

INSPECTION REPORT

CHAILEY SCHOOL

Mill Lane
South Chailey
Lewes
BN8 4PU

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114594

Headteacher: Mrs Vivian Howell

Reporting inspector: Dr Vivien Johnston
8402

Dates of inspection: 8th – 10th May 2001

Inspection number: 189972

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:	Community
Age range of students:	11 to 16
Gender of students:	Mixed
School address:	Mill Lane South Chailey Lewes East Sussex
Postcode:	BN8 4PU
Telephone number:	01273 890 407
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Clive Stillman
Date of previous inspection:	September 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Chailey School is a community comprehensive school situated in a rural area north of Lewes. Its 642 students come from a wide area of rural and urban housing, and a wide range of backgrounds. The overall profile of students' backgrounds is broadly average, although the proportion of students known to be entitled to free school meals is below the national average. The school has roughly equal numbers of boys and girls aged from 11 to 16, and is smaller than most other secondary schools. It is popular and so is over-subscribed. It is due to expand in September 2001; building works were taking place at the time of the inspection. Almost all the students are white. A very low proportion of students speaks English as an additional language, one of whom needs additional help with language. The proportion of students identified as having special educational needs (21 per cent) is average compared to other schools nationally. Eighteen students have statements of special need. Mostly, the needs relate to learning difficulties. The overall standard attained by students on entry to the school in Year 7 is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school which has some excellent features. Its students achieve very well as, overall, standards are well above average by the end of Year 11. GCSE results are also well above average. The quality of education provided by the school is very good. In particular, consistently effective teaching enables students of all ages to progress well in all areas of the curriculum. The school has a strong ethos that values individuals' contributions and successes, and fosters a high level of commitment from staff and students. The governors, headteacher and other staff with responsibilities provide excellent leadership and management, characterised by a constructive response to change. The school's costs per student are broadly average. Overall, the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Students are very successful academically, both in tests and examinations and in the standard of their work in lessons.
- The teaching is very good – staff have high expectations of students, and pay much attention to developing their understanding.
- Students enjoy school, try hard, behave well and show a strong sense of responsibility.
- The school has a very strong community ethos, within which students' individual needs are identified and met very successfully.
- The school is led and managed highly effectively.

What could be improved

No areas of the school's work need significant improvement. The only minor issue identified by the inspection was the need to provide a daily act of collective worship.

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 September 1996. Its improvement is very good, both in maintaining and improving on the strengths identified by the last inspection and in remedying almost all the weaknesses. However, an act of collective worship is still not provided every day. The provision for students with special educational needs and the use of information and communications technology (ICT) in other subjects at Key Stage 3 are now strengths. Areas that were identified as strengths by the last inspection, and which have been further developed, include the standards students attain and their test and examination results, the quality of teaching, and students' behaviour and learning. Teachers now make very effective use of information on how well students are doing, for setting targets and monitoring their progress. Staff are committed to the system of self-evaluation that has been developed, which involves rigorous reviews of the school's effectiveness and purposeful action being taken on the basis of the information gathered. Consequently, the school has an excellent capacity for further improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 year olds based on average total point scores in GCSE examinations.

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

The school's results at GCSE have risen at a faster rate than the national trend, especially in the proportion of students gaining at least five grades A* to C or A* to G. Compared to similar schools, the results in 2000 were very high as they were in the top five per cent. Overall, girls' results were also very high, and boys' results were well above average. Higher-attaining students did particularly well, as is shown by the proportion of students gaining the top grades (A* and A) in many subjects.

Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have also improved over the last five years, at a rate similar to the national trend. Overall, the results were well above average in 2000, compared both to all schools nationally and to similar schools, and boys did particularly well. The English and science results were better than those for mathematics. Compared to similar schools, the English results were very high, and the mathematics and science results were well above average. The school exceeded its targets for results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 and GCSE in 2000.

