

INSPECTION REPORT

THAMESMEAD SCHOOL

Shepperton

LEA area: Surrey

Unique reference number: 125310

Headteacher: Ms Vivienne Porritt

Reporting inspector: Anthony Shield
3569

Dates of inspection: 17 – 19 September 2001

Inspection number: 189600

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Manygate Lane Shepperton Middlesex
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ken Langlois
Date of previous inspection:	March 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Thamesmead School is a mixed comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 – 16, situated in Shepperton in the north-east of Surrey. The school is well balanced socially and academically, although most pupils come from socially advantaged homes. At just under four per cent, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. There are 961 pupils on roll, with about equal numbers of boys and girls. The school is over-subscribed and numbers on roll have been increasing. Attainment on entry overall is above average although the percentage of pupils with special educational needs is about average, with one hundred and seventy-five pupils on the register of special educational needs; this represents around 18 per cent of the school roll. Fifteen of these have Statements of Special Educational Need; this is also around average. The overwhelming majority of pupils are of white UK heritage, with relatively small numbers from other ethnic groups. Four pupils have English as an additional language, but none of these is at an early stage of acquisition.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school, outstanding in some aspects, in which effective teaching and high expectations produce well above average standards of work in most subjects. GCSE standards overall are well above average and pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. The headteacher, teachers and all other staff have created a climate of good relationships and behaviour in which pupils have the confidence to achieve well. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Well above average standards at the end of Key Stage 3 and in GCSE examinations, particularly in English, mathematics and science are promoted by good teaching which enables pupils of all prior attainments to make good progress.
- The very effective leadership of the headteacher and other senior staff has secured the full support of staff and is guiding an already successful school into a fully reflective and self-evaluating institution.
- The assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress are excellent and target setting is very well used to inform learning and motivate pupils.
- The very good personal development of pupils is strongly promoted by the very good programme for personal, social and health education, the very effective house and tutor system, good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and a very good range of well supported extra-curricular activities.
- The very positive ethos for learning which challenges pupils to achieve, take responsibility for their own learning and rewards all aspects of their achievements.

What could be improved

- The provision for information and communication technology across all subjects in Years 10 and 11

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1996. Since then it has made very strong improvements in all aspects. Both examination results at GCSE and test results at the end of Key Stage 3 have improved. Performance in English, mathematics and science has improved markedly. The quality of teaching has improved and the headteacher has introduced tighter management systems designed to

raise standards further. The school's targets for GCSE performance are both realistic and challenging. Most key issues from the previous inspection have been satisfactorily addressed although compliance with the requirements for collective worship remains outstanding, and the school has further to go in improving provision for information and communication technology in Years 10 and 11.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

In 2000, the school's Key Stage 3 test results in English, mathematics and science were well above average. Comparison with similar schools indicates that results were well above average in English and science and average in mathematics. The very good performance of boys in particular raises overall standards. Results in all three subjects are improving and high standards have been maintained in 2001. The trend in the school's average points score for all subjects has improved in line with the improving national trend.

The school's GCSE results of 67 per cent of pupils gaining five or more A* to C grades in 2000 were well above the national average. Comparison with similar schools suggests that achievement is average, the percentage achieving A* and A grades is improving, and high attaining pupils made well above average progress through Key Stage 4. Over ninety-nine per cent of pupils achieved five or more GCSE grades A* to G. This is very high and within the top five per cent of schools nationally. Average and low attaining pupils achieve particularly well. In relation to their prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, pupils of all prior attainment made well above average progress. The school maintained these high standards in 2001.

GCSE results in English, mathematics, science, French, drama and geography were all significantly above average. Pupils in 2000 met the targets set for them by the school. Those set for 2001 and beyond are both challenging and achievable.

