

INSPECTION REPORT

HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Gloucester

LEA: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115718

Headteacher: Mrs M A Bainbridge

Reporting inspector: Dr Paula Haes
16042

Dates of inspection: 5 – 7 March 2001

Inspection number: 189339

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Grammar (selective)
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18
Gender of pupils:	Girls (mixed sixth form)
School address:	Denmark Road Gloucester
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs H R P Davies
Date of previous inspection:	September 1996

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6 - 10
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	11 - 16
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	16 - 17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19 - 23

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The High School for Girls is a maintained selective school for girls aged 11-18 within the Gloucestershire Local Education Authority (LEA). There are 780 pupils including 190 in the sixth form, 11 of whom are boys. The roll has risen since 1996, as have the numbers in the sixth form and the proportion of boys at that stage. Admission at 11 is according to the LEA selection procedure. Entry at 12+ (for pupils transferring into the area) is decided on the basis of tests administered by the school. Just over six per cent of pupils come from homes where English is not the first language, higher than most schools, but no pupil is at an early stage of acquiring English. Ninety per cent of pupils are white. Two pupils have statements of special educational need. Twenty-two pupils (three per cent) have been identified as having special educational needs, which is well below the national average.

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, six pupils, is well below the national average. Pupils are taken from Gloucester City and surrounding areas, and as far afield as Cheltenham, Tewkesbury and the Forest of Dean. They come from many social backgrounds but mainly from homes where support for learning is high. The level of attainment on entry is well above average. Of the pupils leaving Year 11 in 2000, 97 per cent went on to take A levels, two per cent went into employment and one per cent into training. Of the pupils leaving Year 13 in 2000, 96 per cent went on into higher education, a large increase on previous years, two per cent entered further education and two per cent employment.

The inspection of this school included a detailed inspection of its provision for pupils identified as having special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The High School for Girls is a good school with many strengths and few areas in need of development. Standards of attainment overall are well above average. There is a high percentage of very good or excellent teaching and learning. The leadership and management of the school are good, with senior staff creating a very productive climate in which pupils across the school achieve well. At the same time, the income per pupil is below average, so that the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards of attainment are well above average in the school overall, but especially high at the ages of 14 and 16.
- There is a high proportion of very good or excellent teaching and learning. Teachers' mastery of their subject is frequently outstanding and the majority of teachers are highly skilled at promoting very good learning by the pupils.
- The pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour both in and out of the classroom are very good, and often exemplary. They show consideration for others and high levels of sensitivity and maturity.
- The headteacher takes a very strong lead in creating an efficient and vibrant community in which all can fulfil their potential. She is supported by a talented senior management team and an experienced and committed governing body.
- The welfare of all pupils from all backgrounds is supported very effectively.
- The provision for social and moral education is of high quality.
- The school manages its finances very well.

What could be improved

- The highest attaining pupils do not achieve to their full potential in every subject.
- The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and the action taken as a result are not consistent at all levels of the school or across the subjects.
- The new management structure which will increase the delegation of managerial responsibilities is not yet established fully.
- The teaching of number skills is not fully developed across the subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in 1996, it has made satisfactory improvement. Progress has been made in tackling the key issues for action identified at that time. The high levels of pupils' attainment have been sustained, and indeed raised in the sixth form, through the sharing of good teaching methods. The high quality of teaching has been maintained. The governing body has developed good awareness of its responsibility for the quality of education and takes effective action. The planning for, and teaching, of personal and social education (PSE), including careers, are now good, and tutorial time is used well to deliver PSE. The policy for special educational needs and the reporting on this area now fully comply with requirements. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is now a strength. The provision of training and resources for the teaching of information and communication technology has improved. The supply of resources has increased generally, with a marked improvement in the library's accommodation and resources. The time allocation for religious education at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is now adequate to cover the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The longer-term planning for the development of the school is much improved and good priorities are set. The minor health and safety issues raised at that time have been attended to. Much more information on pupils' prior attainment is gathered from the feeder schools and through testing in Year 7, and it is generally used satisfactorily to raise standards. At other stages, the prior attainment of the highest attaining pupils is not always taken fully into account in planning their teaching provision. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching, especially by the senior management, are now much better developed, but there is still further work to do in this area.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	A*	A*	A*	C
A-levels/AS-levels	A	A	A*	

Key

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

Results at the end of Key Stage 3, at GCSE and at A level, are in the top five per cent of all schools.

