

INSPECTION REPORT

CRISPIN SCHOOL

Street

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123873

Mr Ian Thomson

Reporting inspector: Mr Keith Davitte
15029

Dates of inspection: 5 – 8 November 2001

Inspection number: 190029

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 16 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Street
Street

Postcode: BA16 OAD

Telephone number: 01458 442714

Fax number: 01458 447955

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs A Morrison

Date of previous inspection: October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
15029	Mr K Davitte	Registered inspector
12775	Ms J Goodchild	Lay inspector
13619	Mr B Meech	Team inspector
5241	Dr C Millband	Team inspector
3731	Mr W Robson	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Bench Marque Ltd
National Westminster Bank Chambers
Victoria Street
Burnham-on-Sea
Somerset
TA8 1AN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	11
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	21

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Crispin School is an 11-16 co-educational comprehensive school in Street in the local educational authority of Somerset. There are 1099 pupils on roll with 582 boys and 517 girls. The great majority of pupils are white. Only six pupils speak English as an additional language which is low and all are proficient in English. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs (15%) and with statements of special educational needs (1.9%) is broadly average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average (8%). Attainment on entry is average. The school is part of a community campus involving Strode College, Strode Theatre, Street Swimming Pool and Street Community Centre. Crispin has been awarded Technology College and Beacon School status. It is a designated Eco School and holds the Junior Sportsmark Award.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Crispin is a very good school. It is very effective in consistently achieving well above average GCSE results with pupils who entered the school with mainly average standards. Excellent leadership and management combined with mainly good teaching and a substantial proportion of very good teaching are key factors which make that possible. The interests of all pupils are very well served and there is a strong determination to build even further on this aspect of its work. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- GCSE results overall are consistently well above the national average and pupils make very good progress from their time of entry into the school.
- National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were well above average overall.
- Teaching is good overall and very good in a substantial proportion of lessons.
- Leadership by the headteacher and his two deputies is excellent.
- The range and quality of extra-curricular activities are excellent.
- The aims and values promoted by the school are fully reflected in pupils' personal development and relationships.

What could be improved

- Greater consistency over time in national test results taken at the end of Year 9 to match the improved results of 2001.
- Improving boys' results in French at GCSE.
- Implementing the school's plans to alter the length of lessons and eliminate 35 minute lessons.

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 October 1996. At the last inspection the school was judged to be good; it is now very good. The proportion of very good teaching has increased. Standards in national tests and GCSE results have improved. A review of the roles of senior managers has taken place and two new assistant heads are making a very good contribution. Assessment systems are much stronger. Extra staffing made available by Beacon School and Technology College status has helped to ease some of the pressures. Spiritual development is now an integral part of the school's carefully thought-out values. Information and communication technology (ICT) has been given a considerable boost by Technology College status. Ongoing monitoring of teaching and departmental reviews are now very well established. There is now a reliable system for recording afternoon attendance. Improvement since the

time of the last inspection has been good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations. (*calculated using grade A*=8, A=7, B=6, C=5, D=4, E=3, F=2, G=1*).

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

GCSE results have been well above average compared with all schools nationally in each of the last five years. Since the last inspection the trend in improvement has been above the national trend. Results have also been well above average compared with similar schools. These results represent very good achievement and progress by pupils who were of average attainment overall when they joined the school. Ambitious targets are met. Standards seen at the inspection show that pupils are on target to achieve similar GCSE results in 2002.

GCSE results in English, mathematics and science have been well above average in each of the last three years. In each of the last three years, results in German, geography and religious education, all with significant numbers of candidates, have been consistently over 20 per cent better than the national average at A*-C which indicates very good teaching. There are very few subjects which do not at least match the national average but in 2001, results in drama with only 15 entrants were well below the national average. Girls usually achieve above average results in French, compared with girls nationally, and were well above average in 2000, but boys do not achieve as well and, although above average in 2000, were below average compared with boys nationally in 2001. The gap between girls' and boys' results in French is wider than that nationally. Although results are influenced in particular by some of the more able boys opting for German rather than French this is still an area where improvement can be made. The quality of teaching is well capable of improving boys' results in French. Results in GNVQ vocational examinations which contribute to the overall GCSE points score for the school were very good in 2001.

