

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **MULLION SCHOOL**

Helston, Cornwall

LEA area: Cornwall

Unique reference number: 112058

Headteacher: Mrs V Morley

Reporting inspector: Mike Young  
4345

Dates of inspection: 17 – 20 September 2001

Inspection number: 192444

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11-16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Meaver Road  
Mullion  
Cornwall

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Hazel Caines

Date of previous inspection: November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Mullion School is a comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 16 years. It is smaller than average for a secondary school, with 274 boys and 265 girls, making 539 pupils in total. A number of pupils are recruited to the school from beyond its catchment area of the Lizard Peninsula and the school has grown steadily over the last ten years. Only five pupils are from a non-white background and only two do not have English as their first language. Those two pupils are now at an advanced stage of English language acquisition. Ten per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is average, though local adult male unemployment is well above the national average at 17 per cent.

There are 8.5 per cent of the school's pupils on the special educational needs register, which is technically below average, but actually reflects the school's approach to special needs. The school has, as a matter of policy, fewer pupils on the early stages of the register. The proportion of pupils with statements is above average at 5.3 per cent, some of whom join the school from outside the catchment area. A complete range of special needs is catered for including physical disabilities, behavioural problems and moderate learning difficulties. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is broadly average. There is a small local authority audiology unit based at the school, serving the area.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Mullion is a very good school. Most pupils achieve well above what might have been expected from their standards on entry. Good teaching and very good care and support help pupils to reach these standards in examinations. Provision for the pupils out of lessons is also very good and, with the care and support, contributes to very positive attitudes. The headteacher and governors provide good leadership and have used resources effectively for the benefit of pupils. The school has many strengths and the capacity to deal with the two weaknesses identified in this report.

#### **What the school does well**

- Good teaching and very good support outside lessons help pupils to achieve well above average results.
- Community initiatives greatly enrich the learning opportunities for the pupils.
- All pupils at the school get a fair deal.
- The very good care for pupils helps them achieve the results they do.
- The pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in English at Key Stage 3 have not improved as rapidly as in mathematics and science.
- Weaknesses in the teaching and assessment of information and communication technology (ICT) are yet to be fully addressed.

*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 1996, since when it has made good progress. Standards at both GCSE and at the end of Key Stage 3 (14 years) have been maintained at well above both the national average and the average for schools in similar circumstances. Results for 2001 look to have continued this trend and improved the performance of boys. All teaching is now at least satisfactory and the majority good or very good. The school has used government funding to enhance its study support to a very good level. The issues identified at the time of the last inspection have been successfully tackled, though the school is still unable to bring all pupils together for a daily act of collective worship. Senior management responsibilities are clear, as are the middle managers' responsibilities for monitoring. There is now a special needs key group representing all subjects and physically disabled pupils are well cared for. However, while resources for information and communication technology (ICT) have been recently enhanced there are still aspects of provision which are unsatisfactory.

## 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				<b>Key</b>  well above average    A above average        B average                C below average        D well below average   E
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A	

The school's results in the 2000 national tests for 14 years olds were well above average in mathematics and science. Results in English were not as high, but still above the national average. The indications for 2001 are that this pattern will be repeated, but that the gap in performance between English and the other two core subjects will widen further. The trend in improvement of these results has, up to 2000, been below the national trend.

Boys and girls both achieved above average standards at Key Stage 3 and the difference between their performance is greater than the national difference.

At GCSE in 2000, the school's results were well above average. The percentage of pupils getting five or more A\*-C grades (66 per cent) was well above average as was the average points score for all pupils. All pupils who attend the school leave with at least one GCSE pass. Indications for 2001 are that this well above average performance will be maintained, with all pupils getting at least one GCSE pass.

