

INSPECTION REPORT

ACLE HIGH SCHOOL

Acle, Norwich

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121213

Headteacher: Mr G Batty

Reporting inspector: Margaret Jones
5028

Dates of inspection: 24th September - 26th September 2001

Inspection number: 193050

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 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	South Walsham Road Acle Norwich Norfolk
Postcode:	NR13 3ER
Telephone number:	01493 750431
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Blackwell
Date of previous inspection:	11 th November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Acle High School is a small, non-selective, foundation school which has 330 boys and 316 girls on the roll. Numbers have been rising over recent years. The attainment of pupils when they join the school covers the full range of ability expected and is broadly average. Pupils come from a wide social and economic background and 10.2 per cent take free school meals. This is in line with the national average. There are 99 pupils, (15.3 per cent) on the register of special educational needs, with 23 of them having statements of need. This is slightly above the number expected. The school makes good provision for two pupils with physical disability. Only one pupil comes from a minority ethnic background and has English as an additional language.

The school borders onto the Great Yarmouth Education Action Zone (EAZ) but is not part of it. In 1998 Acle school was granted Beacon status and this was renewed in 2001. Funding has been used to support cross phase work with local primary schools and to help a struggling school in the EAZ. The school has had several head teachers in the last few years due to illness and secondment. The current head teacher had only been in post three weeks prior to the inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Acle High school is a good school. The management team provides strong leadership and is well supported by the school governors. The new head teacher has a clear educational vision for the future. Standards of attainment are good and pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning. Teaching is good. The school's strengths outweigh the areas that might be improved. It provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- GCSE results for 2000 were above the national averages in science, English literature, geography, music, and design and technology.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good, with a significant number of examples of very good teaching.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.
- Pupils' attitudes are positive. Pupils have very good relationships, behave very well and respond to teachers with both interest and enthusiasm.
- The school provides effective support for pupils and monitors their welfare carefully. Pupils are known well by all their teachers.
- Standards in information communication technology for pupils aged 11 to 14 are above the national expectation, with good equipment and high quality teaching.
- The senior management team and the governing body show a keen commitment to continuous improvement.
- The school uses its Beacon School status well and has developed a very effective liaison programme with the cluster primary schools

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment in national tests for pupils aged 14, and in GCSE: art, modern languages and business studies
- The breadth and relevance of the curriculum for older pupils
- The quality of reports to parents

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Considerable progress has been made since the previous inspection in November 1996. Examination results have improved and are now above the national average and the school is on track to meet its ambitious targets in mathematics, English and science. Attendance has improved due to the introduction of a computerised system and contacting parents on the first day of absence. Key issues from the previous inspection have been dealt with. The quality of teaching is better. The provision for pupils with special needs has been transformed by a new co-ordinator and is now very good. There has been a significant improvement in the resources for the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT). Some progress has been made with the development of pupils' independent learning skills. For example, pupils now use ICT confidently on their own but there are still too few opportunities for them to research and investigate topics for themselves. Reports to parents vary in quality and do not always give enough information about attainment and progress.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
GCSE examinations	A	A	B	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

In 2000, pupils aged 14 achieved results in the national tests in English, mathematics and science broadly in line with national average. However, when compared to similar schools these results are poor. Fluctuations in staffing have adversely affected standards in recent years, particularly in English. There is little difference between the results of boys and girls. In 2001, results in mathematics and, particularly, in science have improved to above the national average but results in English have fallen below average. The quality of work seen in lessons is in line with national expectations. Standards in information and communication technology for this age group have improved markedly since the previous inspection.

When pupils take the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) they attain standards above those gained in similar schools. Their performance in gaining five A*-C was slightly higher than the national average in 2000. The proportion of pupils obtaining at least five A*-G grades is well above the national average. Results in science, English literature, geography, music and design and technology were above the national average in 2000. The most recent examination results for 2001 showed that pupils had made significant progress in raising their standards of attainment from the levels at age fourteen to achieve success at GCSE. This was above expectation. The previous large difference at this level, in girls performing better than boys, has been reduced considerably to less than the national difference. Only results in art, business studies and modern languages were below expectation.

Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in their classes, make very good progress, and obtain creditable examination results.

Standards of literacy across the school are good. They develop well from entry in Year 7, particularly writing skills. Accuracy, structuring of work and writing at length are developed well between Years 7 to 9; this lays a good foundation for success at GCSE across the curriculum. Oral skills also develop well, especially where there is an emphasis on group work. The use of number skills is satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and proud of the school and their own achievements.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	There are high standards of behaviour in and out of lessons and pupils show respect for each other. Pupils are friendly, helpful and courteous.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils work well together and are mutually supportive. There is a very good rapport between pupils and staff. Pupils are confident and willing to take responsibility when it is given.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average. There is very little unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Across the school three quarters of the teaching seen was good or better. In most lessons high expectations, well-planned lessons, and teachers' enthusiasm for their subjects lead to pupils learning at a good rate. Only three unsatisfactory lessons were seen; these were in different subjects. These were partly the result of low priority and status given by the school, in the past, to particular subject areas.

The teaching in English is now a strength overall. The high quality of leadership and support of the head of department is appreciated by the team. The department has experienced considerable turnover in staffing which has contributed to the minor fluctuations in standards.

The quality of teaching and learning in science is consistently good. Teachers provide challenging activities for pupils at all levels of attainment. High expectations, well planned lessons and teachers' enthusiasm for their subjects lead to pupils learning at a very brisk rate. Very good progress is evident in all groups and also among pupils with differing capabilities.

Most teaching in mathematics is good. A high level of demand is made of pupils, who respond well. The teaching of investigative skills in the subject is developed less well, resulting in a lower than expected proportion of pupils gaining higher levels in national tests.

As a result of good quality teaching pupils on the special needs register make very good progress in improving basic skills in numeracy and literacy, and through the subjects of the curriculum. Whilst high standards are evident amongst GCSE pupils, a few pupils with the highest levels of ability do not always receive the challenging teaching they require to make the maximum amount of progress. Literacy skills are taught well. Numeracy skills are taught well in mathematics but not taught equally well across the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for younger pupils is good. It covers a range of subjects and meets statutory requirements. In Years 10 and 11 there are a few weaknesses. There is no vocational provision and a

	are a few weaknesses. There is no vocational provision and no opportunity to gain accreditation in ICT or religious education. The school does not comply with the requirement for a daily act of collective worship.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The assessment of pupil's special educational needs is excellent. Very good provision is made for teaching in class and very effective use made of learning support assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Social and moral development are strong features and are supported by a variety of fieldwork trips, musical, cultural and sporting activities. There is lack of planned provision for the spiritual development of pupils and for their preparation for life in a multicultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are treated as individuals. The school promotes good behaviour and good attendance. Sound child protection procedures are in place.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The senior management team provide very good leadership and a clear sense of purpose. This results in a shared commitment across the school to raising standards still further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are kept well informed and are fully involved in the life of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good systems for monitoring and evaluation are in place but occasionally effective action is not taken to correct deficiencies where these are found.
The strategic use of resources	The budget and extra funding from Beacon School status are used very well to support learning. The school gives careful consideration to all its spending options when purchasing resources or services.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects pupils to work hard. • Pupils enjoy school and develop maturity. • Teaching is good and pupils make good progress. • Staff are very approachable and pastoral support is good. • The school is well led and managed. • Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A significant minority of parents are concerned about the amount and timing of homework. • Parents would like more information in school reports in order to work more closely with the school in supporting their childrens' learning. • Some parents do not know enough about the range of extra-curricular activities on offer.