Results in national tests at the end of Year 9 have been more variable than GCSE results over time but in 2001 were very good. The combined results of English, mathematics and science were well above average overall compared with all schools and similar schools nationally in 2001, representing very good achievement and progress. In individual subjects, results were well above average in mathematics and science compared with all schools and similar schools and above average in English. The challenge for the school is to at least maintain the standards achieved in the 2001 results. Most pupils write well but the school has to work hard to improve the literacy skills of some pupils particularly in Years 7 to 9. Good progress is being made in that respect as seen by improved national test results. Pupils make very good and rapid progress in ICT from Year 7 onwards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: pupils are proud of their school and involve themselves readily in activities. Nearly all have a very strong desire to succeed and are not embarrassed about doing so.
Behaviour, in and out of	Very good: almost all behave in an orderly and civilised manner. Low

classrooms	level disruptive behaviour of very small numbers of pupils is irritating in some lessons.
------------	---

Personal development and relationships	Very good: pupils take advantage of the many opportunities to exercise choice, to think, reason things out and take responsibility. Very good relationships are at the heart of much of what the school achieves.
Attendance	Very good: well above average and affected by pupils enjoying their school life.

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.

Teaching is good overall, very good in a substantial number of lessons and there are teachers in the school who are capable of excellence. Of the 63 lessons observed at the inspection nearly half were very good or better and nearly three-quarters of lessons were good or better. Teaching is very good in mathematics and science and good in English. In English and in most other departments there are also notable examples of very good teaching.

Consistent features in excellent and very good lessons seen at the inspection were the respect which pupils had for their teachers, the level of interest generated in well-paced lessons, the quality of teachers' questioning and challenging activities which stretched all pupils. Although there are some lessons where pace and lack of variety is an issue most lessons are well structured and move on quickly. Teachers generally cope well with the constraints of 35 minute lessons where they take place but there are times when it is too much of a rush to cover the lesson objectives. Pace in double lessons of 70 minutes is good but occasionally drops off at some stage. Large classes are very well managed. Many teachers have profited from the increased opportunities in the school to use ICT in their teaching. The whole school drive to improve pupils' literacy skills is having a very positive effect and numeracy skills too are well taught. The school caters well for the needs of all pupils but despite the successful drive to improve literacy skills there are still pupils who need much support. More effective and careful proofreading by pupils of what they have written could eliminate some errors.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good: extra-curricular activities are excellent with a high participation rate. The statutory requirement for all pupils to be taught religious education in Key Stage 4 is not met but all pupils will follow a short course in religious education from September 2002. A very good start has been made with GNVQ courses and the declared plans to expand this provision will extend the range of opportunities. The revision of schemes of work and resources in history are developing too slowly.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good: pupils are well integrated and have equal opportunities. The direction given by the special educational needs co-ordinator is a key factor in the success of the provision and the team which she leads.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good: moral, social and cultural development are excellent and opportunities to reflect on spiritual matters are sensitively interwoven into the curriculum. Music provision is geared to all interests without sacrificing standards and makes an excellent contribute to cultural provision. Trips and visits add another important dimension to pupils' social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good: pupils are given enormous support in and out of lessons. Pupils are happy and feel safe and secure. There is a clear structure in the school which imposes a discipline on pupils but at the same time gives them a freedom to express themselves. Assessment is being very well used to track progress and brilliantly so in mathematics, science and geography.

The school works very well with parents and communications and relationships are very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent: the headteacher makes a distinctive mark on the school. There is excellent leadership by the headteacher and his two deputies. Both assistant heads make a major contribution. Senior staff are very much in evidence around the school. This is valued by teachers and other staff who feel very well supported. Heads of department and heads of year make a key contribution but history is too isolated from the more dynamic developments elsewhere in the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good: a combination of long-established governors and more recent recruits has given a sharper edge to their deliberations. They have a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have the potential to be more involved in the evaluation of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good: most of the areas for improvement identified by inspectors are already being tackled through the school development plan. It is not a complacent school.
The strategic use of resources	Very good: Technology College funding helps and is well used to benefit the whole of the school. Principles of best value are very well applied in monitoring the budget and in keeping costs to a minimum.

The number of teachers is adequate but classes are large and the accommodation in many rooms is very tight in this popular and expanding school. Special room timetabling arrangements are made to ensure that disabled pupils, including wheelchair users, are not disadvantaged. The installation of a long awaited lift, which is imminent, is essential. Learning resources are now good.

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 liking school, making very good progress and being expected to work hard. • The quality of teaching. • A well led and managed school where an approachable headteacher makes his mark. • The very good behaviour. • They feel well informed on pupils' progress. • They feel comfortable in approaching the school with questions or a problem. • The interesting range of activities outside lessons. • The school helps pupils to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some 16 per cent of parents who responded to the pre-inspection survey were unhappy with the amount of work pupils had to do at home.