In relation to their attainment on entry in Year 7, students' achievement is very good. Taking all subjects into account, standards are above average at the end of Year 9, and well above average at the end of Year 11. Students are articulate, and show good levels of understanding in discussing their work in all subjects. Their written work is thorough, detailed and well presented, often with very good use of ICT to present their findings.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Students enjoy school, and are keen to do well. Many take part in extra-curricular sports activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good, in lessons and at other times of the day. Students cope with the difficulties caused by the building works with calm affability. The proportion of temporary exclusions is below the national average.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Students develop a strong sense of responsibility for themselves, others and the school. Relationships show mutual respect. Students are supportive of each other, and are appreciative of others' successes.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Both attendance and unauthorised absence figures are close to the national averages. A few students attend infrequently, whereas the others' regular attendance and punctuality to lessons contribute to their academic success.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years
Lessons seen overall	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 proportions of good and very good teaching are higher than in many schools inspected. The teaching was satisfactory or better in all of the thirty lessons observed. It was good or better in ninety per cent of the lessons, and very good or, occasionally, excellent in forty-three per cent. Teachers have high expectations of students' effort and achievement, and place strong emphasis on developing students' understanding as well as their knowledge and skills. These strengths in teaching were consistent across all the subjects in which lessons were observed, including English, mathematics and science. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well.

Students' learning is also very good. Teachers adapt the work to meet the range of students' needs in their classes, and so are successful in making the activities appropriately challenging for all, including the high attainers and those with special educational needs. As a result, students of all ages and levels of attainment work confidently and independently, and try hard to do well. Students' skills in judging the quality of their work are a particular strength, and they learn well from both their mistakes and their successes.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum caters well for students' needs and interests. Students in Years 10 and 11 study a broad range of subjects for GCSE, with other options available as well. A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided, especially in sport.
Provision for students with special educational needs	Very good. Teachers work closely with skilled learning support assistants, to match the work and resources to students' needs.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Very good. The extra support provided is well matched to individual needs.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. The school offers many opportunities for students to develop confidence, responsible attitudes and a sense of community. Visitors and visits enhance the curriculum, extending students' horizons and giving them good opportunities for personal development.
How well the school cares for its students	Excellent. The school provides a very caring environment. The mentoring and target-setting systems make a particularly strong contribution to enabling students to achieve as well as possible. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme and careers education are also very successful. The arrangements for child protection are excellent. Staff are very good role models, and good behaviour is strongly promoted.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher's skill and vision in moving the school forward have empowered staff and encouraged a constructive response to change. Senior managers have also made a strong contribution to raising standards and improving the school's effectiveness.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. The governors are enthusiastic in their support of the school, and use their wide range of skills for the school's benefit. Governors have strong links with subject departments, and are very well-informed about what happens within the school. They work very effectively in partnership with the staff, to ensure the school's success.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The programme of rigorous and regular reviews of aspects of the school's work, including monitoring the quality of teaching, has contributed strongly to the school's improvement and the rise in standards.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The school deploys its staff very effectively, particularly in the way learning support assistants are attached to subject departments. The principles of best value are understood and applied well. The budget is managed carefully to get the best value for money. Staff and parents are consulted regularly, and the school sets itself challenging targets for improvement.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school, and make good progress. • Behaviour is good, and their children are helped to become mature and responsible. • The teaching is good, and the school has high expectations of its students. • The school is approachable and responds well to any questions or problems raised by parents. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No issues were raised by a significant number of parents.

The inspection team agrees with parents that the areas they have identified are strengths of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Students are very successful academically, both in tests and examinations and in the standard of their work in lessons.

1. The school is very successful in enabling students to do well in tests and examinations. Students' results at GCSE in Year 11 and in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have improved steadily, and are now much higher than at the time of the last inspection – when they were above average overall.

2. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 have improved at a rate similar to the national trend. As in 1999, the overall results were well above average in 2000. The English and science results were well above average, whereas the mathematics results were above average. There is no significant trend of difference in the results of boys and girls, although some variation from year to year. Taking all three subjects' results together, the boys did particularly well in 2000. Boys did better than girls in 1999 and 2000, especially in science. However, girls did better than boys in two of the three previous years. Compared with similar schools (those with a similar proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals), the school's results were well above average in mathematics and science. They were very high, in the top five per cent nationally, in English.

3. The school's GCSE results have risen at a faster rate than nationally for the last five years, especially in the proportion of students gaining at least five grades A* to C or A* to G. Both results were well above the national average in 2000, as they were the previous year. The results at one or more grade A* to G have consistently been above the national average, indicating that lower-attaining students and those with special educational needs have done well. Overall, girls' results were very high in 2000, and boys' results were well above average. In previous years, boys have sometimes done better than girls, and both have attained well above average results overall for the last three years.

