

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **THE BOSWELLS SCHOOL**

Chelmsford

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115332

Headteacher: Mr. K. Arkell

Reporting inspector: David M Bain  
3258

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> –8<sup>th</sup> February 2001

Inspection number: 187546

Short 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: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 11-19 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Burnham Road  
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Chelmsford

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Ruth Bird

Date of previous inspection: March 1996

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Boswells School is a large, mixed comprehensive situated in Springfield, a relatively advantaged area on the north-eastern edge of Chelmsford. There are currently 1479 students on roll, including 250 in the sixth form, which is known as the Boswells College. The school is popular and over-subscribed and, unusually for Chelmsford, has become a neighbourhood school; the majority of students live within walking distance, a change from the last inspection when a significant number commuted from surrounding villages. The intake of the school is fairly balanced, as judged by students' past attainment and cognitive abilities test results. Each year, the school loses about 15 of the ablest students from its feeder primary schools to two highly selective grammar schools. There are currently 240 students identified as having special educational needs, mostly with moderate or specific learning difficulties. The proportion of students with special educational needs and those with statements are both below the national average. Almost all students come from a white UK heritage background, with only a few students speaking English as an additional language and none at the early stages of learning English. Just over five per cent of students are eligible for free school meals, which is below the national average of 18 per cent. Currently about 60 per cent of Year 11 progress into the College, where most follow AS/A Level courses. A vocational course in business education is also offered at both advanced and intermediate levels. About a further 20 per cent of students continue their education at other schools or colleges. Early indications suggest that College numbers may rise significantly next year. The school has an international focus. It hosted an international teachers' conference in 1999, jointly organised with a Danish sixth form college, and is currently considering an application for language college status.

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

The Boswells is a very good school with many outstanding features. Both staff and students enjoy working in the school. Teaching is generally good, and sometimes inspiring, and leads to very good quality learning which ensures that high standards are achieved by students of all abilities.

Attainment is well above national averages at all key stages. The leadership and management of the headteacher, senior managers and other key staff is excellent and is correctly focused on improving teaching and learning in order to raise standards. Provision for social development, including a wide range of extra-curricular activities, is excellent. The school gives very good value for money.

## WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Provides good quality teaching and very good learning experiences, which enable students of all abilities to achieve high standards.
- Provides high quality leadership and management, which is focused on improving teaching and learning in order to raise standards.
- Encourages an ethos where school is enjoyable.
- Makes very good provision for students' personal development, including excellent provision for their social development.
- Provides a wide range of very good quality learning opportunities for students.
- Provides very good quality care for students.

## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Aspects of the accommodation and facilities provided to support students' learning.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made very good improvement since the last inspection in 1996. Significant improvements have been made in the use of information and communications technology (ICT) across the curriculum, although the school recognises the need for further advances in order to keep pace with ICT developments. There has been a major investment in hardware, software and training, and good use is made of the internet. The school has received DfEE recognition for its use of ICT in report writing. The school has researched thoroughly the reasons for the different levels of performance of boys and girls, and has implemented a range of strategies to reduce the gap, including some longer-term strategies with pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 and their parents. The school has gained national recognition for its work in newspapers, research journals and on television, where it featured on Panorama. The school has reviewed its planning cycle, placing greater emphasis on medium and long-term planning and now meets all statutory requirements for assessment. The school is continuing to address the need for vocational courses in the college, whilst not wishing to duplicate courses which are more effectively offered in further education (FE) colleges. Business education is very effective and consideration is being given to the introduction of ICT and arts based vocational A Levels. Toilet refurbishment was completed soon after the last inspection and the standard of cleaning is reported to have improved since the school took over responsibility for it. Provision for religious education has improved, but the school still does not comply with statutory requirements concerning collective worship. It has consulted widely on the reasons for this, wishing all staff and students to participate in assemblies and is supported by parents. The school successfully promotes spiritual and moral values and has recently appointed a school chaplain.

## STANDARDS

The table below 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	B	B	A	

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	
<i>B</i>	
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

Whilst attainment on entry is broadly average, attainment at 14, 16 and 18 in external tests and examinations is well above average compared to all schools nationally. Achievement is therefore very good at all three key stages. At Key Stage 3, whilst the trend in the school's average point score over the last three years has been broadly in line with that nationally, results in 2000 improved significantly in English. On average, students performed at levels which suggest they are working nearly a year ahead of their peers nationally in English and two terms ahead in mathematics and science. However, when compared to similar schools based on the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, whilst attainment in English remains well above average, that in mathematics and science is just above average.

In 2000, results at GCSE were well above average, as they have been in all recent years. Sixty two per cent attained five or more A\*-C grades compared to 47 per cent nationally and almost all students attained at least five grades A\*-G. Results were a significant improvement on those of 1999. When compared to similar schools, based on either free school meals or prior attainment, the average point score is well above average, whilst the proportions attaining five or more A\*-C or A\*-G grades are above average. In 2000, results were significantly better than nationally in English language, mathematics, French, Spanish, geography, business studies, home economics and physical education, and for girls in information technology, but below average in religious education. Above average results were also achieved in most other subjects.

Post 16 results showed a significant improvement in 2000, with the average point score at A Level well above the national average. The point score for those entered for GNVQ at advanced level was also above average and all those entered at intermediate level were successful. Results in individual subjects vary between years. In 2000, excellent results were achieved in law, theatre studies, general studies, geography and economics and in 1999 in mathematics, French, German and history, as well as law and economics. At all key stages the school has set appropriate and challenging targets, both overall and for individual targets.

Work seen during the inspection confirmed these external results. Attainment in English, mathematics and science observed was consistently well above average and students with special educational needs were making very good progress. Pupils are confident and articulate, and have very good literacy and numeracy skills. Very good standards were observed across the curriculum.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Students are keen to come to school and appreciate that they are expected to work hard. They welcome the opportunities provided by the school and participate in the many extra-curricular activities. Most respond positively in lessons. These very positive attitudes contribute to students' very good learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is generally good, despite cramped conditions in some classrooms and corridors. Effective steps are being taken to address the mildly disruptive behaviour of a few less-motivated students. In the past year, there have been no permanent exclusions, and the number of fixed-term exclusions is below average. Students understand and support the praise and punishment systems
Personal development and relationships	Very good. There are excellent relationships amongst students and between students and adults. Teachers treat students with respect. Students respect the feelings of others and are relaxed, confident and articulate. Students use their initiative well when given the opportunity
Attendance	Very good. Students' attendance rate has remained well above the national average and the rate of unauthorised absence is below average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of students' learning is very good. Students are enthusiastic learners and are provided with good quality teaching, some of which is outstanding. Overall, teaching was satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of lessons, including 39 per cent where it was good and 33 per cent where it was very good or excellent. Some very good teaching was seen in most subjects and all year groups; the highest proportions being seen in Years 8, 10 and 12. Examples of excellence were observed in the teaching of English, French, drama and physical education. Most teachers manage students very well; have very good subject knowledge and plan effectively their use of time and resources, including ICT.

