

INSPECTION REPORT

SOUTH WOLDS SCHOOL

Nottingham

LEA area: Nottinghamshire

Unique reference number: 122883

Acting Headteacher: Mr Phil Hughes

Reporting inspector: Sue Kearney
18006

Dates of inspection: 19 - 22 March 2001

Inspection number: 188249

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11-18 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Drive
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Nottingham

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Ms Kate Foale

Date of previous inspection: April 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

South Wolds is a comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11-18. It is located to the south of Nottingham in the village of Keyworth. It is an average size school with 1058 pupils on roll and includes a successful Sixth Form of 191 students. Pupils come to the school from the local town and a wide range of rural areas, as the school is popular with parents from outside the immediate catchment area. Overall, the pupils come from socially advantaged homes and the standards of attainment when they enter the school are above national expectations. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is about average and the percentage speaking English as a second language is low. There are very few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average, and with statements of special educational needs it is well below average. Attendance is at the national average. There has been no significant change in the characteristics of the school since the last inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

South Wolds School is a good and improving school. Standards in GCSE examinations and in the Sixth Form are well above national averages. The school has good leadership and management, although there are some weaknesses. There is good teaching across the school although a very small number of lessons seen were unsatisfactory. The headteacher and governors have good vision for the school and financial control is good. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Standards overall have improved in GCSE examination results. In 2000 examination results in the Sixth Form and in GCSE were well above the national average. This represents good achievement.
- Teaching is good across the school. It provides opportunities for good learning.
- The Sixth Form is a strength of the school with a wide range of courses and good monitoring of students' progress.
- Leadership and management is good overall and is reflected in the high standards achieved by the pupils.
- Relationships across the school are very good and pupils have good attitudes to their learning. Their personal development is well supported by a strong pastoral system.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The provision in information and communications technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory.
- There is insufficient rigour in the monitoring and evaluation of some areas of school performance. These include the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the range and quality of extra-curricular activities, the effectiveness of pupil grouping, and health and safety issues often related to unsatisfactory accommodation.
- There are some weaknesses in strategic planning which lead to a failure to take sufficient effective action in some areas of school performance.
- The school needs to further develop the use of assessment data and national benchmarks to assist in the review of subject performance and the overall progress of pupils.
- Governors do not fulfil all of their statutory duties.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

South Wolds School has made satisfactory improvement overall since the inspection in April 1996. There has been significant improvement in raising standards at GCSE and A Level. The quality of teaching is higher. Pupils' progress is more closely monitored and targets are now used effectively in Key Stage 4 and the Sixth Form. This has had a significant impact on standards and has changed the way the school reviews its performance, particularly in subjects. Key appointments have been made in response to the last inspection but difficulties at senior management level and financial restraints, have held back the rate of improvement and the overall impact of these appointments on school provision.

Statutory requirements for collective worship, for teaching religious education and for teaching information and communication technology (ICT) are still not met. The governors and senior staff have begun to address the issues related to review of performance and development planning but with insufficient rigour. These remain weaknesses. Although the standards and provision in ICT have improved, the majority of pupils still do not have sufficient opportunity to develop their skills.

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	C	B	A	A
A Levels/AS Levels	D	B	A	

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

Examination results at the end of Key Stage 4 have improved in recent years faster than those nationally. In 2000 GCSE examinations, there were particular strengths in geography, history, German, business studies, science and sociology. Performance by pupils is not as strong in art, English and French although examination results in English and French are above the national average for the average points score. Results in art are below the national average. Results in the three core subjects in national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 are also well above the national average.

In the work seen during the inspection, standards overall closely reflected the examination results. Pupils' achievement in many subjects is above expectations and in mathematics is well above. Literacy skills are well developed in English but less so in other subjects. Numerical skills are very well developed in mathematics. Pupils with statements of special educational needs make good progress in response to good teaching.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school.	Pupils show good attitudes to school and to each other.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms.	Good overall in the majority of lessons. There are occasional instances of disruptive behaviour in a few lessons.
Personal development and relationships.	Pupils develop very good relationships with each other and with adults. Relationships between pupils in lessons are often very good.
Attendance.	Attendance is in line with the national average.