The degree of satisfaction which parents show is unusually high and nearly all feel extremely pleased to have their children educated at Crispin. Inspectors agree that pupils are very well served by the school. The main concern over homework is confined to parents of pupils in Years 8 and 9. Their concern relates mainly not to a lack of work set but the excessive amount of time which pupils spend on homework, particularly on some evenings. The amount of time which pupils should spend on homework needs to be reinforced more strongly in the lower school so that very keen pupils in particular do not overburden themselves. Parents are happy with the amount of homework set in Years 10 and 11 which is making a significant contribution to the very good results achieved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

GCSE results overall are consistently well above the national average and pupils make very good progress from their time of entry into the school.

1. GCSE results have been consistently well above average compared with all schools nationally. In each of the last five years including in 2001 the average points score per pupil and the percentage of pupils attaining 5 or more A*-C grades have been well above average. (*The average points score is calculated using A*=8, A=7, B=6, C=5, D=4, E=3, F=2, G=1*). Since the last inspection the trend in the average points score has been above the national trend. Results have also been well above average compared with similar schools nationally. These results represent very good achievement and progress by pupils who were of average attainment overall when they joined the school.
2. In the most recent GCSE examinations in 2001, 66 per cent of pupils attained 5 or more A*-C grades compared with the national average for all schools of 49.8 per cent. The average points score per pupil was 49.3 in 2001 compared with 39.1 nationally.
3. In individual subjects in 2001, the majority of subjects were well above the national average compared with all schools in the percentage of pupils attaining 5 or more A*-C grades. Results in English, mathematics and science have been well above average in each of the last three years. Evidence of the success of the increased drive to improve literacy skills is seen not only in the improved test results at the end of Year 9 but also in GCSE results in English language where both boys and girls achieve well above average results.
4. In addition, in each of the last three years, results in German, geography and religious education have been consistently over 20 per cent better than the national average at grades A*-C and music, with small numbers of entrants, has achieved a 100 per cent success rate. There are very few subjects which did not at least match the national average over the last three years but in 2001, results in drama, with only fifteen entrants, were well below the national average. Girls usually achieve above average results in French, compared with girls nationally, and were well above average in 2000. Boys do not achieve as well as girls in French.
5. A healthy feature of results has been the percentage of pupils attaining A grades. In 2001, for example, nearly all subjects attained above average results at grade A, including English language and mathematics, and results were well above average in science. The school does not do quite as well at A* grade but in 2001 mathematics was above average and science was well above average. Other subjects which entered significant numbers of pupils and attained above average results at grade A* in 2001 were geography, religious studies and physical education.
6. Results in GNVQ vocational examinations contribute to the overall GCSE points score for the school. In 2001, results were very good. Thirty pupils followed vocational courses. Twenty-three gained a GNVQ Intermediate award (equivalent to four GCSE grades A*-C) and five gained a GNVQ Foundation award (equivalent to four GCSE grades D-E).

National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were well above average overall.

7. In 2001, the school produced its best results in national tests for 14-year-olds at the end of Year 9. The combined results of English, mathematics and science were well above average overall compared with all schools nationally and similar schools. These results show that pupils who entered the school with mainly average standards made very good progress in their first three years at the school.
8. In individual subjects, results were well above average in mathematics and science compared with all schools and similar schools and above average in English.
9. Results in English, mathematics and science were all well above average in the percentage of pupils attaining the level expected of 14-year-olds (Level 5 or above). At Level 6 or above, results were well above average in mathematics and science and above average in English. At Level 7+, mathematics was above average and English and science were similar to the national average.
10. The well above average national test results at the end of Year 9 in 2001 are in line with the well above average results being consistently achieved in GCSE examinations in Year 11. There has been an extra focus on end of Year 9 tests which has paid dividends and which should serve as an even stronger base for pupils moving on to GCSE and other examinations.