4. A comparison of students' GCSE results with the grades predicted on the basis of their test results at the start of Year 7 shows that they did much better than expected. For example, 68% gained five or more A* to C grades, compared to the predicted 58%. The high-attaining students did particularly well as 26% gained one or more grade A* or A, compared to the predicted 15%. In several subjects, the percentage of A* and A grades was more than double that of schools nationally – these were English, science, art, French, German and physical education. In most of these subjects, the proportion of students entered for the examination was higher than nationally, indicating that the results were even more favourable than the figures suggest.

5. The school has also done well when its GCSE results are compared with those of similar schools – both those in which a similar proportion is known to be eligible for free school meals, and those in which the students' results were similar in the national tests at the end of Year 9 two years earlier. GCSE results in 2000 were very high on both comparisons.

6. The school exceeded almost all its formally-agreed targets for results in the national tests at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE in 2000. In the Year 9 tests, the targets were that 75% of the students would gain Level 5 or higher in English, 72% in mathematics and 68% in science. At GCSE, the targets were that 58% would gain five or more grades C or better, and 98% would gain at least one grade G or better. The results attained in 2000 were also higher than the agreed targets for 2001 and 2002. These targets took into account the varying proportion of students with special educational needs in each year group, and were based on the results of tests carried out by the school at the start of Year 7. The inspection evidence indicates that both sets of targets are very likely to be exceeded. Additional, more challenging targets have been set in the light of recent results and the information gathered from in-school reviews of the quality of teaching and learning in different subjects.

7. The overall attainment of students on entry to the school in Year 7 is average. In relation to this, the standard of work seen during the inspection showed that students achieve very well. Due to the time of year that the inspection took place, lessons involving Year 9 or Year 11 students were not observed. This was because the Year 9 students were taking the national tests in English, mathematics and science, and the Year 11 students were in the last week of revision prior to GCSE study leave and examinations. This prevented the inspection team from making overall evaluations of the standards attained within English, mathematics and science at the end of Years 9 and 11.

8. Nevertheless, the available evidence indicates that standards overall, across all subjects of the curriculum, are above average at the end of Year 9 and well above average at the end of Year 11. The evidence indicates that, at the end of Year 9, standards in English and science are higher than in mathematics, reflecting the difference between these subjects in the test results. By the end of Year 11, the evidence indicates that standards in most subjects are well above average, except in information and communication technology (ICT) and history. In ICT, this reflects a weakness in the provision for this subject that has now largely been dealt with. Displays of art work in the school entrance hall and the art rooms were of high quality, in a wide range of media. In modern foreign languages, students in Year 10 have made very rapid progress in learning German, and after only one year were using the past tense confidently and accurately.

9. A sample of students' written work in English, mathematics and science was scrutinised. The standard of this work was similar to the results in each subject. The Year 9 students have covered a good range of work in English, and have developed a strong individual 'voice' in their writing. Their creative writing is of a high standard as they use a wide vocabulary and a variety of stylistic devices confidently and accurately. Year 11 students write analytically about the literature they have studied, showing good understanding of wider issues as well as thorough knowledge of the texts.

10. In mathematics, students have covered a good quantity of work, including the successful use of ICT for some investigations. Year 11 students' work included interesting, extended topics such as on the relationship of graphs, which was linked to discovering a general mathematical rule relating to a real-life context (controlling the spread of rotten apples).

11. Students have also covered much work in science. It is organised and presented very well, with well-drawn diagrams and graphs. The work seen in the area of scientific investigation was particularly strong. Year 9 students' work had a good focus on prediction and evaluation, and Year 11 students had completed plenty of investigations into such topics as friction.