In work seen, the standards of pupils' work in English, mathematics and science were well above average at the end of both key stages. Pupils' achievements are good, given their attainment on entry.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Most pupils are keen to learn and have very positive attitudes to lessons and school in general. These positive attitudes make a strong contribution to their

	progress.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils demonstrate thoughtful and sensitive behaviour both in and outside classrooms.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The quality of relationships at every level within the school community is a strength. Senior pupils act with maturity and take their responsibilities seriously.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance levels are broadly average and the rate of unauthorised absence is below average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	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.

The quality of teaching is good in both Key Stages 3 and 4, and has improved since the time of the previous inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed and nearly one in three lessons was very good or excellent. Teaching in English, mathematics and science is good in both key stages.

High expectations, good relationships, good pace of learning and effective classroom management characterise much of the good teaching. Planning is usually effective in meeting the needs of all pupils, and pupils with special educational needs in particular are well supported and make good progress. The teaching of both literacy and numeracy is good. The quality of marking is usually very good, and the effective use of targets ensures pupils know how to improve. In almost all cases, the quality of learning matches the quality of teaching, helped by pupils' positive attitudes in lessons. Pupils' knowledge of their own progress is particularly good, and most pupils confidently take responsibility for their own learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum has good breadth, is made to seem relevant and meets the needs of pupils well. There is a very good range of well-supported extra curricular activities, particularly in music and sport.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Links with parents and external agencies are strong and the quality of support in lessons is very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for pupils' personal development through the wide range of classroom and other activities is a strength. While spiritual development is satisfactory, the school makes good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Child protection and welfare procedures are very good, and the pastoral and academic support provided by tutors through the house system is very effective. Assessment systems are excellent and the school's comprehensive and thorough approach to target setting is a strength of its provision.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and senior managers are providing clear educational direction. They are well supported by managers and staff at all levels, and all staff are committed to maintain and improve standards. Robust management systems are now in place to ensure quality is assured.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are committed and hardworking and bring a wide range of experience and expertise to the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. This is a reflective school, constantly seeking ways of improving performance.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Financial planning is based on educational priorities and the principles of best value are applied whenever possible.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the school expects their child to work hard and achieve their best • That they can approach the school with problems easily • The school provides good teaching and that their child is making good progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No issues were identified to inspectors

Inspectors agree with parents' views. Parents are strongly supportive of the school and their contribution helps pupils make good progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Well above average standards at the end of Key Stage 3 and in GCSE examinations, particularly in English, mathematics and science are promoted by good teaching which enables pupils of all prior attainments to make good progress.

1. Attainment on entry in Year 7 is fully comprehensive and pupils of all abilities are present in the school. Standards in national tests in English, mathematics and science, taken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in their primary schools are above average overall. However, one hundred and seventy five pupils are on the register of special educational needs, a proportion which is broadly average. Of these, fifteen have Statements of Special Educational Need. The percentage of pupils with identified special educational needs is increasing and the current Year 7 has nearly one third of pupils on the register of special educational needs. Given the attainment of pupils on entry to the school, most pupils make good progress throughout the school and their achievements are good.
2. Results in national tests taken at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000, were well above average in English, mathematics and science. Comparison with schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals indicates that results were well above average in English and science and average in mathematics. Although both boys and girls do well, it is the very good performance of boys in particular which raises overall standards. Taking the average National Curriculum points figures of the last three years, the performance of boys in all three subjects exceeded the national average for their age group by the equivalent of 3.3 points. This is higher than the equivalent figure for girls. Results in all three subjects are improving and high standards have been maintained in 2001. The trend in the school's average points score for all subjects has improved in line with the improving national trend.
3. The percentage of pupils achieving five or more A* to C grades at GCSE in 2000 was 67 per cent, well above the national average of 47.4 per cent. Results have been consistently well above average in recent years. When compared with other schools with similar Key Stage 3 results in 1998, these very good GCSE results indicate that higher attaining pupils made well above average progress. The percentage of pupils achieving A and A* grades is also improving. Over ninety-nine per cent of pupils achieved five or more GCSE grades A* to G. This is very high and within the top five per cent of schools nationally. Average and below average pupils achieve particularly well. In relation to their prior attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, pupils of all prior attainment made well above average progress. The school maintained these high standards in 2001.
4. GCSE results in 2000 in English, mathematics, science, French, drama and geography were all significantly above average. In particular, English Language results in 2000 were outstanding, with 81.8 per cent of pupils achieving A* to C grades compared with 56.1 per cent nationally. In both mathematics and science the proportions of pupils achieving A* to C grades was significantly above average and the proportions achieving A* and A grades was also higher than the national average. These high standards were maintained in GCSE results in 2001.

