

INSPECTION REPORT

**THE HERTFORDSHIRE AND ESSEX HIGH
SCHOOL**

Bishop's Stortford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number:117592

Headteacher: Mrs Sandra Buchanan

Reporting inspector: Mr John Collins
8163

Dates of inspection: 22 – 25 January 2001

Inspection number: 187204

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Secondary
School category: Foundation
Age range of pupils: 11-18
Gender of pupils: 11-16 girls; 16-18 mixed

School address: Warwick Road
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Jim Smith

Date of previous inspection: 26 February 1996

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6 - 12
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	13 -18
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	20 - 23

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Hertfordshire and Essex High School is a five form entry all-ability school for girls aged 11-16 and for boys and girls in the sixth form. It admits 160 girls per year at age 11 and boys to the sixth form at age 16. The school is of broadly average size; it has a total of 1,007 pupils, 994 girls and 13 boys. Formerly a grant-maintained school, the school now has foundation status. Pupils' ability on intake, based on the average of their English, mathematics and science scores at age 11 in national tests, is above average. Ten per cent of the school's intake is by proven aptitude in music, drama or sport. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds but the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average.

About 94 per cent of pupils are white and there are four main ethnic groups which make up another three per cent of the school, Chinese, Pakistani, Indian, and pupils of African heritage. A further three per cent do not fall into any particular category. Thirty-one pupils have English as an additional language but only one is at an early stage of learning English. All major, and many minor, faith groups are represented. About twelve per cent of pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs, including three pupils with statements. This is well below average. The staying-on rate at age 16 is very high and about 75 per cent of pupils go on to higher education.

The school has set many targets for improvement, most significantly for reviewing the curriculum throughout the school, improving the provision for information and communication technology (ICT), and implementing the literacy and numeracy strategies.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The Hertfordshire and Essex High School is an outstandingly effective school with many excellent features. It is very well led by its headteacher and senior management team, who are ably assisted by a committed and enthusiastic governing body. The quality of teaching is very good overall and pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. Consequently, their attainments by age 14 years and 16 years are very high. The excellent relationships and commitment to high standards in all that it does are strengths of the school. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the school are very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning, their personal development, and their relationships are excellent.
- Pupils' attainments in national tests at age 14, and GCSE examinations at age 16, are excellent.
- The quality of teaching is very good and is a strength of the school; it is particularly strong in the sixth form.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The arrangements for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are excellent.

What could be improved

- The provision for information and communication technology is improving but is not yet sufficiently developed in some subjects.
- The allocation of time for religious education in Years 10 to 13 is insufficient to enable statutory requirements to be met. The subject is nevertheless very well taught.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1996. Since then, sound improvement has been made against the key issues raised and in many other respects the school has made very good improvements. It has maintained and improved on its excellent General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination results and the average point score per pupil has risen significantly. A-level results have shown year-on-year improvement in line with national trends since the last inspection. The educational value added by the school from age 11 to age 16 is excellent and, using pupils' average point scores in national tests age 14 and GCSE at age 16, the school's performance is well above the national average and the average for similar schools. Consequently, the *trend* in pupils' average point score at age 16 over the past three years for English, mathematics and science is above the national trend. This contrasts sharply with the slight reduction in the pupil attainment profile on entry to the school over the past three years.

The school has addressed most of the key issues from the last report. For example, it has developed and improved its monitoring and evaluation procedures so that they are more regularly applied; it uses this information effectively to review the planning for the teaching of future lessons. The quality of teaching was good at the time of the last inspection and has improved further; it is now a significant strength of the school. Good opportunities to support pupils' spiritual development are provided through lessons in most subjects and the programme for personal, social and health education in particular has been re-organised to facilitate the discussion of spiritual matters.

However, some key issues have not been dealt with. The school has continued to review the arrangements for providing a daily act of collective worship and has done so thoroughly and frequently. All pupils now have two assemblies per week, which are based on themes planned well in advance. However, this still does not meet statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship. As at the time of the previous inspection, insufficient time is given to religious education for pupils aged 14 to 18. Nevertheless, the subject is very well taught.