Inspectors agree with the positive comments of parents. Parents are supportive of the school and feel comfortable in approaching the school. A new student planner has been introduced this year: it provides good general information with school weekly and homework timetables. Inspectors found that homework is set regularly and the use of the timetable allows pupils to plan their work. Year 11 pupils however are under pressure to meet course-work deadlines. Annual reports are poor. There are inconsistencies between and within subjects. They do not provide clear information about pupils' strengths, weaknesses and targets to give parents guidance to support their children's learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

GCSE results for 2000 were above the national average

- 1 In GCSE, standards of attainment are above the average achieved by similar schools. In 2000, the GCSE results showed that pupils had done particularly well when compared to their previous attainment at age 14. Many subjects produced results above the national average, especially science, design and technology, English literature, geography and music. In most other subjects standards were in line with national figures.
- 2 In 2001, 58 per cent of pupils achieved 5 A*-C grades at GCSE, a figure well above the county and national average. Pupils with special needs achieve well and make good progress. They are effectively supported in the classroom and take a good number of examinations with creditable success. The impact of this is seen in the high proportion of pupils who gain five or more qualifications at GCSE. All pupils achieve at least one grade A*-G
- 3 Science is a strength of the school. Standards of GCSE science are consistently high. All pupils are entered each year and the results at grades A*-C are well above the national average. Emphasis is placed on establishing secure routines for learning science in Years 7-9. There are and focused learning objectives that ensure pupils are clear about what is expected of them, and these enable them to make good progress. These were seen in a Year 7 lesson, in which effective planning by the teacher enabled small groups of pupils to make rapid progress in understanding the effects of heating on different materials. High quality course work was evident in the work scrutiny. This showed pupils responding at length and in depth to investigative work and interpreting observations and experimental data.
- 4 In design and technology, high standards are seen in lessons. Pupils are aware of the principles of designing products and think creatively. For example, in a lower set in Year 11, after a very clear explanation and demonstration by the teacher, pupils were able to make effective use of pulleys and levers when designing and making many different and imaginative sorts of mechanical toys.
- 5 English Literature GCSE is a very successful course with results on a rising trend for the last five years. Large numbers of pupils are entered each year and the results at grades A*-C are above the national average. Strong emphasis is placed on reading in Years 7 to 9, with effective strategies developed for helping pupils to use challenging texts. For example, a Year 9 lesson in which effective planning of activities enabled groups of pupils to make considerable progress with understanding the complex area of style in 19th century writing. The scrutiny of pupils' work showed that pupils responded at length and in depth to literature - based tasks. Coursework essays were generally of a good standard, often showing effective structuring of ideas and a sound grasp of the text content.
- 6 The standards of work seen in geography and history are good. Higher ability pupils at the beginning of their Geography GCSE course, have a real understanding of the human and physical factors that affect farming. Prompted by probing questioning they are able to give extended answers, explaining in detail terms such as intensive arable farming. In history, pupils have a very good grasp of

chronology. In a Year 11 lesson on the changing role of women in the First World War pupils were able to extract meaning from different sources of evidence and understand how legislation changed the lives of women. In both subjects high quality coursework is produced for the examination.

- 7 Music is one of the strengths of the school. Standards at GCSE music are consistently high. The number of pupils taking music is growing, with over twenty pupils in current GCSE groups. Musical ability and standards of performance are very good, as shown in a Year 10 lesson in which pupils were beginning to develop their first paired compositions. A range of styles and collaborations are used very effectively. Pupils also showed a great deal of confidence in their willingness to share their work in progress. The department is well equipped, and good use is made of the instruments during lessons for developing the creativity of the pupils. The department successfully encourages high participation rates and developing pupils' interests.