12. Students' standards and achievement in ICT are higher than reported by the last inspection, and the range and quality of students' use of ICT in other subjects is now a strength. Each subject area identifies an ICT-related topic in each of Years 7 to 9, and this enables students to apply and extend the skills they learn in ICT lessons. For example, in presenting projects in several subjects, students have imported photographs and other graphics to illustrate their work, and skilfully formatted the text in a variety of ways. The use of ICT in Years 10 and 11 has not been audited in the way that has been done for the earlier years. However, evidence gathered during the inspection showed a wide range of uses of ICT. For example, students' design and technology portfolios include work on a computer-aided design project, use of the Internet for researching information, use of a database to record responses to a questionnaire, and word processing of project reports. Work in graphics was of a particularly high quality. Other subjects in which ICT has been regularly and successfully used include English, mathematics, science, art and physical education.

The teaching is very good – staff have high expectations of students, and pay much attention to developing their understanding.

13. The evidence of the thirty lessons observed during the inspection, written work students had completed and the opinions they expressed in discussions all confirmed the parents' view that the teaching is a strength of the school. In all the lessons observed, both teaching and learning were satisfactory or better. In a high proportion, nearly half, they were very good or better. Almost all the lessons observed had many strengths as teachers consistently implemented the school's policies on teaching. This contributed to students' confidence in learning, for example because teachers used similar approaches to promote literacy and numeracy skills. In many lessons, teachers made a particular effort to ensure that the class understood new and subject-specialist vocabulary before they read it independently and used it in their own writing. Most subjects give students good guidance in how to structure their written answers. These strategies have made a good contribution to students' language development, and have helped them learn how to write well independently.

14. As parents said, teachers have high expectations of students' effort and achievement. This was illustrated by the pace of most lessons observed. They started promptly, and students were quickly involved in active learning, usually through an initial question-and-answer session that recapped previous learning and set the class thinking about something new. A key feature of the success of many lessons was that teachers placed strong emphasis on developing students' understanding as well as their knowledge and skills. For example, a Year 8 science class learning about the absorption of digested food were asked many questions to check their understanding of the process and of how to test for starch and sugar. The questions and practical activities were adapted well to the range of needs within the class – a writing 'frame' helped lower-attainers and those with special educational needs to cope with the written task – and so all found the work challenging. The teacher had planned for much work to be covered during the lesson. The students accomplished it successfully because they understood what to do and why, they worked within well-established classroom routines, and their progress was checked during the practical activity. The teacher's effectiveness was complemented by the help and teaching provided by a learning support assistant, who had the experience and confidence to reinforce and explain what the teacher had said when students with learning difficulties needed assistance.

15. Similar strengths in the demands teachers placed on students' learning were seen in many other lessons. In art, probing questions held Year 10 students' interest in considering a sense of place, and a series of short activities quickly improved their skills in sketching freely. In design and technology, a Year 10 class were challenged to be creative in designing and making desserts, and developed many ideas through their lively, focused discussions. In mathematics, the teacher made very good use of the blackboard when demonstrating the equivalence of simple fractions, decimals and percentages, enabling the Year 7 class to learn how to work out this type of problem. In music, a very effective sequence of activities enabled a Year 8 class to learn and play a rondo, and then to compare their performance to that played on a CD-ROM. The talents of several gifted students who learn musical instruments were used to the full in this lesson, for example in playing piano and keyboard accompaniments, enabling the teacher to ensure that the less confident students took a full part in playing and appreciating the music. In all these lessons, and many others, students' learning was underpinned by very good relationships among the class and with the teacher. Teachers gave ready praise for individual effort, interest and achievement, and students followed this role model when invited to contribute their evaluations of their own work and that of others. The classroom ethos was of success for all.

16. The strengths in teaching and learning were consistent across all the subjects in which lessons were observed, including English, mathematics and science. In English, Year 7 students responded enthusiastically to the teacher's questioning on similes and metaphors in a poem, and were led to new insights into the line structure of the poem. Very good use of timed writing tasks excited the class and led to high levels of application and effort towards

writing their own poems, informed by the feedback they were given by the teacher and learning support assistant. Instances of effective use of computers were seen, notably to demonstrate geometric patterns in the angles of quadrilaterals within circles during a Year 10 mathematics lesson. This enabled the class to assimilate the concepts quickly, and stimulated some to ask 'what if ...?' questions. Science lessons were characterised by a good focus on scientific thinking.