In comparison with similar schools (based on eligibility for free school meals), the school achieves well above average results. The school has maintained these high standards at GCSE over the last five years, with the upward trend in results similar to the national rate of improvement. In 2000, science, art and geography all performed well above those subjects nationally, with approximately twice as many A and A\* grades. Indications for 2001 are that science results have again increased significantly. English results are much more comparable with mathematics at GCSE than at Key Stage 3. Girls did rather better than boys up to 2000, but the evidence from 2001 is that this gap in performance has narrowed.

Almost all pupils do very well at Mullion School. Progress from when they enter in Year 7 up to Year 9 is very good and good progress is maintained through to the GCSE examinations in Year 11. Pupils with significant learning difficulties manage to achieve GCSE standards, while many pupils with average attainment on entry have achieved well above average GCSE results by the time they leave.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils concentrate well and are not easily distracted. They are positive about learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Very few instances of any misbehaviour at all were seen.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships between pupils and pupils and staff are particularly good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Current attendance is about average for secondary schools, but unauthorised absence is low.

Pupils are very positive in lessons, often enthusiastic and almost invariably well motivated. There is very little misbehaviour in the school and what there is is quickly dealt with. Pupils manage themselves well and in many circumstances do not need a great deal of supervision. Pupils show consideration and support for one another. Temporary exclusions are about average and the school tries not to exclude permanently. Many pupils give considerable additional time to participate in study support and community programmes.

## 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. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. Teaching is also good in the core subjects of English and mathematics, as it is across most of the curriculum. It is consistently good or very good in science. When to this is added the impact of support outside lessons, learning is very good. Particular strengths are the teachers' knowledge of their subject, their experience, their knowledge of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses, as well as the time and support pupils can expect outside of lessons from their teachers. In very good lessons, pupils were given the tools for the job and then challenged to reach standards or discover something beyond what might have been expected.

Meeting the needs of all pupils is a particular strength of the school. Pupils and teachers share an expectation that they will get on with the business of learning. However, the teaching of literacy at Key Stage 3 has weaknesses which numeracy does not and which contribute to the slower improvement of standards in English.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A very good range of learning opportunities is provided, with an exceptionally rich level of provision outside of school time.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision, with careful tracking of pupil progress. The integration of pupils with special educational needs is a particular strength.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall, with clear opportunities for older pupils to take on responsibility.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are, and know themselves to be, very well cared for at the school, with good systems to ensure their health and welfare.

The range of opportunities open to pupils through the schemes outside of lesson time is particularly rich and responsive to the pupils' needs. Pupils with special needs make at least good and often very good progress, with well-planned individual support. Another strength is the organisation and adaptation of the curriculum to meet the needs of all pupils. The school's strategy for literacy, by contrast, needs to be organised more effectively, with a faster start for pupils in Year 7. There are very good examples of monitoring pupils' progress and appropriate intervention when some are not achieving as well as they should be. However, this is not yet as consistent as it could be across all subjects. The school excels at motivating rather than monitoring. The very good care of pupils is backed up by helpful links with community support services such as health and counselling.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good leadership by the headteacher and senior staff ensures a clear focus on all pupils achieving their personal best.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are well informed and clear about what they want for the school. They fulfil their responsibilities to pupils well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is good, with clarity on strengths and weaknesses. Very good system for annually reviewing the effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting all pupils' needs. Monitoring of teaching is more variable.
The strategic use of resources	There has been a clear strategy to maintain teaching quality which has worked. The school has been very successful in obtaining additional grants to support its objectives.

The headteacher and governors have provided a clear lead for the school in ensuring that teaching quality is maintained and that all pupils get a fair deal. The headteacher and governors know the school, its staff and pupils well and make strategic decisions accordingly. The curriculum is kept under more or less continuous review to ensure pupils' needs are met. Senior managers ensure that the teachers are able to focus fully on their teaching and to offer high quality support to the pupils. The school has a strong sense of community and purpose. How best to spend the relatively limited funds is carefully considered and the school provides good value for money, not least in the way in which it has been able to use government initiatives to augment the resources available.