In national tests in 2000, at the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' results in English, mathematics and science were very high compared with the national average. Compared with similar schools, results were above average overall. They were above average in English, and close to the average in mathematics and science. Over the last five years, the upward trend in the

school's results at the end of Key Stage 3 has closely matched the rise nationally.

In the GCSE examinations in 2000, results were very high compared with the national average. They were close to the average for grammar schools. The proportion of grades A*-C was significantly above the national average in every subject. Pupils' best performance at GCSE was in German and mathematics. Performance at GCSE has risen in line with the national trend.

In the A-level examinations in 2000, the results were very high compared with the national average, and above average for similar schools. Over the last five years, there has been a substantial improvement in results at A level. The proportion of grades A and B attained by pupils is particularly high in art, English, German, home economics and further mathematics. The proportion of grades A and B in French, Spanish and history is not as high.

Standards of attainment in work seen during the inspection were well above average across the school. In the sixth form, where the school admits students with a wider range of prior attainment, standards were still above average overall. Attainment in English and science is well above average overall and above average in mathematics.

Pupils from all backgrounds achieve well, including those identified as having special educational needs or physical handicap, and those acquiring English as an additional language. At Key Stage 4, where teaching, and pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour reach especially high standards, achievement is very good. In a minority of subjects, some higher-attaining pupils do not achieve quite as well as they could, because of the curricular provision.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very eager to learn and work very hard at all times.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good and often exemplary. Nothing less than good behaviour was observed.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are very considerate and mature in their values. Relationships with each other and with staff are very good.
Attendance	Very high.

In lessons, pupils are attentive, ready to contribute and thoroughly engaged in activities. They respond with great enthusiasm and enjoyment, especially to the more stimulating teaching methods. Pupils conduct themselves with quiet dignity and show respect, consideration, and concern for the feelings and needs of others. Their personal confidence is particularly well developed. Pupils are rarely absent without good cause. Only two pupils with long-standing difficulties were excluded last year.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Very 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 teaching is at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of lessons, at least good in 80 per cent, and in 33 per cent of lessons, teaching is very good or excellent. The quality of

pupils' learning closely matches the quality of teaching. At Key Stage 4, the quality of teaching and learning is particularly high, with nothing less than good quality observed and very good or better teaching and learning in half the lessons. Teachers' mastery of their subject is a special strength and most teachers are able to convey knowledge and skills very clearly. Most teachers plan their lessons very well, to include stimulating and challenging activities which enable pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Teachers' excellent management of pupils, often lightened with humour, creates very good relationships in the classroom. Teachers are highly aware of the needs of pupils identified as having special educational needs or physical disability and those learning English as an additional language, and they ensure that these groups of pupils learn as rapidly as others. The skills of literacy are taught well, with sustained expansion of key vocabulary and strong support for writing in most subjects. The teaching of the skills of number is less developed, except in mathematics. Some teaching methods and planning are not so well adapted to the needs of the highest-attaining pupils, particularly when the range of attainment is wide. A very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was observed in science and mathematics, with insufficient variety of activities and slow pace.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school offers a wide range of subjects to pupils at all stages, and a good choice of activities outside lessons.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is carefully planned, monitored and reported.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Support is offered when necessary, and provision ensures that no pupil is at a disadvantage.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Moral and social education are very good and promote strong values and a keen sense of responsibility and citizenship.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Care is very good. Difficulties are dealt with very swiftly and effectively.

The range of courses at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form is particularly wide. Sport is now a significant strength of the school. However, the way the pupils are grouped in some subjects makes it difficult for a few teachers to extend the highest attainers. The school's procedures and practice for monitoring pupils' welfare, both personal and academic, are very strong. Individual target setting for all is a particular strength. The school provides very well for the needs of pupils of all faiths.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and her senior team create a very efficient, warm and caring community in which individuals at all levels can develop their potential.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are well trained, committed and experienced and fulfil their responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Pupils' performance is analysed carefully and effective action is taken, particularly in the planning of the curriculum.
The strategic use of resources	The available resources are used very well to fulfil the school's targets. The focus on getting best value is outstanding.