Teaching is good overall and very good in a substantial proportion of lessons

11. Teaching is good overall and very good in a substantial number of lessons and there are teachers in the school who are capable of excellence. Of the 63 lessons observed at the inspection nearly half were very good or better and nearly three-quarters of lessons were good or better.
12. Excellent teaching was seen in five lessons at the inspection and a few other lessons came very close to that. In a challenging and fast moving lesson in personal, social and health education (PSHE), where relationships between teacher and taught were outstanding, pupils made excellent progress in their knowledge and understanding of the legal system. Pupils similarly made excellent progress in a Year 11 geography lesson on natural disasters, where the exceptional skills of the teacher, and in particular the quality of questioning, kept pupils of all abilities on their toes. There was a clear lesson plan but that was embellished by the teacher having a wonderful feel for the class, the way the lesson was progressing, and what should be done at any time to make things even sharper. In a Year 11 ICT lesson, a middle attaining group made outstanding progress in their first lesson on spreadsheets as a result of the teacher's very good use of technology, excellent use of questions and a mixture of group and individual work. The good liaison with the support teacher was a key factor in the success of the group work. A physical education lesson in netball with Year 7 pupils had everything. Teaching was confident and enthusiastic and pupils were expertly involved in assessing their progress. The lesson had much pace which was combined with much learning and an element of fun. A Year 8 class in music was inspired by the teacher's demonstration of guitar technique at the outset of a lesson, and pace, interest and high levels of motivation were sustained throughout.
13. Consistent features in excellent and very good lessons seen at the inspection were the respect which pupils had for their teachers' expertise, the level of interest which they generated in well-paced lessons, the quality of teachers' questioning and challenging

activities which stretched all pupils. A combination of these qualities was a feature of a lesson for Year 11 pupils studying for a GNVQ qualification in Leisure and Tourism. Excellent relationships were well used to motivate and drive pupils and reach the very high expectations of the teacher. Again particularly high expectations in a Year 11 science lesson combined with exceptionally thorough teaching consolidated pupils' understanding of atomic structure. The teacher teased out ideas from the pupils and encouraged them to think and apply their knowledge.

14. Other examples of very good use of questioning techniques were seen in a Year 11 class where an able group of pupils studying 'Lord of the Flies' was encouraged to share ideas and develop an understanding of a key theme in the novel. In another Year 11 English lesson, a lower attaining group of pupils, not naturally well-motivated, was helped to concentrate by a combination of the teacher's questioning and very good class management when analysing examples of writing in story books for children. A very good question and answer session at the beginning of a Year 10 mathematics lesson served to check on pupils' knowledge and understanding before proceeding with algebraic solutions of simultaneous equations. In the same subject Year 8 pupils responded particularly well to questions at the end of a lesson to reinforce very well what had been learned. In art and design, there was very good use of questions combined with stimulating tasks to make pupils think and bolster their confidence.
15. Some of the assessment work carried out is exceptional and is a major factor in the success achieved by pupils. Some of the best systems are in mathematics, science and geography where they are used meticulously to track pupils' progress. In geography there are some excellent worksheets. Year 9 pupils, for example, are set tasks such as producing a geographical newspaper article on a volcanic eruption with detailed guidelines on how they will be graded according to National Curriculum levels.
16. Although there are some lessons where there is lack of pace and variety, most lessons are well structured. A physical education lesson for pupils in Year 8 succeeded in reinforcing the essential aspects of fitness through competitive events. Theoretical aspects were dealt with thoroughly but swiftly with the right balance between theory and exercise. A very good lively practical session was also seen in an ICT lesson where Year 10 pupils produced a great deal of imaginative, individual work. In just a 35 minute lesson, Year 7 pupils in music succeeded in developing drum beat grids, practised them and performed competently to the whole class. A Year 9 group in French made very good progress in speaking in a lesson where good pace and a smooth transition between activities was ensured by the use of very well prepared materials, which included use of a computer resource, the white board, train tickets and recordings. Similar qualities were displayed in a religious education lesson in Year 11 where variety and pace led to very good progress in understanding ethical issues and the importance of recognising the diversity of the Islamic faith.
17. The high quality of the relationships between teachers and pupils is a significant feature of most lessons, including in the teaching of PSHE. A Year 10 lesson on drug awareness, for example, illustrated that clearly when pupils were able to relate well to the teacher and discuss matters openly.
18. The school is able to recruit teachers who are mostly teaching their own specialist subject and that shows to advantage. In addition, many teachers have profited from the increased opportunities in the school to use ICT in their teaching. In mathematics, for example, teachers use their additional expertise in ICT very well to illustrate mathematical concepts such as in a lesson in Year 9.

19. A number of very good lessons managed to combine subject specific tasks with opportunities to improve pupils' skills in literacy and number work. Geography is particularly strong in contributing to the development of pupils' numeracy skills. There is also some very good combined work between teachers and support assistants to improve basic skills and subject knowledge. In a Year 10 science lesson, for example, a support teacher ably helped several pupils to understand about the skin as a receptor for heat, pain and pressure.
20. Examples of excellent and very good teaching seen on a short inspection are only the tip of the iceberg. Completed work of pupils over time and the very good test and examination results are other indicators that very good quality teaching is taking place.