Accommodation is very tight, with many lessons conducted in far from ideal circumstances. While the headteacher and teachers work to overcome the impact, the use of the library and the canteen, for example, for very many lessons does not help the school in improving provision for the core subjects. Conversely the school, with its relatively low turnover of staff, has not suffered from recruitment difficulties.

## **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The progress pupils make at the school</li> <li>• High expectations of teachers</li> <li>• The quality of teaching</li> <li>• How easy it is to approach the school if there are problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework and homework diaries</li> <li>• Communications from the school to parents</li> <li>• Working closely with parents</li> </ul>

The school prides itself on its community networks. A parents' representative in every local community served by the school ensures good feedback on parents' views. Nevertheless, a minority of parents in the survey would like to be better informed on their child's progress and the school does not have a regular newsletter. The inspectors felt that reports could be simplified and, while the school is in good contact with most parents, a regular newsletter could only add to this positive picture. A number of parents expressed concerns at the parents' meeting about the use of homework diaries as pupils get older. However, the inspectors found that homework was regularly set and the diaries well used by the pupils. The inspectors endorse the parents' positive view of teaching and expectations, which lead to the very good progress of pupils at the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Good teaching and very good support outside lessons help pupils achieve well above average standards**

1. The overall good quality of teaching, with some very good aspects, enables the very good progress that pupils make up to the end of Key Stage 3. Good progress is then sustained through to GCSE, where well above average results are achieved. One particularly significant aspect in this achievement is the quality of support pupils receive outside of the lesson time. This falls into two parts. Firstly, there is the study support and additional opportunities, the impact of which is explained in the section on study support below. Secondly, there is the time and attention that individuals get from their teachers and in some cases, from teaching assistants.

2. The school has a culture in which this additional support for individual pupils is the norm rather than the exception. The senior team target specific groups at Key Stage 4 for additional support, such as underachieving boys. The school has also invested in extensive support for pupils with special educational needs. But, in addition to this, teachers regularly give time up outside of lessons to answer queries, solve problems or simply help work to get done. For example, a science teacher offered Year 11 pupils the opportunity to return at lunchtime and complete their practical investigation, a continuation of the help offered to individuals in the lesson on voltage and current. It was clear in an art lesson, for the same age group, that insufficient progress or a weak drawing would result in further work through breaktime until the product improved. Furthermore, a technology teacher offered pupils help after school and at lunchtime in designing their consumer questionnaire. Such examples, when totalled, amount to a significant additional investment of teacher time in pupils' success.

3. An important factor in the quality of teaching is the experience and subject knowledge of the teachers. The headteacher and governors have decided to invest in maintaining this quality and the result could be seen in many lessons. It was often expressed in very good preparation. In a Year 11 English lesson, the teacher had prepared two video readings of the poem "In Romney Marsh", opening pupils to the possibilities of poetry. As well as knowing what will work, experience is demonstrated by the teachers' ability to give pupils the right tools rather than doing the whole job of learning for them. This was well illustrated by a very good Year 9 Spanish lesson, where the teacher gave the pupils all the language elements they needed to express their likes and dislikes of a part of that country. The pupils rose to this magnificently, enunciating sentences well beyond what they could manage at the start. Well-established routines and systems, which support learning through familiarity and their internal logic, are another product of teachers' knowledge and experience. A good example is the consistent approach provided by science teachers to investigation. In Year 7 this guidance produced accurate measurements of temperature, while in a Year 11 lesson on Ohm's law, the teacher's very good analysis and guidance allowed the pupils to work through to a new level of understanding.

4. Another strength reflects both the teachers' knowledge of their subjects and of their pupils. Teachers were able to anticipate possible misunderstandings and, through careful explanation help pupils overcome these. For example, in a Year 8 mathematics lesson the teacher identified emerging misconceptions in the pupils' understanding of prime numbers and, through carefully chosen examples, helped overcome their difficulties. Pupils know

they will receive this quality of support. Teachers provide them with the challenges to rise to. The result is effective learning in most lessons most of the time.