The headteacher and leadership team have very good educational vision and an intelligent understanding of their roles. The commitment to good relationships and equal opportunity for all within the school is outstanding. The monitoring of the quality of teaching is not yet consistent. The opportunities for delegation, embodied in the new management structure, are not yet fully available.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's high expectations • The progress their children are making • Good teaching 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about how their children are getting on • The school working closely with parents • More out-of-school activities

The inspection team agrees with the positive sentiments expressed by parents. Whilst there is a perception by a small minority of parents that information about their children's progress and a closer working relationship with the school could be improved, the inspection found no evidence to support this. Indeed, the range and quality of information which is available for parents is judged to be very good. Where a pastoral need is identified, the school's communications with parents and support for pupils are excellent. There is a good range of activities outside lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards of attainment are well above average in the school overall, but especially high at the ages of 14 and 16.

1. In national tests in 2000, at the age of 14, pupils' results in English, mathematics and science were very high compared with the national average and in the top five per cent of all schools. Compared with similar schools, results were above average overall. They were above average in English, and close to the average in mathematics and science. Over the last five years, the upward trend in the pupils' results at the age of 14 has closely matched the rise nationally. Work seen during the inspection reflected the very high standards in the national tests. The highest attainers in a Year 9 English lesson on Macbeth', for example, reached outstanding levels of attainment. They showed deep knowledge and understanding of plot and characters. They made excellent use of quotation to justify their well-developed ideas. In religious education pupils demonstrate a good understanding of different religious groups, the Quakers for example. Not only do they know about the customs of Quakerism and the context in which it has evolved, but they also grasp the underlying religious principles.
2. In the GCSE examinations in 2000, results were very high compared with the national average and again in the top five per cent of schools. They were close to the average for grammar schools. The proportion of grades A*-C was significantly above the national average in every subject¹. Performance at GCSE has risen in line with the national trend. Pupils' best performance at GCSE, relative to their other subjects, was in German and mathematics. The proportion of grades A* in German and design and technology was far above the average, even for grammar schools. These very high levels of attainment were reflected in the work seen during the inspection. In German at the age of 16, pupils have an excellent command of advanced vocabulary and structures. In design and technology, some of the folders of work prepared for the GCSE examination in, for example, food technology, are of outstanding quality.
3. In the A-level examinations in 2000, the results were very high compared with the national average, in the top five per cent of all schools, and above average for similar schools. Over the last five years, there has been a substantial improvement in results at A level. The proportion of grades A and B attained by pupils is particularly high in art, English, German, home economics and further mathematics. In work seen during the inspection, standards of attainment in the sixth form were above average, even though the school takes in a much wider range of ability than at the other stages. Attainment in art, for example, is particularly high. Students explore a wide variety of ideas in a range of media. Their work is backed up by careful preparation and thought, all recorded in notebooks and portfolios of high quality.
4. Pupils from all backgrounds achieve well. At Key Stage 4, where teaching and pupils' learning, attitudes and behaviour reach an especially high standard, achievement is very good. Pupils identified as having special educational needs and those acquiring English as an additional language receive so much targeted support that they are scarcely at a disadvantage in reaching high levels of attainment. Although pupils with severe physical disability may not always reach the same levels of attainment as the able-bodied, nevertheless they achieve as well as they possibly can. For example, in an art lesson, a pupil with physical disability made good progress in line with the other

¹ The proportion of A* and A grades was close to the average for grammar schools

pupils, as a result of her own efforts, the support of her friends and considerable encouragement by the teacher.

5. There is no doubt about the factors which contribute to the high levels of attainment reached in many subjects. The attitudes to learning and the behaviour of pupils ensure that no time is wasted in the acquisition of new knowledge, skills and understanding. The very skilled teaching of the vast majority of teachers enables them to transfer their own mastery of the subjects to their pupils. The supportive and ordered environment created under the leadership of the headteacher and her management team and carried through by all staff guarantees that pupils generally achieve to their best possible level.