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
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	A*	A*	A*	A*
A-levels/AS-levels	A	B	B	

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

A indicates very high in comparison with similar schools.*

The school's results in the GCSE are consistently excellent and are in the highest five per cent of maintained schools in England. Almost all pupils are entered for ten GCSEs and, in addition, most take a short GCSE course in information technology, which is rated as a half GCSE. At the age of 14, pupils' attainments in English, mathematics and science are consistently very high compared with national averages. Between the years 1998 and 2000, results indicate they were, on average, more than a year ahead in their achievements in all three subjects and the school is working hard to maintain these very high levels. Nevertheless, over the past three years, pupils' average point scores in both English and mathematics have shown a slow but steady decline. This reflects the changing attainment profile on entry to the school over the same period. Although the target percentage for five GCSE grades A*-C is very high, it changes year on year, from 92 per cent in 2001 to 88 per cent in 2002, to reflect the changing profile of pupil ability.

Over 40 per cent of the school's students leave to pursue post-16 education elsewhere and the students who comprise the sixth form are not entirely the same cohort as those from the previous Year 11. However, results in both GCE A-level and the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) are above national averages for these courses. Analysis of the results obtained by students in recent years, on the basis of their attainment on entry, shows that good gains are made.

Inspection evidence confirmed that standards of work in English, mathematics and science are above those expected nationally but are, in this respect, better for pupils in the 14 to 16 age range than for 11 to 14-year-olds. This is because in a *minority* of subjects, pupils are sometimes unnecessarily repeating work that has been taught and learned in primary school. Nevertheless, overall, pupils achieve extremely well by the time they are 16. Standards of work seen at GCE A-level and for GNVQ are, overall, in line with course requirements.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils show respect for their teachers and each other. They work well independently and collaboratively and are supportive, caring and enthusiastic about their school and speak highly of the good opportunities it provides.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils in and around the school behave very well. Occasionally, the behaviour of a small number of pupils causes concern. This is dealt with swiftly and effectively.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development and relationships are excellent. With few exceptions, pupils are warm, courteous and helpful to each other and to visitors to the school. Senior pupils accept responsibility and use it wisely and to good effect in guiding younger pupils. The School Council provides useful dialogue with staff on school matters of concern to pupils.
Attendance	Attendance is good. Pupils 'love coming to school'. They are rarely late for school and are punctual to lessons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is very good and is a strength of the school. Eighty-nine per cent of lessons were good or better and 39 per cent very good or excellent. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Lessons of outstanding quality were occasionally seen in both the 11 – 14 and the 14 – 16 age ranges, and more frequently in the sixth form. For pupils in the 11 – 14 range, 84 per cent of lessons were judged to be good or better and 30 per cent were very good or better. In the 14 – 16 range, 92 per cent of lessons were judged to be good or better and 26 per cent were very good or outstanding. In the sixth form, all the lessons seen were good or better and 49 per cent were very good or excellent.

