

INSPECTION REPORT

HUNTCLIFF SCHOOL

Saltburn by the Sea

LEA area: Redcar and Cleveland

Unique reference number: 111726

Headteacher: Mrs R Headdon

Reporting inspector: Mr R C Drew
7281

Dates of inspection: 7th to 9th May 2002

Inspection number: 191615

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

© Crown copyright 2002

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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Marske Mill Lane Saltburn by the Sea Cleveland
Postcode:	TS12 1HJ
Telephone number:	01287 622178
Fax number:	01278 622299
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Rosemary Nicholls
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
7281	R Drew	Registered inspector
9710	R Burgess	Lay inspector
19586	W Easterby	Team inspector
6432	M Sewter	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Power House Inspections

'Grasshoppers'
1 Anglesey Close
Chasetown
Burntwood
Staffordshire
WS7 8XA

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	12
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	15
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	17
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	18

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Huntcliff School is an 11 to 16 mixed community school with 516 pupils on roll, smaller than most secondary schools. It serves the seaside resort town of Saltburn as well as rural and industrial settlements nearby. Overall, pupils' socio-economic circumstances are below those found in the country as a whole: while some neighbourhoods are relatively prosperous, more pupils come from disadvantaged backgrounds and the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals, at 21 per cent, is significantly higher than the national level of 15 per cent. The vast majority of pupils are white, and only two use English as an additional language. There are 99 pupils on the special educational needs register, 12 of whom have statements: both these figures broadly match national proportions. Overall, pupils enter the school with above average attainment levels. A broadly average proportion of pupils enter and leave the school part way through any year.

Huntcliff was designated a Beacon School in 1999 as a result of sustained high-quality provision, and it is still popular: while the region as a whole is one with falling rolls, this school remains full. It chose not to continue as a Beacon School to avoid excessive call on staff time. Since the previous inspection it has lacked continuity at headship level. It has become part of East Cleveland Education Action Zone and The Redcar and Cleveland "Excellence in Cities" programme. A new headteacher was appointed in February 2001.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. It is highly effective, enabling pupils to attain well above average standards and make very good progress. Teaching and learning are very good and the headteacher leads and manages very well. Spending per pupil is above average and the school gives good value for money

What the school does well

- It helps pupils to reach high standards of work and make very good progress.
- It provides very good teaching.
- Care for pupils through monitoring their social and academic progress is very effective.
- It promotes pupils' moral and social development very well.
- The headteacher and senior management colleague provide good, clear leadership and management.
- It makes particularly effective provision in art and design, geography, design and technology, and mathematics.

What could be improved

- Monitoring of teaching and of the work of heads of departments is too limited.
- Girls exceed national standards in their work, but not by the wide margin achieved by boys.
- Provision in physical education and science is hindered by shortcomings in accommodation; in science and information and communication technology (ICT), discontinuity in staffing and too little monitoring further restrict progress.
- The governing body, while very supportive, does not have a satisfactory knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

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 1997. It was judged to be a very good school, but one which could still improve the quality of its developmental planning, its monitoring of staff and the provision for ICT. It has made satisfactory overall gains on all of these issues, with marked

improvement in the quality of planning. More remains to be done to resolve monitoring and ICT arrangements.

In addition, the school has continued to improve GCSE results at a far better rate than the national trend and has provided new accommodation for the humanities faculty and for food technology teaching.

Overall, therefore, improvement has been good.

STANDARDS

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

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

Pupils enter the school with a wide range of prior attainment, but on balance standards are above average. By the end of Year 9, pupils reach standards in National Curriculum tests that are well above those for all schools and in the top 5 per cent for schools with a similar intake. These well above average standards have been consistently reached in mathematics and science and were also achieved in English in 2001. In the work seen during the inspection, standards in all three subjects were well above average. In the other subjects of the curriculum, the work seen was well above average in art and design, design and technology, geography and physical education. Standards are above average in all other subjects, except in ICT where they are below average.

