

INSPECTION REPORT

PRIORY SCHOOL

LEWES

LEA area: EAST SUSSEX

Unique reference number: 114598

Headteacher: Martyn Ofield

Reporting inspector: Grace Marriott
3674

Dates of inspection: 10th to 12th September

Inspection number: 192491

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Secondary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Mountfield Road Lewes East Sussex
Postcode:	BN7 2XD
Telephone number:	01273 476231
Fax number:	01273 486922
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Arr-Jones
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
3674	Grace Marriott	Registered inspector
19798	Jane O'Keefe	Lay inspector
28199	Peter Lawley	Team inspector
1292	Vera Foster	Team inspector
4617	Roslyn Fox	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

e-Qualitas, Langshaw, Pastens Road, Limpsfield Chart, Oxted, Surrey RH8 0RE

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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	10
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	14
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	16
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	16

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Priory is a larger than average 11-16 mixed comprehensive in Lewes, the county town of East Sussex. It has 1127 boys and girls on roll. They come from a very wide variety of backgrounds, though mostly from relatively advantaged rather than disadvantaged homes. The proportion entitled to free school meals is below average. Most students are of white UK heritage, with a few from other ethnic backgrounds and a very few students at an early stage of learning English. About twelve percent of students are on the special educational needs register. This is below average, though the proportion with statements is broadly average. The main special needs are dyslexia, hearing impairment and emotional and behavioural difficulties. When the students join the school their attainment in the core subjects has, until recently, been somewhat above average but as the average standards have risen nationally, the attainment of the current intake of students is closer to the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Priory is a successful school which has achieved Beacon School status. The teaching is good and students achieve standards that are much higher than most secondary schools. The curriculum is rich and the provision for the arts is particularly good. The school is very well managed. Governors, headteacher and senior managers have a clear view of the school's needs and realistic priorities. The school is providing good value for money.

What the school does well

- Students are achieving very good standards in English, mathematics and science in Years 7, 8 and 9 and very good GCSE results in English, mathematics, the humanities and modern languages
- The work in art, music, dance and drama is very good, as are the examination results
- The teaching is good overall and much of it is very good
- The school provides a broad, balanced and rich curriculum which includes a very good range of extra-curricular activities
- Staff at all levels provide good leadership and manage their responsibilities very well

What could be improved

- Standards in science, though comparable with English and mathematics in Years 7, 8 and 9, are not yet as good as these subjects at GCSE
- Some school policies and expectations are not being implemented consistently enough and in a few cases this affects standards of work or behaviour

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997. Since then it has achieved Beacon School status. The response to the last inspection was positive, with much of the development taking place in the last two years. Teaching has improved generally and GCSE results are higher. Teaching and standards in mathematics are much improved. The provision for lower attainers in Key Stage 4, and for vocational education, is better. The departmental reviews ensure a more systematic approach to marking and assessment. There is still a little too much inconsistency in the implementation of policies, for example those for homework and classroom management. Setting arrangements and good teaching help the most able students to achieve high standards. Other developments include a new management structure giving more responsibility to heads of department and heads of year. They are well supported by the senior management team. A new communication

policy has been developed in consultation with parents. Information and communications technology (ICT) facilities have been considerably improved. The school provides better support for students with behavioural difficulties. The changes to the school day have increased the time for tutorial work and are designed to improve lunchtime arrangements, though it is too soon to judge how successful this is.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations. *The point score is based on an A* being worth 8 points, A – 7, B – 6, C – 5, D – 4, E – 3, F – 2, G – 1*

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	B	A	A	A

Key		
well	above	A
average	above	B
average		C
below average		D
well	below	E
average		

In English and science in 2000, the results of the national tests taken in Year 9 were well above the national average and those of similar schools (those with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals). In mathematics, they were well above the national average, and very high compared with similar schools

GCSE results in 2000 were well above the national average and those of similar schools. When compared with the results the students achieved at the end of Year 9, GCSE results were better than most schools. Nearly two thirds of the year group achieved 5 or more A* to C grades and about half obtained 8 or more. Girls performed better than boys, but the gap between them was smaller than it was nationally. The school achieved the targets set for 2000. As the inspection was early in the Autumn Term the full 2001 national results were not available for comparison. The proportion of students achieving 5 or more A* to C grades was not quite as high as in 2000 but consistent with the previous work of this year group.

