

# INSPECTION REPORT

## MYTON SCHOOL

Warwick

LEA area: Warwickshire

Unique reference number: 125767

Headteacher: Mr Ian Hecks

Reporting inspector: Mr R. Palmer  
31198

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> March 2001

Inspection number: 192861

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11 to 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Myton Road Warwick
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J. Atkinson
Date of previous inspection:	25 <sup>th</sup> November 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Myton School is a co-educational, foundation comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 to 19 years serving the towns of Leamington Spa and Warwick. It is larger than other secondary schools nationally and is oversubscribed in all years. In January 2001, there were 1560 pupils on roll, including 244 in the sixth form, compared with 1471 at the time of the previous inspection in 1996. The surrounding area is economically advantaged, but pupils attending the school come from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. The attainment of pupils in the current Years 7 to 9 was slightly above average when they entered the school at the age of 11; each intake contains fewer than expected pupils of the highest levels of attainment. Students entering the sixth form are of above average attainment overall and include a few who transfer from other schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (seven per cent) is below the national average. The number (12.7 per cent) of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high, but very few are at an early stage of learning English. A very high proportion of pupils, 20 per cent, are of ethnic minority background. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (16 per cent) is average and most of these have moderate learning difficulties. The number of pupils (0.5 percent) who have statements of special educational needs is well below average.

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

Myton School is a very good school. The excellent leadership of the headteacher and the very good leadership and support provided by the governing body and senior staff are significant factors in the school's very good progress since its last inspection in 1996. Results in GCSE examinations are well above average and have improved faster than the national trend. A-level results have risen from just above the national average to well above. Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 3 and very good progress in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Within a very caring environment, pupils respond very well to the high expectations set for them, work hard, achieve very well and enjoy their learning. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall and is a significant strength. The school has considerably more strengths than weaknesses, manages its resources very well and provides very good value for money. The sixth form is cost effective.

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

- Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 3 and very good progress throughout Key Stage 4. GCSE results are consistently well above the national average and continue to improve.
- The very good teaching and pupils' very positive attitudes to their work ensure that pupils achieve very well.
- The excellent leadership and management of the headteacher, with very good support from senior staff and the governors, set a very clear direction for the school, provide a very good climate for learning and have achieved considerable improvements.
- In the sixth form, standards are well above average and the quality of education is very good.

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

- Results in mathematics and science are above national averages at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 and are improving. However, pupils should achieve higher standards in these two subjects. A-level results should also be higher in mathematics, biology, physics and French.
- The use of pupils' individual education plans does not effectively ensure that pupils with special educational needs always receive work that is appropriate to their individual learning needs.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made very good progress since its last inspection in November 1996. It has consolidated its previous strengths, particularly in teaching and learning, which are now very good. GCSE and A-level results, which were already above average, have improved further and have been well above the national averages in all of the last three years. Leadership and management continue to be very effective in setting a clear direction and achieve very good improvements through rigorous and frequent reviews of all aspects of the school's performance. Progress has been very good in dealing with the four key issues identified in the last inspection, which referred to the need for higher standards in a few subjects, improvements in the provision for lower-attaining pupils, better procedures for assessing pupils' work and more effective curricular planning. Parents justifiably continue to hold the school in high regard. The school has the capacity and the shared commitment to improve further.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 and 18 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	B
A-levels/AS-levels	A	A	A	

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average   E

Results in the national tests for 14-year-olds over the last three years have been well above the national average and have improved in line with the national trend. In 2000, results were well above the national average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Results in English were well above those achieved by similar schools; results in mathematics and science matched those of similar schools. Boys and girls achieved well above their respective national averages.

GCSE results have improved much faster than the national trend and over the last three years have been consistently well above the national average. Results are above the average achieved by similar schools. Girls achieve higher results than boys, but this is not significant when compared with the situation nationally. Comparing pupils' average total points score in GCSE examinations in 2000 with their prior attainment in Key Stage 3 national tests, achievement was well above the average for schools with similar levels of prior attainment. GCSE results at grades A\*-C in 2000 were above expectations based on pupils' prior achievement in most subjects but were below expectations in mathematics and science. GCSE results in 2000, compared with pupils' prior attainment in the Key Stage 2 national tests taken when they were 11, indicate good progress in English and mathematics and satisfactory progress in science. Results in A level examinations are well above national averages. Taking into account pupils' prior attainment in GCSE examinations these results represent at least good progress in most subjects but students' A-level results have been below expectations recently in mathematics, biology, physics and French.