Basic numeracy and literacy skills are well taught and well used in the various subjects of the curriculum. Particularly good examples of pupils' knowledge and understanding of basic numeracy were seen in geography, science, physical education, and in design and technology. Good emphasis is given in most subjects to the use of spoken and written language and pupils make good use of the key words relevant to each subject. Pupils with learning or other difficulties are well supported in their learning and make good progress in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education plans. The more able and talented pupils also are provided for well. Most are identified soon after joining the school and enabled to make very good progress and to attain exceptionally high standards.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	<p>Overall, curricular provision is good and is much enhanced by excellent access to many activities. The school has particularly strong sports, music and art clubs.</p> <p>The curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is broad and balanced. Two modern foreign languages are provided for all pupils in Years 8 and 9 but this is too challenging for the majority of them. The curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is also broad. It provides a wide range of subject choice and excellent careers, vocational, and work experience programmes. In the sixth form, students are able to pursue a wide range of well-taught A-level and vocational courses.</p>
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for these pupils and they make mostly very good progress. Many achieve five or more GCSE grades A*-C
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The progress of pupils with English as an additional language is carefully monitored to ensure that they are given the support that is needed to help them succeed. Consequently, in the main, these pupils make very good, and sometimes excellent, progress and obtain very good GCSE results.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Excellent provision is made for pupils' moral, social and cultural education and the provision for spiritual education is good. In most subjects, teachers make efforts to enthuse pupils and to provide them with opportunities for emotional response in their studies, for example, joy, sadness, amazement, awe and wonder. Pupils have good opportunities to work well independently and collaboratively in small groups and teams.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Excellent. The school has excellent child protection procedures and makes every effort to ensure that pupils are known well, happy and secure, and that they achieve to the best of their abilities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and direction for the work of the school. She is ably supported by the senior management team and the enthusiastic and committed governing body. Heads of Faculty mostly provide strong and effective leadership but a minority are not as effective as they should be. This is because they provide insufficient guidance on teaching and carry out insufficient monitoring of standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors are committed enthusiasts in matters related to the school. In all they do, they are clearly focused on improvement in provision and standards. They seek to obtain the best value possible when purchasing goods and services for the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school has developed systematic monitoring and evaluation of its performance. It is using effective procedures to raise standards and ensure good pupil progress. These are becoming securely embedded in all that it does.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The governors make excellent use of money to plan for and provide additional resources where needed. Their vision for the school has led to much refurbishment and the building of new and improved facilities such as the new accommodation for English, physical education, business studies, and for the sixth form. They are currently seeking to improve the ratio of computers to pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way the school is led and managed. • The quality of teaching is very good. • The progress pupils make is good. • The expectation that their daughter will work hard and achieve her best • Pupils enjoy coming to school. • Behaviour is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations of pupils in Years 7 and 8 are not high enough. • Information about pupils' progress is not frequent enough. • The school does not work closely enough with parents. • The range of activities outside lessons is not wide or interesting enough. • The amount of homework is not appropriate.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views about the school. They also agree that levels of expectation in Years 7 and 8 are occasionally lower than they should be. This sometimes happens in mixed-ability classes where high-attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged by the teaching and the work set. However, more generally, teachers' expectations throughout the school are very high. Students in the sixth form receive termly reports concerning their effort and achievement and this is very helpful. However, pupils in other years currently receive one written report towards the end of the academic year. The inspectors agree with parents that an interim report, which indicated pupils' achievement at that time, would be very helpful to pupils and their parents. Strong efforts are made to work closely with parents and they are welcome to contact the school to arrange to discuss any concerns with a member

of the teaching staff. The inspectors found that there is a wide range of interesting and well-attended clubs and other activities outside school lessons. About equal numbers of parents said there is too little homework as said there is too much. The arrangements for homework are mostly in line with government recommendations. Parents are advised by the school to comment on their concerns in the pupil organiser or to contact the school directly.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The leadership and management of the school are very good

1. The headteacher, her senior staff and the governing body have a clear understanding of where the school should be heading. Their leadership is excellent. Much of what is intended is achieved and there is a continuous drive to promote the highest possible standards in all the school does. The school has an excellent ethos, promotes equality of opportunity and seeks the very best for *all* its pupils.
2. The leadership of heads of faculty and pastoral managers is, overall, good and is sometimes very good. The results of internal and national tests are analysed thoroughly by the senior management, and discussions held with subject leaders to ensure that suitable and determined strategies for improvement are implemented. Teaching and curriculum development are monitored regularly by senior managers and most subject heads. Support is provided from a group of experienced teachers within the school where a need for improvement is acknowledged. Clear priorities and targets for improvement, that are focused on pupils' needs, are set and agreed with staff. The outcomes are reviewed regularly and, where necessary, staff are called to account.
3. Staff understand the role they are encouraged to play in the development and running of the school and know that their contribution is appreciated. They know that they are able to influence the way policies are developed and implemented. They are encouraged to observe each other teach and to share ideas and practice. This has begun to happen, for example in the teaching of English, science and some other subjects, but it is not yet sufficiently widespread to have the desired positive impact across the curriculum. It should now be structured so that the quality of teaching is monitored systematically, effective practice shared and weaknesses rectified.
4. The headteacher maintains a high profile about the school. She is approachable and highly regarded by staff, pupils and parents. She teaches and makes frequent informal visits to classrooms and is often to be seen around the school ensuring that it is orderly, calm and happy. The senior managers work as a powerful and cohesive team that has school improvement and pupil achievement at the heart of all its discussions and decision-making.
5. Development planning at school level is very good and is a helpful and effective management tool. However, at faculty level it varies from barely satisfactory to excellent; it is mostly good. Spending targets are identified carefully and are linked well to the requirements of the school development plan; priority is rightly given to the improvement of educational provision and standards. Routine administration of the school budget is very effective.
6. The work of the school is subject to careful scrutiny by the governors and the senior management team, and realistic targets are set for the school to achieve. The headteacher and senior staff have participated in a performance review of their work and there is a performance management programme in place.
7. The governing body is knowledgeable, committed and enthusiastic in its support of the school and its staff. It provides very good strategic leadership. For example, governors are much involved in the school's development planning and are beginning to use it as