Leadership by the headteacher and his two deputies is excellent.

21. Without the excellent leadership qualities of the headteacher and his two deputies the school would not be so successful. They are the main catalysts for improving standards and implementing change. The headteacher and his two deputies set high standards for themselves and expect similar standards from others. They do not impose such expectations on others, unless necessary, preferring to take staff along with them as equal partners, and that approach works. There is much mutual respect between the headteacher and his two deputies and all staff of the school.
22. The headteacher and his deputies have credibility when monitoring lessons as all three are very good teachers and capable of excellence. The headteacher finds time to teach in a busy school of over 1000 pupils and that sends out an important message on priorities in the school.
23. The headteacher and his deputies do not cut themselves off from staff by getting bogged down with administrative work, but equally the latter is not neglected in a very smooth running school. They are out and about in the school mixing frequently with staff and pupils. They are ready to applaud staff and encourage where necessary. They work hard and successfully with less experienced teachers to ensure that they enjoy their work, feel valued, are supported and remain in the profession.
24. At the pre-inspection meeting parents praised the headteacher for the way he makes his mark on a school which is receptive to change. That assessment is accurate but, although receptive to change, the school does not run with something for the sake of it or because it might look good. Everything is done with the interests of pupils in mind. The acquisition of Technology College status was extremely well thought out, as seen by the quality of the original submission, and additional funding and improved technology facilities have benefited the whole school. Beacon School status is not an end in itself but a vehicle for improving the school further and in making an important contribution to other schools with which it is working in spreading good practice. Projects have embraced environmental education, many aspects of teaching and learning, raising standards of literacy and the role of the teaching assistant. In the future there will be an additional focus on assessment, working in conjunction with two other secondary schools and a primary school.
25. Being a designated 'Eco School' is seen as a springboard for further achievement and inspiration and reflects the strongly held principles of the school on environmental issues. The award is given to schools which encourage pupils to be actively involved in environmental projects. It is unusual to find a whole day allocated for staff development and training on this aspect of the school's work.

26. There is a clear set of values in the school which influence its ethos and direction and there are simple but effective principles operating in the daily running of the school. Behaviour is monitored carefully but there is much emphasis on taking measures to prevent poor behaviour happening in the first place. There is a strongly held belief, supported in practice, that teachers should be allowed to get on with their teaching and pupils allowed to learn without any unnecessary distractions. Teachers, nearly all pupils and parents like this feature of the school.
27. Leadership is far from complacent and priorities of the school development plan illustrate a school which seeks to move on and plug the gaps in areas where it has not yet fully achieved its objectives. The main focus is correctly on improving teaching and learning. In promoting further its very good policies and practices on inclusion an extra focus is planned on serving better the interests of some underachieving boys and gifted and talented pupils. The proposal to appoint a newly created post of head of drama from September 2002 should add additional depth to the curriculum. The plan to expand vocational provision further is very sound philosophy as the school realises that there are still some pupils in Years 10 and 11 whose needs are not being fully met by the present curriculum. Senior managers realise that in a comprehensive school of over 1000 pupils there are individuals who do not necessarily share the values of others. It therefore openly targets, in its development plans, a reduction in incidents of aggression alongside strategies and further staff training to make that possible. A very good feature of the leadership of the school is that nothing is 'swept under the carpet' even when overall behaviour is very good.
28. Senior management is keen on replicating a successful team spirit throughout the school and in departments. It is successful in achieving that but realises that it has not as yet managed to bring history on board to the same extent. Although improving, the revised schemes of work and accompanying resources in history are developing too slowly and the department is rather isolated from the more dynamic developments elsewhere in the school, including in other humanities subjects.
29. The recognition of the excellent qualities of the headteacher and his two deputies should not allow attention to be deflected from the contribution of other managers in the school, including the assistant heads, the extended senior management team and most middle managers. Their very good contribution in a busy and ambitious school is vital.

The range and quality of extra-curricular activities are excellent.

30. Extra-curricular activities are numerous, varied and of a high quality. They fulfil many functions, including broadening pupils' cultural and social experiences, extending pupils' skills and knowledge and providing extra support to pupils where required.
31. The programme is not static and changes depending on pupils' interests and staff availability. The programme is too extensive to mention all that goes on. In many schools, extra-curricular activities are dominated by sport but at Crispin, whilst sporting provision makes a significant contribution, it has to compete against many other activities on offer. These include an art club, a Christian Union club, a chess club, the ready access to computing facilities, an extensive music programme, an alternative energy workshop (the Green Room) and a Young Enterprise and a Duke of Edinburgh Award. At lunchtimes in particular, the school is a hive of activity. Computer rooms, for example, are packed. Arrangements are also made at lunchtimes for pupils in Years 10 and 11 to use the Street Youth Centre located on the same campus as the school and

the school pays for the supervision time of one of the youth workers involved. At various time during the year there are theatre visits and subject specific trips including residential. The geography department is a particular contributor through its annual field trip which is much appreciated by pupils.