Achievement is good by the end of Key Stage 3 and very good by the end of Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Standards of work seen were above average in Key Stage 3 and well above average in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. Gifted and talented pupils, pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils of minority ethnic background all make good progress by the end of Key Stage 3 and very good progress by the end of Key Stage 4 and the sixth form.

The school sets suitably challenging targets for improvements in external examinations and achieved its targets in 2000.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are proud of their school, work hard and are eager to learn. They readily participate in the wide range of activities provided.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good, both in class and around the school. Pupils are extremely polite and friendly. They move around in a mature and orderly way, showing self-discipline and consideration for others.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships among pupils and between teachers and pupils are excellent. Personal development is very good. Pupils respect the views of other people and are very sensitive to the needs of others.
Attendance	Attendance is above average. Unauthorised absence is average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	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 quality of both teaching and learning is very good overall. The teaching was at least satisfactory in all of the lessons seen; it was good or better in 88 per cent and very good or better in 43 per cent of lessons seen. The overall quality of teaching seen in Key Stages 3 and 4 was good in English, mathematics and science. The teaching of literacy is very good across the school and the teaching of numeracy is good. Pupils with special educational needs are generally well taught but in a few subjects teachers make insufficient use of the individual education plans to set appropriate targets for learning and the pace of learning is sometimes too quick for a few pupils. Pupils of all levels of attainment, including the high-attaining pupils and those of minority ethnic background, are very well taught in most subjects. Teachers manage their classes well, use their very good knowledge of the specialist subject to enthuse the pupils and make very effective use of assessment to help pupils to improve their learning. Lessons are very well planned to ensure a fast pace of learning. The quantity and quality of homework set are appropriate and help pupils to consolidate and extend their learning. Pupils acquire very good skills, knowledge and understanding in most subjects and generally know whether they are doing well enough. They work hard, concentrate well and are keen to learn.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and satisfies statutory requirements. Many pupils enhance their learning through an outstanding and wide-ranging programme of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall, but a few teachers make insufficient use of the individual education plans to ensure that work for these pupils is always at an appropriate level of difficulty. Provision in the sixth form is very good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 3 and very good progress in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. They have equal access to all aspects of school life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' social development is excellent; provision for personal, moral and cultural development is very good and that for spiritual development is good. Pupils readily accept responsibility and generously support charitable causes.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The quality of care is very good. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is very good. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are very effective.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. He is very well supported by other senior managers. Together, they very effectively plan and successfully manage improvements, particularly in raising pupils' levels of achievement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors carry out their duties very effectively. They monitor progress rigorously and set very demanding targets for improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Management has a clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses. The development plan has good targets for improvement. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are effective in further improving the quality of teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Very careful planning linked to the school's priorities ensures that the school is well resourced. The school applies the principles of best value to its spending decisions.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils are expected to work hard and they make good progress.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good. Pupils are helped to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Parents can easily discuss any problems with the school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework set is inconsistent.</li> <li>• Some feel that they receive insufficient information about pupils' progress.</li> <li>• Some say that the school does not work closely enough with parents</li> </ul>

Inspection findings strongly support all of parents' positive comments. Inspectors agree that there is some inconsistency in the amount of homework set. The homework policy is an appropriate one; for the most part the quality and amount of homework set are good, often including suitably challenging investigative tasks. However, homework is not always given in accordance with the homework timetable and occasionally pupils are not made to complete missing homework. Inspectors do not agree with those parents who say that there is insufficient information about pupils' progress or with those who feel that the school's links with parents are not close. Parents receive generally good information about pupils' progress and the school's links with parents are good. The school works closely with parents to resolve any issues that may arise. The 'target-setting' day to which parents are invited in December is effective in keeping parents aware of pupils' achievements and potential. Well-attended consultation evenings and termly and annual reports keep parents well informed about pupils' progress. The planning diaries are a further and effective means of communication between home and school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 3 and very good progress throughout Key Stage 4. GCSE results are consistently well above the national average and continue to improve.**

1. Pupils' attainment is slightly above average when they enter the school at the age of eleven. By the end of Year 9, results in National Curriculum tests are well above average and by the end of Year 11 pupils' results in GCSE examinations are well above the national average. This represents very good progress.