one means of checking on the school's progress. They were very much involved in the vision for and development of the recent restructuring and improvement of school buildings. Each governor is linked to at least one subject department. Most governors, including the Chair of Governors, visit classes and occasionally talk with classes about their work. For example, during the inspection, the Chair of Governors was observed talking with a Year 11 citizenship class about various aspects of personal banking. This was very well received by the pupils whose interest and good listening skills were evident from their many questions and thoughtful responses. Such visits are reported back to the governing body. The governors fulfil almost all their statutory requirements. The exceptions are ensuring that there is a daily act of collective worship and that adequate provision is made for religious education throughout the school.

Pupils' attitudes to learning, their personal development, and their relationships are excellent

8. Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. In all of the classes visited, pupils were attentive and responsive to their teacher. In most lessons seen, they participated enthusiastically in the lesson activities, responding confidently and competently to their teacher's questions. Their written work is set out systematically and with obvious care and in most of this the effort to do well is very apparent. For example, in a very effective English lesson for a Year 9 class, pupils were conducting a mock trial of Macbeth. They took on the role of Macbeth and other characters from the play with confidence and obvious enjoyment and faced audience participation in the style of popular TV programmes. The session included searching questions by the teacher, which raised the level of pupils' understanding of the play. They explored social and moral issues through vigorous formal debate and it was clear from their well thought out and informed written and oral responses that they had enjoyed this work and learned much from it. Many such examples, which illustrate pupils' excellent attitudes, were seen throughout the school.
9. The personal development of pupils is a strength of the school. Through homework, course work and other projects, pupils learn to develop their research and study skills to a very high level of competence. This is evident in the depth and quality of much of the written work, particularly amongst older pupils. There is a strong sense of belonging and pupils are encouraged to become responsible members of the school community. Most are self-confident and assured. As they move up through the school they show mature attitudes to their work and to their relationships. Many examples illustrate how the positive relationships are part of the good ethos for learning in the school. In conversation, pupils refer to their school as the 'hugging school' to best explain the support and care pupils' show each other through the occasional 'hug'. The quality of racial harmony is excellent. Pupils form excellent relationships with one another in their tutor groups and across the year groups, and in the vast majority of cases they have good relationships with their teachers. They are aware of the school's expectations of them and appreciate the importance of this to their own well-being as well as for the well-being of others.
10. Many examples were seen in nearly all subjects of pupils working collaboratively, helping each other to achieve well. In a Year 10 science lesson, for example, pupils worked in pairs learning to separate metals from a metallic compound. They give good support to each other in lessons and around the school, for example helping each other with particular difficulties. They listen carefully to one another, respecting the feelings and views of others. Pupils in a Year 11 French lesson, for example, were able to engage in sensible and thoughtful discussion in French about their school subjects.

11. Pupils take full advantage of the many opportunities given for them to show initiative in taking responsibility for their work. Many help in the day-to-day running of the school - for example, helping in the library. The pupils have for some time helped to raise funds for the people of Uganda and they do much to help in the local community. Students in the sixth form in particular make a very important contribution to the life of the school - for instance by acting as mentors to younger pupils and helping to develop their reading and other skills.
12. The very good behaviour of pupils and the excellent attitudes they have to their work throughout the school are significant strengths and make a very important contribution to their attainment and the good, and often very good, progress they make in their learning.