The quality of teaching and learning is good, with a significant number of examples of very good teaching

- 8 The quality of teaching is good. In almost three-quarters of lessons observed during the inspection the teaching was judged to be of good quality or better. Nearly a third of all teaching was very good or excellent. Good teaching enables pupils to make rapid progress in their learning particularly in Years 10 and 11. Where a reasonably large number of lessons was observed, teaching was strong in English, drama, science, music, modern languages and physical education. Some teaching of good quality was seen in almost all other subjects, but in most of these only a small number of lessons was observed.
- 9 The good and very good teaching is characterised by four important factors. These enable pupils to develop their intellectual, creative and practical capabilities effectively.
- Pupils are managed very well. Teachers have high expectations both of work and behaviour. Lessons are characterised by a rigorous approach, where high expectations are made explicit with challenge and progression built into the development of skills. This was shown well in physical education in a Year 11 hockey lesson in which there was good staging of increasingly complex passing skills. A good feature was that the teacher picked up well on the fact that he had extended pupils too far at one point and went back to build the necessary skills and confidence.
 - There are harmonious working relationships which help pupils remain focused and on task. In good quality lessons, teachers have developed well-established working routines. For example, in a Year 7 science lesson careful organisation enabled pupils to complete the set tasks safely. They consolidated their practical skills and were able to make accurate observations of different reactions when testing materials.
 - Lessons are carefully planned. They build effectively on the knowledge pupils have already gained. Lessons have clear objectives for reinforcing pupils' understanding and extending their learning further. For example, in a Year 9 English lesson in which careful planning enabled pupils to develop ideas from

simple statements, share them with each other, and transfer their skills and transform these ideas into extended pieces of written work.

- Questioning is used very well. Teachers check pupils' understanding very effectively as the work progresses. Lessons are usually characterised by a warm rapport between the teachers and pupils. This is used to by teachers to encourage pupils to go beyond recalling facts and to express personal opinions, suggest ideas and explain their reasoning. For example, in a Year 8 German lesson pupils were helped by skilful questioning to deduce from a school timetable many facts about the German educational system, so pupils learnt much more than vocabulary and gained a wider appreciation of German culture.
- 10 Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is effective also because of the use made of assessment. Pupils are often given aide-memoires of marking schemes and assessment criteria to which they can refer. This enables them to target their efforts to improve further.
- 11 In approximately one quarter of lessons observed during the inspection the teaching did not reach the good or better levels described above. However, the teaching was satisfactory because it enabled pupils to make steady progress in their learning. Unsatisfactory teaching was only seen in three lessons. In these lessons pupils did not make sufficient progress. In some lessons, in which teaching was otherwise good, the most able pupils were not sufficiently stretched and challenged.
- 12 Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and make very good progress. A feature of their progress is the excellent support and guidance they receive from the learning support department and learning support assistants.
- 13 There has been a marked improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection.

Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress

- 14 Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and make very good progress. The school identifies pupils with individual needs and provides for them very well. Itl uses a whole school policy and appropriate strategies to meet these pupils' needs. Very good support for pupils withdrawn from lessons reinforces basic skills and ensures pupils make very good progress. In a Year 7 spelling lesson, detailed diagnostic tests were used to assess pupils' specific needs and gauge their progress. Brisk written and oral tasks reinforce, consolidate and improve pupils' skills: as a result they learn very quickly.

Pupils' attitudes are positive. Pupils have very good relationships, behave very well and respond to teachers with both interest and enthusiasm

- 15 Pupils are positive about their school and proud of their achievements. The school expects effort and hard work, and the pupils respond well to this challenge. They enjoy coming to school and participating in the range of activities provided. Pupils concentrate well in lessons and get on with activities set. They want to learn and are keen to answer questions. They listen well to teachers and to one another. Pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes to learning.

- 16 Behaviour is very good throughout the school: this has a considerable impact on the positive learning environment observed in most lessons. Parents are very satisfied with the standards of behaviour and the orderly environment. Pupils respond well to the classroom code of behaviour, including the Year 7 pupils who are still very new to the school. Even in the few lessons where teaching is less good or the tasks are not sufficiently demanding or interesting, the majority of pupils get on with their work. Staff have high expectations of good behaviour. Permanent exclusions are low although last year, fixed term exclusions were high. The school is currently reviewing its rewards and sanctions policy, particularly for older pupils.
- 17 Pupils are friendly, helpful and polite. They speak well and with confidence as shown in a Year 11 English lesson in which a topical debate on asylum seekers stimulated extended contributions from the group.
- 18 Relationships between pupils are very good. They are supportive of one another in lessons and they work well together in groups. For example, in a Year 7 drama class, pupils worked well in pairs pretending to be robots and their controllers, developing co-operation, mutual understanding and good listening skills. Relationships between pupils and staff are very positive and pupils show respect to one another and adults working in the school. Pupils are confident to cope with the pressures and opportunities provided by the school and ask for help or advice if needed. Many older pupils willingly undertake prefect and various other team captain responsibilities. By the time pupils leave school they are mature and confident.