2. Results in the national tests for 14-year-olds over the last three years have been well above the national average and have improved in line with the national trend. In 2000, the school's results were above those achieved by similar schools, as defined by the number of pupils entitled to receive free school meals. Results, based on average points scored, were well above the national average in English and mathematics and above average in science.

3. In 2000, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of six and above in the national tests for 14-year-olds was well above average in English, and above average in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, the proportion reaching level six and above was well above average in English, average in mathematics and below average in science. The overall results for boys and girls were well above their respective, separate national averages.

4. GCSE results have improved much faster than the national trend and over the last three years have been consistently well above the national average. The rising trend over the last few years represents very good achievement because the school's results started from a higher position than that of most schools. The school achieved its best ever GCSE results at grades A\*-C in 2000 when 63 per cent of pupils achieved these grades.

5. GCSE results are above the average achieved by similar schools. Girls achieve higher results than boys, but this is not significant when compared with the situation nationally. Comparing pupils' average total points score in GCSE examinations in 2000 with their prior attainment in Key Stage 3 national tests, achievement was well above the average for schools with similar levels of prior attainment. GCSE results at grades A\*-C in 2000 were well above expectations, based on previous achievement, in most subjects. GCSE results in 2000, compared with pupils' prior attainment in the Key Stage 2 national tests taken when they were 11 indicate good progress in English and mathematics and satisfactory progress in science. Outstanding GCSE results were achieved in English literature in which a well-above-average number, 77 per cent, of all pupils of Year 11 age achieved a grade at A\*-C level.

6. In the previous inspection the performance of high attaining pupils was below expectations in French, geography, religious education and art and design. Very good progress has been made in dealing with this shortcoming. In 2000, GCSE results at grades A\*-C were significantly above average in French and art and design and above average in geography. The proportion of candidates achieving grades A\* and A was high at more than 25 per cent in art and design and French and good at 14 per cent in geography. Only seven pupils entered religious studies, two of whom achieved a GCSE pass at grade A.

7. Pupils' achievement is good by the end of Key Stage 3 and very good by the end of Key Stage 4. Standards of work seen were above average in Key Stage 3 and well above

average in Key Stage 4. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school as shown by the high proportion, 96 per cent, of pupils who achieved at least five GCSE grades A\*-G in 2000. Gifted and talented pupils make very good progress overall. The proportion of A\* grades achieved in GCSE examinations has increased in all of the past four years. Other pupils of all levels of prior attainment make at least good progress by the end of Key Stage 3 and very good progress by the end of Key Stage 4.

8. A particular strength of the school is the very good progress and achievement of pupils of minority ethnic background. This is shown through the results achieved in 2000 by the school's 37 pupils of minority ethnic background in Year 11 who sat the GCSE examinations for English, mathematics and science. When these pupils entered the school their overall attainment in all three subjects was well below that of the other pupils. By the end of Year 9 their results in national tests showed that they had closed the gap but that their attainment was below that of the other pupils in English and well below in mathematics and science. In the GCSE examinations in 2000 these pupils of minority ethnic background achieved significantly better results than the other pupils in English and science and achieved better results in mathematics.

9. Standards in literacy are well above average and assist pupils' learning in all subjects. Standards in numeracy and in ICT are good and help pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in many subjects.

10. The school sets challenging targets for improvements in external examinations and achieved its targets in 2000.

**The very good teaching and pupils' very positive attitudes to their work ensure that pupils achieve very well.**

11. The quality of both teaching and learning is very good overall. The teaching was at least satisfactory in all of the lessons seen; it was good or better in 88 per cent and very good or better in 43 per cent of lessons seen. The overall quality of teaching seen in Key Stages 3 and 4 was good in English, mathematics and science.

12. In the large majority of classes, pupils learn effectively because lessons are well structured, teachers have high expectations and the pace of the lesson is suitably fast. Usually, teachers explain the aims of the lesson and ensure that these are well understood by the pupils. Quick, but thorough revision of previous work then follows, aided by probing questions and relevant discussion. In lessons where teaching was less than good, the teacher tended to do most of the work, pupils did not feel able to participate actively and occasionally the work was of inappropriate levels of difficulty for all pupils.