Results have improved over time, particularly in mathematics. Other subjects where results are much better than most schools are English, the humanities, modern languages and the arts. Science GCSE results, though better than the national average, have lagged behind the other core subjects. The school is working hard to change this and the significant improvement in the science Year 9 test results should begin to be seen in GCSE results. In all subjects, the work seen during the inspection was broadly consistent with the test and examination results except for science in Key Stage 4 where it was better. When test and examination results are compared with standards when students join the school in Year 7, it is clear that they are achieving well and many are doing very well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Students have generally positive attitudes to school. Most are well-motivated and want to succeed
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The majority of students behave well in lessons and around school
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good and students have many opportunities to take responsibility

Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average and unauthorised absence is lower than most other schools
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The vast majority of students are prepared to work and take part in all that the school has to offer. They are encouraged to be independent and show initiative, and their views are taken seriously. A few pupils are challenging in their behaviour and attitudes, but the staff work hard to ensure that they are not allowed to disrupt the education of other students. On a few occasions students were able to exploit inconsistencies between teachers in the way in they implemented school policies on behaviour and homework.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	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 teaching is good overall and slightly better than at the last inspection. All the teaching and learning in Key Stage 4 was satisfactory or better and eight out of every ten lessons were good or very good. In Key Stage 3 the teaching and learning was almost as good, with seven out of every ten lessons being good or very good. Teachers have good subject expertise and high expectations, particularly in Key Stage 4. They expect students to work hard. They assess the students' work carefully and set challenging, yet realistic, targets. The quality of questioning in lessons extends students' understanding and encourages them to think in depth. In the satisfactory teaching the approach was not as rigorous, expectations were not as high and students did not achieve as much. Some established teachers were not fully implementing school policies for homework or behaviour. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching resulted from new teachers not yet being fully familiar with the expectations of the school. The teaching in mathematics, science, art, music, drama and PE was consistently good and often very good. The teaching of English, modern languages and the humanities was mostly good. In design and technology the teaching in food technology was very good, the teaching of resistant materials was satisfactory. In ICT, the specialist teaching was very effective and the non-specialist was satisfactory. The school teaches literacy and numeracy skills well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides students with a wide range of experiences and opportunities in all areas of the curriculum
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for special educational needs is satisfactory overall with strengths in the early identification of students' special needs and in the support provided in the learning and behaviour support centres
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school has few pupils at an early stage of learning English. They are well supported and make good progress
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural	Very good overall. The opportunities for cultural development are excellent, those for social and moral development are very good. For spiritual development

development	they are satisfactory
How well the school cares for its pupils	The pastoral care systems are well organised and sensitive to pupils' needs

The relationship with most parents is sound and they have been consulted recently over communication and school uniform. Parents receive termly interim reports and an annual report, and attend a consultation meeting, to keep them informed about how well their children are doing. Despite the school's best efforts, a minority of parents are not satisfied with the education the school provides.

The curriculum is exceptionally broad. GCSE options include three modern languages, Latin, separate or combined science, classical studies, dance, drama and photography. The range of vocational courses has increased and all students in Key Stage 4 are taking an ICT qualification. The creative and expressive arts feature strongly and very many students take part in extra-curricular activities in these areas and in sport. Concerts, plays, field studies, residential visits and a very wide range of visits and visitors enrich the students' experience. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils have access to the curriculum and activities. The school has recently improved assessment by linking targets and grading systems more closely to the National Curriculum levels. The support for students with special educational needs is good in the learning or behaviour support centres. Support in class is more variable. Where subject teachers work closely with support assistants the students benefit greatly, but teachers do not always deploy support staff as effectively as they could.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and senior management team provide good leadership and manage the school very well. They have a clear view of priorities and the skills to implement the plans successfully
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well informed about the work of the school and involved well in strategic management
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has implemented a programme of systematic review of its work which is having a good effect on improving the quality of education
The strategic use of resources	This is good; the school works hard to maximise the use of all resources