### **Community initiatives greatly enrich the opportunities for pupils**

5. In this context 'study support' is concerned with activities outside of the regular school curriculum, which are designed to improve pupils' motivation, self-esteem and learning skills. The choice of activities on offer is largely pupil led.

6. In 1996, the Lizard Outreach Trust (LOT) charity was set up to facilitate out of school learning in Mullion School. It has been highly successful in procuring funds, and in 1999, in conjunction with Mullion School and the primary schools on the Lizard peninsula, was awarded £148,000 from the government's New Opportunities Fund (NOF). The Lizard "Teylu" (Teylu is Cornish for family) was set up. This organisation and LOT provide a vast array of activities throughout the area, from which the pupils derive enormous benefit.

7. LOT obtained two mini-buses from the Variety Club of Great Britain; Mullion School staff and students successfully co-operate with the local golf club in raising money to pay for their running costs. These mini-buses provide essential transport for young people taking part in activities.

8. Numerous interesting and unusual extra-curricular activities are offered to the pupils of Mullion School by Teylu and LOT. These include many sporting activities, other physical activities, and many opportunities for pupils to learn new skills. Some take place in school, others such as wind-surfing, boat building, hospitality courses, bell-ringing, and 'building includes girls' (BiG) take place in local venues offering specialist facilities. The school derives considerable benefit from the use of these venues. Many of the activities are tutored by people from the local community having the necessary expertise, thus greatly increasing the range of experiences available to pupils in this school. Girls from the school and women from the community participate, through BiG, in a wide variety of activities, thus considerably strengthening the links between the school and the community.

9. The school's links with the local primary schools are strengthened by the organisation of activities for primary school pupils by Teylu at the Mullion School. These activities include guitar, football and rock-climbing clubs. Some Teylu initiatives have involved all the local schools, for example the visit of the astronaut Don Lind; and the 'get to know you day', a July Saturday visit of Year 6 pupils to Mullion School, hosted by Years 7, 8, and 9 pupils. Links with the wider community are further enhanced by annual two-day conferences held in the local hotel and the school's successful and popular drama productions.

10. The Teylu-LOT project has an office in Mullion School. It is used by small activity groups, the project worker and many visitors to the school who are involved with pupils, thus further reinforcing community links. The school receives valuable informal help from the project, for example a trustee of LOT, who is a volunteer, helps the school by driving the mini-bus; and by downloading photographs from the computer and mounting displays.

11. A 2001 summer school for literacy and numeracy was funded by the LEA and held in the school. It was attended by primary school pupils who were transferring to Mullion School in the September, some of whom had not quite achieved the national average in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2. As well as literacy and numeracy, many fun activities were provided during the week, such as a visit to the Eden Project, go-karting and pop-lacrosse. The headteacher said that pupils' confidence and self-esteem are much

improved as a result of their experiences at this summer school, in addition to the impact on their literacy and numeracy attainment.

12. The majority of pupils take part in the activities. Those interviewed were very enthusiastic about what is on offer and had very much enjoyed taking part. Pupils' written evaluations of this out of school learning are very positive.

### **All the pupils at the school get a fair deal**

13. Mullion School has developed very effective strategies for making inclusion a reality for all pupils. The school has achieved an average points score at GCSE over recent years which is well above the norm and no pupils have left the school without at least one GCSE pass over the last four years. Moreover, the headteacher and staff have created a climate in which it is expected that everyone can get on with the business of learning without interruption or disruption and pupils respond accordingly. The headteacher tries not to permanently exclude pupils. The school has successfully targeted the underachievement of boys, with a group specifically helped by mentors from the senior management team. Boys' results have improved this year and the gap with girls narrowed.