A significant number of lessons were observed only in English, mathematics, science and modern languages. English, teachers make skilful use of resources, sometimes display a dramatic presence and provide good opportunities for students to learn from each other. The structured approach of most mathematics teaching supports students in developing their understanding. In science, students are provided with good opportunities to learn through practical investigations and to carry out research. Learning objectives are clear and relate topics to students' everyday experience. In modern languages, teachers provide excellent role models in use of the target language. Literacy and numeracy skills are well taught across the curriculum.

A major strength of much teaching is the emphasis placed on practical experience and research with students encouraged to become active learners and to collaborate in pairs and groups. Teachers use effectively a range of teaching methods. They use much skilful, and often targeted, questioning, both to assist understanding and to ensure that the ablest are challenged. In most lessons, teachers' expectations are high and the pace of work is often impressive. In the best lessons, pupils' interest, concentration and independence are exceptional. In contrast, in a few lessons with older students, the teacher is too dominant requiring only passive completion of tasks or note taking. Where appropriate, tasks are set at different levels matched to the needs of individual students. Pupils with special educational needs are provided with very good quality support, which enables them to make very good progress. Marking of students' work is often excellent. In the best practice, observed for example in English, art and science, marking is diagnostic and gives excellent advice to students on how to improve their work.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is broad and balanced. The school provides a wide variety of learning opportunities that meet the needs of students of all abilities. Provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent, as is the increasing focus on internationalism.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is very good. Students are supported well in class and also taught key skills effectively in separate lessons. Both students and parents value this provision. The recent reorganisation of learning support has been effective, providing greater support within lessons by learning support assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are few students for whom English is an additional language, none at an early stage of English acquisition.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Provision for social development is excellent. It enables students to recognise and celebrate success in all areas of school life. Students are offered many opportunities to work collaboratively. Spiritual development is good, despite the lack of a daily collective act of worship.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a strength. Students are very well known by their tutors and year heads and are clear where they would seek help. Child protection procedures are fully implemented. Primary liaison is exemplary, as is the school's assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is ably supported by skilled senior and middle managers. The school's aims and development planning are clearly focused on improving teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	A well informed, supportive governing body fulfils its responsibilities very well. There is an effective committee structure, well serviced by senior managers and the clerk to governors.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. There is a well-developed and effective programme of monitoring and evaluation by senior and middle managers. Good use is made of assessment data, including excellent tracking and target setting from Year 7.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. School development is supported by thoughtful and well-planned use of resources. Administrative procedures are very good and careful application of the principles of best value, including thorough consultation, ensure resources are used most effectively.

## 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 work hard and make good progress.</li> <li>School is fun and children enjoy attending it.</li> <li>Teaching is good and staff are approachable.</li> <li>The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>Examination results.</li> <li>Extra curricular activities.</li> <li>The quality of pastoral care.</li> <li>Transition from primary school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information on how children are getting on.</li> <li>Homework.</li> <li>Lockers.</li> <li>Behaviour in some classes.</li> <li>Lack of sports hall.</li> </ul>

The inspection team agrees with the extremely positive perceptions of most parents. Whilst there are some less motivated students, inspectors found behaviour of most students to be good. The school provides good information to parents about students' progress. Concerns from parents largely referred to a cancelled Year 7 tutor evening. Concerns about homework were varied. Inspectors found homework was mostly appropriate both in content and the amount set. Inspectors share parents' concerns about the lack of lockers and of a sports hall.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **Provides good quality teaching and very good learning experiences, which enable students of all abilities to achieve high standards**

1. Overall, the quality of students' learning is very good. Students are enthusiastic learners; they receive good quality teaching in most lessons, and outstanding teaching in some. Across all key stages, the proportion of very good or excellent teaching observed was around a third; in the college about a fifth of lessons observed were excellent. Overall, teaching was satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of lessons observed, including 39 per cent where it was good and 33 per cent where it was very good or excellent. Some very good teaching was seen in most subjects and all year groups; the highest proportions being seen in Years 8, 10 and 12. Whilst there is more very good teaching at Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3, there is also more that is only satisfactory. Examples of excellence were observed in the teaching of English, French, drama and physical education. A significant number of lessons were observed only in English, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages. In around a third of those observed in English and mathematics and a fifth in science and languages, teaching was judged as very good or better. Teaching was good or better in 90 per cent of science lessons and around two-thirds of English, mathematics and languages lessons. Some unsatisfactory teaching was observed in mathematics. The school is clearly succeeding in fulfilling one of its principle aims of improving the quality of teaching and learning, and the appointment of a senior member of staff as teaching and learning manager to support initiatives and disseminate good practice is further evidence of its determination.

2. Across the curriculum, teachers' knowledge and understanding of their subjects is very good, although difficulties in recruiting staff, particularly to cover temporary vacancies, has resulted in some timetables being covered by non-specialists. In the best lessons, teachers' enthusiasm for their subject is infectious. For example, in a Year 12 drama lesson, the teacher's references to different dramatic styles, throwing ideas into their improvised scene, challenged students to develop ways of expressing the battle between good and evil in the characters of Jekyll and Hyde. In languages, the excellent role models of the language provided by the teachers enhances students understanding. Lesson planning, often informed by on-going assessment, is generally effective and based upon the needs of students. In some lessons, the tasks are varied to meet the needs of individual students, whilst in others, the teacher's choice of task and careful exposition ensures that students of differing abilities make good progress. Teachers have high expectations of students. Able students are challenged appropriately, whether they are taught with other high-attaining students or in mixed ability classes. Teachers work hard and expect students to do the same. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers' classroom management is very good, with some extremely skilful handling of less motivated students by some teachers. Students respond differently to different teachers and different subjects. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson a few boys were little involved in a good lesson on Macbeth, which stimulated some good discussion, whilst some of the same boys enthusiastically set about work in mathematics which others in the same class found difficult to understand. Students from the same year group displayed confidence working independently in home economics, discipline in learning a set piece in dance and excellent collaborative skills in drama.