5. The most significant factor in these high standards is the good quality of teaching, which has a strong focus on maximising achievement for pupils of all abilities. In addition the positive attitudes of most pupils to their learning, supported by the overall ethos for learning established in the school promotes good progress. The quality of teaching is good in both Key Stages 3 and 4, and has improved since the time of the previous inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection, around three quarters of teaching was judged to be good and nearly one in three lessons was judged very good or excellent.
6. Standards in English, mathematics and science in work seen was well above average at the end of both key stages. The teaching of these subjects is particularly effective, and the teaching of both literacy and numeracy is good. This ensures a solid foundation on which achievement in other subjects can be based. Teachers adopt a consistent approach to emphasising key technical words and ensure that these are prominently displayed in the lesson objectives. Language is adapted to ensure that pupils of all abilities are challenged, and the good use of questions ensures pupils explain their answers and think deeply about the issue. The drafting and re-drafting of material is a strength. In English, drafting books are well used to brain storm and to create spider diagrams of ideas, before work is drafted. Many subjects as well as English offer good opportunities for different kinds of writing, in particular religious education, geography and history. High standards of presentation and accuracy are expected, and spelling and grammatical mistakes are corrected. Pupils speak with confidence and listen attentively to others. In lessons, many are able to argue a case and explain a point of view convincingly. Pupils take care with the presentation of their work and write at length and in a range of contexts.
7. Numeracy skills are good and pupils are able to manipulate numbers and apply numerical and graphical skills in a variety of subject contexts. Some effective work was seen with pupils using graphs and formulae in science. Data handling using computer spreadsheet applications was not so confidently carried out by some Year 11 pupils.
8. It is the expectations that teachers have of what pupils can achieve that distinguishes the very best teaching. Where expectations are high, pupils are challenged, the pace of lessons is brisk and the pupils' learning is at least good. This takes place within a well-planned and well-ordered lesson that meets the needs of all pupils, taking account of their different starting points. For example in an outstanding Year 10 physical education lesson on how the main joints in the body control movement, the challenge was just at the right level and maintained throughout the lesson. The teacher's imaginative approach engaged the whole class, and the boys in particular responded to the competitive edge introduced into several of the activities. Learning objectives, which were shared with the pupils, clearly outlined the minimum targets which all were expected to achieve by the end of the lesson, but also what some pupils might additionally aspire to. Learning was effectively reinforced by practical relevance and the fast pace of learning was maintained throughout. Pupils responded to the teaching with committed concentration. At the end of the lesson, they were asked to evaluate their own progress against the lesson targets set. This they did conscientiously and honestly.
9. Another lesson observed in which high expectations led to pupils of all abilities achieving well was a Year 11 English lesson in which a well managed discussion of the moral issues behind the Thomas Hardy text led to a clear understanding of the issues. Because of the very well planned structure to the lesson, these lower attaining pupils were confident in what they were trying to achieve and expressed themselves with clarity. As with the physical education lesson, learning was made more relevant through drawing comparisons with modern day events and to the pupils themselves.