The school has a strong focus on attendance and behaviour and this is reinforced at every opportunity. As a result pupils understand what is expected of them and behaviour is generally good in lessons and around the school. There are a few incidences of bullying but these are well managed by the school. The pastoral support for pupils is good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

In lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons of which 55 per cent were good and 22 per cent were very good or excellent. Three of the lessons seen were unsatisfactory. These were in science and physical education. The best teaching was seen in Years 10 and 11, and in the Sixth Form.

Teachers in English lessons make good provision for pupils to develop their language skills when they first enter the school. However strategies to develop literacy skills are not yet effective across

the school. Teaching in mathematics is often very good and numerical skills are developed well in mathematics lessons. The development of pupils' skills in ICT is unsatisfactory overall, although pupils taking a short course at GCSE were seen to make good progress. The school has plans to improve opportunities for pupils to use computers across Years 7 to 9. The quality of teaching in science is mostly good although there is a significant proportion that is unsatisfactory.

Pupils are attentive in most lessons, keen and willing to persevere. In the majority of lessons teaching is good. Teachers ensure that lessons are well planned to cater for the spread of ability, that there are lively teaching methods that engage pupils' interest and that time is used to good effect. In nearly all subjects, teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the topics. This enables them to challenge pupils by effective questioning and prompts greater understanding in pupils. In the few lessons where teaching is less than good, there are low expectations, a slow pace and over-reliance on experience rather than clear planning. The pupils are not challenged and narrow teaching methods fail to engage pupils in their learning. This leads to some unsatisfactory behaviour.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum.	The curriculum is satisfactory and provision in the Sixth Form is good Statutory requirements are not met in ICT, religious education and for collective worship.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs.	Pupils have good provision and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.	Moral and social development is good. There are weaknesses in the planning and monitoring of spiritual and cultural development which are satisfactory. The overall provision is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils.	Procedures to ensure the safety and welfare of pupils are satisfactory. The strong pastoral teams ensure that pupils' concerns are recognised and responded to.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff.	Good overall. Most pastoral managers and curriculum managers offer good quality. The headteacher and senior staff provides good leadership but there are weaknesses in the monitoring and evaluation of some areas of school performance.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities.	Governors are very supportive of the school and well organised. They know what the key features of the school should be. They are not fully effective in reviewing performance across the school and do not fulfil all their statutory responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance.	The procedures for effectively evaluating the work of the school are not sufficiently rigorous. Actions taken have failed to bring about consistent improvements across some key areas. Overall, therefore, unsatisfactory.
The strategic use of resources.	Good financial control ensures the best use of resources. Staffing levels are adequate but the accommodation is unsatisfactory. Resources for ICT are well below average.

The governors, headteacher and senior staff have created an ethos where young people feel secure, enjoy a variety of challenges in school, develop confidence and form very good relationships.

There are, however, some weaknesses that are having an effect on the overall performance of the school. Assessment data and national benchmarks are not yet used effectively. There is a lack of rigour in systematic monitoring of some areas of school performance. These include some aspects of teaching and learning; aspects of the provision for pupils' personal development; the opportunities to develop skills in ICT, and health and safety issues associated with the poor state of the majority of school buildings. The current documentation, which guides the strategic direction of school development and monitors school performance, lacks rigour and coherence.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
Children like school and they make good progress.	Some poor behaviour.
The school is approachable.	Arrangements for homework.
Children are expected to work hard	Information on progress and better links with parents.
Teaching is good.	A wider range of extra-curricular activities.

The inspection team agrees with all the positive views expressed. Homework was seen to support learning in several subjects. The inspection shares the concerns of parents about a small number of incidences of unsatisfactory behaviour in some lessons, the extra-curricular activities and the information about pupil progress, particularly in Key Stage 3.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards overall have improved in GCSE examination results. In 2000 examination results in the Sixth Form and in GCSE were well above the national average. This represents good achievement.