32. Music activities are held in high regard, including by pupils, parents and governors. Evidence of that was seen in the quality of extra-curricular activities during the inspection week. Activities seen could only give a flavour of what is on offer over the whole year. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting described music provision as 'fantastic' and governors and pupils are equally proud of the standards achieved and the opportunities for all to participate. A wide range of tastes is catered for through orchestral and chamber music, recorder and jazz groups as well as through a school choir. The annual carol service at Wells Cathedral and other concerts are some of the highlights of the school year. There have been enormous efforts to put on major musical productions and, more recently, performances of 'Buddy' and 'Bugsy Malone'.
33. The range of fascinating projects regularly pursued in the Green Room and adjacent areas is something which marks out the school as being different from others. These are not fringe activities; they involve substantial numbers of pupils and their achievements are given a high profile in the school. Projects in the Green Room include solar water heating systems and the use of datalogging equipment to keep records of temperature and voltage generated by turbine and solar panels.
34. A very successful feature of extra-curricular activities is the additional support available to pupils outside normal lesson time. A 'breakfast club' targets those needing extra support in their work and a homework club fulfils similar objectives. Pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for with teachers and support assistants regularly available at lunchtimes. In the build up to GCSE examinations there are many extra support activities after school and some revision classes arranged in the holidays.
35. Technology College status has provided a boost to extra-curricular activities as a result of additional funding available, and additional ICT facilities have opened up increased opportunities for parents too. A particularly interesting venture is the free parent and pupil basic ICT course run as a ten-week evening class. Such classes are regularly full. Amongst many other examples, an advanced website design course for pupils after school has also been made possible by the enormously improved ICT facilities.
36. The school is an active partner in the Strode and Crispin Community Campus. Community education staff work together using the facilities of both the school and Strode College in contributing to a wide range of educational training and recreational activities for people of all ages.

The aims and values promoted by the school are fully reflected in pupils' personal development and relationships.

37. The school places much emphasis on enabling pupils to reach their full potential in national tests and examinations but it does much more than that. It has a set of agreed values which are carefully thought out, prominently declared and which continuously influence what goes on in the school.
38. The school encourages pupils to have a positive view of themselves and for most that is successfully achieved. As a result nearly all pupils enjoy coming to school and this

contributes to the well above average attendance rate.

39. By recognising and rewarding the progress which pupils make in relation to their earlier attainment the achievement of all is recognised and not just that of higher attainers. Pupils take a pride in doing well and readily recognise the achievements of others. It is not a school where pupils feel embarrassed about achieving well or in recognising the achievements of others. The 'achievers of the week' board, displayed prominently in the school, is an accepted part of the school. Parents, including parents of pupils with special educational needs, appreciate the way in which the school contributes to pupils' personal development and builds up their self-confidence. The school realises that children achieve more when parents and the school work together.
40. The school sees itself as having major responsibilities not only in equipping pupils with the skills to cope with their present education but also to develop skills which will serve them well in the future both as students and responsible citizens. The PSHE programme contributes very effectively to that aim. The involvement of large numbers of pupils in extra-curricular activities also encourages pupils to develop a wider range of interests in making them more rounded citizens.
41. The fact that pupils are made to feel that their views matter is also an important influence on pupils' personal development and relationships. They are consulted through the every effective school council where they manage their affairs efficiently. They have been consulted, for example, on the plans to change the structure of the school day in moving from single 35 minute lessons, or a double lesson of 70 minutes, to standard lessons of one hour. They learn how to cope with the frustration of dealing with a small number of pupils who spoil things for others and occasionally resort to vandalism in toilet areas and see it as their responsibility to find a solution. They make decisions on raising money to help deprived children in Kenya. Some of the older representatives, observed in a meeting of the school council during the inspection, had the characteristics of young business people as they conducted their affairs. The school has experimented with pupil questionnaires, and a survey of the views of Year 11 pupils after they had left school pinpointed a number of issues for the school to think about, including the effectiveness of the lunchtime detention policy.
42. Some former pupils returning to the school during the week of the inspection were asked to relate their enduring memories of the school. The relationships in the school and the support of teachers were typical responses and they also felt they had left the school with the necessary skills and attitudes to cope effectively with the next stage of their education. Such an outcome is very important to the school in its scale of values.
43. The sensitivities of relationships and feelings are well explored by the school and permeate much of what it achieves. Pupils are expected to treat all people with kindness and respect and nearly always do so. They are taught to consider the plight of those less fortunate than themselves but equally the importance of doing something about it. Charitable work features strongly at home and abroad including Christmas hampers for senior citizens locally and in raising money for disadvantaged children in economically poorer countries. In the past pupils have contributed readily to a 'shoebox' appeal, initiated by the Christian Union club, for children who live on the streets of Moscow. The link with a school in Kenya has grown in strength with sums of money being raised currently to improve educational facilities at Masana School. That project is given extra prominence in the school through displays explaining what needs to be done and of what is being achieved.
44. Another very good example of the way in which pupils help others is in the pupil