These results represent very good achievement for pupils between entering school and reaching the age of 14. Achievement is particularly strong in those subjects with well above average standards. Progress is unsatisfactory in ICT.

At the end of Year 11, pupils' standards of attainment are again well above average. For example, the proportion of candidates gaining five or more A* to C passes in 2001 was 64 per cent, compared with 48 per cent nationally. These high standards have been sustained over several years and continue to rise. The targets set in agreement with the governing body are demanding, yet the school met those for 2001 and is in line to meet those for 2002. Results have been particularly high in certain subjects: in 2001, for example, they were well above average in art and design, design and technology, geography and mathematics. Pupils' results in some subjects, science and English, for instance, are usually above the national average, but are noticeably lower than the same pupils are reaching in their other subjects.

Pupils in general make very good progress across Years 10 and 11. The overall gains from entering to leaving this school are therefore impressive. Pupils with special educational needs and those deemed gifted or talented progress very well. The school identifies and supports such pupils' needs more effectively than is usual. The very few pupils with English as an additional language also make very good progress. Standards of literacy are well above average and numeracy skills are above average. Those in ICT are broadly average, despite the inadequate progress being made, because there is a high level of interest and for many pupils considerable scope for learning outside formal school lessons.

Contrary to national trends, boys in this school are making better progress than girls. Both at the end of Year 9 and again at the end of Year 11, girls exceed the national average for their gender, but boys outstrip their gender average by an even greater margin.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: pupils are far more positive about school than is usual. They participate very readily in lessons and extra-curricular activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good: behaviour is impressive in a very large proportion of lessons. While a small minority of pupils have a tendency towards poor behaviour, this is nearly always curbed by good teaching. In many lessons, pupils show enjoyment of their work and an open yet respectful attitude to their teachers. Around school they are mature, whether supervised or not, and are polite to visitors. Exclusion levels are low
Personal development and relationships	Very good: pupils are mature and self-confident and staff are highly committed to establishing good relationships with their classes. The school values pupils as individuals and pupils appreciate this.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is below average, but too many pupils are absent on holiday during term time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	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 overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. Virtually all the lessons seen during the inspection had satisfactory or better teaching and learning, and in a larger proportion than is usual, the quality of both was very good or excellent. This was consistently the case in all year groups. Indeed, the school had 84 per cent of lessons with good or better teaching when nationally the figure is 68 per cent.

In English and science, teaching and learning are good, while in mathematics, both are predominantly very good. Amongst the other subjects, teaching and learning are particularly good in art and design, design and technology, geography and physical education. The overall quality in ICT is broadly satisfactory, with some very well taught lessons but inconsistent expertise in the use of ICT across the curriculum as a whole.

Teachers are particularly good at setting challenging work for the full range of pupils' needs in their classes. They also establish very effective relationships with the vast majority of pupils. These factors enable them to set high expectations of both learning and behaviour from pupils. Most lessons use a wide range of teaching strategies and regularly involve group, paired and whole-class activities, with extensive scope for pupils to think for themselves and work independently. Learning benefits from this very good teaching and the very positive attitudes most pupils bring to lessons. As a result, pupils concentrate, sustain interest, and acquire new knowledge and skills far more effectively than is generally found. Literacy is

taught well across the curriculum as a whole. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are taught very well and learn equally effectively.