There is a high proportion of very good or excellent teaching and learning. Teachers' mastery of their subject is frequently outstanding and the majority of teachers are highly skilled at promoting very good learning by the pupils.

6. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in 95 per cent of lessons, at least good in 80 per cent, and in 33 per cent of lessons, teaching is very good or excellent. The quality of pupils' learning closely matches the quality of teaching. At Key Stage 4, the quality of teaching and learning is particularly high, with nothing less than good quality observed, and very good or excellent teaching and learning in half the lessons. Teachers' mastery of their subject is a special strength, and most teachers are able to convey knowledge and skills very clearly, so that pupils' learning is rapid and purposeful. In German, for example, the teacher has perfect mastery of her subject, yet is very aware of the difficulties encountered by pupils learning a foreign language. She explains the steps to good pronunciation very well, so that pupils acquire the tools to tackle even unknown words independently and accurately. In science, teachers have very good knowledge of their subjects, especially in their specialist areas. Generally, the explanations teachers give of new concepts and skills are concise, but remarkably clear and effective. In business studies in Year 10, for instance, the technical terms associated with marketing were conveyed with precision and clarity. By the end of the lesson, they were part of the pupils' own broad and advanced business vocabulary.
7. Most teachers plan their lessons very well, to include stimulating and challenging activities which enable pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Question and answer sessions probe understanding and encourage pupils to explore key concepts in greater depth. In one mathematics lesson, for example, the opening session was used very well to review previous work. Well-chosen examples deepened pupils' understanding of the concepts connected with graphical presentation. The teacher challenged even the highest-attaining pupils well by extensive discussion. In physical education in Year 9, the planning for the lesson was detailed, with many opportunities during the activities for pupils to evaluate their own progress. Excellent use was made of demonstration both by the teacher and by pupils. As a result, pupils made very rapid progress in acquiring knowledge and skills. In music in Year 10, the teacher used a wide range of resources to encourage pupils to understand the moods generated by music. If problems of understanding emerged, she had a wide range of alternative strategies to ensure that the knowledge and skills were fully conveyed to pupils.
8. Teachers' excellent management of pupils, often lightened with humour, creates very good relationships in the classroom, which enhance motivation and increase the pace of learning. There is often a very brisk pace to the lesson and a variety of activities which ensure that pupils work to their full potential. In one English lesson in which

Shakespeare's play Macbeth' was being studied, the teacher set very tight time targets for the completion of tasks and not a second was wasted. Group work encouraged listening skills and developed pupils' grasp of advanced concepts.

9. Teachers are very aware of the needs of pupils identified as having special educational needs or physical disability. In science, for example, additional work is available to cater for the special needs of pupils and is focused well on their individual targets for improvement. At the same time, pupils with special needs or physical disability are fully integrated into the lessons and take an active part, with extra support where necessary. The teaching of pupils acquiring English as an additional language is also good, aided by the teachers' clear explanations. The skills of literacy are taught well, with sustained expansion of key vocabulary and strong support for writing in most subjects.

The pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour both in and out of the classroom are very good, and often exemplary. They show consideration for others and high levels of sensitivity and maturity.

10. Nothing less than good behaviour was observed either around the school or in the classrooms. In seven out of ten lessons, behaviour was very good or excellent. Most pupils enter the school with well-established positive behaviour and attitudes, but these are developed further by the calm and supportive atmosphere they encounter, good teaching methods, and a very strong programme of education in social and moral values.
11. Pupils are unfailingly attentive and thoughtful in their approach to lessons. They often respond to activities with enthusiasm and tangible enjoyment, especially when the exercises are both stimulating and challenging. Pupils sustain concentration and persevere to the end of even the most difficult tasks, using their time very economically. Their pride in their work is particularly evident in the high standards of care applied to its completion and presentation. In an art lesson in Year 8, for example, pupils' demeanour was exemplary. They were fully engaged in activities, moving quickly and sensibly from one task to another. They were keen to answer questions and not afraid to ask their own questions in order to further their learning. They worked very well individually and were very co-operative in group work.
12. Pupils show respect for their teachers at all times. Their support for each other is outstanding. In physical education, for example, pupils evaluate each other's performance and offer support and advice in order to raise levels of achievement. They are never critical in an unkind way. In mathematics lessons, pupils listen well to each other and contribute to the lesson in a way which shows sensitivity to the feeling of others. Pupils from all backgrounds, and with a variety of needs, are treated with equal consideration, following the strong example set by staff. Behaviour around the school is consistent and courteous.