Pupils' attainments in national tests at age 14, and GCSE examinations at age 16, are excellent

13. Parents are justifiably very pleased with the school's national test and GCSE results. Over the three years 1998-2000, taken together, pupils' average attainment at age 14, in comparison with national averages, was over five terms ahead in mathematics and six terms ahead in English and science. The difference was slightly less in 2000. The proportions of pupils obtaining Level 5 and above and Level 6 and above was well above the national averages for all three subjects. In mathematics and in English more than double the national average proportion of pupils achieved Level 7 and above, and in science nearly four times the national average achieved Level 7 and above. These results are well above average even when compared with results in similar schools.
14. By the age of 16, it is clear that pupils have built extremely well on their earlier achievements. In 2000, all the Year 11 pupils achieved at least five GCSE grades A*-G. The proportion achieving five GCSE grades A* - C (93 per cent) is double the national average and places the school in the highest five per cent nationally. The proportion of Year 11 pupils entered for GCSE in each subject is also very high, and in the foundation subjects is frequently more than double the national average. One measure of the excellence of these results is that *in almost all the subjects taken, the proportion of A* and A grades is more than twice the national average*. In some subjects, such as business education, design and technology, physical education, and religious education the proportion is three or more times the national average. The average point score per pupil is 60 compared with the national average of 38. The small number of pupils from ethnic minorities achieved an average point score per pupil of 61.

The quality of teaching is very good and is a strength of the school; it is particularly strong in the sixth form

15. Parents and pupils are understandably very pleased with the quality of teaching; the inspection found it to be a strength of the school. Of the 75 lessons seen throughout the school, 89 per cent were good or better and 39 per cent were very good or excellent. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen.
16. In the 11–14 age range, 84 per cent of lessons were good or better and 30 per cent were very good or better. Whilst a few lessons provided insufficient challenge for younger, higher-attaining pupils, for instance in mathematics, the great majority were well planned, lively, well-taught lessons that captured the interest of the pupils. Teachers demonstrated very good knowledge of the subjects they taught and used a wide range of effective assessment and teaching methods to ensure that the pupils learned well. They made very good use of the allocated time, good use of support staff, and excellent use of relevant learning resources. For example, in an excellent Year 8 art lesson, the pupils were learning about art from the Renaissance period in preparation for a visit to the National Gallery. The teacher had planned the lesson in anticipation that some pupils might already have some knowledge of this topic. Skilfully questioning the pupils, she established the extent of pupils' prior learning. Using their answers to well-chosen questions, she built on their knowledge in a manner that captivated and informed the whole class. In a masterly fashion, the teacher wove the pupils' knowledge of history, geography, mathematics and religious education into the lesson, enlivening the work whilst extending their knowledge and understanding of Renaissance art. The pupils consolidated their learning through the use of a well-prepared and informative worksheet before engaging with a practical task involving drawing using perspective in the Renaissance style.
17. In the 14–16 age range, teaching is very good overall. For example, in a very effective history lesson in Year 11, the pupils were shown a video describing the events leading to the Cuban missile crisis. The teacher fully engaged the pupils with challenging questions, which revealed the pupils' good understanding of Fidel Castro's attitude to the United States of America, the role of the United Nations and events that led to the confiscation of United States assets. The teacher's high expectations of the pupils were evident in the challenging pace and well-planned activities, including role-playing and group work, to extend pupils' thinking and draw on their understanding of the topic. The pupils were very well motivated to work hard and learn well; they made excellent progress.
18. Teaching at sixth form level is consistently very good or excellent. Teachers have excellent knowledge of, and enthusiasm for, their subjects. As one student put it, 'They love their subjects and their enthusiasm is infectious'. Examples of very high quality teaching were observed in all the subjects seen: English, mathematics, physics, business studies, chemistry, biology, geography, German, French, physical education, religious education and theatre studies. The high quality was characterised by clear, helpful, technically correct explanations, some of which concerned complex ideas, vigorous and rigorous discussion where appropriate, and skilful probing of students' responses to well-structured questions to lead the students to draw their own conclusions. The marking of students' work is meticulous. It is carried out on a regular basis and invariably provides helpful, informative comment to enable students to improve.

19. Literacy skills are taught well throughout the school and considerable effort is made to ensure that pupils know, understand and are able to use the key words of each subject. Examples of this gathered by chance on one morning of the inspection included, in physics: resistance; in chemistry: reactivity; in English: antithesis, and the difference between lightening and lightning; in geography: acrostic; and in personal and social education: homophobic. Pupils have extensive opportunities to read to others, engage in discussion and to write for different types of reader. The vast majority are able to do this with confidence at levels that are high for their age.
20. Pupils are encouraged in most subjects to make good use of their numeracy skills. For example, in design and technology they used a geometry theorem to find the centre of a circular metal plate so as to insert the mechanism for clock hands. In geography, they made competent use of line graphs to examine population growth and pie charts to compare the use of land. They used bar charts in physical education to display information about fitness tests, and in science they drew graphs to examine the relationship between voltage and current in an electrical circuit.