10. Characteristic of much of the teaching are the very good relationships established between staff and pupils. Many teachers have established trusting and productive relationships with their pupils. As a consequence good learning takes place in a friendly and secure atmosphere. Overall classroom management and discipline are also strengths of the teaching. In a Year 11 mathematics lesson observed with a lower attaining group, the respect with which teacher and pupils held each other was clearly evident. Although much of the teaching was to the whole class, the teacher's sensitive awareness and very good knowledge of individual learning needs resulted in effective learning. The lesson was characterised by clarity of purpose – the pupils knew exactly what they had to do – and a step-by-step approach in which learning was built on prior knowledge in a logical sequence. Good relationships secured high levels of motivation and concentration amongst all pupils, and this was another key factor in their very good progress. Gains in learning and understanding were tangible and all pupils responded very positively to the teacher's approach.
11. The quality of marking and the use of ongoing assessment are excellent. In most subjects marking is regular and supportive with detailed guidance on how to improve. Pupils' knowledge of their own progress is very good, and all are aware of their learning targets across a range of different subjects. This is a key factor in the good progress most pupils make overall. Teachers are very good at ensuring that progress is assessed at all stages. Where gaps in learning are identified, targets are written into the pupil's day book. Pupils reported that they find this process helpful in making them aware of how well they are doing, and as importantly what they should do to improve. Target setting is very well established at whole school level, and at subject and individual pupil level.
12. Planning is usually effective in meeting the needs of all pupils, and pupils with special educational needs in particular are well supported and make good progress. The small number of pupils with behavioural difficulties are usually very well managed in lessons. Sometimes this is with the support of support assistants who have a good awareness of their individual needs and are able to handle them effectively. In general because of the good quality relationships, teachers are able to deal with challenging behaviour well, and classroom management skills are of a high order. In just a few cases teachers struggle to engage the full attention of a small minority of pupils. However, this was never allowed to interfere significantly with learning.

The very effective leadership of the headteacher and other senior staff has secured the full support of staff and is guiding an already successful school into a fully reflective and self-evaluating institution

13. Leadership and management are very good. The school has maintained consistently high standards of achievement and teaching since the last inspection. In addition the school works hard to maintain its values, which are characterised by good relationships, a caring but challenging approach to learning and a sense of its responsibility to its local community. The school's confidence is demonstrated by its designation as a Training

School for teacher training students and its application for Performing Arts College status.

14. The headteacher provides very good leadership. She is clear about the direction of the school and her calm authority is widely respected. Having taken over an already successful school around one year before the present inspection, she has moved quickly to put more rigorous management systems in place and to guide the school into reviewing its practice and becoming a more self-evaluating institution. Her thoughtful and insightful approach to leadership has successfully gained the full support and co-operation of the staff. She is well supported by two deputy headteachers whose complementary skills provide the school with effective role models of good management.
15. The leadership team is a strong driving force for the school. They have a good understanding of standards and the quality of provision through their regular observation of teaching and learning in lessons. Team meetings provide a useful sounding board for ideas and a forum for raising and discussing ideas for development. The open approach to management and the concern shown to take all views into account is highly valued. Informal communication, is good, and all staff are committed to improvement and share the school's values and ideals. The school's capacity for further improvement is very good.
16. Management at other levels is also good and heads of department are providing effective leadership of their subject, working hard to secure improvements in teaching and learning, and giving a clear lead based on a careful evaluation of standards and provision. Line management meetings with senior staff are held regularly and are purposeful and useful opportunities to raise issues and to review the work of their department. It is planned that these meetings will in the future focus on progress towards targets identified in departmental action plans. Heads of House also meet regularly with a deputy headteacher. The more structured approach to management has been welcomed by staff, who feel that lines of communication have been improved and that their ideas and views are valued.
17. Observation of teaching and learning is now undertaken by members of the leadership team on a regular basis, and to an agreed common format. Feedback is given and any action points taken forward through the teacher's own professional development programme. The system has as yet had insufficient time to prove its value in terms of impact on the quality of teaching, and not all heads of department have observed lessons within their own teams. However early indications are that the process has been valued by staff who have participated. Inspectors endorse the leadership team's view that the process will be an important tool in raising quality and providing models of best practice.