14. The school values individuals, they receive the support they need and all are provided with a rich range of opportunities. The small number of ethnic minority pupils are well integrated, as are pupils with special needs. Those pupils with English as an additional language have progressed well and are becoming fluent. Mullion School exists within a context in which there are no special schools and this is reflected in the range of special needs pupils attending the school; some of whom have chosen to be there because of the school's reputation. Pupils with special needs are well integrated into the mainstream activities of the school. They are provided with the support they need to access the aspects of that curriculum. A good example of this was provided by a music lesson where a small group of Year 8 pupils with learning and behaviour difficulties were well supported by a teaching assistant. The result was they participated successfully in a lesson of reading and playing music that, in different circumstances, their problems may well have closed off to them.

15. In another example, a boy in a Year 7 English class with an autistic spectrum disorder was helped to join in and enjoy the lesson through good support. In these ways the school ensures that all its pupils benefit from what is on offer. The school has also identified specific groups of underachieving pupils for help and successfully supported them.

16. The school's curriculum is kept under regular review to ensure that it meets the needs and aspirations of students. There are careful adjustments, for example to pupil grouping to ensure this is supporting achievement. Dance and drama will be introduced at GCSE next year to extend the curriculum for pupils' benefit. Study support activities are in the same way responsive to pupils' needs as well as underpinning basic skills.

### **The very good care for pupils helps them achieve the results they do**

17. Pupils, particularly older pupils, at the school are aware of the quality of care and support they receive from the school. This helps motivate them to do their best. Each year both staff and governors analyse the examination results and take appropriate action to improve the curriculum. The pastoral system has been reorganised to enhance this support and the school is particularly successful at promoting good behaviour and dealing quickly and effectively with any bullying. Pupils receive good support and guidance through their

school career and over 90 per cent continue successfully into further education. There are very good examples of effective monitoring of pupil progress, as in science, but individual target setting is still relatively new. Where the school really excels is not so much in monitoring but in motivating pupils to do well and providing the support to get them there.

18. There are a number of pupils at the school from out of the catchment area whose parents have chosen for them to be there; frequently the quality of care or of support for learning difficulties are factors in this decision. The school demonstrates this care through a number of aspects of its provision, for example through the support it offers to individuals already described, but also through its effective arrangements for child protection and the provision of external counselling support for pupils who need it. The school is treated with respect by its pupils, with little or no litter or graffiti. Parents expect the school to take good care of its pupils, especially given its local reputation; for almost all of them it lives up to their expectations.

### **Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning**

19. Pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning at the school and this leads to their well above average achievements. No lessons were seen in which attitudes were unsatisfactory and often they were very good. For example, in a boys' PE lesson in Year 9 all pupils paid close attention to the teacher when required to and, when the teacher's attention was not on them, continued to get on with the task. This was typical of many instances where pupils demonstrated both maturity and a capacity to get on with the job in hand. In a Year 7 lesson in information and communication technology pupils were attentive and conscientious even though it was the last lesson of the day.

20. There were also good examples of pupils working co-operatively to enhance one another's learning and achievements, as in the Year 11 English poetry lesson already mentioned where pupils demonstrated both a ready facility to work in groups and, in some cases, to take the task in new and quite surprising directions. Pupils often worked with real enthusiasm, demonstrating a very real interest in learning. For example in a Year 10 science lesson on conception to birth, where a combination of very good teaching and the pupils' ability to respond with maturity ensured the sensitive handling of this important topic. Examples were also seen where pupils helped other pupils to behave appropriately in lessons and, in general, pupils demonstrated consideration to other pupils with learning difficulties.

21. The principle means by which the school helped pupils develop these positive and mature attitudes to learning was by example. The teachers' concern for them was obvious to the pupils and, beyond the individual member of staff, the structure of pastoral support and richness of opportunity gave pupils the same message. There were, of course, individuals who did not want to behave well all the time; Mullion is a genuinely comprehensive school. But these individuals did not set the tone for lessons, let alone the school, thanks to its overall ethos.