lunchtime service 'Oi listen 'ear' run by Year 11 pupils for pupils in Years 7 and 8 who like a safe haven during lunchtimes and require advice and support. Senior pupils also offer advice and help with bullying problems.

45. One important feature which distinguishes Crispin from most other schools as a designated Eco School is the degree of its commitment in teaching pupils to think about environmental issues, alternative energies and sustainable development. This has an important influence on pupils' personal development. A very good example of pupils being able to offer their views and influence events was seen in a lunchtime meeting of the Green Committee involving 19 pupils and five staff. All year groups were represented in discussing progress on a range of innovative environmental projects. Items for discussion included recycling waste and spreading the word on the merits of selling and purchasing Fair Trade products in school and even encouraging local shops to do likewise. Here again intentions influence things in practice. In line with its commitment to environmental issues the school is vigilant in preventing pupils from dropping litter and the general cleanliness of the whole site is an important example to pupils.
46. The influence of the school's commitment to environmental education is seen throughout the school. A very good example is set by several departments and staff from those departments being involved. Year 8 pupils have been involved in the landscaping of the spiritual garden. A Year 9 art group has been involved in a design to improve a recently cleared outdoor area. The whole school is made to think of the ethics of trade and employment conditions in other countries through the high profile of the school's Fair Trade Café. On a wider local stage, the school shares its ideas and work with primary schools. Nationally there has been involvement with the Environmental Agency in setting up and running a Youth Forum and developing a major teaching resource 'Riverside Explorer' available to every school in the country. There has been work with the World Wide Fund for Nature in developing a website on environmental matters. The school sends representatives to conferences on a wide range of issues and is developing inter-school links in Europe. These activities are not on the periphery of the school but totally integrated.
47. The unique work of the school in many respects in relation to environmental issues has been recognised in some national publications. It has a major impact on pupils' personal development and should have an enduring influence on them long after they leave the school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Greater consistency over time in national test results taken at the end of Year 9 to match the very good results of 2001.

48. Although results in national tests at the end of Year 9 in 2001 were the best so far achieved by the school there have been some inconsistencies over time.
49. In 2000 for example, overall results in English were only average compared with all schools nationally and were well below average compared with similar schools. There was an improvement on this in 2001 when results were above average compared with all schools and similar schools.
50. In 2000, although results in mathematics and science were above average compared with all schools they were only average compared with similar schools in science and

below average in mathematics. This was rectified in 2001 when results in mathematics and science were well above average compared with all schools and similar schools.

51. English has a particular challenge to face in attempting to match the results of those in mathematics and science. The school has correctly identified a literacy problem with a group of boys, particular in Years 7 to 9. Improving the accuracy and quality of pupils' writing and reading in all subjects is an important objective in the development plan. The English department and the school are working hard and successfully in tackling this issue. Although girls do better than boys in English the school is making headway with boys and the percentage attaining Level 5 and above (the national expectation) in 2001 was 12 per cent higher than the national average for boys, which was an improvement on the previous year. Improving literacy standards for some boys in Years 7 to 9 is an ongoing challenge for the school and it features in the school's development plan along with strategies to raise standards.
52. The 2001 results show what an ambitious school such as Crispin is capable of achieving both in relation to all schools and similar schools. The well above average results overall in 2001 have given the school a benchmark for subsequent years. The real success of that improvement will have to be judged on more than one year's results. The school recognises this fact and the targets in the development plan for 2001-2 show a determination to at least maintain standards in the percentages of pupils attaining Level 5 or better and Level 6 or better.

