towards the school as an active community.

**Students at Key Stages 3 and 4 have a broad and relevant curriculum that is enriched by the range of modern foreign languages.**

13. The school, as a specialist language college, is ensuring that students have an exciting introduction to a range of language experiences. All subjects of the curriculum are focused on language and this brings an international flavour to all aspects of learning; subjects of the curriculum are linked by language and cultural topics. For instance, students studying the Japanese language are designing and making kimonos in art and using the recent Japanese experience of the destructive powers of earthquakes as an illustration in geography. Their familiarity with place names and customs furthers the students' understanding of literature across the world. The strong language skills of the teachers and the competence of language assistants open up a range of languages and cultural experiences for all students.

14. The language laboratory helps students to practise their language skills and, in time, the conferencing facilities will add international oral communication to their increasing competence across the Internet. The school is planning to work in different languages in all subject areas and is keen to encourage the development of local community and business links through the language programme with the objective of widening students' interests and raising their aspirations. The emphasis on language helps students towards better usage and understanding of English; literacy and oracy skills are well supported across the curriculum. Participation in the Comenius programme of the European Commission has enabled the school to work closely with two schools in Europe - the art work resulting from the project is displayed in the foyer.

15. Senior managers appreciate that students in a mostly monocultural school need to be introduced to a range of topics not necessarily covered in the main curriculum. The able students' programme, although given lower priority during the move, is seen by students to have been of great support in extending their horizons. For instance, all students in the present sixth form are following up foreign language skills first encountered in the enrichment programme in addition to their elective studies.

16. Careful planning of the personal and social education (PSE) programme means that students have an opportunity to study other traditions as well as aspects of their own culture. For example, in a Year 7 class, students discussed relationships and, with sensitive questioning by the teacher, came to understand the nature of interaction and support within different family arrangements. Other areas of the curriculum contribute to the students' understanding of moral issues as, for instance, in a Year 11 English lesson when they discussed immigration and food supply in the Third World as an aspect of their media studies.

17. The school itself is a stimulating place; the quality of the building and the furnishings is excellent and enlivened throughout by thought-provoking displays of students' work. Outstanding facilities for sports, the sciences and technologies, art, music and drama give the students an exciting and motivating environment.

**The school's programme of support for students with special educational needs (SEN) is very effective; provision is excellent and students make very good progress.**

18. The SEN department is concerned with the development of the whole student and much emphasis is placed on enhancing self-esteem, confidence and social skills, as well as encouraging higher levels of attainment. Students are rewarded for academic achievement and productive behaviour. The enthusiastic students meet the high expectations of teachers and classroom assistants. This was demonstrated particularly well in the weekly session when students brought their work to a meeting of all the Key Stage 3 students on the SEN register to display their work, take questions from their peers and be applauded by the whole group. Teachers have succeeded in giving these students the confidence to show their work and the oracy skills to talk about it and reply to questions.

19. Specialist subject staff are fully involved in the programme for SEN. The department works closely with subject departments in focusing on particular aspects of the National Curriculum and in devising lesson plans, teaching approaches and resources which will most effectively enable students to meet their own raised expectations. In a Year 9 science lesson students made good progress investigating the law of reflection. This was because the aim of the lesson was made clear, the practical task chosen was appropriate and achievable, and students were confident in the laboratory. Helpful displays showed them how to write up their experiment and little time was wasted in non-essential activities or unproductive chatter; by the end of the lesson, most of the students reached standards in line with national expectations for their age group.

**The quality and good use made of information and communication technology (ICT) in all subjects are helping students' learning and progression through the key stages and into the sixth form.**

20. The level of provision and the quality of ICT equipment are very good. The school sees computer literacy as an essential skill and the ICT suite is well-equipped for whole class teaching. A lesson introducing spreadsheets to Year 7 students showed them to be keen and ready to learn. Students also have easy access to PCs in departmental resource areas and were seen to make extensive and extended use of the facility to research topics and to present their work to the best advantage. Students used the computers readily, both in lessons and in their 'own' time; they are progressing quickly as independent researchers.