1. Standards of attainment in Key Stage 4 have improved since the last inspection. The improvement is faster than the national trend. In previous years pupils entered the school with standards that were above those expected for their ages, and examination results for 16 year olds are now well above the national average. This indicates that the pupils achieve well while at the school. Since the previous inspection in 1996 the average points score per pupil in the GCSE examinations has increased from 40.3 to 46.7 in 2000. The proportion of pupils awarded higher grades A* to C has risen from 58 per cent to 67.5 per cent in 2000. When the GCSE results in 2000 are compared with the standards the pupils gained in national tests at the end of Key Stage 3, the pupils are seen to achieve well. Pupils' progress across Years 10 and 11, based on average points score per pupil, was well above average in comparison with similar schools. The school has implemented strategies that have had a significant impact on raising the attainment of boys. The achievement of boys is better than the national expectation in several subjects and has been improved by the introduction of a wide ranging mentoring programme in Years 10 and 11, and a tutor review in Year 9. These encourage boys to reach their full potential. The achievement of girls is less good. Over the last three years, all pupils taking GCSE examinations have achieved results above the national average. Boys have achieved well above with an average points score margin of 10.3 and girls have achieved above average with a margin of 6.4 over the national average.

2. The average A/AS Level point score of candidates entered for two or more GCE A Levels or AS equivalents was well above the national average in 2000. It has been above average for the last three years and shows an improvement each year from 16.7 in 1998 to 20.2 in 2000. The number of candidates entered for A/AS Levels in 2000 decreased to 65 compared to 73 in 1998 and nearly all were entered for two or more examinations. The Sixth Form is well organised and managed, and students are well supported by a strong tutorial team who play a key role in monitoring the progress each student makes towards their individual targets.

3. Pupils' attainment in national tests in 2000 at the end of Key Stage 3 is well above average across the three core subjects. Pupils enter the school with standards that are above expectations and these results indicate that pupils make good progress. Although the data is not fully reliable, because the school does not have accurate data for the whole year group, when the results in National Curriculum tests at age 11 are compared with the results of those taken at age 14, pupils are achieving in line with expectations. Since the last inspection the average points score has increased from 33.9 to 34.9, which is not as fast as the national trend. This reflects the concerns of the school and the findings of the inspection. Over the last three years the achievement of girls has been marginally less than that of boys. The performance of boys in all core subjects exceeded the national average for their age group by

the equivalent of 2.8 points while that of girls exceeded the national average by 2.2 points. There are some factors that are having a slightly negative effect on the overall progress of pupils in the core subjects in Years 7 to 9. These include some weakness in the teaching in science; the effectiveness of pupil groupings, particularly in English and science; a lack of continuity of learning due to staff absence in science; weaknesses in the use of assessment data to inform teaching and set targets for individual pupils.

Teaching is good across the school and provides opportunities for good learning.

4. In more than three quarters of the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good or better. The overall quality of the teaching has improved since the last inspection where 91 per cent of lessons were satisfactory or better compared to 95 per cent during this inspection. There has been a significant improvement in the proportion of very good teaching from 12 per cent to 22 per cent. Very good teaching was seen in all stages and in the majority of subjects. In English teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and are reinforced in Years 9 to 11 by the recent introduction of the National Literacy pilot programme, which requires a clear structure to lessons and a variety of approach in teaching. This encourages good standards of literacy that can then be used across the school. Teaching in mathematics is very good and numerical skills are well taught in mathematics. Pupils have sufficient skills to enable them to apply numerical knowledge in other subjects. Although there is good teaching in science, too many lessons were seen to be unsatisfactory. For example, a lively and enthusiastic group of Year 7 pupils learnt about sweating and the functions of the skin. The lesson had been well prepared with key words clearly displayed to help the pupils understand what they were going to learn. However, the teacher did not refer directly to the keywords during the lesson and the oral responses of pupils were severely restricted by a lack of opportunity for them to provide their own views or feedback. In a Year 9 lesson with higher attaining pupils there was insufficient care taken about the health and safety of the pupils as they conducted practical investigations. In both these lessons the size and layout of the accommodation had a negative impact on the overall quality of the teaching. Some pupils had an obstructed view of the board and the teacher, while others had to carry out practical activities in very cramped conditions. Not enough use is made of ICT in the majority of subjects.