Improving boys' results in French at GCSE

53. Boys at Crispin do not attain nearly as well as girls in French in GCSE examinations. That is also the overall picture in schools across the country except that the gap between boys' and girls' results at Crispin is wider than the gap between boys and girls nationally. Whilst girls' results are usually above average and were well above average in 2000, French over time is one of the weakest subjects for boys at Crispin. In 2001, boys' results at grades A*-C were below average compared with boys nationally.
54. In the last four years, results of boys and girls at Crispin at grades A*-C in relation to national averages are as follows:
 - 2001: Boys 38% (National 44%); Girls 60% (National 58%).
 - 2000: Boys 46% (National 37%); Girls 79% (National 54%).
 - 1999: Boys 36% (National 37%); Girls 60% (National 54%).
 - 1998: Boys 47% (National 34%); Girls 64% (National 52%).
55. Results for boys are influenced in particular by some of the more able boys opting for German rather than French. In addition the fact that Crispin enters a higher proportion of boys for the examination than is the case nationally, including some weaker pupils, also influences the overall statistics. Results could be boosted by the school being more selective in its entry policy, but Crispin is not that sort of school. Whilst results for boys are certainly not disastrous compared with boys nationally they nevertheless represent an area where improvement can be made. The skill of the teaching is not in doubt, as seen by the results for girls, but teaching strategies for boys need to be re-appraised. The department has begun discussions with the senior management team to explore the effectiveness of teaching methods in relation to boys including the possibilities of making greater use of ICT. The increased investment in ICT in the school as a result of Technology College status provides one important avenue amongst others to investigate further.

Implementing the school's plans to alter the length of lessons and eliminate 35 minute lessons.

56. Inspectors judge that it is important for the school to implement its declared plans to reorganise the structure of the school day from September 2002. Thirty-five minute lessons in particular impose constraints on learning even though teachers do remarkably well in the time available to cover the lesson objectives. There is clearly less scope in 35 minutes to pursue legitimate digressions which arise in the course of teaching. This dilemma was seen at the inspection in some lessons. In addition a double lesson of 70 minutes can be rather long for some activities and pace drops off in the latter stages of some lessons. In most cases a lesson of 60 minutes could offer the same opportunities. Standard 60 minute lessons planned from September 2002 are therefore important in improving the quality of teaching and learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. In order to improve standards the governors and senior management should:

Achieve greater consistency over time in national test results taken at the end of Year 9 to match the very good results of 2001 by:

- fully utilising the very good individual pupil targets devised;
- meeting the targets in the school development plan and departmental plans to at least sustain the results of 2001.

(paragraphs 48,49,50,52)

Improve boys' results in French at GCSE by:

- re-evaluating the effectiveness of teaching methods for boys to see what works best and exploring the potential of a greater use of ICT;
- more concerted monitoring of French lessons by senior managers in conjunction with the head of modern languages;
- involving boys and their parents by informing them of the school's intent to raise standards.

(paragraphs 53,54,55)

Implement the school's plans to alter the length of lessons and eliminate 35 lessons from September 2002. (paragraph 56)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	63
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	26	16	15	1	0	0
Percentage	8	41.3	25.3	23.8	1.6	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 one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1099
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	85

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	21
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	170

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	34
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	29

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

National comparative data	7.7
---------------------------	-----

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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	105	97	202

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	73	89	89
	Girls	83	77	79
	Total	156	166	168
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	78 (71)	83 (74)	84 (74)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	40 (22)	60 (46)	54 (37)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	64	85	77
	Girls	78	74	68
	Total	142	159	145
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	71 (79)	80 (76)	73 (84)
	National	65 (64)	66 (66)	66 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	37 (30)	58 (55)	42 (32)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	85	88	173

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	52	79	84
	Girls	62	83	86
	Total	114	162	170
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	66 (72)	94 (95)	98 (99)
	National	49.8 (47.4)	86.6 (90.6)	94.5 (95.6)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score Per pupil	School	49.3 (49)
	National	39.1 (38.4)

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	30 93
	National	N/a

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	1097
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	1	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 pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	55.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.1

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	24
Total aggregate hours worked per week	678

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	79.3
---	------

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25.9
Key Stage 4	21.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	2,719,610
Total expenditure	2,633,108
Expenditure per pupil	2,532
Balance brought forward from previous year	62,494
Balance carried forward to next year	148,996

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10.3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	1099
Number of questionnaires returned	306

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	41	50	6	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	50	45	2	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	51	4	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	52	12	4	3
The teaching is good.	41	53	0	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	49	9	1	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	32	2	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	25	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	36	50	8	1	6
The school is well led and managed.	61	30	1	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	49	2	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	43	4	1	11