3. In general, teachers make learning objectives clear to students at the start of lessons. For example, the clear focus provided to a Year 7 science lesson investigating different circuits enabled students to carry out investigations effectively, and high attainers to complete an extension activity. Teachers' expositions are generally very clear and skilful questioning is used both to review previous learning and to develop understanding. For example, in a Year 7 geography class, effective use of questions enabled students to identify changes in settlement over a period of 2000 years. Students were very observant and able to suggest many reasons for the changes. Good questioning is also used, for example in some mathematics lessons, to summarise work in the lesson and ensure that all students have grasped concepts fully. Teachers use time effectively in most lessons. In the best lessons students are required to move through a variety of tasks at pace. Good use is made of learning support teachers and assistants to help students with special educational needs who are, therefore, able to follow the curriculum and make very good progress. Those students with greatest need are sensitively withdrawn from some English lessons in Key Stage 3 for extra help. The school gives a high priority to the improvement of literacy. A policy group has surveyed the provision made by different departments and a student spelling book is being incorporated into the student handbook. Teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is strong across the curriculum. Teachers employ a range of resources to support students' understanding. Videos were used effectively, for example, in a Year 10 English lesson, so that students could compare different directors' interpretations of the opening scene of Macbeth. Good use of ICT was observed. For example, in a Year 8 French lesson, students used spreadsheets to record likes and dislikes. Homework is used effectively by most teachers, and students often spend significant amounts of time completing the generally appropriate tasks. Many make good use of the library to support research, whilst others use a range of homework clubs and a homework helpline. Many students use homework time sensibly, choosing to spend time on coursework tasks on evenings when they find they have little homework.

4. A major strength of the teaching is the emphasis on active learning, practical experiences and collaborative work, such as the geography field trip organised during the inspection in which all Year 9 students took part. In English there are theatre trips and visiting authors and poets, regular outings in history and exchanges and video-conferencing in languages. This emphasis ensures that students internalise their learning. For example, in religious education, an interesting sequence of activities, which included role-play situations stimulated students' knowledge and understanding of Islam. In A Level chemistry, pairs of students were required to research alternative fuels to petrol and give presentations to the rest of the class, and to respond to searching questions from the teacher, thus developing confidence in communicating and using their analytical skills. In Year 7 music, all in a class learned how to play the tune of a popular song and skilful accompaniment by the teacher when they performed ensured all left with a sense of achievement. In Year 10 drama, a well paced sequence of comic improvisations based on characters from Macbeth, first working in small groups and later combining into larger groups, skilfully encouraged effective collaboration and resulted in some characterisation of high quality. In contrast, in a minority of lessons, particularly with older students, students were too passive in predominantly teacher led lessons. Across the curriculum, students are given a wide range of opportunities to develop intellectual, physical and creative skills. Students work with interest, generally

display very good concentration and when given the opportunity, as they often are, display an excellent ability to work independently. Students have a good understanding of the levels they have reached, and when they are unsure they are not afraid to ask. The standard of marking is high; it is usually analytical with suggestions for improvement. In art, for example, very detailed notes on ways to improve their work were attached to Year 11 students' sketchbooks.

5. In English, teachers make skilful use of resources, sometimes display a dramatic presence and provide good opportunities for students to learn from each other. In one excellent lesson observed in Year 9, a dialogue was developed between the teacher and students from the start of a lesson on Shakespeare's Henry V. The teacher challenged students to think and had high expectations of them. He used his excellent subject knowledge to engage pupils in a discussion of Englishness then and now. He helped them to understand what the battle would have been like, drawing on comparisons with 'Private Ryan'. The teacher's use of literature specific vocabulary was extensive and pupils enjoyed being exposed to high levels of challenge. The structured approach of much mathematics teaching supports students in developing their understanding, although on few occasions learning objectives lack focus and students complete tasks without real understanding. In a very good pacey Year 11 lesson, the teacher had planned a series of activities to inculcate technical skills and to develop understanding of the steps involved in manipulating algebraic fractions. The emphasis on understanding made students think as they worked intensively. During the lesson, students learnt to extend existing skills and apply them to more complex problems. In science, students are provided with good opportunities to learn through practical investigations and to carry out research. Learning objectives are clear and relate topics to students' everyday experiences. For example, in a Year 10 lesson, students had good opportunities of learning about lenses and images through a practical investigation. They collected data and were able to identify patterns in their findings. In languages teachers make excellent use of the target language, plan effectively including differentiated tasks when appropriate and make good use of a range of resources, but allow too much English by students as confirmation to their understanding. In an excellent Year 12 French lesson on aspects of Europe, the lesson was crowded with information and a range of activities planned to inform and advance language at a challenging pace. Language quality made a major contribution to the lesson, creating an atmosphere which inspired learning. The teacher conducted the whole lesson in French at native speed with no concession to students. Authentic materials were used and understanding was developed through a detailed examination of the language structure and vocabulary. Students were actively engaged through giving their own presentations. Two excellent drama lessons were observed, with an A Level group in Year 12 and GCSE group in Year 10, both developing good collaborative skills and involving skilful teacher inputs to develop high standards. An excellent Year 12 physical education involved students in a planned sequence of skills practices to build up their skills in volleyball. Excellent teaching of a mixed group, enabled more powerful boys to facilitate the involvement of all girls without either dominating or patronising them, and resulted in excellent learning with skills developed and tactics used in a game situation.