The school is very well managed at all levels. The changes to the management structure have given heads of department and heads of year more responsibility for ensuring that the school delivers a high quality education. Together with senior managers they monitor and evaluate work thoroughly and work well with subject teachers and tutors to try to ensure the consistent implementation of school policies. The staff are well aware of the need to deploy all resources efficiently and apply the principles of best value rigorously. The short-term targets the school has set are realistic, and the long-term targets are ambitious, but achievable.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

.What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good teaching • Students like school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework • How closely the school works with

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students make good progress • The range of activities 	<p>parents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well parents are kept informed • Behaviour
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The parents' response to the meeting and questionnaire must be treated with considerable caution as the 10% return is low and only 30 parents attended the meeting. The inspection team agreed with the parents' broadly positive views. The team felt that there was scope for rather more consistency in the setting of homework and in implementing expectations for behaviour, though neither of these is unsatisfactory. The school is as concerned as parents to ensure that expectations are high in these areas. The school does much more than is legally required to keep parents informed about their children's progress. Staff are committed to working as closely as possible with parents. The recent changes arising from the consultation on communication should help to ensure that there is a good two-way flow of information.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Students are achieving very good standards in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 3 and very good GCSE results in English, mathematics, the humanities and modern languages

1. When the students join the school their attainment in the core subjects has, until recently, been somewhat above average, but as the average standards have risen nationally, the current intake of students is closer to the national average. In the tests taken in Year 9 the results in 2000 were well above the national average and the results of similar schools, in English and science. In mathematics, they were well above average nationally and very high when compared with similar schools. Over three quarters of the students are achieving Level 5 or better in all three subjects. In mathematics over half achieved the higher Level 6. In English almost half achieved Level 6 and in science just over a third did so. These results are between fifteen and twenty per cent higher than most schools at both Level 5 and Level 6. Only in the very highest grades are there any significant differences between the subjects. The proportion of students achieving Level 7 was much better than the national average in English and mathematics and close to the national average in science. In all three subjects the more able pupils are achieving results consistent with their ability, and pupils with average and below average attainment on entry are generally doing better than might have been expected.
2. The school's results at GCSE in 2000 were well above both the national average and the results of similar schools. In English, mathematics, history, geography, religious education, the arts, classics, and modern languages around seventy per cent of the students entered achieved an A* to C grade. This is significantly higher than the national average in all these subjects and is an important reason why a high proportion of Priory students achieve 5 or more A* to C grades. Results have improved over time, particularly in mathematics which was a weakness at the time of the last inspection.
3. Students are achieving well in both key stages and many are achieving very well both in Key Stage 3 and at GCSE, to a large extent because the teaching is good and most students are well motivated. They want to succeed. In English, the emphasis on developing good literacy skills has not been at the expense of pupils' creativity or the study of a wide range of literature. Pupils learn to express themselves well, both orally and on paper, on a good range of topics and issues. By Year 11 their work is thoughtful and mature. In mathematics, a good action plan rigorously implemented, accurate target setting, more focused and challenging teaching, improved setting arrangements, and an emphasis on numeracy from the start of Key Stage 3 have all combined to raise achievement. Students now do better in mathematics than they do in most other subjects. In science, the students show increasingly good levels of knowledge and understanding. They respond well to the targets set. In modern languages the way in which students and teachers consistently use French, German or Spanish throughout the lessons, particularly in Years 10 and 11, develops skills and confidence. The quality of assessment in the humanities and the opportunities for field work help students to produce course work of a high standard.
4. When compared with the results this year group achieved at the end of Year 9, GCSE results were above average in terms of both the proportion of pupils achieving 5 A* to C grades (63%)

and the average point score (45). About half the year group obtained 8 or more GCSE grades A* to C. Girls performed better than boys but the gap between the two groups was smaller than it was nationally. The school achieved the targets set for 2000. As the inspection was very early in the Autumn Term the full 2001 national results were not available for comparison and the school had not fully completed its own detailed analysis of results. The proportion of students achieving 5 or more A* to C grades was not quite as high as in 2000 but consistent with the previous work of this year group.