18. Increasingly this is a reflective and self-evaluating school in which all members of the school community are involved in monitoring and reviewing practice and seeking ways to improve and sustain high standards. The school improvement plan has been written to a new format this year and provides a good framework for development over the next three years. It is securely based on an audit of current provision and priorities identified are appropriate. Subject action plans are drawn up in the light of the whole school plan.
19. Governors are committed and hard working. They bring a good range of experience and professional expertise to the school's governance. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through their detailed and comprehensive discussion of the school's work in committee and full governors' meetings. Governors are increasingly confident in their ability to challenge the senior management, who encourage a questioning approach. The chair of governors attends leadership team meetings on occasions and receives minutes of all other meetings. Statutory requirements are met, except with regard to the provision of a daily act of collective worship which remains very difficult to achieve given the limited accommodation.
20. The school's budget is prudently managed, and the school seeks best value wherever possible in its spending decisions. Governors have a good overview of the budget and are kept regularly updated with monitoring statements. Budget planning is carried out with the school's educational priorities in mind.

The assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress are excellent and target setting is very well used to inform learning and motivate pupils

21. The school's excellent assessment system and its associated use of targets are key factors in the school's improving standards. Each pupil is aware of their current attainment level as measured against National Curriculum criteria. This is recorded for each subject in the pupils' own daybook. In addition, every pupil knows the target grades they are aiming for at the end of either Key Stage 3 or 4. Each pupil has ongoing learning targets set to ensure that they achieve the challenging target grades set. Subject teachers sometimes ask pupils to record gaps in their knowledge in their day books as a reminder of what they must learn. Daybooks are monitored by the pupil's tutor at least weekly to ensure targets are being met. Tutors, who know their tutees well, are fully responsible for the academic as well as the pastoral development of their pupils.
22. Academic mentoring days are set aside to review targets and overall progress of each pupil. These alongside parent consultation evenings provide excellent opportunities for pupils and their tutors to monitor progress, to identify any potential concerns and where appropriate re-negotiate targets.
23. The system has evolved over a number of years and is highly regarded by both staff and pupils. Pupils themselves are fully aware of their targets and of the progress they are making towards meeting or exceeding them. As importantly most know how to improve in order to reach their targets; what it is that they need to know, be able to do or understand, to achieve the next step. This gives them the confidence to achieve and empowers them to take responsibility for their own learning. All pupils spoken to during the inspection reported that they valued the process and that it gave them a strong incentive to do well.

24. Annual progress reports are detailed and thorough. They analyse progress against targets and provide a thoughtful and helpful audit of progress in each subject. A strong emphasis is placed on commenting on progress and on the targets for continued progress, reflecting the school's concern to ensure all pupils achieve their potential. Pupils themselves write a personal statement which in many cases demonstrates a well-developed awareness of their own progress. Parents indicated that annual reports are meaningful and well-written and are overall very helpful. They also find the consultation evenings both informative and useful. They particularly valued the fact that their child is also present and that information on progress is shared. Over eighty per cent of parents are confident that they know how well their child is doing.

The very good personal development of pupils is strongly promoted by the very good programme for personal, social and health education, the effective house and tutor system, good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and a very good range of well supported extra-curricular activities.