By their own high standards, some teachers are less confident at using ICT skills in day-to-day teaching, though very good practice is also evident. Numeracy strategies are less well established, but are already taught satisfactorily. Pupils in all years are well informed about the standards they reach and the targets they should aspire to. There is scope for this to become very good, particularly through a consistent approach to showing precisely what steps pupils should take in order to reach these targets.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. All National Curriculum subjects are in place and the majority have very good schemes of work. Some, for example, design and technology and art and design, are exemplary. ICT provision is expanding, but does not yet meet statutory requirement across Years 7 to 11. The programme for gifted and talented pupils enhances the curriculum well as do the very good links with the nearby primary schools and colleges. There is scope for more instrumental provision in music and for numeracy strategies to have greater prominence in schemes of work.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Support for pupils with special educational needs is well organised. Their needs are generally very well understood and support assistants as well as additional resources are used effectively in many lessons. As a result, these pupils make very good progress in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Members of staff give a very strong moral lead and help pupils to mature and learn social skills, led and supported by school policy. Cultural development is promoted by a wide range of visits, especially in geography, art and design, history, modern languages, as well as by sporting activities and a developing range of musical events and groups. Spiritual development is satisfactorily promoted.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school is very good at evaluating and meeting pupils' personal needs and is good at tracking their academic progress. Staff take advantage of the school's small size by ensuring that every pupil is particularly well known and valued.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher gives a very good, clear and strong sense of direction to the school's work. Planning is good and decisions are made quickly yet securely. She is very effectively supported by a deputy head. Discontinuity at headship level over the last four years and the ongoing absence of a member of the senior management team have significantly hindered aspects of the school's work, though steps to minimise the problem have been taken. Middle management is satisfactory overall, including many areas of impressive subject leadership, but in ICT and business studies, arrangements are unsatisfactory due to staff absence.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory. Governors are strongly committed to the staff and pupils of the school, but they do not have a sufficiently detailed picture of its strengths and weaknesses. Collectively they see less of the school in session than is usual and this weakens their ability to give well-informed strategic advice and support.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school is very good at analysing how its academic performance compares with that of others and how it might improve. It has assessed its accommodation needs well and successfully pursued routes for additional funding. Its monitoring of teaching and of the work of middle managers, started later, is less extensive than usual.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The budget is managed well, with funds going to support clearly defined educational priorities. The school is good at deploying the extra financial and human resources made available through initiatives such as the Education Action Zone and at costing services from alternative sources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. • Their children make good progress in school. • Teaching is good. • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible. • Children like school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities that the school provides outside lessons. • The setting of homework is inconsistent. • They would like more information on progress. • They do not all feel that the school works closely with them.

Parents have positive views of the school, which is over-subscribed. Most are very supportive. They particularly like the expectations that teachers have for their children to work hard and achieve their best, feel that their children make good progress and that they are helped to become mature and responsible. A minority expressed concern about homework arrangements; the range of extra-curricular opportunities; the information that they receive about their child's progress and how closely the school works with them.

Inspectors support all the positive views. They find some inconsistencies in the setting of homework, but generally it is used more effectively than is usual. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, but inspectors recognise that some younger pupils have fewer opportunities to participate in music groups than they had at primary school due to the necessity to re-establish music in the curriculum in Years 10 and 11. Annual reports to parents on progress are good and reinforced with consultation evenings with teachers. Overall, a good partnership exists between parents and the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

It helps pupils reach high standards of work and make very good progress

1. At the end of Year 9 and again at the end of Year 11, pupils reach standards that are well above the national average compared with those for all secondary schools. When looked at against schools with a similar level of free school meals, the test results in Year 9 and GCSE results are amongst the best 5 per cent in the country. In National Curriculum tests for 14 year olds, for example, the national average for pupils scoring level 5 or above is 64 per cent in English, 66 per cent in mathematics and 66 per cent in science, whereas the school's scores are 79, 81 and 78 per cent.

2. The average points score for GCSE candidates, at 47.5 in 2001, is well above the national score of 39 for all schools. In many subjects, while the national proportion of candidates gaining A* to C passes is between 55 and 65 per cent, in this school it is 70 to 85 per cent. The proportion of A* and A grades is particularly high in several subjects.