### **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

#### **Weaknesses in the provision of information and communication technology are yet to be fully addressed**

22. Since the last inspection, the school has introduced some improvements in the provision of ICT. Many of these are very recent. Most teaching staff have benefited from up-to-date training; the remainder will have done so by Easter 2002. The computer room, library and design and technology (DT) area have better facilities and these are well used.

However, the school has not responded sufficiently to the issues raised in 1997 when the planning, assessment and monitoring of ICT were judged to need improvement. There remains no clear scheme for teaching the programmes of study prescribed by the National Curriculum. Consequently ICT has not been integrated effectively within the wider curriculum. Neither is there sufficient consistency in the use of level descriptions to provide reliable assessment of pupils' attainment at the end of key stages.

23. With the exception of Years 7 and 9, it is the policy to teach ICT exclusively through other subjects rather than in special ICT lessons and even those years do not receive a full year's teaching. The absence of a comprehensive scheme of work, clearly identifying subject responsibilities for explicit teaching, is a continuing weakness. There are no procedures capable of providing a clear view of what is taught to all pupils, and in which subjects. An audit of subject schemes has identified where ICT applications can be used in the course of teaching other subjects such as science, geography, English and mathematics. Some subjects directly teach aspects of the ICT Programmes of Study. For example, in GCSE English, pupils are taught to 'reflect on the impact of ICT within their lives and the lives of others' by formal debate of issues such as Internet security. Some other subjects are unable to contribute as much as they would like and there are some problems of access. Difficulties in the sharing of resources in the technology area limits the extent to which computers can be used in art.

24. Also, shortage of laboratory space in science affects the extent to which ICT can be taught by that department. This, and the lack of data-logging equipment, prevents them from meeting their ambitions for ICT teaching. Although many pupils successfully develop ICT skills through options such as modern languages, geography, and graphics, others do not. As a result, some pupils have enduring low skill levels that impede their learning. For example, some Year 10 pupils in a French lesson were seen struggling to lay out text only by means of the space bar and return key. Others were frustrated by their inability to distinguish between the functions of the delete and backspace keys, making a straightforward task unnecessarily difficult and a barrier rather than an aid to learning French.

25. The assessments of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 are not reliably based on pupils' work across all aspects of the programmes of study. A formal certification was introduced to provide an indication of which skills pupils demonstrated in their work but this has now been found unsuitable and abandoned. Levels ascribed to pupils' work by some teachers show that current practice is unreliable and provides poor assessment of the quality of pupils' work. The lack of an overview of pupils' achievements prevents them from receiving accurate guidance in improving their skills, knowledge or understanding. Combined with the shortcomings of curriculum planning in ICT, these omissions prevent effective monitoring of both provision and standards by the subject co-ordinator.

### **Standards in English have not improved as rapidly as standards in mathematics and science at Key Stage 3**

26. Over the last five years, the standards achieved by pupils in English at the school at Key Stage 3 have been generally above the national average, with one exception in 1998. At the same time, standards in mathematics and science have been well above average. Compared to similar schools, in 2000 results in English were broadly in line with those schools' results while science was well above them and mathematics very high. Indications for 2001 are of a widening of this gap between English and the other two core subjects, with the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level (5) in mathematics and science increasing to 85 and 86 per cent respectively, while English remains about the same at 69 per cent. An analysis of the number of pupils achieving particular levels over 2000 and

2001 reveals that about twice as many pupils stay at level 4 in English, or just below the expected standard for their age, as in the other two subjects.

27. Both the senior management and the English teachers are aware of this issue, but action so far has not resulted in the level of improvement that might have been hoped for. Some of the actions taken have been entirely appropriate and could be further built on. For example, the headteacher has monitored English work within the school and discussed this with the teachers at their departmental meetings.