17. Students' learning is also very good. Students of all ages are willing and interested in learning. They respond very positively to their teachers' and learning support assistants' interest in and enthusiasm for their subjects, and work confidently and independently. Those with special educational needs usually took an active part in lessons, for example by volunteering ideas. Students' skills in judging the quality of their work are a particular strength, and they learn well from both their mistakes and their successes. For example, in a drama lesson, the Year 10 students' evaluations of their own and others' performances were reflective and insightful. The teacher made good use of opportunities to extend their perceptiveness, and so the students' evaluations were of a high standard.

Students enjoy school, try hard, behave well and show a strong sense of responsibility.

18. At the meeting before the inspection and in their responses to the questionnaire, parents said that their children like school and that relationships and behaviour are very good. Parents also feel that their children become confident and responsible, in response to the many opportunities provided by the school. The inspection team agrees that students respond very positively to what the school offers, both academically and in their personal development. They enjoy school, and are keen to do well. Participation rates in extra-curricular activities are high, particularly in sports.

19. Students have very positive attitudes towards learning and academic success. They are willing learners who contribute thoughtfully and do their best to tackle the work they are set. For example, homework is usually done well, and written work is completed properly. In almost all the lessons observed during the inspection, they listened attentively to their teacher and to each other, showing real interest in the topics studied. For example, Year 10 students participated keenly in a personal, social and health education lesson concerned with rights, and their discussion was perceptive and stimulating. Almost all students attend school regularly and punctually, and this contributes to their very good achievement. During the school day, they move purposefully between classrooms, and so lessons start on time. This also contributes to the students' academic success.

20. Behaviour is very good. The vast majority of students behave well in lessons and around the school. They show a relaxed and good-natured respect for each other. This was particularly noticeable in their movement around the school, as the building works often made route-ways narrow and difficult. The students coped with calm affability. Bullying is rare, and students are confident that any incidents will be dealt with firmly, quickly and sensitively.

21. The students follow the very good role models provided by the staff, and so courtesy, respect, care for others, and good manners are evident at every level in the school. This enhances students' learning, particularly through listening to and reflecting on others' contributions to discussion, and in evaluating the quality of their work. For example, Year 10 pupils evaluated their own and other groups' performances of a drama script, commenting on what each group had done well and giving insightful and constructive advice on how to improve.

22. Students respond very well to the very good range of responsibilities available to them. The prefect system provides excellent opportunities for students to gain confidence, self-awareness and consideration for others, and is highly successful. Parents commented on this at the meeting before the inspection, and students also spoke with appreciation of the way the

school enables them to assume real responsibilities. They willingly seek posts of responsibility, for example as prefects, and fulfil their duties efficiently, recognising the importance of their roles in the school community.

The school has a very strong community ethos, within which students' individual needs are identified and met very successfully.

23. Parents commented on the school's very strong community ethos, in which all are valued and respected as individuals. The inspection team agrees with parents that this is a major strength of the school. Students are expected to attain to their maximum potential, both academically and in their personal development.

24. The school provides a very caring environment. There is a well-structured pastoral system, based on year groups, and careful attention is paid to matching form tutors to their groups. Extra help is available for younger students who have difficulty in integrating. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme makes a very good contribution to students' personal development. It helps them to feel valued in order that they will learn well. The provision for careers education is also very well organised. Staff take care that placements on work experience are matched to students' needs and interests.

25. The mentoring arrangements are excellent, and valued by staff and students alike. This system reflects the school's commitment to meeting individual needs. All students are linked to a staff mentor, and have termly meetings during which they review their work and any problems they may be having. This is helping students to improve the standard of their work. School prefects' responsibilities are often linked to helping other, younger students. For example, Year 7 students said that they valued the help they were given by prefects during their first days in the school.

26. The school is very sensitive to individual needs. It has very good arrangements for the care and education of students with special educational needs. The working relationship between teachers and learning support assistants is especially close and effective. With the help of local authority support staff, it also provides very well for the language and personal support needed by any student who is at an early stage of learning English. A 'buddy' system helps those who enter the school after the usual entry time in Year 7 to settle in quickly. The arrangements for students to make a smooth transition from their primary schools into Year 7 are very good. A particularly strong feature is the attention paid to the few individuals who are identified as being vulnerable. This was introduced in September 2000, with the aim of helping these students to settle in well. Year 9 students with special educational needs were involved in the initial meeting arranged at the school, when they gave a presentation to the Year 6 children and their parents. This illustrates the attention the school pays to encouraging and enabling all its students to make a worthwhile contribution to the school community.