3. Although pupils enter the school from primary school with above-average attainment, the results at 14 and 16 are much higher than would normally be expected of them. For instance, the predictions for pupils taking GCSE in 2001, from a nationally respected agency, were for 60 per cent of candidates to gain five or more A* to C passes: in achieving 64 per cent, the pupils made the progress expected of the top 20 per cent of schools nationally. This very good progress is largely the outcome of impressive teaching and very effective support and monitoring of pupils. Both the pupils and their families can take much credit for the positive attitudes to study that help these rates of progress, while a great deal is also due to the way the school shapes their attitudes and behaviour and provides very good guidance on how to learn effectively.

4. The ethos of the school is one which puts very high expectations on pupils, encourages them to aim high and gives more room for pupils to work and think independently than in many schools.

It provides very good teaching

5. Teaching is very good overall and includes a significant minority which is excellent. The school is aware that there is scope for improvement, but from an already impressive base. The majority of teachers have a wide repertoire of strengths and it is unusual to find such high calibre staff responsible for such a high proportion of teaching. Inspectors frequently described subject expertise and communication skills as excellent. Pupils in all year groups have complete confidence in the ability of the teacher to be authoritative and skilled at explaining complex information and ideas. Teaching is consistently based on the assumption that only the highest standards of attainment and behaviour are acceptable and that pupils have it within themselves to reach such standards. For example, in a Year 7 English lesson, the teacher's very good use of questioning drew out excellent responses from pupils who answered in detail, took care to use technically correct vocabulary and could follow up their initial comment if asked to. In a Year 8 geography lesson, pupils' interests and knowledge were exceptionally well identified and handled: they were pushed to answer in as much detail as possible and in return, questions they had for the teacher were answered with great clarity and awareness.

6. Management of pupils is typically very good and is based on very good, often excellent, relationships. This is repeatedly illustrated in lessons, which benefit from teachers addressing pupils by name at all times and realising when and with whom to deploy humour, rebuke, encouragement or challenge. For example, in a Year 9 modern languages lesson, the very lively and humorous approach gave pupils real confidence in speaking German and they participated very fully. In most lessons, teachers' detailed knowledge of pupils is used to structure the session so that learning proceeds in manageable stages and takes note of the different needs of all. In a design and technology lesson with Year 11, for instance, all pupils had been so well briefed at the start of the lesson that they quickly moved onto extended periods of independent work and the teacher gave very good individual help. A quiet, businesslike atmosphere prevailed with a great deal of responsibility given to pupils, to which they responded well. A Year 7 physical education lesson also typified high-quality planning and knowledge of pupils: it succeeded because excellent knowledge of the subject was supported by extensive use of video and video camera to demonstrate hurdling skills. The lesson was expertly planned to develop shot-putting techniques and resulted in both the full involvement and great enthusiasm of pupils.

Its care for pupils through monitoring their social and academic progress is very effective

7. The school has long been able to turn its relatively small size to advantage: staff know pupils better than in many schools and pupils said they felt very well cared for and supported. In addition, the school is systematic and has very good arrangements in place for health and safety, child protection, monitoring of attendance and eliminating oppressive behaviour. Pupils see the rewards and sanctions policy as fair. Recently, the school has added the services of mentors to existing provision, which has enhanced the personal advice and support to individuals and small groups of pupils considerably. The school is sensitive to personal concerns, exemplified by the changes to financial support for trips, which is now directly linked to the free school meals system. High standards of care are maintained by regular, well-coordinated pastoral meetings involving the deputy headteacher, tutors and heads of key stage. Pupils' academic progress has been improved to the point where it is now good and target-setting is well established. In some subjects, practice is already very good. In mathematics, for instance, the frequent and regular testing of progress keeps pupils informed about how well they are doing and helps teachers to modify the new learning to meet pupils' changing needs. While aspects of this practice have scope for improvement, the combined pastoral and academic monitoring already provide a very good level of care, mentoring and guidance that allows pupils to feel well looked after in a small, friendly environment. Pupils are generally more confident that any bullying would be sorted quickly than in most schools and they are appreciative of the help they receive from teachers.