The school provides effective support for pupils and monitors their welfare carefully. Pupils are known well by all their teachers

- 19 The school provides a clean, well-maintained environment in which pupils' safety is given high priority. For example, when pupils are boarding buses in the evening the gates are closed and vehicles are prevented from moving. Pupils are well known and their needs appropriately identified and supported. Pupils feel safe and secure. There are very few incidents of bullying or violence, but on the rare occasions when these occur they are dealt with effectively and promptly. Child protection procedures are in place but the school has only one, trained member of staff. Parents are very satisfied with the high level of care, support and guidance provided by the school.
- 20 The school has high expectations of good behaviour; staff work hard to support the small number of pupils who find behaving well difficult. There are very good procedures for promoting good attendance. The school now uses a computerised registration system and teachers take a register in all lessons. A first day, response system is effective at locating pupils and parents are very happy with the system. Unauthorised absence is now very low.
- 21 The school has developed good progress reviews, which enable staff to closely monitor progress, particularly for pupils in Key Stage 4. However, not all pupils are provided with one- to- one interviews and target setting with pupils is not well established.

Standards in information communication technology for pupils aged 11-13 are above the national expectation, with good equipment and high quality teaching

- 22 Improving standards in Years 7 to 9, are a result of a much improved computer infrastructure and very good management of the subject. Pupils now have access to a number of computer suites and individual machines. Schemes of work have been transformed and expectations are high, as observed in Year 9 work. Pupils produce high quality presentations using different software packages, combining text, data and analysis of survey information. The significant improvements achieved for Years 7 to 9 are now planned to be extended to Years 10 and 11 to give greater access to vocational information and communication technology courses for older pupils.

The senior management team and the governing body show a keen commitment to continuous improvement

- 23 The senior management team and the governors provide very good leadership to the school. Though the head teacher has only been in post since the beginning of term, he has a clear vision for the development of the school and how to build on the school's current successes. A key target for development is the work- related curriculum, which is currently under-represented. Departmental and pastoral management is generally of a high standard. Staff and pupils are committed to improving learning and this results in a positive academic and pastoral ethos across the school.
- 24 A good feature of the school's self-review programme is the work being done on monitoring and evaluating teaching, which is helping to increase teacher effectiveness. However, in a couple of cases, this monitoring has not resulted in sufficiently robust action being taken to resolve difficulties and provide support in business studies and religious education. Information on pupil performance is collated effectively and is being used to support target setting at both departmental and whole - school levels. There are plans to make the data collected more accessible to and useable with individual pupils and parents.
- 25 The governing body knows the school well and supports the work of the school effectively through the committees. Governors are kept well informed and are fully involved. The finance sub-committee provides rigorous scrutiny of expenditure and value-for-money tendering. The governors and senior management team collaborate effectively in the realisation of the school development plan. However, planning could be reviewed further, particularly with regard to costings and framing the targets as objectives related to learning and raising standards rather than tasks. Financial management is very secure and extra funding is spent appropriately, as evidenced from the report on the Beacon initiative. This initiative has resulted in very good curriculum liaison with the primary schools and is to focus on college and Sixth form liaison in the next stage of development. The school's budget expenditure profile is appropriate, with resources targeted effectively. For example, an area where spending has effectively supported learning is in the enhanced provision of ICT.