6. Good teaching and very good learning result in standards which are above national levels in all key stages. These are obtained in a mix of ability sets and mixed ability classes, teachers sensibly recognising that in some subjects best learning occurs where students of differing abilities are grouped together but that in others some form of ability grouping enhances the pace of learning of students of all abilities. Standards are high across the curriculum. In English, reading and listening

are strengths at Key Stage 3. Expectations are high, and even low-attaining students are expected to complete complex assignments. Year 9 students contrasting the views and attitudes to the First World War of Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon were producing work of good GCSE quality. The department is committed to bringing on students of all abilities and teaches in mainly mixed ability groups. Students can write in different relevant registers, support their arguments with evidence and are confident in their approach to tasks and in their ability to act on the extensive advice given by teachers. In mathematics, the ablest students have a confident understanding of concepts and are provided with a range of extension materials. Differentiation is clear between sets. Students receive a very good grounding in basic mathematical skills in Key Stage 3 and reach higher than average standards. At Key Stage 4, as is often the case, some students of average ability lack confidence in their own ability. Where teaching stresses understanding, confidence is greatest and results in high standards. Overall standards in science are well above average. The emphasis on practical work ensures that students develop good investigational skills. In modern foreign languages, standards in listening and reading are high, as are standards in writing, where accuracy is stressed. However, standards in speaking are low in comparison, affected by the use of too much English and written prompts, which result in students writing and then reading speaking exercises, rather than speaking naturally. Standards are high across most other subjects. Work well above average was observed in English, mathematics, science, physical education, home economics, drama and art, and above average in geography, languages, design and technology, music, economics, law and dance.

7. Attainment is broadly average on entry, with about 15 abler students from feeder schools choosing to attend grammar schools and fewer students with special educational needs than average nationally. Attainment in Key Stage 3 tests, GCSE and A Level is well above average compared to all schools nationally. Students, therefore, achieve very well. At Key Stage 3, students attained well above national averages in English, mathematics and science in 2000, based on average point score. Whilst the trend in the school's average point score over the last three years has been broadly in line with that nationally, results in 2000 improved significantly in English. On average, students performed at levels which suggest they are working nearly a year ahead of their peers nationally in English and two terms ahead in mathematics and science. However, when compared to similar schools based on the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, although attainment overall is above average attainment in English remains well above average, whilst that in mathematics and science is just above average. Overall there has been a significant improvement in English results over the last three years. In 1998, results were in line with national average, in 1998 they were above and in 2000 well above. Results have also improved in mathematics from above average to well above average and they have remained consistently well above average in science. The results of teacher assessments in other subjects are higher than national averages. Realistic targets were set for the proportions achieving Level 5 or higher, Level 6 or higher and for the average points score. Except for the proportion reaching Level 5 or higher in science, these were all exceeded.

8. GCSE results have been consistently well above average, except in 1999 when they were above average, but significantly lower than in other years. In 2000, 62 per cent attained five or more A\*-C grades compared to 47 per cent nationally and almost all students attained at least five grades A\*-G, 97 per cent compared to 91 per cent nationally. When compared to similar schools, based on either free school meals or prior attainment, the average point score is well above average, whilst the proportions attaining five or more A\*-C grades, five or more A\*-G grades and at least

one A\*-G grade are above average. The school has worked hard to raise the attainment of boys. Their strategies have been reported in educational journals, newspapers and on television, including an item on Panorama. The strategy has been successful. Whilst, in general, girls still outperform boys, in 2000, boys' average point score was 8.1 above the national average for boys and that for girls was 7.5 above the average for girls. Given the presence of grammar schools locally, these are impressive results. Able students perform very well at the school. For example, the highest points scores achieved in 2000, both by boys, was 75, compared to the national average of 37.8. Twenty students, eleven of them girls, achieved scores of 67 or better.

9. In 2000, results were significantly better than national averages in English language, mathematics, French, Spanish, geography, business studies, home economics and physical education, and for girls in information technology, but below average in religious education. Above average results were also attained in most other subjects. The most dramatic improvement in results occurred in English language. In the previous two years results had been close to, or just above, the national average. In 2000, the proportions of both boys and girls attaining grades A\*-C were 13 per cent higher than nationally. An impressive proportion attained the highest grades A\*-B, 43 per cent compared to 30 per cent nationally. English literature results were also above average, but by a smaller margin. Over the last three years, results in mathematics have been consistently well above those nationally, but again improved significantly in 2000, when 58 per cent achieved grades A\*-C, compared to 47 per cent nationally. As nationally, girls outperform boys but, unlike English, only by a few percentage points. Again, the proportion of higher grades was well above average. All students take double award science. Except in 1999, results have been above national averages, 57 per cent attaining grades A\*-C in 2000 compared to 49 per cent nationally, however, the proportion of highest grades A\*-B is below that nationally. In contrast to the position nationally, boys outperform girls, however the proportion of highest grades A\*-B is below that nationally.

10. Amongst other subjects, excellent results were achieved in geography where 77 per cent attained grades A\*-C compared to 54 per cent nationally; in home economics where an impressive 91 per cent attained A\*-C grades compared to 43 per cent nationally; in business studies where 79 per cent attained A\*-C grades compared to 53 per cent nationally; and in physical education where 80 per cent attained A\*-C grades compared to 52 per cent nationally. In all four subjects, the proportion of A\* and A grades was exceptional. Excellent results were also obtained in French where three quarters of those entered attained grades A\*-C compared to 46 per cent nationally and from a small group in Spanish where every candidate attained A\*-C. Results in German also improved to above national averages. Results are also above those nationally in media studies, dance, information technology and history. Results in history showed a significant improvement on the previous two years when they had been poor. Results are also good in art, drama and music, but are only around national averages, which are also high in these three subjects. Only in religious education and economics were results below those nationally, although in religious education results had been very high in 1999. Care should be taken in comparing results in different option subjects as the ability of individual entries varies. This is particularly so for languages. The entry for Spanish was a small group of able linguists, whilst half the year group take German, which in many schools would be second language only taken by the ablest.

11. The school set appropriate targets for 2000, both overall and for individual subjects. It met targets for average point score and A\*-G passes, but failed to reach the target of 65 per cent A\*-C

grades which it has set again for 2001. It significantly surpassed its target for English, passed that for mathematics but just failed to meet that for science. A rise of about 3 per cent in science results would lead to the school meeting its overall targets.