13. Pupils with special educational needs are generally well taught. However, in a few subjects, teachers do not always make enough use of the individual education plans to provide work of suitable levels of difficulty. Pupils of all other levels of attainment, including the high-attaining pupils and those of minority ethnic background, are very well taught in most subjects. In a very good and well-planned history lesson in Year 11, the teacher used questions of differing degrees of difficulty to involve and challenge a wide range of pupils and succeeded in getting pupils to think carefully about their work. He ensured that pupils learned from their mistakes and provided very good feedback to pupils about their answers. The pace of learning was suitably brisk throughout the lesson and pupils showed a good ability to extract appropriate information from the text. Relationships between the teacher and the class were very good, professional and with a touch of humour. Pupils who speak English as an additional language were fully integrated, made a very positive contribution to the lesson and their learning was at least as good as that of other pupils in the class. These pupils were

very enthusiastic and showed very good levels of concentration; they worked hard, listened well and were not afraid to give their opinions.

14. Teachers manage their classes well and use their very good knowledge of the specialist subject to enthuse the pupils. Most lessons are very well planned to ensure a fast pace of learning. In an outstanding psychology lesson in Year 12 the teacher used his very good subject knowledge expertly and made very effective use of an introductory question and answer session to review previous learning. He made the learning fun for the students. This generated a very good response from the students, who proceeded to show a very good understanding of various psychological systems. Through the very effective use of a stress response test, students became aware of the mis-match between perception and coping strategies. The teacher reinforced the students' understanding and previous knowledge of the topics being studied and skilfully enabled them to use their own experiences to assist their learning. Students were made to think deeply about the subject. The teacher used a series of very challenging activities that set out to drip-feed information that would affect their stress levels. This had the result of giving students a very good insight into their own reactions and an excellent understanding of the cause and effect in stress. The activities motivated students very well through personal and group involvement and, through the use of a practical investigation, they could relate theory to practice. When a student found difficulty in following all the stages of the argument, particularly when there was much complex information to assimilate, the teacher successfully used different methods to get the points across. During this lesson the learning was enhanced through very good use of well prepared displays projected from a lap top computer to a screen.

15. Marking is good overall. In English, teachers' marking is of a particularly high order and is a significant factor in helping pupils to improve and to achieve well above average results in external examinations such as GCSE. Teachers of English provide pupils with detailed and very helpful suggestions about how to raise standards; they carefully and thoroughly evaluate units of work in all years and proceed to set suitably challenging targets for pupils.

16. The teaching of literacy is very good across the school. Pupils' standards of speaking, listening, reading and writing are very good and teachers encourage them to use their skills in literacy to enhance their work in all subjects. Pupils answer questions eagerly in class and can discuss their work sensibly and articulately. Teachers help pupils to learn the meaning and spelling of key words. In a Year 10 science class, the teacher made sure that pupils not only understood the terminology of the subject but also correctly applied the rules of grammar and used appropriate structures for sentences. In a Year 8 mathematics lesson, the teacher asked pupils to give careful definitions of words they were using. In many classrooms, the displays of key words and of rules for punctuation and grammar are well used to encourage pupils to write accurately.

17. The teaching of numeracy is good but is not as well developed as that of literacy. Pupils use their good and often very good mathematical skills well in many subjects. In a Year 13 physics lesson, students used their skills in numeracy confidently and competently in practical work in which they were carrying out experiments to estimate absolute zero by measuring volumes of trapped air in a capillary tube.

18. Pupils acquire very good skills, knowledge and understanding in the different subjects. In a music lesson in Year 9, for example, pupils were all able to play the three chords, C, F and G on the musical synthesisers. Some pupils were able to alternate the chord structure using first inversion and second inversion and produced clear and accurate sounds. Pupils had a good understanding of note patterns. They collaborated well with each other in work in pairs, for example to help each other to find backing rhythms and in fingering exercises. As noticed in the vast majority of the lessons seen, pupils' attitudes to learning were very positive and enthusiastic. By the end of this particular music lesson, pupils had made very good progress; the higher-attaining pupils had learned the chord sequences and could play the melody for the first part of the song, could count beats accurately and select appropriate backings.

19. The quantity and quality of homework set are appropriate and help pupils to consolidate and extend their learning. For example, pupils in a Year 9 English class were set the demanding task for homework of writing a letter from Shakespeare to explain what he had done to the historical facts in his composition of the play Macbeth.