25. The school's very effective pastoral system is based on a house system and tutor groups in which pupils of mixed ages remain with the same tutor throughout their school career. The family ethos which this engenders is an important factor in the overall school atmosphere of good relationships and of caring for one another.
26. Pupils' personal development is very good, and most senior pupils are mature and sensible young people. Through frequent reminders of the shared expectations of the school, and the lead set by staff generally, the great majority of pupils bring responsible and caring attitudes to their work and the whole school community. They co-operate well and enjoy teamwork. When opportunities for responsibility are offered within school, such as being a tutor group representative, house captain or prefect, pupils take their duties seriously and reliably. Prefects play an important part in the day-to-day running of the school, particularly at break and lunchtimes, and carry out these duties conscientiously and responsibly.
27. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Staff co-operate very well together. Tutors often have very good levels of rapport with pupils, and pupils often relate very well to particular teachers. Pupils are very much at ease with one another. Overall there is tolerance of other people's differences, and pupils are encouraged to be aware of the impact of their actions, although a few examples of less sensitive behaviour were witnessed by inspectors.
28. Tutors have good opportunities to work with their tutees during tutor periods on most mornings. This time is often effectively used not just to read out administrative notices but to check daybooks and monitor progress targets. Many effectively use the 'Quote of the Week' as a point of reflection to focus pupils' thoughts on a particular theme. However, not all tutors use this time to maximum effect and valuable time is sometimes not used purposefully. Pupils attend one House assembly each week and occasional year group assemblies. These are well planned and structured, and provide an orderly and thought provoking start to the day.
29. The programme for personal, social and health education is imaginatively planned within different subjects who each make specific contributions. For example, food technology contributes to learning on diet and health eating, religious education to moral issues such as sex outside marriage, and mathematics to issues such as money management. In addition occasional days are devoted to specific topics such as drugs awareness. The programme is carefully managed and co-ordinated. Pupils appreciate the fact that teachers make the topics relevant and the effectiveness of this course is making a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.

30. Overall the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Spiritual provision, a key issue at the time of the last inspection, is now satisfactory. All pupils now follow a short GCSE course in religious education in Key Stage 4, and there are identified opportunities for spiritual development in a number of subjects. For example a very good Year 10 history lesson on World War One prompted pupils to reflect on the horrors of warfare through effective use of photographs, cartoons, telegrams and poetry. Discussion during a Year 11 English lesson on a Shakespearean sonnet encouraged pupils to reflect on the meaning of the text through relating it to their own experiences. Moral issues are also raised in a number of different subjects, and a moral dimension underpins much of the school's work. A Year 11 drama lesson contributed effectively to both social and moral education through asking pupils to empathise with homeless people. In an excellent Year 10 geography lesson pupils reflected on the morality of inequalities of wealth across the world.
31. Pupils have very good opportunities to participate in music and drama activities which help promote their cultural development. The very wide range of extra curricular activities, particularly in music and sport and including trips and visits abroad also make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.

The very positive ethos for learning which challenges pupils to achieve, take responsibility for their own learning and rewards all aspects of their achievements.

32. The school's motto 'Only Our Best' underpins the school's work and the attitudes of pupils. The school's positive working ethos, in which learning is at the heart of the school's work, is immediately apparent. Pupils move purposefully to lessons and attitudes in class indicate that most pupils are keen to do well. As a consequence they work hard, and learn at a good pace. Pupils' co-operative skills are very good. In a Year 10 drama lesson observed, pupils worked together in groups purposefully, valuing each other's ideas and building on them. Many demonstrated considerable responsibility and independence in their learning. The teacher had to intervene only occasionally to prompt ideas or adjust the direction of the learning. This was managed very effectively and encouraged the pupils to solve problems themselves, and not to rely on the teacher. In observing each other's work, pupils are sensitive and constructive.
33. Key to the pupils' good learning skills are the comprehensive target setting procedures. All pupils know how well they are doing and as importantly know how to improve. This is considerably empowering and encourages pupils' to take responsibility themselves for their learning. Pupils bring mature attitudes to their learning. In discussion they are clear about what grade they should expect to achieve and whether they are on target to make it. They are confident in their evaluations of their progress and in understanding how they can improve.
34. Very good learning was observed in a Year 8 history lesson in which below average pupils were studying the causes of poverty in the sixteenth century. Firstly they were clear about the learning objective which was displayed on the board for all to see. Previous learning was checked through challenging questions from the teacher. As the lesson progressed, pupils increasingly took responsibility for finding out for themselves and recording their results. Whole class discussions ensured that the learning was consolidated and reinforced through analysis and review. Throughout the lesson, pupils were very keen to do the tasks set accurately, working effectively in pairs. They were all highly motivated and industrious and there was evident pride in their achievements by the end of the lesson. The lesson strongly encouraged the pupils to learn and think for themselves.
35. Good learning habits are established very early on. The two-day induction programme for Year 7 pupils about to start provides an effective introduction to the learning expectations of the school. Pupils reported that they valued the opportunity to visit the school and appreciate the fact that they are known to staff when they come in September. Many had

already attended the summer school during the holidays and were made aware of the high expectations of application and work rate required.