12. The Post 16 results showed a significant improvement in 2000, with the average point score at A Level well above the national average. The point score for those entered for GNVQ at advanced level was also above average and all those entered at intermediate level were successful. Results in individual subjects vary between years. In 2000, excellent results were achieved in law, theatre studies, general studies, geography, sociology and economics and in 1999 in mathematics, French, German and history, as well as law and economics. The size of subject groups varies between years. Most students enter general studies, with 37 per cent attaining grades A and B in 2000, well above average, and 92 per cent passing. 30 students entered geography; all passed and as nationally 37 per cent attained the highest grades A and B. Nearly two thirds of the 19 entered for law attained grades A and B and all passed, whilst nearly half those entered for sociology attained high grades, with a pass rate in line with that nationally. Nearly half those entered for theatre studies and 40 per cent for economics attained grades A and B and again all passed in both subjects. There were also sizeable entries for biology, English and mathematics. Results were sound in all three, but with less high grades than nationally. However, in 1999 both English and mathematics had been above national results with nearly two thirds attaining the highest grades in mathematics. All entered passed in design technology, art, home economics, history, chemistry, Spanish and physics, but from small entries. However, a larger entry for history in 1999 produced excellent results. Results in French were less good in 2000, but excellent in both French and German in 1999 from small entries. Pass rates in physical education and music were sound. The school has set challenging targets for A Level results, aiming at raising the proportion of higher grades, which is currently in line with that for comprehensives to 35 per cent, the average for all schools nationally including grammar schools.

**Provides high quality leadership and management, which is particularly focused on improving teaching and learning in order to raise standards.**

13. The school is led by a very experienced headteacher who provides outstanding leadership and a clear vision for the school, focused on raising achievement through improving the quality of teaching and learning, whilst caring for all individuals within the school community. His personal touch, which is apparent in all aspects of the school, such as the impressive monthly newsletters, is strongly appreciated by staff, parents and students. He is ably supported by his deputies, with whom he works closely as a team, and by others within the leadership group. All senior managers carry out their roles effectively, displaying both expertise and enthusiasm for their areas of responsibility. The school has a complex, but effective, management structure. Very good leadership is provided to skills areas, subjects and year teams. The organisation and management of primary liaison is exceptional.

14. The school has a clear and comprehensive set of aims, which are reviewed regularly. A major revision occurred in autumn 2000. An impressive statement of aims explains in detail how each one is met in practice. Aims are supported by a comprehensive set of school policies, including, for example, a recently produced policy on multicultural education. The implementation of

policies is carefully monitored and policies are reviewed regularly. A long established appraisal policy has been developed into a good policy on performance management. The school encourages the professional development of staff in order to improve practice, as recognised by the Investors in People award. The school has developed a process of development planning which it finds effective. Planning is linked into the budget cycle, with detailed plans produced by every area of the school to support the targets agreed by staff and governors.

15. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are excellent. There is a well-developed programme of, for example, lesson observation and work sampling. All heads of skills areas have a timetabled period each week to carry out monitoring activities, which is augmented by a programme of regular monitoring by the head and his deputies, who have responsibility for two curriculum areas each. Governors are routinely involved in reviewing provision, through meetings and focused visits. Senior managers scrutinise results in external examinations very thoroughly and hold departments to account for students' achievements in their subjects. There is an annual review of all skills areas. The school is making excellent use of assessment data to support target setting and tracking of individual students. Key Stage 2 data is now obtained for all pupils entering the school and is used alongside the results of cognitive abilities tests (CATs) to set targets for all students. Heads of year, their assistants and tutors track students' progress effectively as they move through school and take action, where appropriate, to support possible underachievers. Good regular progress reports are provided on students on a half-termly basis, in addition to the annual report. Whole-school and subject targets are set for external assessments and success in meeting these targets is monitored. Targets are both appropriate and challenging.

16. All senior managers are involved in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in order to raise standards. Whilst the head and deputies have oversight of curriculum areas, an assistant head has responsibility for assessment, recording and reporting and another as teaching and learning manager. The other two assistant heads have oversight of the college and Year 7 and are fully involved in monitoring the progress of students in these years. The Head of Year 7 works closely with his colleague responsible for assessment, in setting up and implementing the system of tracking individual students. The head of the college and his tutors monitor closely the progress of students to ensure their ultimate success in examinations.

17. The governing body gives very strong support to the headteacher and staff. It is well informed about the work of the school, with groups of governors visiting regularly to pursue specific areas of interest. There is a well-organised committee structure, with each committee very effectively serviced by a deputy. An efficient clerk to the governors ensures good communication between the school and governors. As a result, governors are able to carry out their strategic role successfully. A committee meeting observed during the inspection exemplified this; governors were able to discuss knowledgeably the implications of future funding arrangements of post 16 students, resulting from the requirements of Curriculum 2000.

18. School development is supported through thoughtful financial planning. Very good consultation occurs over spending decisions, and good use is made of best-and-worse-case scenarios to aid decision making. The school has developed very good financial administrative procedures, based upon its experience as a grant-maintained school, and uses key indicators to

support monitoring by governors and senior managers. Careful application of the principles of best value ensures that best use is made of resources. For example, the decision to take on cleaning in house has improved the cleanliness of the building, whilst providing employment for some college students. Good use is made of bench-marking data to aid spending decisions. Expenditure on Post 16 students is proportionate to the moneys allocated through age-weighted pupil units.

19. The strength of the school's management is exemplified in many ways. Not least, by its handling of the difficulties that have arisen in replacing staff, particularly the large number of temporary vacancies that have occurred in the last year, many as a result of maternity leave. The significant improvement that has been made to accommodation is another example of very effective management. The use of in-house staff to carry out the refurbishment of the library, for example, is impressive.

### **Encourages an ethos where school is enjoyable.**

20. The Boswells provides an excellent environment for learning. Both staff and students enjoy working in the school. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting indicated that their children thought school was 'fun' and this was repeated by students of all ages during the inspection. The school values individuals, their diversity, and the contribution each makes. Students speak positively about this, appreciating the opportunities to learn from, and about, each other. Very good relationships exist between students and between students and teachers. Students of all ages spoke of friendly, helpful staff. They recognise that staff care about them as individuals and give an enormous amount of their time. College students spoke of teachers expecting them to enjoy themselves and of the commitment of teachers to the school. A lot is expected of teachers, many of whom work very long hours. Staff speak of the Boswells being a demanding school, but in return they expect students of all abilities to work hard and achieve high standards. Intellectual and physical development, independence and creativity are valued, alongside academic achievements. In all areas of school work, good effort is praised publicly.

21. Students have very positive attitudes towards school. They are happy, confident and articulate; they are keen to learn and mostly work hard. The vast majority of students behave well in lessons and around the school. They are courteous and trustworthy and show respect for property. For example, in home economics, a Year 10 class sensibly set about preparations for cooking without waiting for their teacher to arrive. There is no oppressive behaviour in the school. Bullying, racism and sexism are not tolerated and when occasionally an incident occurs, it is dealt with firmly and effectively. Students are given many opportunities to show initiative in lessons and are willing to take responsibility when given the chance. Students' attendance is very good, with very little unauthorised absence.