20. The progress and achievement of pupils was at least satisfactory and usually good or very good in all of the classes observed. Standards are generally high because pupils have positive attitudes to their work and are eager to learn. Pupils work hard, show a keen interest in carrying out classwork and homework and concentrate very well. They readily answer questions in class and display very good social skills, for example in group work and simulation exercises in sixth-form classes in business studies, politics and economics. They relate well to the teachers; many of the pupils who were interviewed said that they trusted the teachers and held them in high regard. The very good behaviour of pupils contributes to a most effective environment for learning.

**The excellent leadership and management of the headteacher, with very good support from senior staff and the governors, set a very clear direction for the school, provide a very good climate for learning and have achieved considerable improvements.**

21. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. Under his thoughtful and sensitive guidance, the school constantly strives to achieve a very high quality of performance in all aspects of its work. Other senior managers support the headteacher very well. Together, they very effectively plan and successfully manage improvements, particularly in raising pupils' levels of achievement, as shown in the well above average results in GCSE and A-level examinations.

22. The school's outstanding leadership and management are significant factors in the school's continued success and improvements. The headteacher and the governing body set out a very clear educational direction for the school and have very high expectations of staff and pupils. Parents and teachers commented favourably about the positive impact of the headteacher and the leadership team on the school's enhancement of its high standards and its justifiably very good reputation locally. The school has maintained the many strengths identified in its last inspection report in 1996 and has made very good progress since.

23. A significant strength is the excellent quality of relationships within the school. There is a climate of trust between pupils and teachers. In their discussions with inspectors, many pupils and students said that they enjoyed school, felt safe and secure and that teachers dealt very effectively with any incidents of bullying. They said that the teachers cared well for pupils of all capabilities and backgrounds. A pupil in Year 9 summed up pupils' views of the school by quoting the school's motto of 'working together for excellence' and saying that everyone in the school pulled together in a friendly spirit. Pupils of ethnic minority background

are very well assimilated and their achievement is often higher than that of other pupils. The morale of pupils and teachers is high. Pupils are very appreciative of the outstanding range of extra-curricular activities provided. They are also very supportive of charitable causes, as evidenced by their very good work to raise considerable funds for a local hospice last year and to respond to requests for help in the aftermath of the Indian earthquake more recently.

24. The leadership and management of subjects are good and sometimes very good. For example, the English department helps pupils to achieve very good external examination results through very effective leadership and management of a department in which there is a shared vision, a capacity and a commitment for change and excellent monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress.

25. The central aim of raising the attainment of all pupils to the highest possible level is clear throughout the school and is achieving much success. This is indicated in the consistently well above average results achieved in public examinations. In 2000, the school achieved its best GCSE results to date; these results were higher than expected when measured against pupils' previous attainments at the end of Key Stages 2 and 3. Pupils know that they are expected to work hard and they respond very positively to try to achieve well. Teachers in all subjects are committed to further improving the quality of teaching and learning and benefit from the very good programme of staff development.

26. Procedures for evaluating the school's performance and planning for improvement are very good and the outcomes of these procedures are very good overall. The headteacher, governors and senior managers regularly and rigorously monitor data relating to the school's performance and have a very good awareness of the school's current strengths and weaknesses. Suitably demanding targets for pupils' and all departments' performances in external examinations are set by the leadership team and governors, following a diligent study of pupils' prior attainment and of other relevant assessment data. In 2000, the school met its targets for performance in public examinations. Performance targets set for the current year are appropriately challenging.

27. Governors carry out their responsibilities properly and are actively involved in the work of the school. They are well informed about the performances of all subjects, monitor developments closely and chart progress effectively. They work closely and well with the school's leadership team and show an interest in the all round development, as well as the academic success, of all pupils. The work of the governing body is a strength of the school and is another important factor in the school's very good progress.

28. Governors and senior managers review all aspects of the school's performance and take effective action to improve. As a result of these reviews, in which the school often uses external inspection and advisory services, pupils' achievement continues to rise and the quality of teaching and learning improves further. Very good procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and for monitoring the quality of teaching have been developed and contribute positively to pupils' improved standards.