28. The English team have themselves focussed on improvements at GCSE, and this has had some success, with an increase in the higher grades in line with most other subjects. At Key Stage 3 the English teachers have identified breadth of vocabulary and studying difficult texts as two problems that pupils have and there are individual targets and vocabulary worksheets to help pupils improve. A scrutiny of work from Year 9 and Year 11 did reveal that some pupils had difficulty in making informed comment on texts, while misspelling was quite common in some pupils' writing at Key Stage 3.

29. The school has made a start on implementing the National Literacy Strategy, which is of course designed precisely to address issues such as these. Not enough has yet been done in this regard, however. An audit has been started but not yet completed, while current management arrangements are not robust enough to take forward the strategy across the whole school with the determination that is needed. For example, the English department does not manage the literacy support, nor is it likely to manage cross-curricular literacy. Another real strength that could be built on is the availability of both teacher and teaching assistant support for less able pupils, thanks to the school's investment in this. The Literacy Strategy requires the creation of target groups of pupils for language improvement and, given the above, the school is better placed than many to put such a strategy in place.

30. The time available for English, at 13.3 per cent of the week, is good for most years. It is lower in Year 9, but supplemented by a "literacy" support lesson. This arrangement is neither sufficient nor robust enough to bring about the desired improvements in literacy. The school now sets pupils in English from Year 9, which has helped to raise standards. Year 7 programmes do not provide a fast enough start, as they are not sufficiently informed by the skills and knowledge pupils have acquired in primary school since the introduction of the literacy strategy. The summer school has begun to address this, but the lessons from it need to be carried forward into English teaching in Years 7 and 8.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

### **(1) Improve the provision for ICT, by:**

- producing a scheme of work, which meets national requirements and clarifies what should be taught at what stage;
- improving the skill levels of all pupils to appropriate standards;
- ensuring assessments are accurate and provide a realistic guide to what pupils can and cannot do;
- Monitoring and keeping a record of attainment in ICT.

(See paragraphs 22, 23, 24, 25)

### **(2) Improve the standards in English at Key Stage 3, by:**

- consistently monitoring teaching as well as pupils' work to raise standards;
- completing the audit for the Key Stage 3 strategy;
- bringing together the management of the literacy initiatives;



- reviewing the time available in Year 9;
- giving pupils a faster start in Year 7 through improved knowledge of pupils' literacy at Key Stage 2.

(See paragraphs 26, 27, 28, 29, 30)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	5	15	10	0	0	0
Percentage	0	17	50	33	0	0	0

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than 3 percentage points.*

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	539
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	50

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	28
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	83

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	23
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	6.4	School data	0.6

National comparative data	7.7
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National comparative data	1.1
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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
	2000	57	45	102

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	34	46	45
	Girls	36	34	34
	Total	70	80	79
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	70 (75)	78 (77)	77 (74)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	31 (37)	55 (52)	48 (38)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	37	45	46
	Girls	37	37	34
	Total	74	82	80
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	75 (81)	80 (79)	78 (81)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	41 (39)	48 (58)	42 (44)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	61	59	120

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	32	55	57
	Girls	47	57	59
	Total	79	112	116
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	66 (68)	93 (98)	97 (100)
	National	47 (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 per pupil	School	45 (48)
	National	38 (38)

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	1
Indian	1
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	522
Any other minority ethnic group	3

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian	1	
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	21	2
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	32.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.3

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	23
Total aggregate hours worked per week	593

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.6
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	23.8
Key Stage 4	17.9

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	1,509,324
Total expenditure	1,493,129
Expenditure per pupil	2,855
Balance brought forward from previous year	45,869
Balance carried forward to next year	62,064 <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This balance has intended to improve the school's learning resources, in which there was less investment in 1998 and 1999 as the priority was teachers.

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.7

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	527
Number of questionnaires returned	149

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	46	7	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	49	46	3	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	54	3	3	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	47	14	3	3
The teaching is good.	45	48	3	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	43	12	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	36	2	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	40	3	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	36	47	11	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	46	44	4	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	45	7	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	39	5	1	4

### **Other issues raised by parents**

The use of homework diaries