22. The ethos of the school is epitomised most clearly, for example, by the preparations for the school musical, 'Grease'. Around 300 students are involved in the production as singers, dancers, actors, musicians or backstage. Since auditions in September, students have regularly participated in rehearsals for a production in March. Excerpts were shown to a house assembly during the inspection and enthusiastically received by students of all ages. Dance and drama rehearsals observed exemplified how well students of differing ages support each other and get on within the

school. This is encouraged even before students join the school. Photographs of new students, taken whilst still in their primary schools, are displayed within the school before their arrival. Year 8 pupils act as mentors for Year 7 when they arrive and college students as ‘aunties’ and ‘uncles’. College students are also used to mentor boys as part of the project to raise boys’ performance.

23. Apart from the school production, students participate enthusiastically in an excellent range of extra-curricular activities at both lunchtime and after school. There are clubs related to most areas of the curriculum. As well as school teams, there are many sports clubs where students are encouraged to participate whatever their ability. College students also organise the school’s house system, liaising with assistant heads of year. The house system is used to organise a range of events as well as sporting competitions. In addition, the Year system plays a major part in the school’s excellent collections for charity.

24. Much of the work of the college is student led. There are many student committees, including, for example, social, charity, and environmental awareness committees. Wisely the school has kept breadth to the college curriculum. All students take general studies and have to include an elective subject. This can be a physical activity, an area of interest such as film appreciation or theatrical make-up, or a form of community service working with old people or children. Most audibly it also includes a rock school. The social committee organises an annual ball for those leaving the college and produces a year book of exceptional quality; providing an impressive memento of their time at The Boswells.

**Makes very good provision for students’ personal development, including excellent provision for their social development.**

25. The provision for pupils’ personal development is very good overall; that for social development is outstanding. As one year 9 pupil stated; ‘this is a social school’. There is a thorough programme of personal, social and health education delivered by tutors in half hour periods four days a week. The programme is organised by heads of year and is augmented by weekly assemblies. The programme is well devised and contains, for example, in the Autumn term of Year 7, units on getting to know students, personal safety and study skills. The significant time allocated to physical, social and health education (PSHE) attaches to it greater importance than is usual and helps tutors develop very good relationships with students. Regular house assemblies also take place. These are organised by college students and provide opportunities for public recognition of students’ achievements, both sporting and related to their work, through the school awards system. Students speak positively about the use of rewards. The house system provides numerous opportunities for students to participate in a range of activities which support their personal development. Year 7 students are very positive about the role of college students who attend their tutorials and support their social development.

26. There is a strong emphasis within the school on students working together co-operatively both in lessons and in activities outside lessons, particularly in sport and the arts. The success of school teams and school productions epitomises this. Collaborative learning is encouraged across the curriculum. Teachers work hard to help develop students’ confidence. The quality of students’ collaborative skills is exemplified for example, in Year 10 drama where students of disparate abilities

injected a range of humour into improvisations based on characters in Macbeth. Students are expected to develop independence in lessons and in completing homework, and are encouraged to work collaboratively and use their initiative. Students are given opportunities to take on responsibilities, through year councils, for instance, where they can influence school development. Some have helped in the organisation of the careers room. College students also have many opportunities to take on responsibilities through college committees, house activities and their support to Year 7 students. Significant sums of money are raised for charities through the year system.

27. Students' moral and cultural development is very good. Most assemblies have a clear moral theme and lessons across a range of subjects address moral and cultural issues. Students are articulate, concentrate well and are very open and willing to give their views. Year 11 students spoke positively about the way they could speak openly about issues in lessons and knew that their views would be listened to fairly, but would be challenged when inappropriate. Students are taught to appreciate not only their own cultural traditions, but those of other cultures. There are good multicultural displays around the school. And as part of their reading, students are expected to read texts based in other cultures. The aims of the school have recently been revised, placing greater emphasis on multiculturalism. During the inspection, college students were gripped by personal accounts of Holocaust victims. Good use is made of visiting speakers across the curriculum, and many trips are organised both in this country and abroad. Cultural visits are strengths of the school. There are many trips to the theatre, museums and galleries. The cultural life of the school is excellent. Apart from regular school productions which involve large numbers of students, there are a variety of musical ensembles, and a range of drama, dance and art related activities. College students also have the opportunity to study film and a range of other cultural activities in their electives.

28. Students' spiritual development is good. The school has rejected the principle of a daily act of collective worship for reasons of logistics and inclusion. It does not have enough large spaces to gather the school together and wishes all students and staff to attend assemblies independent of their beliefs. Students are encouraged to explore their own spirituality and there is a spiritual element to many lessons and extra-curricular activities. Students' responses to the achievements of others exemplify the strength of the school's spiritual and moral development. Students know right from wrong. In religious education, and across a range of other subjects, students are given the opportunity to reflect on their own and other people's lives and beliefs.

### **Provides a wide range of very good quality learning opportunities for students.**

29. The quality and range of curricular opportunities are very good in all three key stages. There is a clear curriculum philosophy which ensures all students receive a balanced curriculum. The appropriate statutory curriculum is in place in all years. In all years, a significant amount of time is allocated to personal, social and health education (PSHE) taught by form tutors. At appropriate stages, this includes units on careers. There is a well-organised careers room which provides students with access to all the information they may require in researching possible careers. Good access is provided to a careers advisor. Work experience is organised by a separate co-ordinator, who also runs a Year 11 jobs club for those who may wish to take up a career rather than continuing their education. Good support is provided within the college to students in preparation

for higher education. The pastoral curriculum is a strength of the school and pupils' progress is not just seen in terms of individual subjects, but in terms of the whole child. It is valued by the school and is a practical manifestation of the school's values.