The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good

21. The school has made significant improvements in its provision for pupils' spiritual development. Many examples were seen which 'moved the spirit'. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson based on the novel 'Of Mice and Men', the pupils discussed with empathy the relationship between two of the characters, George and Lennie. In a Year 7 music lesson, the pupils were clearly moved by the choral chanting of the 'Night train' whilst exploring how music can be used with words to heighten its effect. In science, and later again in religious education, pupils experienced awe and wonder in learning that every part of a leaf has an important role to play. In a Year 8 choreographed dance, pupils moved rhythmically to music with changing group shapes and were able to interpret and depict fear through facial expression. Such examples abound through the various subjects of the curriculum and enrich the spiritual development of pupils.
22. Provision for pupils' social development is excellent. As a consequence, pupils are courteous to each other and to adults they meet. They converse with their peers, their teachers and other adults with confidence, showing interest and good listening skills. Lessons give pupils good opportunities to work as a class, in small groups, in pairs, and individually. Pupils respond very well to this range of groupings and learn to work collaboratively as part of a team as well as to share ideas and thinking with a partner. Other opportunities for social development abound, for example in dance, drama, and the arts and through the substantial amount of sporting activities. Pupils' artwork is attractively displayed and is of a high standard; this provided a useful focus of discussion for some pupils. Music provides good opportunities for pupils to perform with others through, for example, various ensembles, choir and orchestra. Pupils participate enthusiastically together in extra-curricular music activities. There are many other such examples to illustrate the breadth and high quality of pupils' social education.
23. The provision for pupils' moral development is excellent. Pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong and are expected always to display the principles of honesty, equality and fairness. They are strongly encouraged to have an awareness of responsibility and respect for self and others. The school promotes these important values through its teaching, tutor time and assemblies, and in all its contacts between staff and pupils.

24. The personal and social education course ensures that sex and drugs education takes place within a moral context and gives good opportunities to discuss both spiritual and ethical issues in general. Pupils are encouraged to raise issues that concern them and to speak out when they know something is wrong. The school has raised funds for a well in a village in Uganda, and Year 11 are currently raising funds for science equipment for their link school in Uganda. This encourages pupils to look beyond the immediate environment to the world outside, and is raising awareness of other cultures. Pupils also learn to appreciate the achievements of others, listening attentively to the reasons why awards have been made and applauding to congratulate those chosen. In physical education, English, music, art and other subjects, pupils have opportunities to perform or give their views or present their work for the appraisal of other pupils. They learn to accept constructive criticism as well as praise. The pupils are aware of the high expectations of their teachers and the ways in which their work and behaviour can improve still further.
25. Provision for pupils' cultural development is excellent and is supported by the frequent use of visiting speakers who talk about their religion, cultural background and sometimes about their travels. Pupils have regular opportunities to take part in school productions and musical events. They also visit (as at the time of the inspection) art galleries, buildings of cultural and historical interest and theatres. In religious education, they have opportunities to visit places of worship representing other faiths in the area and further afield. Art and design, geography, history and religious education make very good contributions to pupils' cultural development by providing opportunities for pupils to learn about aspects of different cultures. The school celebrates cultural diversity through displays which are informative and of high quality.

The arrangements for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are excellent

26. Every effort is made to ensure that the very best provision is made for pupils' welfare, health and safety. Clear child protection procedures are in place and they conform to national requirements. Excellent guidance on such matters is provided for staff. The school's claims to very high quality in its partnership with parents and contributory primary schools are well borne out in practice. Even before pupils arrive at the school they are visited in their primary schools by teaching staff. Great effort is made to acquaint the pupils with all the school has to offer. During the summer term, primary-age pupils visit the school to experience the routines of a big secondary school, including some lessons. Once in the school, the academic and social progress of every pupil is monitored carefully by a form tutor who, in most cases, will remain with them throughout their time in a particular key stage. Extra support and counselling are available for those who need it, and many benefit from this. The well-structured personal and social education programme and the high quality careers programme also make valuable contributions to pupils' development. In combination, these factors ensure that pupils receive excellent opportunities to grow into well adjusted, caring and responsible young adults who learn well and can take their place in society with confidence.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The provision for information and communication technology is improving but is not yet sufficiently developed in some subjects