27. The curriculum has been improved since the last inspection in its capacity to meet the needs of all students, consistent with the school's strong emphasis on educational inclusion. The curriculum now provides well for students' interests and varying needs, giving students of all levels of attainment the opportunity to do well academically. In Years 7 to 9, students take drama and PSHE as well as all the required National Curriculum subjects. Most students in Year 9 have the opportunity to learn a second foreign language – Spanish or German – while those who are not likely to benefit from this are offered study and skills support lessons. Regular ICT-based work in other subjects enables students to apply and extend the skills they learn in ICT lessons. In Years 10 and 11, most students take eleven subjects at GCSE. They all study a core of subjects that includes English and English literature, mathematics and science, a short GCSE course in religious education, and PSHE. Students then opt for four other subjects, including a foreign language, from blocks of subjects that are clustered to ensure that students retain breadth in their studies. GNVQ courses have recently been introduced to provide further breadth, and less academic students can follow an option based

on the Youth Award Scheme with single science. The school plans to further broaden the vocational component in the curriculum, as suitable courses become available.

28. The arrangements for promoting students' personal development are very good. Students are strongly encouraged to develop confidence, responsible attitudes and a sense of community. Staff provide very good role models, and are quick to recognise and reward success in all areas of school life. The school rules are clear, and implemented consistently. Staff give students many opportunities to work co-operatively and independently in lessons, and expect them to show similar standards of responsible, considerate behaviour at all other times of the day. The prefect system is taken very seriously by staff and students. An especially strong feature of this system is that students are required to write applications for the various positions, setting out the personal qualities and experience that make them suitable for the positions they seek. Other opportunities that promote students' personal development include being a form representative, involvement in charity work, taking part in performances, and participating in inter-house matches.

29. The curriculum is enriched by a good extra-curricular programme which has particular strengths in sports, and includes music, study support and a variety of other activities. Additionally, visitors and visits enhance the curriculum, extending students' horizons and giving them good opportunities for personal development. A few parents expressed the view that the range of these opportunities is too narrow. The inspection team found that this is not normally the case, although shortly before the inspection some visits had had to be cancelled because of the foot and mouth outbreak, and some extra-curricular sports activities had been curtailed because of the building works.

30. The school has strengthened its links with parents. These links are now very effective, and contribute to the community ethos. The information given to parents enables them to support the school and their children's efforts towards meeting the targets they are set. Parents have very positive views about the school, and especially value its high expectations of their children. Parents feel that they can approach the school with queries or concerns, and that these are dealt with promptly and efficiently. Good arrangements are made to keep parents informed of their children's progress. Each term a progress report or student profile is sent to parents, and twice-yearly parents' evenings keep them fully informed and involved in their children's development. The parents of students with special educational needs are kept very well informed about how well their children are doing, through regular contacts and formal, annual reviews. A very recent innovation is enabling parents to find out more about what has been taught and the associated homework, through the school's web site. A regular and very lively newsletter, the Chailey News, provides good information. The parent-teacher association also makes a valuable contribution to the school, through their activities and support.

The school is led and managed highly effectively.

31. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. She has shown great skill and vision in moving the school forward to its current position. She has established a culture of open management. This has been highly effective in empowering staff with management responsibilities and in fostering a constructive response to change. Key strengths in her approach are an emphasis on evaluation, a willingness to delegate responsibility, an ability to recruit staff of high quality, and a capacity to anticipate and plan for change. She has an active presence in the school, including a teaching commitment, and commands the respect of the whole school community, parents and governors.

32. The senior management team and other staff with posts of responsibility fully share the headteacher's vision. They have made a strong contribution to raising standards and improving the school's effectiveness. They have responded very positively to initiatives such as improvement through self-evaluation, which has now become embedded in the school's way of working. Rigorous and regular reviews of subject departments and the monitoring of teaching are well established, and have contributed much to the steady improvement in

standards. A significant outcome of the monitoring and evaluation activities has been a general raising of awareness of what constitutes effective teaching. This has had a clear impact on the quality of education provided.