29. Through the commitment and hard work of staff at all levels, the school has made very good progress since its last inspection in November 1996. The quality of teaching and learning continue to improve and are now very good overall. Attainment in public examinations, which was already above average, has risen to well above the national average. Progress in dealing with the four key issues identified in the last inspection is very good. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and for monitoring the quality of teaching have been developed and contribute very positively to pupils' improved standards. The assessment procedures have been reviewed and now provide pupils and departments with a good understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. Schemes of work are more

suitably matched to pupils' learning needs, although there is still room for further improvement to ensure that the needs of lower-attaining pupils are always fully met. Higher-attaining pupils now achieve much better in French, geography, art and design and religious education in which subjects they had previously underachieved. Parents justifiably continue to hold the school in high regard. The school has the capacity and the shared commitment to improve further.

**In the sixth form, standards are high and the quality of education is very good.**

30. Students' attainment when they enter the sixth form is well above average. They maintain these high levels of attainment, with the result that A-level results have been well above the national average in all of the last three years. In most subjects their achievement in A-level examinations is usually at least in line with expectations based on their prior attainment in GCSE examinations. In many subjects students gain higher than expected results, as they did, for example in 2000, in computer studies, economics, geography, general studies, government and politics and history. However, A-level results in mathematics, biology, physics and French have been below expectations in each of the last two years. The large majority of students who begin the A-level and AS-level courses in Year 12 stay to the end of the course and sit the appropriate examinations.

31. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall in the sixth form. Some of the teaching is excellent as observed, for example, in a psychology lesson in Year 12.

32. Typical of a very good lesson in the sixth form was a biology lesson seen in Year 12 in which very good teaching led to very good learning. The teacher explained the aims of the lesson very clearly and extended students' understanding of their investigation of phagocytosis and inflammation. Using an overhead projector skilfully, the teacher explained what happens when a splinter or thorn penetrates the skin. She used her very good knowledge of the subject to introduce topics in a challenging and interesting way. Students responded very positively to the open-ended questions posed by the teacher and were made to think about how to solve problems by using their previous knowledge and understanding of the work. The teacher set very high expectations for the students. Relationships between the teacher and class were very positive, as in nearly all sixth-form classes seen. She provided very good support to individuals as the lesson progressed and there were easy going conversations and information passing to and from the teacher and students. The pace of the lesson was appropriately fast; students had sufficient time to think and, for example, to produce their own flow chart to show the effect of knives on a localised injury. Students, including those of ethnic minority background enjoyed their work and were well motivated. They had a very good understanding of the work covered in the lesson, showed very good recall of previously learned work on the structure of DNA and replication. The teacher set a relevant and suitably challenging homework that required students to consider the body's non-specific response to the entry of pathogens.

33. Relationships and the quality of pastoral care are very good in the sixth form. Morale is very high. Students said that they stayed on into the sixth form because they felt comfortable at the school, relationships were very good, resources such as the library and ICT facilities were very good and the A-level results were high. They like being treated as adults and said that discipline was very good because the school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They also value the excellent provision for extra-curricular activities, which include clubs or activities for sports, drama, music, religion, debate, foreign travel, outdoor education, theatre and other trips and the Young Enterprise and Interact schemes They support charitable causes generously with their time and through fund raising.

34. The range of courses provided in the sixth form is very good, contains many activities



to enhance the basic curriculum and effectively meets the needs of students. The 16 courses offered at A and AS levels are well subscribed, most classes contain a good number of students and a few are quite large, such as a psychology class of 25 students. The quality of tutorial support for students is very good. The assessment system works well and helps students to make good or very good progress in their learning; it involves a close partnership among students, parents, subject and form teachers and the head of sixth form.

35. Students exercise responsibility very well. All sixth-form students help younger pupils to enhance their learning in different ways at least once a week through such activities as assistance in lessons, arranging peer support groups, providing tutorial support, fundraising for charities, acting as lunchtime supervisors and sports coaching. The prefect system operates effectively and younger pupils respect the sixth formers. Students develop their social awareness through a good programme of community and work placements. The careers service provides very good advice for students. The compulsory AS-level general studies course in Year 12, which includes religious education, helps to broaden students' education appropriately. Students feel that the head teacher and the head of sixth form listen carefully to their suggestions. They know where to turn for help and advice and said that there was always some one in the school, particularly the form tutors, who would be willing to help them with any problems.

36. The number of students entering the sixth form is steadily increasing and now totals 244 students. The sixth form is cost effective and provides very good value for money.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**Results in mathematics and science are above national averages at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 and are improving. However, pupils should achieve higher standards in these two subjects. A-level results should also be higher in mathematics, biology, physics and French.**

37. Results achieved in public examinations at the end of Year 9, Year 11 and Year 13 are not as high overall in mathematics and science as they are in the other core subject of English.