21. Subject departments are making effective use of ICT to aid learning and to motivate and stimulate students. For example, in a Year 8 English group, SEN students independently searched the Internet for references to 'highwaymen' as part of their study of the poem, and used downloaded clip art to illustrate their work. In other English lessons, students use the computers in the classroom and those in the resource area to compose written work and improve their presentational skills. Students in Year 11 and in the sixth form use the Internet and CD-ROMs extensively for revision purposes.

22. The display around the school, and especially in the classrooms, shows that students have used ICT skills to good advantage; their work is of high quality and serves to interest and motivate others. In business studies, for instance, the sparkling display of graphical presentations illustrates the wide range of techniques students can use to present data and explain processes. Similarly, mathematics classrooms are enlivened by the displays of computer generated work and students are encouraged to use ICT on appropriate occasions to extend and enrich their learning.

**The management team's clear vision and effective planning are leading to**

### **progressively more effective learning and higher attainment.**

23. Prior to and during the move managers at all levels maintained the school routine well; students were able to work and achieve well in the public examinations and national tests. Senior managers had obviously planned all aspects of the move and all staff worked as a team. The imaginative move to language college status has enhanced the curricular opportunities for all and the detailed planning has ensured that students benefit fully.

24. Heads of subject departments were fully involved in the move and in the planning and provisioning of the departments in their new setting. Consequently they know their department's strengths and weaknesses very well and their development plans form an integral component of the school development plan (SDP).

25. Performance has been raised in all areas but the school is continuing to move forward on its known strengths. For example, the school is opening opportunities for a wider group of students at sixth form level through the introduction of the NNEB course and additional GNVQs. The planned emphasis on setting targets for individual students at GCSE is using the efficient data analysis procedure to enhance the monitoring and recording of individual performance at all levels.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

#### **The school's programme for systematically monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching in relation to students' attainment is not fully in place.**

26. Although the school is following the Dorset appraisal system, it has not fully implemented a monitoring scheme to identify teaching approaches that promote effective learning and how these might be shared across the school. The headteacher and deputies have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of many aspects of teaching through discussions, informal contact and visit to classrooms. Heads of department observe teaching when they can and support their staff but are constrained by the lack of 'space' on their timetables. Pressures on the senior management team also inhibit a regular programme of regular observation of teaching across subjects to identify common strengths that can be shared and areas where improvements are needed. The senior management team and middle managers need to become involved in monitoring the quality of teaching across departments. The already effective arrangements for analysing the performance of cohorts will provide a good basis from which to develop a more systematic approach.

#### **The inadequate planning of lessons by some teachers means that students do not always make best use of their time in the classroom, particularly during the final ten minutes.**

27. The overall quality of teaching across the school was good at all levels but there were occasions when, due to inadequate planning or poor time-keeping, students were not making the best use of their time throughout the whole of the lesson. An example of this occurred in a Year 9 science lesson when, despite the teacher's good subject knowledge, the pace of the lesson flagged and a number of boys were allowed to go off task in the second half of the lesson. Similarly, in an English lesson with Year 7, the unfocused structure and slow pace led to inattention, lost concentration and, consequently, poor learning.

28. With a greater attention to monitoring of the quality of teaching, senior managers and heads of department would have a secure basis for discussing lesson-planning



strategies.

**Not all students have a positive attitude to learning although teachers work hard to provide an environment which gives students high aspirations and an ambition to succeed.**

29. At Key Stages 3 and 4, and in the sixth form, most students are well disposed to learning and want to do well. Teachers work hard to promote intellectual curiosity and initiative, but some students lack keenness and ambition and fail to do their best in lessons. They do not always appreciate the personal effort they have to make. For example, some students in a Year 11 mathematics lesson showed little interest in their studies or their potential GCSE grades although the teacher gave each individual special attention; learning and attainment deteriorated as the students became inattentive and uncooperative.

30. In some instances students came to the lesson unprepared to work. This was the case in a Year 9 English lesson. Three students arrived without their books and another two were 15 minutes late; the teacher's sound teaching skills and knowledge kept the students on task throughout the lesson but their unwillingness to be fully involved meant that their progress was minimal.

31. In general, students' attitudes improve as they move up the school so the efforts of managers and teachers are making a difference, but a few students still need to be reminded of their own responsibility as learners.