The work in art, music, dance and drama is very good, as are the examination results.

5. The arts make a very substantial contribution to the success of the school and the quality of education it provides for its students. Standards are high and unlike many schools, the numbers taking these subjects at GCSE are significant. 90 pupils were entered for art, and almost thirty for music or drama in 2000. Over three quarters of students who took GCSE in art, music or drama obtained an A* to C pass. In art, almost a fifth of the students achieved an A* and a third achieved an A grade. In music and drama about a third achieved an A or an A*. The school is currently applying for Arts College status.
6. The standards achieved reflect the quality of teaching in these subjects and the considerable amount of time and effort teachers and students are prepared to give to the work, both in and out of lessons, from Year 7 onwards. In an outstanding drama lesson, the level of challenge from the teacher resulted in a high level of intellectual commitment from the students. In a very good dance lesson in Year 7, the teacher used her own performance skills to demonstrate to students how they could achieve a particular sequence of movement. The students responded with enthusiasm and in a short time made real progress. The staff in these areas work well together which ensures that standards are consistently high. Observation of two very good art lessons with parallel groups in Year 11 and the quality of work in the third group, showed that the students in each group were developing skills of a high order.
7. The number of students taking these subjects at GCSE, and taking part in the extra-curricular activities, reflect their popularity and the students' appreciation of what is on offer. A large number of students from Year 7 to Year 11 have instrumental music tuition and play in the orchestra or one of the bands. School plays, concerts and musical productions involve many students in performing, working backstage or managing the front of house. This gives them very valuable experience, which in turn benefits their studies and helps their personal development. The school takes every opportunity to exploit the rich professional resources of London and the south east of England. For example, links with the education department at Glyndebourne are strong and students are regularly taken to exhibitions in art galleries, and to theatres and concerts in London.

The teaching is good overall and much of it is very good

8. The teaching is good overall and much of it is very good. It is slightly better than at the last inspection. All the teaching in Key Stage 4 was satisfactory or better and eight out of every ten lessons were good or very good. In Key Stage 3 the teaching was almost as good, with seven out of every ten lessons good or very good. Staff have good subject expertise and high expectations, particularly in Key Stage 4. At all stages in the school they assess the students' work carefully and set challenging yet realistic targets which are shared with students. They also use the information gained from assessment to modify their planning. The day-to-day marking, though

regular, is not quite as effective and in some subjects students could be given more guidance on how to improve their work. The good and very good teaching is leading to pupils achieving higher standards. The gaining of Beacon School status has also enabled the staff at Priory to strengthen links with other schools and share their expertise, which benefits all involved.

9. The teaching in mathematics, science, art, music, drama and PE was consistently good and often very good. The teaching of English, modern languages and the humanities was mostly good. In design and technology, the teaching in food technology was very good, the teaching of resistant materials was satisfactory. In ICT the specialist teaching was very effective and the non-specialist was satisfactory. Other subjects are increasing the amount of use of appropriate ICT applications as more facilities have become available. The planning for this is incorporated well into the subject planning.
10. Teachers expect students to work hard and develop their knowledge skills and understanding to a high level. The quality of questioning and discussion in lessons extends students' understanding and encourages them to think in depth. Students are encouraged to think for themselves and test their ideas in discussion. In a very good food technology lesson in Year 9 the teacher made very good use of students' knowledge to extend and develop their skills. In a very good mathematics lesson the teacher made her expectations for the lesson very clear to students so that they knew exactly what to do. The work was well matched to the needs of the class and challenged the higher attaining pupils.
11. In the satisfactory lessons, staff were not as rigorous, their expectations were not as high and students did not achieve as much. On a few occasions in lessons which were otherwise good, some established staff were not fully implementing school policies for homework or behaviour, for example not insisting on students writing down the homework so that it would appear that none had been set, or allowing students to determine classroom organisation. The unsatisfactory lessons (one in English and one in modern languages) were not typical. They arose from new staff not yet being fully familiar with the expectations of the school and a few pupils exploiting this. The school teaches literacy and numeracy skills well. In addition to the work done in English and mathematics, key words are a feature of the work in most subjects and geography, science and design and technology all make a substantial contribution to developing students' numeracy skills. As a result, students written work is more accurate and they have more confidence in their computational skills,