It promotes pupils' moral and social development very well

8. The school makes very good provision for the moral and social development of pupils. This is partly the result of good policies and systems and partly the consequence of staff implementing policies successfully and acting as very effective role models. Social and moral expectations are clearly and constructively expressed in documents, posted on classroom walls and discussed by pupils and staff. Equally well publicised are the many opportunities for pupils to participate in and be rewarded for their contributions to school life. The school uses its small size to good advantage by ensuring that all pupils are known to a great many staff, in addition to their form tutors. The latter have acquired good pastoral skills and stay with their classes from Year 7 through to Year 11. Senior staff and middle managers make it their job to have a clear picture of pupils' personal needs and skills. As a result, the school's desire to help pupils become mature, responsible and socially aware is substantially

achieved because staff implement strategies for promoting social and moral development much more effectively and comprehensively than is usual.

9. In addition, the school has strategies which are distinctive: a full-time learning mentor focuses on pupils' personal issues and study skills, and another mentor helps prepare older pupils for transition to college. Pupils provide a support and listening service for their peers. Staff run an efficient behaviour-tracking system and take every opportunity to offer positive rewards for good contributions to school life. Above all, lessons are far more effective than in many schools in repeatedly demonstrating to pupils that it is normal and desirable to express their views, develop distinctive skills, work in pairs and groups and take a significant role in their own development. In a Year 7 English lesson for example, pupils were very confident in discussing factory-farming issues and were sufficiently committed to follow it up by writing letters to their local MP, who has agreed to respond.

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good, clear leadership and management

10. The current headteacher has set clear aims for the school and communicates these well to staff. Due to several years of intermittent long-term absence by the previous headteacher and the current absence of a deputy head teacher, senior management has been understaffed for some time and various important initiatives have been delayed or only partially implemented. While it is a tribute to staff that so much of the school's good work has been sustained during this time, it is also clear that the new headteacher's arrival has had a marked, beneficial impact. Teachers at every level have had their ideas and potential recognised and overdue decisions have been made swiftly. For example, the absent deputy headteacher's responsibilities were quickly devolved to a range of good middle managers, to the benefit of both the school and their own professional development. A new development plan has been devised that recognises the need to move quickly to set up widespread monitoring and support arrangements, and the headteacher has made good progress on this front. She has been very successful in identifying the school's established strengths and relative weaknesses and noting areas such as some of the cultural factors behind girls' relative underperformance. Senior managers have encouraged staff to obtain maximum benefit from membership of the local Education Action Zone and have used mentors more effectively than is common, according them due recognition. The conspicuous presence around school of both head and deputy have helped to make the school's leadership and management accessible and credible in the eyes of staff and pupils. The introduction of a commendation system has successfully given additional motivation and recognition to many pupils and has brought them into more direct contact with senior managers.

It makes particularly effective provision in art and design, geography, design and technology and mathematics

11. In each of these four subjects, the strong features seen across the school as a whole are all found, with excellent results. Their success is illustrated by the 2001 GCSE results, in which 83 per cent of candidates taking art and design gained A* to C grades, 78 per cent in geography, 77 per cent in design and technology and 70 in mathematics, while the national averages for these subjects are between 55 and 65 per cent. A crucial factor is the very high quality of leadership of each department. This has ensured that schemes of work inform day-to-day teaching particularly well in terms of National Curriculum requirements in Years 7 to 9 and in relation to examination board requirements at GCSE. These are also amongst the subjects where there is a more successful integration of literacy, numeracy and ICT strategies into lessons than in the school as a whole, and where extra-curricular opportunities are well developed. For example, geography has an impressive field work programme in every year and used ICT effectively in every lesson observed; there were

references to art exhibitions and other visits which linked these with aspects of pupils' work in each art and design lesson seen; and every day, design and technology and mathematics offer well-attended lunchtime or after-school clubs. The awareness of the needs of gifted and talented pupils and those with special educational needs is conspicuously high in each department, so that overall planning maximises the challenge and support for all pupils and expectations are realistic but demanding. Where a department has several teachers or has had to engage supply staff, it is significant that clear leadership and good briefing and support by colleagues has ensured a consistent approach. While the accommodation or staffing problems faced by geography and design and technology have been significant, they have not been of the same order as those hindering physical education and science provision.