38. In all of the last three years, the school's results in the national tests, as measured by the total average points scored, have been well above average in English and above average in mathematics and science; in two of these years results were well above the national average in mathematics. In 2000, the results in both mathematics and science were in line with those achieved in similar schools, whereas in English results were well above those achieved by similar schools.

39. In 2000, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of six and above in the tests for 14-year-olds was well above the national average in English and above it in mathematics and science. When compared with the achievements of similar schools, the proportion achieving Level 6 and above in English was well above average, in mathematics it was average and in science was below average.

40. GCSE results at grades A\*-C in 2000 were well above expectations, based on National Curriculum levels reached in tests or teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 in nearly all subjects; they were in line with expectations in English but were below expectations in mathematics and science.

41. A-level results in most subjects are usually well above the national average and at least in line with expectations based on students' prior attainment in GCSE examinations. However, A-level results in mathematics, physics, biology and French have been generally below expectations recently. In mathematics, a few students of relatively low prior attainment study the A-level course and understandably achieve below average results but a few higher attainers have underachieved. In French, results in GCSE examinations have improved dramatically since the last inspection and are very good. Although the teaching of French in the sixth form is at least good overall, results at A-level examinations are unsatisfactory mainly because, in recent years, students have not previously acquired the same good knowledge and understanding of the subject that pupils now gain by the end of Year 11.

42. The school is well aware that English results are better overall than those in mathematics and science. It uses the monitoring and assessment procedures well to help mathematics and science to move closer towards the high standards achieved in English.

43. In mathematics, for example, the department has revised its schemes of work to teach more work of a higher level in Year 9, has streamlined its assessment arrangements and introduced several aspects of the National Numeracy Strategy. The effect of these developments was a significant increase in the number of pupils reaching the high levels of seven and eight in the national tests for 14-year-olds from 15 per cent in 1999 to 26 per cent in 2000. In order to improve the performance of average and slightly above average attainers in Key Stage 3, the mathematics department is planning to use more extension work, particularly for classes in Year 7, so that these pupils can make quicker progress. In Years 10 and 11, the mathematics department has recently extended its focus on improving the GCSE pass rate for grades A\*-C to raising the proportion achieving grades A\*-A. This strategy is succeeding and the proportion of pupils gaining GCSE grades A\* or A has risen from four per cent in 1998 to six per cent in 1999 to 13 per cent in 2000.

44. In science, the department is aware that achievement should be higher. Pupils in Year 7 do not always progress as fast as possible because they repeat some work previously done, mainly because there is little liaison with the junior schools in science. In a good attempt to raise standards in Key Stage 3, a more relevant scheme of work is being developed, which is based on the best practice in the school. This work is intended to be more suitable to the needs of pupils of all levels of attainment and in particular, to provide more demanding activities for pupils of high attainment. Pupils' progress is slightly hindered because many in the early years are not clear about the levels towards which they are working. There is a lack of challenging work for high attainers to enable them to carry out the extended work needed to achieve the top level at the end of Key Stage 3 and grades A\* and A in GCSE examinations. The science department recognises the shortfall in GCSE results at A\*-C grades compared with those achieved in other subjects. It is seeking to use short-term target setting more effectively to raise pupils' motivation and standards and to persuade pupils that they can do better in the subject. It has also appropriately phased out the single-award course and raised its expectations for the achievement of lower-attaining pupils.

45. In the scrutiny of work carried out by inspectors a noticeable strength of the English teaching, which was much less prominent in mathematics and science, was the very good marking of pupils' work. The marking in English was detailed, encouraging and gave pupils very clear indications of how well they were doing and how they could do better. This very good marking enhances pupils' learning. In the other two subjects, much of the marking was more cursory and occasionally, especially in the case of lower attaining pupils, missing work or corrections were not completed.

**The use of pupils' individual education plans does not effectively ensure that pupils with special educational needs always receive work that is appropriate to their individual learning needs.**

46. The work carried out in the learning support centre, particularly for pupils with statements of special educational needs is very good. Pupils with physical or hearing difficulties take a full part in the curriculum at an appropriate level, including in the sixth form. A well-organised team clearly identifies the needs of all pupils with special educational needs and implements appropriate programmes to improve these pupils' basic skills and, where appropriate, their behaviour. The arrangements for grouping pupils tend to place the slower learning pupils together in classes and help teachers to pace the work accordingly. The shortcoming is that pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes do not always receive work that takes full account of their learning needs.