The school provides a rich and varied curriculum which includes a very good range of extra-curricular activities

12. The curriculum was described as good in the last report and has improved further since then. It is unusually broad, balanced and provides a very good range of educational experiences and opportunities which reflect both the national requirements and the needs and interests of students. As part of this, extending and enriching the curriculum through extra-curricular activities for all students is seen as important. The school works hard to ensure that all students have access to the curriculum and other activities. The criticisms made in the last inspection report have largely been dealt with effectively. Since the last inspection the school has reviewed its policy for organising teaching groups and in mathematics, the move away from an express stream to wider setting has raised expectations for what all students can achieve and helped to raise standards. The use of ICT in other subjects is increasing rapidly as the facilities have expanded. More time is given to the subject

in Key Stage 3, and in Key Stage 4, all students are taking the foundation GNVQ course in ICT.

13. In both key stages, the provision for the performing and expressive arts is very good. Students study art, music, dance and drama in Key Stage 3. All these subjects are options for GCSE with the addition of media studies and photography. The structure of the option blocks provides considerable flexibility. Students can take three sciences, they can choose from three modern languages and Latin and, if they wish, continue to take two humanities subjects. All students do a short course in religious education. Vocational provision has been extended and a number of students for whom a full GCSE course would not be suitable, follow a work related course which includes regular work experience and a Foundation Level GNVQ in Leisure and Tourism. The school curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education through careers education and PSHE. The vast majority move on to further education when they leave at the end of Year 11.
14. The provision for students who have special educational needs is well planned. The school has a hearing impaired unit on site and these students are very well integrated into the mainstream school. The SENCO liaises effectively with the primary schools and arrangements are made for Year 6 primary schools pupils with special needs to spend additional time in school in the summer term before they start at Priory so that the process of settling in is easier. The Learning Support Department places considerable emphasis on improving literacy skills and pupils are withdrawn if necessary for good additional help. The learning support assistants also provide considerable support in class. This is most effective when the support assistant knows what is planned for a lesson and what she or he can do to support individuals or groups of students. It is less effective when the subject teacher has not given enough thought to the most effective deployment of an assistant and too much is left to that person's own initiative. The behaviour support unit is a relatively new development. It is well managed and beginning to have a significant impact on the school's ability to keep students whose behaviour is challenging in school and help them to improve both their behaviour and their chances of success academically, socially and in employment.
15. The school provides an exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular activities, including a range of sports and leisure activities, music, dance, drama and subject based clubs all of which help extend the students' experience and support their academic work. The school regularly wins a regional public speaking competition and many students win sporting honours and local, county or national level. The extensive range of visits undertaken to places of interest, including field work and study visits abroad, and the wide range of visitors invited into the school, enrich the curriculum.
16. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is very good overall. The provision for cultural education is excellent. Work in the arts and in subjects such as English, history and religious education introduce students to the cultural heritage and traditions of this country and many others. The wide range of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, show initiative and work together to develop their interests means that social development is very good. For example, all Year 11 students are given a duty or a responsibility for an aspect of school life. Moral education is also strongly emphasised. Students are encouraged to be independent and think for themselves, but at the same time to realise that their actions have consequences and that they should show respect and consideration for others. Spiritual development is at least satisfactory and the work in the creative and expressive arts, English and the humanities give students the opportunity to consider spiritual questions, often at a mature level. The more formal occasions,

such as year group assemblies, are not as effective in promoting spiritual development. The headteacher is aware of this and has begun to consult with students about how to improve the quality of assemblies and in particular make better use of the school chapel. The school is also not meeting statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship for all students.