12. As other subjects, these four show consistently very good teaching, with some lessons having excellent teaching. The quality of learning is particularly strong, based on excellent relationships with pupils and maximum participation by pupils in lessons. Art lessons, for instance give pupils far more freedom than is common in choosing how sections of lessons should be organised; geography lessons involve building on pupils' responses or on the focus of their personal studies; design and technology lessons succeeded in creating the atmosphere of a thoroughly professional workshop, with everyone working to the best of commercial standards; mathematics lessons consistently build in rapid-fire questioning of pupils in which all responses are valued and the possibility of making mistakes does not inhibit pupils.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Monitoring of teaching and the work of heads of departments is too limited

13. While teaching in the school is already very good, a crucial factor in raising standards still further is the need to extend best practice and translate "satisfactory" into "good" teaching. Currently, the school has too little evidence from formal monitoring of lessons to identify a detailed pattern of individual teachers' strengths and weaknesses or the pattern for the whole school. Even in departments where there are many excellent features, heads of department do not claim that formal monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are properly established. Senior managers did not begin systematic monitoring of either teacher or departmental management quality until later than many schools and the process, begun under national "Performance Management" arrangements and supplemented by the new headteacher's direct observation programme, has progressed modestly, largely because of staff absences. The benefit of seeing colleagues teach exceptionally well yet with radically different styles is largely lost; equally the scope for helping staff to raise their teaching quality by careful analysis and planning improvement in specific skills is not yet established.

Girls exceed national standards in their work, but not by the wide margin achieved by boys

14. The school is relatively unusual in that the overall performance by boys at ages 14 and 16 is not overshadowed by that of girls. Both genders greatly exceed what might be predicted in terms of their attainment on entry to the school, but the school's ethos of very high expectations and working to full potential spurs boys most successfully. In the core subjects tested at age 14, boys' overall points score matches that of girls: it is twice as far beyond the national average for boys as the girls' points score is for their national average. At GCSE, the overall performance of boys is higher than that of girls by a very wide margin. Even in English, where the ascendancy of girls is generally rarely challenged, boys in this school had a higher points score in 2001 and scored far more A and A* grades. In science, the situation is particularly noticeable. In the 2001 GCSE results, the proportion of girls

obtaining the higher grades at double-award science was only in line with the national average and well below that of boys, whose attainment is well above the national average.

Provision in physical education and science are hindered by accommodation problems, and in science and ICT by staffing discontinuity and too little monitoring

15. In physical education, standards are already high in all respects, but the very good leadership, teaching and commitment to improvement cannot entirely counteract accommodation problems. Facilities are currently so limited that the department cannot offer a GCSE course. Time is wasted moving between the school and the nearby leisure centre where much teaching takes place in Years 10 and 11. Changing rooms are of poor quality and there is insufficient office space. While additional accommodation is anticipated next year, past and present conditions have hampered provision in an otherwise very effective department.

16. Standards in science are high in many respects, but the severely disrupted teaching arrangements over a considerable period have had an impact that needs to be countered. The relative performance of pupils - that is, how they perform in one subject compared with their overall performance at GCSE - is weak in science. Candidates' points scores in 2001 were noticeably lower, by nearly half a grade, than their averages for their other subjects. Staff have worked hard to minimise the effect on pupils' learning, but there are now early signs of a downward trend in standards generally at GCSE, and a marked difference in the attainment of boys and girls. This latter whole-school trend is particularly marked in science. Teaching, while always satisfactory, lacks the consistency and overall good high quality of other departments. This has been particularly marked in Years 10 and 11, where the quality of teaching has been variable and staffing has been unstable over the past three or four years. Monitoring and support of teaching are especially needed under such circumstances.