33. The provision for students with special educational needs is managed very well. The students' individual education plans are well written. Effective liaison between the special educational needs co-ordinator and class teachers means that they use the plans well to help them meet the students' needs. The school's policy of attaching learning support assistants to subject areas rather than to individual students only is particularly successful. It has enabled the support assistants to build up very good expertise in their subjects, and so they are well placed to advise teachers on the students' needs when necessary and to provide them with specialist help when they encounter learning difficulties. Each assistant has responsibility for named students as well, thus providing a well-planned network of support.

34. The governing body is a highly-skilled group which fulfils its commitments excellently. It works efficiently through its committee structure. Governors provide the school with valuable guidance and support. Their expertise has been very helpful in establishing the various improvement projects, notably the current building programme. Governors also play an active role in the school's improvement. For example, they are involved in the reviews of the departments they are linked to. This contributes both to the rigour of the process and to the governors' understanding of the school and how it works. They also review the headteacher's performance rigorously – which she appreciates. The high level of governors' commitment to and involvement in the school enables them to carry out their responsibilities from a fully informed position.

35. The school uses its resources very well. Administrative and other support staff are very efficient. The bursar manages the budget very efficiently, and works closely with the governors' finance committee to make the best strategic use of resources. Principles of best value are fully understood, and applied to all spending decisions. The budget has been managed carefully. Although it is in deficit, this is with the agreement of the local education authority and the school is on target to have a budget surplus within the agreed time. The deficit arose partly because the school had to commit itself heavily to the new buildings but wished to maintain features such as the high quality of its provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school has been quick to respond to opportunities to bid for supplementary funding – such as that which became available for refurbishing the science department and sports hall – and this has enabled many improvements to the learning environment to be made.

36. Following the last inspection, the school committed itself quickly and effectively to dealing with the points for action identified then. Its current improvement plan is very well structured and has identified appropriate targets for development. Target-setting for students and departments is firmly embedded in the school's organisational culture. Led by the headteacher and senior managers, the staff have a strong commitment to further improving the quality of education they provide. Consequently, the school is very well placed to maintain its many existing strengths and develop further.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

37. No major issues for improvement were identified by the inspection team. The only area in which the school's provision was found to be unsatisfactory was that a daily act of collective worship is not provided. This was also the case at the time of the last inspection. Assemblies are held twice a week, and on other days form tutors work with their students on a programme of activities designed to support their personal and academic development. Though the school identifies a thought for the day, this is insufficient to meet the statutory requirement for collective worship.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

38. No major issues are identified for the governors' action plan. However, the governors may wish to include the minor issue, the provision of a daily act of collective worship, within their action plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	36	47	10	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of students on the school's roll	642
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	47
Number of students with statement of special educational needs	18
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	134
Number of students with English as an additional language	2
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	41
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.5
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
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

Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	57	58	115

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	44	44	47
	Girls	55	44	39
	Total	99	88	86
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	86 (80)	77 (73)	75 (71)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	57 (46)	50 (42)	43 (24)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of students at NC level 5 and above	Boys	44	44	42
	Girls	51	47	38
	Total	95	91	80
Percentage of students at NC level 5 or above	School	83 (75)	79 (86)	70 (77)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of students at NC level 6 or above	School	33 (39)	49 (29)	30 (38)
	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	42	51	93

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of students achieving the standard specified	Boys	25	39	40
	Girls	38	51	51
	Total	63	90	91
Percentage of students achieving the standard specified	School	68 (60)	97 (98)	98 (98)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results	GCSE point score
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Average point score per student	School	50.8 (45.8)
	National	38.4 (38.0)

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

Ethnic background of students

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	632
Any other minority ethnic group	7

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	17	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	39
Number of students per qualified teacher	17 :1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	442

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77.7
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	23
Key Stage 4	19

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	1,518,546
Total expenditure	1,530,015
Expenditure per student	2,555
Balance brought forward from previous year	-12,511
Balance carried forward to next year	-23,980

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	642
Number of questionnaires returned	128

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	46	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	40	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	61	4	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	61	11	2	2
The teaching is good.	41	56	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	48	11	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	28	3	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	27	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	34	48	12	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	67	30	1	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	40	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	41	10	2	9