Staff at all levels provide good leadership and manage their responsibilities very well

17. The headteacher and senior staff work very well as a team to provide good leadership and a very clear sense of direction for the school. They are not complacent about standards and are strongly committed to maintaining and, where possible, improving the quality of education. The short-term targets they have set are realistic, and the long-term targets are ambitious but achievable. The senior management team has set the long-term target of over 70% of students achieving five or more A* to C grades at GCSE and is aiming to see the school in the top five per cent of schools nationally.
18. The school is very well managed at all levels. The changes to the management structure were well thought out. They have given staff at middle management level, that is the heads of department and heads of year, more responsibility for ensuring that the school delivers a high quality education. The line management structure and new departmental review system are effective. The middle managers have a clear understanding of their management responsibilities and the need to ensure that action planning for departments and year groups reflects whole school aims and priorities. They feel well-supported and also that they are consulted and have a significant input into setting priorities. They, together with the senior management team, thoroughly monitor and evaluate teaching and learning and work well with subject teachers and tutors to raise standards. They are aware of the need to achieve rather more consistency in implementing school policies and are supportive of the school's efforts to achieve this.
19. The governing body is active and well-informed. They take their responsibilities seriously and newly appointed governors spend a day in school shadowing a group of pupils. The governors have a clear view of the difference between the role of governors in setting the strategic direction of the school and that of the headteacher and staff in managing it. Governors monitor and evaluate the school's work very effectively through committees, regular visits and reports and careful scrutiny of test and examination results. They have been fully involved in the discussions and the decision to apply for Arts College status.
20. The systems and procedures for financial management are good. The links between development planning, school priorities and the budget are explicit and budget holders are expected to maximise the use of funding. Resources are well targeted towards achieving educational objectives. Grants for specific purposes such as provision for pupils with special educational needs and in-service training for staff are properly and very effectively used. The support staff play a major role in the smooth running of the school. Teaching and non-teaching staff are well aware of the need to deploy all resources efficiently and apply the principles of best value rigorously.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in science, though comparable with English and mathematics at Key Stage 3, are not yet as good as these subjects at GCSE

21. Science results at GCSE, though exceeding the national average by about 10%, have lagged behind the other core subjects. However, the recently appointed head of department has implemented an action plan which has been effective in a relatively short space of time. Standards have risen significantly in Years 7, 8 and 9. This is now being seen in the results of the Year 9 national tests where, in the last two years, over 70% of students have achieved a Level 5 or above. The proportion of students achieving Level 6 and 7 in Year 9 is well above the national average and the results of similar schools. As these pupils move into Year 10 and 11, the results of the changes should begin to be seen in improved GCSE examination performance.
22. The effect of the action plan has been to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and science teaching is good. As in other subjects the emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills and the increasing use of ICT is contributing to the improved standard of work. Schemes of work have been re-written for Key Stage 4, with more emphasis on work being matched accurately to the attainment of different groups of students. A student tracking and monitoring system has been put into place in both key stages. This is used to set targets which are shared with all students. This makes it easier for teachers to see how much progress the students are making and where the work needs to be modified or the level of challenge raised to meet individual needs. It helps students to know what they should be aiming for and what they need to do to improve.