13. Pupils respond well to the many opportunities for independent learning. In A-level sociology, for example, students choose topics for study wisely and sensibly. Pupils are ready to make their own notes without prompting, and consult dictionaries and other reference books for information. The excellent organisation and good stock in the recently extended library underpin the opportunities for independent learning. In general, pupils from all backgrounds are very self-possessed, articulate and mature in their values. Attendance is very high and pupils are rarely absent without a good cause. The two pupils excluded for a short period last year had long-standing difficulties which have been greatly alleviated by the school's strong support.

The headteacher takes a very strong lead in creating an efficient and vibrant community in which all can fulfil their potential. She is supported by a talented senior management team and an experienced and committed governing body.

14. The headteacher takes a vigorous lead in developing the strengths of the school. Her commitment and hard work are outstanding. The headteacher and leadership team have very good educational vision and an intelligent understanding of their roles. They are particularly skilled in anticipating and preparing for national initiatives. For example, the school's system for performance management is regarded as a model of its kind: immense care has been taken in finding a suitable framework for the observation of teaching, and the objectives set for teachers are carefully monitored and refined. Senior staff carry out their functions with great sensitivity for the feelings and needs of others. Messages, sometimes hard ones, are delivered with considerable understanding and empathy, thus ensuring that there are high levels of efficiency, but not at the cost of caring and warmth. Communication skills are very good. Information for pupils is always clear and concise, carefully adapted to meet the needs of the audience. For example, a briefing by the deputy head in charge of the curriculum on the topic of the new A-level examination system was very carefully prepared and structured. It conveyed the information precisely and helpfully, so that the sixth formers were left in no doubt about the options open to them.
15. The senior staff work tirelessly to create a community in which relationships are very good and kindness prevails. They are utterly committed to equal opportunity and every member of the school - staff, pupils and governors - flourishes, both personally and in their function within the school.
16. The governing body now has a well-developed understanding of its role in monitoring the quality of education offered to pupils. Governors are particularly adept at seeing the whole picture. For example, they see how the appointments they make are important both in establishing the desired management structure and raising the quality of teaching. They have ensured that the curriculum has been enriched at all stages to suit better the needs of individual pupils. They have taken an active role in strategic planning and the creation of a school development plan. The latter now contains much-improved priorities for developing the quality of education over the longer term, and ensures that the school remains up-to-date with national initiatives.

The welfare of all pupils from all backgrounds is supported very effectively.

17. The school's procedures for ensuring that pupils benefit from a safe and caring environment are very good.
18. Staff are very approachable, so that pupils feel there are a number of adults to whom they can take any problems. The pastoral system is very strong. Support begins before the pupils enter the school. There is substantial contact with all the many feeder schools, on matters both pastoral and academic. The school gathers extensive information, which is then used to group pupils and establish a careful recording system. The way pupils settle into Year 7 is monitored very carefully, and the school listens very well to problems raised by parents and responds appropriately. Generally there is excellent communication with parents, and school and home work very well together to overcome difficulties as speedily and effectively as possible. Pupils themselves are very supportive of each other and there is no evidence of bullying.
19. The welfare of pupils from all backgrounds is promoted very well. Every effort is made to enable pupils with physical disability to have full access to the education on offer. The timetable is drafted with these particular needs in mind. Assistance is available, particularly in practical lessons where it is more necessary. The school is mindful of the special guidance needed on careers for those with disabilities. Pupils with other special educational needs are cared for very well. Many in this group suffer from dyslexia and the provision for them is carefully tailored to their requirements, for example by 'spelling surgeries'. Although some pupils learning English as an additional language enter the school with comparatively restricted use of English, their difficulties are carefully identified and the gap is closed very quickly. The needs of pupils from different faiths are catered for, with the provision of a quiet place for reflection and prayer.
20. The academic progress of pupils is monitored regularly and reported to parents very fully. The annual reports to parents includes a section in which pupils evaluate their own progress. Self-evaluation and target setting are, in general, particular strengths. The process is firmly based on reports and the results of testing. Pupils review their progress with staff on a regular basis and the targets are shared with parents. Parents are kept fully in touch with subsequent developments, information which they value very highly. The process of monitoring progress is particularly intensive in the run-up to the external examinations, and is an important factor in the high standards of attainment achieved.