5. In the majority of subjects, teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the topic and the management of pupils is good. Relationships with pupils are constructive and supportive. These factors all contribute to successful learning as was seen in a Year 11 lesson in mathematics. Pupils were supported in their revision by teaching that provided a clear and lively introduction resulting in a purposeful response from pupils. Excellent subject knowledge allowed the teacher to take suggestions from the pupils themselves and build on them to illustrate the key points needed for revision procedures. Relationships within this high-performing, confident group were very good and good humour was used effectively to encourage a brisk pace to the learning. Teaching was often very good in Sixth Form lessons. For example, a large group of students studying psychology in Year 13 had a purposeful discussion about the ethics of using animals in scientific research. The lesson was well planned with a variety of activities that maintained interest and motivation. The teacher was able to stimulate high levels of debate with this very responsive group as she lead them

through different source material such as the Home Office guidelines, constantly inviting their views and asking for feedback. The independent skills of the students were then increased through group work researching different viewpoints using a wide range of material such as the internet, psychology review documents and a glossary of terms.

The Sixth Form is a strength of the school with a wide range of courses and good monitoring of students' progress.

6. Teaching in the Sixth Form is good and is characterised by very good relationships, a style of questioning which probes and challenges students and many independent learning strategies. Teachers in English encourage students to develop their research skills and work independently through well-focused coursework assignments and effective presentations on linguistic analysis. In a lesson on improvised drama students were given opportunities to use their initiative and imagination to good effect. Excellent teaching was seen with Year 13 students studying biology. The young teacher used a wide variety of methods to reinforce the students' understanding of a new topic on the nervous system. All students were fully involved in their learning, regardless of their different abilities. The atmosphere in the group was supportive yet challenging and humour played a sensitive and integral part in the overall success of the lesson.

7. The curriculum is broad with a wide choice of A/AS Levels and includes subjects such as psychology, sociology, media studies, environmental science and advanced GNVQ business studies. There is a well-planned enhancement course in Year 12, which provides some additional breadth in the Sixth Form programme and is the vehicle for teaching religious education. It includes religious education, key skills, general studies, health and drug awareness. There is no enhancement programme in Year 13 and consequently no religious education. The school does not meet statutory requirements in this area.

8. The tutorial system is good. There are strategies for the supportive induction of students into Year 12 and similar support is available when students leave at the end of Year 13. Students enjoy good relationships with the staff and report that the new younger teachers are very supportive and provide recent and relevant information about careers and higher education choices. The new head of Sixth Form has introduced several successful initiatives. For example, the progress of students is regularly monitored with target grades forming the basis and reports used to reinforce the messages to both students and their parents. More frequent monitoring is arranged for students who under-perform and are considered to be 'at risk'. The personal development of students is encouraged by opportunities to take responsibility in the school canteen, in the library and in Year 7 tutor groups.

Leadership and management is good overall and is reflected in the high standards achieved by the pupils.

9. The current acting headteacher has successfully led the school through a difficult period when the previous headteacher suffered from health problems. He has a clear vision for the school based on a good knowledge of areas of strength and where development is needed. He was appointed as deputy headteacher after the previous inspection. Since then he has introduced into the school

initiatives such as the effective use of assessment analysis and performance review using national benchmarks. Both staff and governors acknowledge that these have brought about a significant change in how the school considers its own performance and this has contributed to raising standards. The governors, supported by the financial manager, have worked hard to bring the school into a surplus budget. Despite these difficulties in recent years, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and standards in the school have risen faster than the national rate during this time. A new appointment to the post of headteacher has been made and he or she will take up the role after Easter 2001.

10. The governors and the senior team are aware of many of the strengths and areas for development in the school. The majority of governors are fully involved in the life of the school and many have children who attend the school. Financial management is good and the school ensures that it obtains best value for money when placing contracts for the supply of goods and services.'

11. The school benefits from the experience of many middle managers who know the pupils well and who are long serving in the school. For example, the high standards of pupils in the majority of subjects and the good and improved teaching across the school are greatly supported by the stability of many curriculum managers. Pastoral managers reinforce good standards of behaviour with pupils and this is reflected in the very good relationships across the school. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and the achievement of these pupils is good across the school. There have been recent appointments in key posts including a co-ordinator for ICT, a deputy headteacher responsible for using assessment and national data to raise attainment, a co-ordinator for the Sixth Form, and a financial manager. These posts have made a significant difference to the provision in each of these areas of school performance. New appointments have been made in the management of some subjects including science and geography. These members of staff bring new ideas and experiences to a stable and experienced team of middle managers.