The school uses its Beacon School status well and has developed a very effective liaison programme with the cluster primary schools

- 26 Acle High School was offered Beacon Schools status in 1998 and over the last three years has developed a very effective liaison programme with the cluster primary schools. Cross-phase collaboration has been undertaken in science, art, literacy, modern language, music, special educational needs, ICT and thinking skills. The school has supported another Norfolk High School with cross-site collaboration and planning. The report on the first three years is extremely positive, with a projected extension of the project to include post-16 liaison to enhance staying-on rates to sixth form or college courses.
- 27 The Beacon School initiative has been used particularly well by the English department to make links with primary school literacy programmes, in order to ensure continued development into the lower years at the high school. The resulting literacy programme, in the schemes of work for pupils aged 11 to 14, is rigorous and effective.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards of attainment in national tests for pupils aged 14, and in GCSE: art, drama, modern languages and business studies

- 28 In 2000, results in national tests at age 14 in English, mathematics and science were in line with the national average for all schools. However, the trend, over the last three years, in the school's average National Curriculum points score for all core subjects is below the national trend. Results are well below the average when compared to similar schools.
- 29 In the past, the school has put less emphasis on tests for younger pupils than GCSE results. There has also been a high turnover of staff in the last two years. This has meant fragmented teaching for Years 7 to 9, while established staff have concentrated their efforts on older pupils. For example, one class did very poorly in the English national tests compared with the other two classes taught by more experienced teachers.
- 30 Departments have now analysed their results, have made plans to raise standards and have acted upon these. This has resulted in considerable improvement. In 2001, test results in mathematics and, particularly, in science were above the national average. English results have dipped to below national average for the reason outlined above.
- 31 GCSE art results at grades A*-C have declined over the last few years to well below the national average. Following continued problems with moderation the department has now decided to change examination boards. The two experienced teachers have the target of improved examination results as their departmental development priority.
- 32 Art work seen in lessons, on display and in the work sample provided for the inspection evidence show at least sound standards. A Year 9 lesson on pattern, using Asian textile wood blocks, Indian mirror cushions, and henna hand-and-foot patterns was organised well and the pupils were keen to explain that they were going to make a class patchwork. This lesson also contributed a much-needed input to the pupils' multicultural education.

- 33 Standards in drama have been adversely affected by staffing problems in recent years: and this resulted in very low GCSE results in 2000 when compared with the national average. The results in 2001 were raised by the current teacher in charge of drama, from one third grades A*-C in 2000, to two thirds grades A*-C in 2001.
- 34 Pupils enjoy drama; and this is shown in lessons and by the support given to the school productions. Pupils' enjoyment of drama and its inclusiveness was shown well by a Year 7 lesson in which pair work fostered trust and dependence when one pupil was blind-folded and guided by sound signals, an activity which was fully entered into by a pupil in a wheel-chair.
- 35 Pupils do not achieve as well in modern languages as they do in other subjects. In 2000, 22 per cent of pupils studying one foreign language achieved grade A*-C compared to 40 per cent nationally. However, an above average proportion of pupils are entered for GCSE compared with other schools. The department has also been subject to temporary staffing arrangements. Results improved a little in 2001.
- 36 The curriculum for modern languages has some weaknesses with some pupils in Years 8 and 9 receiving a smaller amount of time than is usual in most secondary schools. The subject has not had a positive image within the school and this has meant that some pupils put less effort into this area. A full review of the situation has been undertaken and staffing issues have been resolved. The teaching of modern languages seen on inspection was very good and seeks to build the self-confidence of Year 10 and 11 pupils in speaking a foreign language. In 2001, the overall results improved and all the pupils who choose to study French and German achieved a grade A* to C.
- 37 Results in business studies have been well below the national average for the last two years. The coursework component was the weakest part of the year 2000's poor results. Pupils who opt for this subject in the school tend to be lower attainers and the teaching does not match the tasks set to this level of ability.