The provision for social and moral education is of high quality.

21. There are very good opportunities for pupils to practise the skills of working in teams in religious education, sociology and English. The many activities in art and science, for example, which involve pupils in pair work, promote the skills of working collaboratively. Outside lessons, the school offers roles which increase pupils' sense of social responsibility: as prefects, for example, and in organising or assisting with the many clubs in the school. A large number of school visits, some of them residential, contribute to social education: among them a residential camp in Year 8, and the many exchanges and visits connected with the study of foreign languages. The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme encourages service to the community and leadership skills. The flourishing house system develops social responsibility and group cohesion. Social education is supported by the strong programme of personal and social education. A particular feature of the programme is the recurrent global perspective,

which develops in pupils a sense of responsibility, not just to the local and national community, but more widely to the global community. Pupils become very involved with issues in other countries. There is an important and effective link with an Indian school.

22. Personal and social education also supports the very good provision for moral education which exists in the school, in such topics as bullying or the abuse of drugs. The staff and senior girls set very good examples of how to treat other people. The Code of Conduct in the school is well known and observed by pupils, who are very aware of the difference between right and wrong behaviour, and the balance between rights and responsibilities. Moral principles are reinforced in assemblies and in various subjects in the curriculum. For example, sport plays a role in promoting principles of fair play and obeying the rules of the game. In business studies, pupils study business ethics. In modern languages at A level, the rights and wrongs of the exploitation of the environment or the treatment of immigrant workers are explored.

The school manages its finances very well.

23. Financial management and the efficient use of resources are very good. The income per pupil is below the average for similar schools, so that the school has to work very hard to fulfil its objectives within a relatively limited budget. The school is particularly skilled in obtaining grants from alternative sources. Spending is prioritised carefully and linked very closely to the targets for long-term development. The school works well within its budget, and the relatively large carry over of funding into the current financial year is earmarked for development of the buildings. These development targets are the subject of careful consultation with all the stakeholders in the school, including parents. The allocation of resources is compared with spending patterns in other schools, both locally and nationally. Funds are invested to achieve the best rate of return. The school obtains a full range of quotations for its purchases and service agreements and is constantly seeking better deals. Recent audit reports have congratulated the school on maintaining its very high standards of financial control. All the objectives arising from the audit of the previous year were achieved.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The highest attaining pupils do not achieve to their full potential in every subject.

24. There are generally high levels of attainment in the school and most pupils achieve well. However, in some subjects, in some years, the highest-attaining pupils do not perform as well as they should. More information on the attainment of pupils on entry is now gathered and much of it is used well to ensure that pupils make the best possible progress in Year 7. However, in French in Year 7 for example, because the groups contain pupils with a wide range of attainment, the level of content in the lessons is not always challenging enough, and the skills of extended writing are particularly underdeveloped. In Year 9 French, the same wide range of attainment is present, so that the highest attainers do not, for example, have the mastery of several different tenses that might be expected. This lack of challenge for the highest attainers in the years before GCSE is partly responsible for the lack of top grades in French in the A-level examinations. In mathematics, although standards of attainment are generally high, the more gifted pupils do not always achieve in written work the standards of which they are capable, and which are evident in their oral work. In science at the age of 16, few pupils obtain the highest grades in the GCSE dual science award. The lack of challenge in the very few unsatisfactory or barely satisfactory lessons and some underdeveloped teaching skills also lead to a small

amount of under-achievement , particularly among the highest attainers.