Relationships across the school are very good and pupils have good attitudes to their learning. Their personal development is well supported by a strong pastoral system.

12. In more than three quarters of lessons seen the response of pupils was good, very good or excellent. It was less than satisfactory in just three lessons and excellent in four lessons. There were 36 per cent of lessons seen where attitudes and behaviour were very good and 38 per cent where it was good. This is more than is normally observed and reflects the positive atmosphere in the school and the very good relationships between all staff and pupils. The response of students in the Sixth Form was very good or excellent in the majority of lessons.S

13. Pupils' learning is greatly enhanced by this positive environment. It encourages both pupils and teachers to take risk and embrace challenge. For example, Year 9 pupils in history were studying the effects of World War 1 on people at home. They contributed orally to the discussion and enjoyed the tasks and finding out information. They were prepared to give their own ideas and then research the issues independently to find out more detail. In science, Year 9 pupils worked in teams and used ICT to research a topic on lichens. They checked their findings by studying lichen growth in the school grounds. Throughout the process they behaved sensibly, collaborated together

to present their reports and completed the task unsupervised, as their homework.

14. Pupils benefit significantly from a tutorial system across the school that provides support and guidance on all matters related to the personal development of pupils. Behaviour is well supervised and pupils know what is expected of them. There is an open and honest approach to problems which encourages pupils to share their concerns. Teachers and other staff provide good role models and encourage through their own behaviour a friendly and helpful atmosphere in the school. The Personal and Social Education programme is well structured to include topics such as drug awareness, health education and similar issues relevant to the lives of the pupils.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory.

15. This was an area of concern in the previous report in 1996. The school has made improvements to the overall provision since then but the ratio of one computer to 13 pupils remains well below average. Pupils in Year 9 do not receive formal teaching in ICT, although the school has plans for this to start in September 2001. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are taught with the aid of a commercial learning scheme. The quality of the teaching is generally satisfactory but does not always meet the needs of individual pupils. For example, Year 7 pupils studying ICT in a mixed ability group worked at their own pace, supported by the commercial scheme. Some pupils found the work too easy and were not sufficiently challenged. This resulted in some restless and disruptive behaviour.

16. More time has been allocated to ICT to give pupils more regular access to computers. This has resulted in a need to deploy several non-specialist teachers to support ICT lessons. Teaching is less secure in Years 7 to 9, than in the examination groups in Years 10 and 11 and the Sixth Form. The overall provision in these two stages is satisfactory.

17. The leadership and management of the subject is now good. The rate of improvement since the last inspection has been severely restricted by difficulties in the appointment and retention of an ICT co-ordinator. The current ICT co-ordinator has been in post approximately three years. Development planning is much improved, although financial constraints due to a recent deficit budget have prevented the school from implementing some important targets. The school is aware of areas that need attention and the monitoring of performance and provision is generally rigorous. Pupils' competence at the end of Year 9 is reported to parents, although the reliability of the data cannot be assured.

18. There is insufficient opportunity for pupils to practice their skills in ICT in other subjects. The low numbers of machines and the high demand from examination groups limit access to computers. Pupils are encouraged to use one of the computer rooms during lunchtime. The level of activity by Year 11 pupils was high during inspection week, which was the deadline for GCSE coursework. However, the school does not monitor the overall use of ICT by individual or groups of pupils and has no way of knowing what the overall quality of provision is outside of formal lessons. For example, machines in the library were not well used during the inspection and the library is closed to

pupils for approximately half the lunchtime.

19. When pupils do use ICT regularly, their attainment is above expectation, as is seen in the examination groups. The majority of pupils come from advantaged homes and report having computers at home. The school is not yet capitalising on this in order to raise standards. For example, few subjects set homework that uses ICT and there is no formal system to link the learning in the ICT lessons to the work that pupils do in other subjects.

There is insufficient rigour in the monitoring and evaluation of some areas of school performance. These include the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the range and quality of extra-curricular activities, the effectiveness of pupil grouping in Key Stage 3, and health and safety issues often related to unsatisfactory accommodation.