30. All students follow a balanced curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4. The increased importance given to tutor time and PSHE results in slightly lower allocation to some other subjects than is usual, but this does not have an impact on standards. Unusually, all students at Key Stage 3, experience business education as part of technology. All students study either French or German as their first foreign language, with Spanish available as a second language for abler students from Year 8. Except in Year 7, and in options at Key Stage 4, ICT is delivered across the curriculum. This policy is successful and ICT is becoming a growing strength of the school, although recording of achievements, which is good at Key Stage 3, needs to develop at Key Stage 4. Drama is taught as a discrete subject from Year 9. At Key Stage 4, the curriculum remains broad. In addition to National Curriculum subjects, students are able to choose from a range of options, including drama, dance, business education, child development and media studies. Students are expected to take an arts subject, an undoubted strength of the school. Currently no boys take GCSE dance, but popularity of dance at Key Stage 3 and of a boys dance club, should bring about a change to this. Otherwise there is a good gender mix across most options, as for example, the enthusiastic boys in Year 10 home economics. The use of a mix of setting and mixed ability classes across subjects is extremely effective in raising attainment. Whilst most students follow a broad GCSE course at Key Stage 4, more vocationally based courses have been introduced to meet the needs of some students. A small number of students are disapplied from part of the National Curriculum to follow a work-based option in Year 11. Pupils are taught in mixed ability classes and in groups formed on the basis of prior attainment, according to departmental policy, and this flexibility is effective in raising attainment.

31. The curriculum post 16 is broad, but does not attempt to duplicate the broad vocationally based curriculum available in local colleges. Most college students take a combination of AS and A Levels. For this coming year A Levels are being offered in art and design, biology, chemistry, computing, design and technology, drama, economics and business, English language and literature, French, geography, German, history, home economics, law, mathematics, music technology, music, physical education, physics, religious studies, sociology, and Spanish. Vocational courses at advanced and intermediate level are taken in business education, a natural extension of courses taken in Key Stages 3 and 4. GNVQ science has also been offered for this coming year. Serious consideration is being given to widening the vocational subjects offered to include ICT and a performing arts courses, as a response to meeting students' needs. The move nationally to five AS Levels in Year 12 has placed considerable pressure on students. The school is aware of this but will in future be bound by proposed changes in Post 16 funding. Traditionally students have taken four A Levels, one being general studies, and have participated in an elective, where they take a non-examination course in a subject of interest, a physical activity or some form of community service. The school rightly wishes to protect this broadly based educational experience, which has prepared students well for university entrance.

32. There is a rich and varied programme of extra-curricular activities. Students of all abilities participate in clubs related to most areas of the curriculum, play sports and participate in school productions and musical groups. There is, for example, an enthusiastic boys dance group. There

are homework clubs and clubs for those students who require learning support. There is a homework helpline, an unusual but welcome initiative. The school library was refurbished last summer. It is now an example of excellence, with good book and ICT provision, and is well staffed. Students make excellent use of it throughout the day, including before and after school. The curriculum is also broadened by a wide range of educational visits. These range from residential trips in geography and languages, day trips in history to theatre trips in English, as well as a wide range of school journeys. Visiting artists, theatre groups, authors and poets, and speakers on a range of subjects also help make the curriculum more relevant and stimulating.

33. The school has an unusual strength in the emphasis it has placed on internationalism. Two years ago the school hosted an international teachers' conference which it organised with a Danish sixth form college. A second conference will be held later in the year in Denmark. Exchanges have been organised with schools in France, Germany, Spain, Denmark and the United States. Video-conferencing occurs with a school in Barcelona, and is being set up with schools in Germany and France. As a consequence of these developments, and the very good results now being achieved in GCSE languages, the school has consulted over proposals to apply for Language College status. The school is well placed to be successful in its application, but it has many strengths and could equally apply, for example, for arts or sports college status.

#### **Provides very good quality care for students.**

34. Parents spoke and wrote warmly about the quality of support given to their children. Several mentioned how well their child had settled into the school. Enormous care is taken over transition from primary schools and the school's liaison with its feeder schools is exemplary. Many events are organised for prospective pupils while they are in Years 5 and 6 of their primary schools, including, for example, a Crazy Sports Day, sports coaching, music master-classes and ICT lessons. One member of each skills area spends a lesson each week in a feeder school. An experienced head of Year 7 has developed strong ties with local primary schools. Photographic evidence of the many events is displayed in school, in order to make the secondary school more welcoming to new entrants. Whilst the head of year takes care to ensure a smooth transition and deals effectively with the concerns of new pupils, the school attaches equal importance to ensuring a smooth curricular transition.

35. Pupils' Key Stage 2 test and teacher assessments are collated alongside their performance in cognitive abilities tests (CATS) which they take on entry to the school. The best of these results are used to set targets for each student at Key Stage 3. The importance that the school attaches to the assessment and monitoring of students' academic performance is clear. Both the head of Year 7 and teacher responsible for assessment, recording and reporting are part of the school's leadership team. Students in all years receive short progress reports four times a year, in addition to an annual report. Whilst the emphasis on reports is on monitoring students' effort, appropriate reference is made to standards being achieved against National Curriculum criteria at Key Stage 3 and broadly against GCSE grades in Key Stage 4.

36. Form tutors play a vital role in tracking students' academic and personal development. Students generally remain with the same tutor from Years 7 to 11. The assistant head of year also moves up with them, as does the head of year from Years 8 to 11. This continuity ensures that any

problems are dealt with efficiently. Tutors spend a significant amount of time with their tutor groups. Apart from short morning and afternoon registrations, they have four half-hour periods in which to deliver a programme of personal, social and health education. This significant allocation of time means that many students develop strong relationships with their tutors and that tutors have the time to take the role seriously. The role played by tutors and heads of year in tracking students' academic development is impressive. Unlike most schools, this now starts from Year 7, and ensures that targets take account of achievements from primary schools. College tutors are equally involved in monitoring the progress of students following A Level and GNVQ courses.