Some school policies and expectations are not being implemented consistently enough and in a few cases this affects standards

23. Relationships between students and staff are generally good. In most lessons staff make their expectations for work and behaviour explicit. They explain lesson objectives clearly and implement school policies consistently, without loss of individuality or creativity in their teaching. They are able to create a good working atmosphere in lessons and give students opportunities to develop their thinking and express their ideas and they respond well to this approach.
24. In a few otherwise good lessons, expectations were not always made clear enough and teachers were not consistent enough in applying school policies. This gives students scope to exploit differences and makes it more difficult for new or less experienced staff to insist that students comply with reasonable expectations for work or behaviour. This causes unnecessary friction and can get in the way of learning. Similarly, if all staff do not implement the school's code of behaviour it becomes more difficult to achieve the high standards the school expects. On a few occasions around the school, some established staff were not consistently following the school's expectations, for example in enforcing the one-way system in corridors.
25. The school's expectations for homework are made clear to all students and staff and in general homework is set regularly and staff check that it is done. The best practice is where departments have incorporated homework into their subject planning so that it is set virtually automatically. There are times though when a few

staff are not consistent enough in the amount or frequency with which they set homework, or do not insist that homework is written down in diaries. This can be exploited by less motivated or committed students.

26. The governors and senior management team are aware of the need to achieve greater consistency over classroom routines, behaviour and homework. One or more senior managers is always on duty and they are providing good support for staff. The effect of the investment in the behaviour support unit and in training for staff in behaviour management is being seen in more consistent expectations. The monitoring of lessons is helping to establish school expectations more securely and in relation to homework, departments are including monitoring homework in their action plans. The changes to the structure of the school day are designed to give tutors more time with their tutor groups and they should be able to monitor homework more effectively. The changes to the lunch hour are designed to improve the atmosphere in the dining hall and reduce the scope for disruptive behaviour by reducing the number of students around the ground and buildings. It is too early to assess the overall effectiveness of these measures but the approach is sensible and the atmosphere at lunch time was pleasant.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The headteacher, governors and staff have a good programme of school improvement, which is constantly being refined. Science is already a high priority, as are continuing to improve teaching and ensuring that school policies and expectations are consistently implemented.

- (1) Implement as rapidly as possible the action plan for improving science and raising standards at GCSE to the very good levels being achieved in English and mathematics;

Paragraph 22

- (2) Ensure that school policies and expectations for classroom management, behaviour, and homework are made as explicit as possible and that their implementation is monitored to eliminate inconsistencies.

Paragraphs 24, 25

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	40
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	12	17	8	2	0	0
Percentage	2.5	30	42.5	20	5		

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1127
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	94

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	20
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	135

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	29

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.6
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	1.1

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for 1999-2000

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	123	104	227

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	86	96	94
	Girls	88	83	82
	Total	174	179	176
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	77 (78)	79 (78)	78 (75)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	43 (48)	61 (55)	43 (37)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	94	96	78
	Girls	94	86	79
	Total	188	182	157
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	84 (80)	81 (81)	69 (80)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	50 (50)	62 (60)	50 (48)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

Percentages in brackets refer to 1999

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	102	119	221

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	59	92	98
	Girls	80	111	115
	Total	139	203	213
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	63 (62)	92 (92)	96 (98)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

Percentages in brackets refer to 1999

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	45
	National	38.4

Figures in brackets refer to 1999

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	0
	National	N/A

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	5
Chinese	1
White	887
Any other minority ethnic group	31

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	74	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: Y 7– Y 11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	66.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17

Education support staff: Y 7– Y 11

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	414

Deployment of teachers: Y 7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.9
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Average teaching group size: Y 7 – Y 11

Key Stage 3	26
Key Stage 4	22.9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	2757198
Total expenditure	3011838
Expenditure per pupil	2647
Balance brought forward from previous year	220334
Balance carried forward to next year	204580

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	21.9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	20.7

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1127
Number of questionnaires returned	115

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	32	50	12	4	1
My child is making good progress in school.	37	47	13	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	8	59	13	14	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	12	43	34	10	2
The teaching is good.	21	63	11	2	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	51	16	10	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	38	41	15	3	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	31	50	15	2	3
The school works closely with parents.	19	48	20	12	0
The school is well led and managed.	19	54	11	9	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	18	59	11	7	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	42	14	4	9