The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and the action taken as a result are not consistent at all levels of the school or across the subjects.

25. The headteacher and senior management team have undertaken the monitoring and evaluation of the teaching of a large number of the teaching staff. The headteacher also regularly samples the work of pupils. Since the establishment of the performance management system, the pace of monitoring and its intensity have accelerated, with one of the deputy heads developing the process, and herself conducting skilled and effective lesson observations, and refining the teachers' performance objectives. For many years, senior management has been strong in taking swift action to eliminate incompetence from the teaching force. However, the senior managers have not been able to monitor all the teaching on their own, and the middle managers vary in their willingness or capacity to assume this important part of their role. As a result, there are still very small pockets of unsatisfactory teaching, or teaching which is barely satisfactory, because it has failed to adapt to the pace, rigour and variety of modern teaching skills.

The new management structure which will increase the delegation of managerial responsibilities is not yet established fully.

26. The school is in the process of establishing a new management structure which will improve systems of consultation with staff and increase delegation. Lack of funding has long hampered the school in setting up this desirable structure and some appointees have yet to take up their posts or have done so only recently. The result has been that the senior management team has had to take a disproportionate role in shouldering the many and varied responsibilities of running the modern school. There is a tangible reluctance on the part of a few middle managers to assume their management roles in such areas as the monitoring of teaching, for example, or the dissemination of good teaching practice and the updating of skills among their departmental members. The training of the 'team leaders' for the performance management system is beginning to develop the understanding and skills necessary to ensure that the new management structure will work effectively in the future.

The teaching of number skills is not fully developed across the subjects.

27. The school has recently set up a working party on numeracy, which has done some very good work. It has completed an accurate audit of the use of mathematics across the curriculum and identified where there is a need for certain number skills to underpin the work in specific subjects. Very good guidance has been compiled on how to enhance numeracy in the different areas. However, the promotion of number skills is not consistent across all subjects. Even in mathematics, opportunities are lost to practise them, and in other subjects there is little evidence of the implementation of the guidance. This is not to play down, however, some good application of wider mathematics skills in, for example, science and design and technology.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) Review the grouping of the highest-attaining pupils and the teaching offered to them, to develop their full potential in all subjects. (Paragraph 24)
- (2) Ensure that the monitoring of the quality of teaching is consistent across all subjects and at all levels of the teaching staff, by providing further training and

- resources to implement the performance management system. (Paragraph 25)
- (3) Strengthen the system for delegating management responsibility by implementing the new organisational structure as speedily and effectively as possible, offering further support and training where necessary. (Paragraph 26)
 - (4) Develop and implement strategies for promoting the teaching of number skills across the subjects. (Paragraph 27)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	27	46	15	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	590	190
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	6	n/a

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2	n/a
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	20	2

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	49

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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	0	120

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	NA	NA	NA
	Girls	118	118	118
	Total	118	118	118
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	98 (100)	98 (99)	98 (97)
	National	63(63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	94 (96)	97 (97)	92 (76)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	NA	NA	NA
	Girls	120	120	119
	Total	120	120	119
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	99 (100)
	National	64(64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	97 (92)	98 (97)	82 (82)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	0	118	118

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	NA	NA	NA
	Girls	115	117	118
	Total	115	117	118
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	97 (95.5)	99 (97.3)	100 (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	63 (60.6)
	National	38.4 (38)

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	12	72	84

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	20.5	26.1	25.3 (22.8)	NA	4.0	4.0 (4.3)
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.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	2
Indian	46
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	2
White	674
Any other minority ethnic group	48

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani	1	
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	1	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	48.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	181

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	78.2
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25.1
Key Stage 4	21.4

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	1849545
Total expenditure	1802578
Expenditure per pupil	2317
Balance brought forward from previous year	89231
Balance carried forward to next year	136198

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	780
Number of questionnaires returned	334

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	47	47	3	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	56	40	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	44	2	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	58	11	3	2
The teaching is good.	41	54	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	45	20	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	46	40	7	4	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	22	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	24	50	18	5	3
The school is well led and managed.	48	42	4	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	42	4	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	43	14	2	7