**Provision for the spiritual development of students is not identified in all areas of the curriculum.**

32. In general the school takes good account of the moral, cultural and social development of the students, but provision for their spiritual development is less well done. Religious education (RE) at Key Stages 3 and 4 is effective and the standard of attainment is high, both in class and in the public examinations. There is no non-examinable RE course on offer to students in the sixth form. RE lessons in Years 7 to 11 contribute much towards the students' understanding of spiritual matters and present occasions for students to discuss and debate fundamental issues. However, opportunities when students could consider fundamental questions in other areas of the curriculum are frequently missed. In particular, apart from there being no collective act of worship, assemblies have no period for reflection or any form of contemplation to give a meaningful start to the day.

**Although the quality of information sent to parents is good, the school does not achieve its aim to make all parents feel fully involved in their child's education.**

33. Communication with parents is good overall. Parent governors and the chairman of the Parents and Friends Association (PFA) report that parents are supportive and recognise that school is helping their child become mature learners. A core of parents is always ready to help organise social and fund-raising events.

34. The school keeps parents informed of their child's progress through regular reports and a series of parents evenings. In general parents are happy about these arrangements, although they agree that there is quite a long gap between reports in Year 8. However, evidence from parents' questionnaire and comments at the parents' meeting indicate that

notwithstanding the quality of communication, there are parents who feel left out of the proceedings.

35. None of the parents at the meeting, nor in their responses to the questionnaire, suggested what might be done by the school to improve this situation. Nevertheless, the school recognises that parental support is an essential element of learning and it should explore ways in which parents might become partners in their child's education.

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

36. The school should now:

- (1) Set up a system of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching to ensure that the existing good practices which promote effective learning and which help to raise attainment are identified, supported and disseminated.  
(See paragraph 26)
- (2) Improve lesson planning to ensure that the time spent in class is used effectively for the whole of the session.  
(See paragraphs 27, 28)
- (3) Seek to raise the aspirations of those students who are less than positive by setting up a programme to develop self-esteem and raise their aspirations.  
(See paragraph 29)
- (4) Improve communication with parents to ensure that all perceive themselves as partners in the education of their children.  
(See paragraph 34)
- (5) Carry out the statutory duty to have a daily Act of Worship and provide for all students to be offered a course in religious education in the sixth form.  
(See paragraph 32)
- (6) Investigate how provision to support the spiritual development of students may be incorporated into all areas of the curriculum  
(See paragraph 32)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	71
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
0	19	46	27	7	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	852	112
Number of full-time students eligible for free school meals	65	1

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	15	1
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	159	1

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	36
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	34

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	7.5
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.3
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 students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	89	87	176

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	73	67	56
	Girls	82	69	54
	Total	155	136	110
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	88 (74)	77 (59)	62 (61)
	National	63 (65)	62 (59)	55 (56)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	46	44	28
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	78	68	57
	Girls	82	70	55
	Total	160	138	112
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	90 (79)	78 (76)	63 (63)
	National	64 (62)	64 (63)	60 (62)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	53	47	30
	National	31 (30)	37 (37)	28 (30)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	67	68	136

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	39	65	65
	Girls	44	65	66
	Total	83	130	131
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	61.0 (57.1)	95.6 (99.3)	96.3 (99.3)
	National	49.9	90.5	95.7

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	46.4 (44.4)
	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	35	39	74

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	14.3	14.2	14.3(14.7)	7.3(1.3)	3.1(5.3)	2.6(3.3)
National	16.5	16.7	16.8	2.6	3.3	2.6

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

### **Ethnic background of students**

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	4
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	956
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	37	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*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 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	57.3
Number of students per qualified teacher	16.8

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	28

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	79.6
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13**

Key Stage 3	23.1
Key Stage 4	23.2

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	2006128
Total expenditure	2027822
Expenditure per pupil	2234
Balance brought forward from previous year	-15185
Balance carried forward to next year	-36879

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	964
Number of questionnaires returned	194

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	31	54	9	5	1
My child is making good progress in school.	34	52	8	2	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	15	48	18	6	13
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	15	59	20	5	0
The teaching is good.	16	62	10	3	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	12	44	27	15	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	34	52	9	6	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	40	46	8	4	2
The school works closely with parents.	9	50	25	11	5
The school is well led and managed.	16	49	15	6	13
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	21	60	10	5	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	47	14	6	12

*Percentages may not add up to 100 because of rounding to nearest whole number.*