37. Whilst, as in all schools, students indicated that some bullying occasionally occurs, usually in the form of name calling, all were clear that it was dealt with effectively. Younger students welcomed the support of college students. Students of all ages mix well within the school. Some college students are involved in peer counselling, working with a minority of disaffected students about changing attitudes. Students indicated that racism and sexism were not issues in the school. Any sexist behaviour is dealt with effectively. Students welcomed aspects of the new multicultural policy. Some indicated that they were interested in learning about other cultures in assemblies and in a range of lessons, such as Asian dance in GCSE dance, and recognised the importance of this in a school whose ethnic mix does not mirror that of British society. Students also welcomed the appointment of a chaplain. The school is strongly aware of its role in ensuring students' welfare, health and safety. All appropriate health and safety checks occur and all relevant policies are in place. A deputy head is the designated child protection officer. Detailed advice and training are provided to staff, and students are made aware of procedures and use them.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Aspects of the accommodation and facilities provided to support students' learning.**

38. The school is housed on a pleasant site in the middle of a residential area. The open nature of the site adds to the impression that the school is truly part of the community. All accommodation is housed compactly in one corner of the site. The school has made many improvements to the accommodation. Before the last inspection, excellent new provision had been made for technology and there had been a refurbishment in science. Following the inspection, toilet accommodation, which had been identified as an issue, was refurbished. More recently, a dedicated dance studio has been built. The English department is now housed in a separate, new and pleasant prefabricated block. An impressive refurbishment and extension of the library took place last summer. The school is fortunate in having premises staff who are able and willing to carry out much of this refurbishment themselves. Weaknesses in cleaning have been addressed by taking over responsibility in-house.

39. However, despite the efforts of staff and governors, weaknesses in accommodation still exist. Senior managers and governors are well aware of these; they are also currently reviewing the implications of a predicted rise in Post 16 numbers. Whilst there are now some very pleasant and well equipped large spaces within the school, some general and specialist classrooms are far smaller than current DfEE recommended sizes. For example, some art spaces are very cramped and there is limited practice accommodation for music, where sound-proofing is also poor. Some language

rooms are also small and accommodation for the large number of students in the college is limited. Circulation space, particularly in the main teaching blocks, is very tight and can result in considerable congestion at the changeover of lessons. The allocation of five minutes between lessons, sensible one-way systems and good supervision by senior staff at known bottlenecks ensures that movement occurs safely. Lateness to lessons was not an issue during the inspection. One consequence of the tightness of space is the lack of lockers for students to store their belongings. This was raised both by students and their parents, who alluded to the medical research on the effect on children's backs of carrying heavy bags. The school is aware of this and has sought remedies. Younger students are encouraged to carry only essential items and possible sites for lockers, at least for some students, have been discussed with fire officers, but so far without success. A second possible consequence of the limited space is the lack of social spaces for students, other than those in the college. Except in inclement weather, students are expected to vacate the buildings at break and lunchtime unless they are attending a club, the library or eating in the dining hall. Given the extremely positive ethos of the school, it is surprising that a more open school policy is not in operation.

40. As identified in the last inspection report, the school does not have a sports hall. Governors have bid unsuccessfully on more one occasion for funding to remedy this shortcoming. There is good external sports accommodation, a swimming pool and a gymnasium. However, with nearly 1500 students, the limited internal provision restricts delivery of some aspects of the National Curriculum. The popularity of physical education at GCSE and the introduction of an A Level in the subject have added to the problem. In wet and inclement weather, some external spaces are put out of action. The demand on other large internal spaces, such as the school hall, have increased in recent years, with the greater emphasis placed on external examinations and assessments.

41. The school has made considerable investment in ICT software, hardware and training since the last inspection. As a consequence provision for ICT is now good, with each skills area having a networked area, good access to the internet, a work area in the staff room and good access within the library. The appointment of a systems manager has enhanced ICT support. However, both staff and students expressed frustrations about aspects of provision, which does not always work as smoothly as they would hope and does not always keep pace with the systems some have available at home. For example, video conferencing, an exciting development in languages, has a knock on effect to other users of the system when conferencing is taking place. Keeping up with the increasing expectations of staff and students will be a challenge for the school.

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

39. In order to improve the school further, governors, senior managers and staff should:

- \* Address shortcomings in the school's accommodation and the facilities provided for students to support their learning. In particular, it should continue to seek funding for a sports hall, continue to enhance ICT facilities, investigate innovative proposals to provide storage space for students and consider improvements to social facilities for students at break and lunchtime.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	78
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6. 5	26	39	26	2. 5	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	1229	250
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	76	N/A

#### **Special educational needs**

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	8	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	250	0

#### **English as an additional language**

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

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	5.8

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.3

National comparative data	5.9
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National comparative data	0.4
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### *Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3*

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	116	130	246

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	89	95	87
	Girls	114	94	91
	Total	203	189	178
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	83 (76)	77 (76)	72 (79)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	47 (28)	50 (49)	39 (42)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	77	102	87
	Girls	118	109	103
	Total	195	211	190
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	79 (76)	86 (78)	77 (76)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	34 (30)	54 (50)	43 (40)
	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	131	118	249

GCSE results		5 or more grades A*-C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	74	124	128
	Girls	79	116	117
	Total	153	240	245
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	61 (54)	96 (96)	98 (97)
	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 results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	46(43.7)
	National	38.4(38.0)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	31	87. 1
	National		N/A

### *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	52	59	111

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	19.2	19.9	19.6 (18.8)	3.3	3.5	3.4 (1.8)
National	17.7	18.6	18.2 (17.9)	2.6	2.9	2.7 (2.8)

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

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	N/A	N/A
	National	N/A	76.5

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	5
Black – other	1
Indian	5
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	1445
Any other minority ethnic group	8

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	12	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:****Y 7 – Y 13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	94. 8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.6

*FTE means full-time equivalent.***Education support staff:****Y 7 – Y 13**

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	473

**Deployment of teachers:****Y 7 – Y 13**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77.2
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**Average teaching group size:****Y 7 – Y 13**

Key Stage 2	N/A
Key Stage 3	24.7
Key Stage 4	23.5

**Financial information**

Financial year	<b>1999-2000</b>
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	<b>£</b>
Total income	3,919,121.00
Total expenditure	3,984,193.00
Expenditure per pupil	2714.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	202,902.00
Balance carried forward to next year	137,830.00

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	1479
Number of questionnaires returned	227

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

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
My child likes school.	40	51	7	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	43	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	59	10	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	56	18	3	0
The teaching is good.	31	63	3	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	37	22	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	36	3	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	35	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	35	50	11	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	56	40	1	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	47	7	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	41	6	0	6

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

41 parents attended the parents' evening prior to the inspection and 35 parents wrote comments in addition to sending in the questionnaire. Almost all comments were positive, although the cancelling of a Year 7 parents' evening clearly concerned many parents. Although most understood the reasons, the decision left many parents concerned about their children's progress. Concerns about homework were almost equally split between those who felt there was too much and those who thought there was too little. The lack of lockers exercised some parents.