20. The provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall. Although there have been a number of interesting initiatives such as the study of African culture by Year 9, the school does not monitor sufficiently well the effectiveness of the provision. This was a concern in the previous report and remains a concern.

21. The development of pupils' social skills would normally be enhanced by their participation in a wider range of activities outside of the timetable. The inspection shares the concerns of parents about the limited extra-curricular activities that take place during the lunchtime and at the end of the school day. For example, there have been few extra-curricular sporting fixtures for girls since September 2000 and during the inspection the number of pupils participating in lunchtime clubs was low. The school does not monitor the extra-curricular programme and has no way of knowing which pupils take part in enhancement activities.

22. The school's curriculum policy, not recently reviewed by the governors, allows individual subject areas to determine the form of pupil grouping. Pupils in Key Stage 3 in several subjects are taught in groups with a wide spread of abilities. Although there is regular observation of lessons, there is no central analysis of the information obtained to determine, for example, the effectiveness, in terms of improved attainment, of different ways of forming teaching groups. There is a system of lesson observations across the school. However, there is no system to collate the information centrally and to analyse rigorously information about the quality of teaching and learning in these groups. There is no whole school system to track the progress of individual pupils or groups of pupils. The school has no way of knowing if these group arrangements are effective.

23. Governors are aware of the health and safety issues related to the poor state of the school buildings. They monitor the impact of major concerns regularly. For example, the school gym was closed recently because of broken windows. Subjects have been asked to provide risk assessment and some are completed. However, the monitoring of the effects of the accommodation on teaching and learning is minimal. During the inspection, pupils were observed trying to work in small cramped rooms where the layout was unsatisfactory. For example, in science lessons, several pupils are seated with their backs to the teacher and the boards and in one lesson a pillar obstructs the view to the front. Bad weather added to the

problems seen in the outside areas where the surfaces are very uneven and leaking gutters caused flooding. Not all subjects pay rigorous regard to health and safety in their teaching. This is particularly the case in science where risk assessments are incomplete. In science poor organisation of equipment in some rooms adds to the problems of outdated and poorly maintained accommodation.

There are some weaknesses in strategic planning which lead to a failure to take sufficient effective action in some areas of school performance.

24. The governors and senior staff do have a shared vision for the school and this is based on a general awareness of what is needed to improve standards. However, recent difficulties in leadership and finance have meant that progress towards targets has been slow. For example, in the improvement of ICT provision. The school development plan is not rigorous in the way it links subjects to whole-school areas for development. It does not quantify targets sufficiently well to allow measurements of success. The school has recently submitted an application for specialist school status that did not get approval from the Department for Education and Employment. However the process of putting together the bid has identified weaknesses in the current development plan which needs review.

25. A particular area of concern in the school is the efficient deployment and management of staff, both teaching and non-teaching. In English in Years 7 and 8, pupils are not always taught by full time English specialists. Several groups in both science and English are taught by more than one teacher. This negatively affects the continuity of pupils' learning. In ICT there are only two specialist teachers and many pupils in Years 7 to 9 are taught by teachers who do not have sufficient training in teaching ICT, and this affects pupils' progress. The school has expanded the number of lessons for ICT without making allowance for the need for additional trained teachers. Many job descriptions need review and a more rigorous system of monitoring. The school hopes that the introduction of Performance Management will help to address these problems.

The school needs to further develop the use of assessment data and national benchmarks to assist in the review of subject performance and the overall progress of pupils, particularly in Key Stage 3.

26. The progress made by pupils in individual subjects is monitored within the subjects satisfactorily. Records are maintained and progress reviewed. There is regular feedback to both pupils and parents. In Year 11 and the Sixth Form pupils are working towards individual targets guided by their tutors. Assessment records are used well in mathematics to group pupils on the basis of prior attainment from Year 7. The school has recently installed electronic systems that will enable all records of pupils' progress to be held centrally rather than the individualised systems in place currently. However, this system is at the early stages of development. The present arrangements do not allow rigorous analysis of the progress of individual pupils or groups of pupils.