27. The school is aware of the need to increase the opportunities for pupils to have ready access to computer hardware and software and to make educational use of the Internet. More than £24,000 has been spent in the last year to increase the number of computers available to pupils. Nevertheless, the ratio of computers to pupils remains well below the national average. However, the school has made significant progress since the last inspection and, by the time they leave, almost all pupils will have gained sufficient knowledge and experience to obtain a GCSE short course award. There are, in most subjects, good examples of the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to enhance pupils' learning and the quality of presentation of their work. For example, in a Year 9 French lesson, pupils used computers and a digital camera to produce a brochure in French to advertise the school to French visitors. In physical education, pupils used spreadsheets to produce charts to illustrate the results of a fitness test. In English, and many other subjects, pupils use the computer to word process their work, and in science the pupils carry out data logging as part of their experiments. However, the school does not systematically ensure that the use of ICT in each subject is as required by the National Curriculum and some staff have insufficient training to use ICT effectively to enhance their teaching and pupils' learning. The school has plans for ensuring that this requirement is implemented and to provide the necessary training and support. This is expected to happen during the current academic year.

The allocation of time in religious education in Years 10 to 13 is insufficient to enable statutory requirements to be met. The subject is nevertheless very well taught.

28. Insufficient time (less than two per cent of the timetabled week) is provided in Years 10 and 11 for pupils, other than those taking GCSE religious education, to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus on which teaching is based. There is a similar shortfall in the sixth form. However, the teaching at all levels in this subject is of high quality and pupils taking religious education at GCSE or A-level are very successful. Nevertheless, statutory requirements are not met for *all* pupils, which was a key issue at the time of the last inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

29. The school should now:

- (1) Continue to improve the provision for information and communication technology and ensure that the programmes of study are being taught as required for all subjects. (Paragraph 27)
- (2) Ensure that statutory requirements are met for the teaching of religious education by:
 - increasing the time allocated to for pupils in Years 10 to 13 and teaching the full locally agreed syllabus as required. (Paragraph 28)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	75
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
8	31	50	11	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
	Number of pupils on the school's roll	803
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	22	0

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
	Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	115	9

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	31

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.4

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	0	159	159

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	N/a	N/a	N/a
	Girls	150	140	139
	Total	150	140	139
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	95 (99)	88 (93)	87 (96)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	69 (83)	68 (82)	60 (69)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	152	144	139
	Total	152	144	139
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	96 (97)	92 (92)	88 (96)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	75 (79)	76 (80)	65 (76)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	0	156	156

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	145	157	157
	Total	145	157	157
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	93 (86)	100 (99)	100 (99)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE/GNVQ results		Average point score
Average point score per pupil	School	61
	National	38.4

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
	2000	6	89	95

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	19.3	18.6	18.6	n/a	3.2	3.2
National	17.7	18.6	18.2	2.6	2.9	2.7

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	9	66.6
	National	n/a	n/a

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	1
Indian	4
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	5
Chinese	12
White	940
Any other minority ethnic group	33

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	1	0
White	11	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	58.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	272

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77.9
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	24.2
Key Stage 4	21.1

Financial information

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	3001170
Total expenditure	3089944
Expenditure per pupil	3087
Balance brought forward from previous year	268876
Balance carried forward to next year	180102

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1007
Number of questionnaires returned	279

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	43	4.0	2.0	1.0
My child is making good progress in school.	60.0	38.0	1.0		1.0
Behaviour in the school is good.	36.0	55.0	4.0		5.0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34.0	56.0	9.0		1.0
The teaching is good.	47.0	48.0	2.0		3.0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31.0	49.0	16.0		3.0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	48.0	43.0	6.0	2.0	1.0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73.0	24.0	1.0		
The school works closely with parents.	27.0	53.0	16.0	1.0	4.0
The school is well led and managed.	53.0	42.0	2.0		3.0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55.0	40.0	2.0	1.0	2.0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46.0	42.0	8.0	1.0	4.0