36. Tutors monitor each pupil's progress carefully. Targets met are rewarded with merits and many younger pupils respond positively to these rewards. It is clear from discussion with pupils that as they move through the school progress in meeting targets is reward in itself.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The provision for information and communication technology across all subjects in Years 10 and 11

37. Since the last inspection, when the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) was a key issue, much has been done. Standards have improved, particularly at the end of Key Stage 3, and discrete lessons in Years 7 to 9 are providing pupils with a sound basis for using and applying computer applications in other subjects. Central facilities have improved and now provide a good resource for all pupils. The school has had network cabling installed, and Internet facilities have been established throughout the school. In addition, each department has carried out an audit of provision and subjects are now clear where they are able to teach particular aspects of the ICT curriculum.
38. However, the school still suffers from an under-investment in ICT facilities. Not all subjects use ICT as an everyday tool within their teaching. Pupils' exercise books show little or no use of ICT to support learning, except for those who undertake work on their own computer at home. This is particularly marked in Years 10 and 11. The designated ICT rooms are poorly designed with inadequate ventilation. Many of the computer monitors based in departments are old and unsatisfactory.
39. During Key Stage 4, pupils experience around four hours of ICT teaching on a withdrawal basis. The planned curriculum is unsatisfactory, inappropriate and does not give pupils the necessary skills to use computer applications confidently in their work. Although the pupils take part willingly, behave very well and are able to complete the tasks set in lessons, what they learn is outside of the National Curriculum. The time available for this work is inadequate but the planned curriculum does not meet pupils' needs.
40. The school is aware of these issues and the school improvement plan goes some way to address the issues raised.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

41. In order to improve and maintain standards and the quality of provision further, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

seek to improve the provision for information and communication technology, particularly in Years 10 and 11 by (paragraphs 37-39):

- improving the resources and facilities, particularly those in departments;
- redesigning the ICT curriculum to ensure that all pupils have sufficient access to computers in all subjects and that the programme supports their learning in other subjects;
- ensuring that the ICT opportunities and requirements identified in the National Curriculum are fully implemented.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	10	17	9	0	0	0
Percentage	5.3	26.3	44.7	23.7	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	961
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	36

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	15
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	213

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.5
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	107	74	181

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	94	92	94
	Girls	69	57	57
	Total	163	149	151
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	90 (75)	82 (79)	83 (80)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	52 (44)	57 (55)	58 (47)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	75	98	96
	Girls	63	58	66
	Total	138	156	162
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	76 (73)	86 (75)	90 (85)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	41 (36)	59 (49)	55 (53)
	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 (Year 11)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	2000	76	90	166

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	49	77	77
	Girls	63	88	88
	Total	112	165	165
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	67 (64)	99 (97)	99 (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	46
	National	38.4

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	919
Any other minority ethnic group	9

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	50	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	52.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.7

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	357

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	73.5
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Average teaching group size: Y Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25.3
Key Stage 4	22.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	2408183
Total expenditure	2382687
Expenditure per pupil	2548
Balance brought forward from previous year	1860
Balance carried forward to next year	27356

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	22.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	21.2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	960
Number of questionnaires returned	243

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	51	7	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	42	51	2	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	60	6	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	56	11	2	6
The teaching is good.	39	55	1	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	51	9	1	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	37	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	31	1	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	29	56	11	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	41	51	1	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	48	2	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	49	7	0	13