27. National benchmarks are not used effectively in the school to make comparisons of school performance. There are very few staff and governors who are aware of the appropriate documents

and therefore the concept of judging value for money is very new. For example, inspectors used the Autumn Package with the senior team to determine the progress of pupils in Years 7 to 9. The school does not have reliable data about National Curriculum test results at age 11 for all pupils who enter the school. This means that the individual progress of pupils cannot be tracked with any degree of accuracy. The school has introduced testing using nationally recognised schemes and these form the basis of a target-setting programme in Years 10 and 11, with plans to extend it lower down the school. A recent appointment of a Literacy Co-ordinator in English is beginning to create greater consistency of approach to improving literacy in other subjects of the curriculum.

Governors do not fulfil all of their statutory duties.

28. The school still does not meet the statutory requirements in respect of: a daily act of collective worship, the provision of ICT, or the requirements for religious education in Years 10 and 11, and in the Sixth Form. These were concerns reported at the previous inspection. There are plans to include provision for religious education in the curriculum in September 2001 and to extend lessons in ICT into Year 9.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

29. In order to maintain and develop further the standards of attainment and achievement, the governors, headteacher and senior staff should:

- Improve the provision for ICT by;
(*Paragraphs: 15 - 19*)
 - * Bringing the ratio of computers to pupils closer to the average;
 - * Providing regular and frequent access by pupils to computers;
 - * Monitoring the use of ICT by individual pupils in lessons, lunchtime and for homework;
 - * Linking the different experiences pupils have so as to provide continuity and a well managed programme to raise standards and improve progress.

- Improve systems for monitoring and evaluating all areas of school performance particularly;
(*Paragraphs: 20 - 23*)
 - * Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
 - * Extra-curricular activities;
 - * The effect of pupil groups;
 - * Health and safety.

- Adopt a more coherent approach to development planning with clear links between whole-school and departmental plans. Ensuring that plans show clearly how future improvements will be implemented by explicit indications of targets, costs, time-scales, responsibilities, success criteria and staff development needs.
(*Paragraphs: 24 - 25*)

- Make rigorous use of assessment data including national benchmarks;
(*Paragraphs: 26 - 27*)
 - * To identify possible areas of strength and weakness at whole-school, subject and classroom levels;
 - * To improve and extend the system for setting clear targets for progress for all pupils based on these analyses;
 - * To use assessment information more effectively to determine the needs of individual pupils and direct the teaching towards meeting those needs.

- Clarify the role of the governors in reviewing school performance to ensure;
(*Paragraphs: 28, 25*)
 - * All statutory requirements are met.
 - * Sufficient and effective action is taken particularly in areas of school performance such as the efficient deployment and management of staff and the maintenance of school buildings.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	20	55	18	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	1058	191
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	48	

Special educational needs

	Y7-Y11	Sixth Form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	167	0

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	31

Attendance 1999/2000

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.9
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	72	77	149

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	55	55	52
	Girls	60	60	55
	Total	115	115	107
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	78(76)	77 (78)	73 (79)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	42(33)	58 (47)	45 (40)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)\

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	46	52	52
	Girls	53	56	50
	Total	99	108	102
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	67 (60)	73 (69)	70(84)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	33 (26)	59(30)	43 (39)
	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	78	73	151

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A* to G	1 or more grades A* to G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	53	73	76
	Girls	49	71	72
	Total	102	144	148
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	68 (69)	95 (94)	98 (98)
	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	47
	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	22	48

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	20.4	20.1	20.2	0	4.5	3.6
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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	9
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	3
Indian	2
Pakistani	5
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	843
Any other minority ethnic group	2

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	2
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	16	1
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:

Y11-13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	60.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff:

Y11-Y13

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	179

Deployment of teachers:

Y11-Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77.4
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Average teaching group size:

Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25.5
Key Stage 4	23.9

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	2459531.00
Total expenditure	2407013.00
Expenditure per pupil	2286.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	-25144.00
Balance carried forward to next year	27374.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	11058
Number of questionnaires returned	99

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	38	47	9	5	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	43	10	3	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	17	53	16	5	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	42	18	13	2
The teaching is good.	21	65	4	5	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	45	18	8	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	44	6	3	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	45	38	6	8	2
The school works closely with parents.	26	39	21	7	6
The school is well led and managed.	22	48	5	8	16
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	27	52	11	5	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	31	16	19	18