The breadth and relevance of the curriculum for older pupils

- 38 The curriculum provides a broad range of good quality learning experiences, supplemented by an extensive programme of field work and visits. However, the needs of pupils with vocational aptitudes are not met well. The curriculum for older pupils in Years 10 and 11 lacks appropriate vocational experiences. Pupils have no access to a suitable accredited ICT course. There is little suitable certification for the less academically capable pupils and those pupils disapplying from a modern foreign language do not receive an appropriate alternative curriculum.
- 39 There is a lack of planned provision for the spiritual development of pupils. The school does not comply with the requirement for a daily act of collective worship. The assemblies, which do take place contribute well to social and moral education but contain little spiritual content or opportunity for reflection. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 only have one religious education lesson every fortnight and there is no opportunity to study for an examination in this subject.
- 40 Pupils receive very good cultural experiences from their own tradition in many subjects, particularly music and drama. Many subjects, particularly art, humanities, English make a valuable contribution to pupils' knowledge of other cultures. For

example, sensitive use was made of a video about Aboriginal peoples in a religious education lesson. However, co-ordinated, whole school planning for the provision of a culturally diverse curriculum that celebrates a wide range of cultures and prepares pupils for life in a multi-cultural society is not evident.

- 41 The curriculum, as it stands, does not prepare all pupils fully for the next stage of their lives when they leave school

The quality of reports to parents

- 42 The school produces two interim progress reviews and one annual report per pupil. The progress reviews give detailed computerised attainment levels and targets. They provide very good information for pupils and staff to have focused discussions about progress and improvement. They provide useful statistical information to parents but require very careful interpretation in order for parents to use them in supporting their children's improvement.
- 43 Annual reports are of poor quality. The majority of subject reports do not provide pupils or parents with sufficient information about strengths and weaknesses or clear targets for improvement. The school is aware that the standard of reports needs to be improved and a working group is currently examining all aspects of reporting to parents.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) Raise standards of attainment in national tests for pupils aged 14, and in GCSE: art, modern languages and business studies by:
- preparing pupils thoroughly for their national tests in Year 9;
 - safeguarding staffing for the lower school;
 - improving the status and value given to modern language, business studies art and drama;
 - improving teaching in business studies; and
 - ensuring sufficient challenge for the most able pupils.

(Ref paragraphs 32-37)

- (2) Improve the breadth and relevance of the curriculum for older pupils by:
- introducing an element of vocational choice;
 - enabling pupils to gain accreditation for information and communication technology and religious education; and
 - ensuring planned provision for preparation for life in a multi-cultural society.

(Ref paragraphs 38-41)

- (3) Improve the quality of annual reports to parents by:
- including sufficient information about attainment and progress; and
 - ensuring consistency across departments within the school.

(Ref paragraphs 42-43)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	14	18	9	3	0	0
Percentage	4%	30%	39%	20%	7%	0%	0%

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than 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	646
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	50

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	23
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	99

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	7.1
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	1.1

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	50	51	101

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	33	36	32
	Girls	38	34	25
	Total	71	70	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	70 (62)	69 (74)	56 (66)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	14 (29)	32 (51)	26 (31)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	34	34	34
	Girls	38	40	25
	Total	72	74	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	71 (60)	73 (75)	58 (70)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	21 (22)	34 (49)	17 (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 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	63	43	106

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	25	59	59
	Girls	28	43	43
	Total	53	102	102
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	50 (57)	96 (94)	96 (95)
	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	41 (42)
	National	38.4 (38)

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	0
	National	N/a

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	645
Any other minority ethnic group	

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	39.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.5 : 1

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	253

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.2
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	24.9
Key Stage 4	20.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	11.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	12.4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
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)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	28	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000-1
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	£
Total income	1854278
Total expenditure	1863267
Expenditure per pupil	2469
Balance brought forward from previous year	89710
Balance carried forward to next year	80721

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	650
Number of questionnaires returned	103

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	48	8	6	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	45	16	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	18	63	8	3	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	42	23	8	6
The teaching is good.	37	50	2	3	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	54	16	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	41	5	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	37	7	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	22	52	22	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	36	52	2	1	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	59	7	2	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	55	13	4	11