17. Pupils' experience of ICT is very variable and reflects a lack of close coordination, due to the lack of a head of department. The relatively recent acquisition of resources and suitable rooms is also evident. Teaching and learning through subjects is patchy and the overall amount of ICT teaching is unsatisfactory, although there have been recent improvements in discrete provision in Years 7 to 9 and there will be additional time in Years 10 and 11 from September 2002. The contribution by subjects is inconsistent, although there is some good work in Years 10 and 11. Reference to the use of ICT in schemes of work is not yet in place in all departments. The audit of provision and mapping of experience across subjects is not fully developed. However, resourcing has improved and a good range of computers and software is now available and well maintained; pupils generally have good access. It is intended to use the current provision more flexibly within departments and continued network improvement and expansion is planned.

The governing body, while very supportive, does not have a satisfactory knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses

18. The school's governing body gives its appointed managers its full support and appreciates the success they achieve. However, it has too few strategies for gaining information and awareness of the school. Visits into school during the working day, meetings between heads of department and link governors, or presentations by staff to the governors' meetings are too rare. As a result, the opportunity to offer direct praise and support to pupils and staff is largely lost, and there is too little scope in the present circumstances for governors to acquire their own first-hand picture of the school. Without it, their ability to offer senior managers imaginative, challenging or alternative ideas is limited. While the strategic advice given is sound, for it to be most helpful it needs to be based on a wider range of evidence than at present. The school's progress towards meeting statutory requirements, for

instance, regarding ICT provision and in implementing monitoring arrangements, is not clearly known by governors.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

19. In order to help this very good school improve still further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) in line with current plans, extend the arrangements for comprehensive observation of lessons and other forms of monitoring and support of teachers by heads of department and senior managers, so that:
 - the excellent practice already in school fully informs teaching as a whole;
 - the limited areas of relative weakness are identified and eliminated.(Paragraph: 13)
- (2) strive for girls to exceed national standards in their work by the same wide margin as boys; specifically, complete a detailed and reliable analysis of girls' performance in every subject and put in place clear strategies to raise their levels of attainment even further.
(Paragraph: 14)
- (3) ensure that all current plans to improve provision for physical education, science and ICT are realised and implemented so that inadequate accommodation or staffing shortages no longer limit what is offered to pupils.
(Paragraphs: 15-17)
- (4) create new arrangements for the governing body to acquire extensive first-hand knowledge of the school in order to:
 - commend staff and pupils and enquire about their work on a regular basis using their own direct information
 - participate more fully in the process of strategic planning.(Paragraph: 18)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	31
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	12	10	5	1	0	0
Percentage	13	39	32	16	3	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 three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	516
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	76

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	12
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	99

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

National comparative data	8.1
---------------------------	-----

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	56	56	112

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	38	41	42
	Girls	50	50	45
	Total	88	91	87
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	79 (64)	81 (76)	78 (64)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	46 (28)	56 (54)	53 (46)
	National	31 (28)	43(42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	33	34	35
	Girls	45	44	27
	Total	78	78	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	71(72)	71 (77)	56 (72)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	35 (44)	53 (58)	32 (43)
	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	53	50	103

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	36	50	53
	Girls	30	48	50
	Total	66	98	103
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	64 (61)	95 (100)	100 (100)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score	School	47.5 (45.8)

per pupil	National	39 (38.4)
-----------	----------	-----------

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	511
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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	18	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	29.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.5

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	216

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	69.2
---	------

Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	24.5
Key Stage 4	23.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	1 545 562
Total expenditure	1 581 008
Expenditure per pupil	3 082
Balance brought forward from previous year	122 191
Balance carried forward to next year	86 745

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0

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	514
Number of questionnaires returned	113

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	49	7	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	54	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	54	6	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	51	20	1	1
The teaching is good.	42	47	6	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	51	19	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	36	8	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	34	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	22	53	16	4	6
The school is well led and managed.	39	46	7	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	50	5	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	45	17	5	6