47. The individual education plans that are drawn up by the special educational needs department to assist pupils' learning are readily available in all subjects and teachers are well informed about pupils' special needs. The plans contain relevant and achievable targets that are regularly reviewed and up-dated. They usually refer to programmes in the learning support centre to improve literacy and behaviour. Pupils are aware of their own targets, keep their own records and copies of the plans are now provided for parents.

48. However, these plans are not fully used by some subject teachers with the result that low-attaining pupils sometimes receive work that is too demanding and their progress falters. The reason pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall is that they bring very positive attitudes to their learning and are keen to do well. Many aspects of the teaching, such as the care shown by teachers to all pupils, are sometimes very good and motivate these pupils well.

49. Since the previous inspection, the school has greatly improved its provision for pupils with special educational needs, which is now good overall and has resulted in pupils achieving well. Senior teachers often teach these pupils; much of the additional support provided in class is by specialist teachers because the governors decided that, although the cost of specialist teachers is high, it is a cost effective use of resources to promote learning. This is reflected in the very good results achieved at grades A\*-G in GCSE examinations.

50. Pupils with special educational needs are generally well taught. In a drama lesson with a Year 7 class, the support teacher participated fully in the activities and provided valuable and effective support to the class teacher in handling pupils with behavioural difficulties. In a geography class in Year 9, pupils with special educational needs behaved well and made good progress because there was a good balance and variety of activities and the work was suitably matched to all pupils' needs. In a few subjects, teachers make insufficient use of the individual education plans to set appropriate targets for learning and the pace of learning is sometimes too quick for a few pupils.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. The school has a very good understanding of its strengths and the areas that need development. In order to improve its high standards of achievement further the school should include the following issues in its action plan.

- (1) Improve the very good overall standards of attainment further by:
  - raising achievement in public examinations in mathematics and science to a similarly high level as that achieved in English at the end of Years 9 and 11, through better marking of pupils' work, more effective use of assessment to help pupils to improve and providing better continuity of learning from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3;
  - raising achievement in A-level examinations in mathematics, biology, physics and French so that students' results are at least in line with their capabilities and prior attainment.(Paragraphs: 37, 40, 42 – 45)
  
- (2) Improve the use of individual education plans so that the work provided for pupils with special educational needs is consistently appropriate to these pupils' individual learning needs.  
(Paragraphs: 13, 30, 37, 41, 46, 48)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	75
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	38

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	36	45	12	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1316	244
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	95	0

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	10	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	250	3

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	185

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	28

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.8
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	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	128	122	250

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	94	97	96
	Girls	113	96	83
	Total	207	193	179
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	83 (82)	77 (76)	72 (62)
	National	63 (62)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	52 (42)	51 (43)	34 (20)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	85	92	63
	Girls	103	93	74
	Total	188	185	137
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	75 (83)	74 (77)	55 (66)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	43 (37)	45 (43)	30 (30)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	127	116	243

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	73	120	121
	Girls	77	111	113
	Total	150	231	234
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	62 (61)	95 (95)	96 (98)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	45.5 (45.7)
	National	38.4 (38.0)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	48	93.8
	National		N/A

### Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	58	70	128

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	19.6	19.3	19.4 (19.8)	2.6	2.9	2.7 (2.4)
National	17.7	18.6	18.2 (17.9)	2.6	2.9	2.7 (2.8)

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	8
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	8
Indian	229
Pakistani	5
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	7
White	1259
Any other minority ethnic group	14

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	1	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	12	0
Other minority ethnic groups	1	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 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	88.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.4

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	259

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	79.2
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	21.8
Key Stage 4	18.6

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	3 919 291
Total expenditure	3 874 836
Expenditure per pupil	2 528
Balance brought forward from previous year	3 634
Balance carried forward to next year	44 455



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1560
Number of questionnaires returned	587

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	36	57	6	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	56	4	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	55	4	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	58	14	3	2
The teaching is good.	35	59	3	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	51	13	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	46	47	5	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	36	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	28	55	11	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	43	50	1	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	50	4	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	45	6	1	6