

INSPECTION REPORT

WARDEN PARK SCHOOL

Cuckfield
Haywards Heath

LEA area: West Sussex

Unique reference number: 126086

Headteacher: Mr B D Webb

Reporting inspector: Paul Cosway

OIN: 2734

Dates of inspection: 21-23 May 2002

Inspection number: 194299

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms C Collins
Date of previous inspection:	December 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Warden Park School is a comprehensive school, educating girls and boys from 11 to 16. Around half of the pupils come from the village of Cuckfield and the surrounding villages. The rest come from much further afield; up to 20 miles away. It is a relatively advantaged area, and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average, at about three per cent. The area the school is in is one of very high housing costs, and staff recruitment is difficult.

The school is popular and over-subscribed. It is larger than average in size. There are 1509 pupils, including many more boys (817) than girls (692). Almost all the pupils are white, which reflects the ethnic composition of the local area. There is a small number of pupils who represent the rich variety of cultural backgrounds in the United Kingdom, including pupils whose family origin is China or the Indian sub-continent. For five pupils, English is not their first language, but none is at an early stage of acquiring English. These numbers are below the national average. The school has a specially designated unit for up to 15 pupils who have specific learning difficulties (dyslexia). Just over nine per cent are on the school's register of special educational needs, which is well below the national average. Forty four of them have full statements—an average proportion. Most pupils on the higher stages of the special educational needs register have emotional or behavioural difficulties or are dyslexic. The overall attainment of pupils on entry is slightly above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. Pupils are expected to work hard and most respond well. As a result of this, and the good teaching, pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 9, they attain well above national averages in English, science and mathematics. By the end of Year 11, their attainment in GCSE examinations is well above the national average. Pupils are also taught to be well behaved and to work collaboratively with others. There is a good ethos for learning in the school, and almost all lessons are brisk and purposeful. The school prides itself on its inclusiveness. It seeks to get the best from all of its pupils and generally succeeds, boys doing particularly well as compared with boys nationally. Excellent leadership has ensured that the school has continued to improve its academic performance year on year. The school gives very good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Attainment is well above the national average, and boys and girls alike make good progress.
- Teaching is good, often very good, across the school.
- Pupils develop very positive attitudes to school and to their work. Behaviour is generally very good across the school.
- The provision for the personal development of pupils is very good, encouraging them to grow into sociable, independent and confident young people.
- There are many examples of excellent leadership, directed towards raising the attainment of pupils and developing their self-confidence and self-esteem.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Although results in both external tests and examinations are well above the national average, not all subjects get the best out of pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in December 1996. Results in GCSE examinations have improved consistently over the last five years, and attainment at the end of Year 9 has risen broadly in line with the rise nationally. The quality of teaching has improved. There is now more very good teaching and less unsatisfactory teaching than there was in 1996. The leadership and management of the school have improved from good to excellent, and the school has the systems in place to continue to improve. It analyses its performance data well and is using this information to help it to refine its work. Overall, there has been good improvement.

The last report was critical of the entry numbers for the English literature GCSE examination. These have been increased. The curriculum did not meet statutory requirements to teach design and technology, religious education and information and communication technology. This has largely been resolved, although not all pupils follow a design and technology course, partly because of shortage of accommodation. The deficiency in school development planning has been rectified. Satisfactory progress has been made on these key issues.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	C

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

The school has sustained high performance in external tests and examinations. Results have been well above the national average in GCSE examinations for the last four years. When results are compared with those of similar schools, they are average. Because of the small numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals at this school, its performance is being compared with the most successful comprehensive schools in the country. Levels of literacy and numeracy are good.

In 2001, in the national tests for 14 year-olds, the overall results were well above the national average. When the three subjects are considered separately, English and mathematics were above the national average and science results were well above. When compared with results in similar schools, mathematics results were well below average, English below average, and science above average. Pupils made good progress from their attainment on entry and achieved well.

In GCSE examinations, attainment has been high and has risen in line with the national trend. The proportion of pupils who attained five or more GCSE passes at the higher grades, A*-C, was well above the national average and the average for similar schools. It was 73.8 per cent in 2000, and 70.4 per cent in 2001. The proportion of pupils who attain at least one GCSE pass (100 per cent) was very high in 2001, in the top five per cent of all schools in the country and of similar schools. Last year, the school met its target for pupils attaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A*-C. It also met its target for attainment in the end of Year 9 national tests.

Pupils achieve very well overall on most of their GCSE courses. For example, in history, geography, sociology, English literature, design and technology, food technology, integrated science, drama, French and German, candidates gained high proportions of A* or A passes at GCSE, well above the national average. However, pupils tend to achieve less well in business studies, information studies and art, compared with their other subjects, although attainment is still close to or above the national average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: the pupils respond well to the school and value the opportunities it gives them to learn and attain well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of pupils in and out of class is very good overall. Almost all are very well behaved and considerate around the school and in lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good around the school. Pupils' personal development is very good. They develop the skills they need to work together as members of a group and take responsibility for their learning.
Attendance	Good: attendance is above average compared with that of other secondary schools, and it reflects the very positive attitudes of pupils and parents towards schooling. Pupils learn better because they attend regularly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

In more than a quarter of lessons observed, teaching was very good or excellent. It was good in most of the others. There is a particularly strong sense of purpose and pace in the teaching in Year 10 and Year 11, bringing the best out of many of the pupils, who attain highly as a result. The teaching of English and science is good overall, and much of it is very good. The teaching in mathematics is good overall. Out of 40 lessons observed, across all subjects, teaching was less than satisfactory in one. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations. Their good knowledge of their subjects and the good relationships they have with their pupils are key strengths. Almost all pupils respond well to their teachers' high expectations of them. They are hard working, good listeners, know what to do to improve, and make good progress. In this inclusive school, the teaching meets the needs of all pupils well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory: the curriculum is good for Years 7 to 9, and is broad and balanced. In Years 10 and 11, not all pupils take design and technology. The provision for information and communication technology is not consistent across the school. The range of after-school activities and educational visits is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Support assistants work hard to meet individual learning needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The few pupils for whom English is an additional language receive good support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall: social and moral development are very good. The provision for cultural development is very good overall, with due regard given to the multi-cultural aspects of our society. The provision for spiritual development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The provision for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare is excellent.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, supported by a strong team of senior managers, has provided excellent leadership over a number of years and this has brought about sustained improvement. The senior managers provide clear direction for the work of the school. They know the school well and know where to concentrate their efforts to improve it still further. Middle managers are giving effective leadership to their departments or pastoral areas and they monitor work well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well, helping senior managers to plan for the strategic development of the school as well as monitoring its effectiveness.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring and assessment data is used effectively to evaluate the school's performance and to plan future development.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of the resources at its disposal for the educational benefit of its pupils. Financial planning is very good. The school applies the principles of best value well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Of those parents who responded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 91 per cent agree that the teaching is good in the school; around 95 per cent recognise that the school expects children to work hard and believe that their children are making good progress. • Almost 90 per cent agree that the school is helping their children to grow into responsible adults and 91 per cent recognise that their children like coming to school. A similar proportion believe that the school is led well. • 86 per cent think that behaviour in school is good overall and feel comfortable in approaching the school with problems or concerns. 	<p>Of those who responded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 26 per cent do not agree that the school works closely enough with them. • 26 per cent do not agree that they are well informed about their child's progress. • 26 per cent are not satisfied with the provision for homework.

The homework tasks that are set are appropriate and extend pupils' learning. Those parents concerned about homework provision believe that the setting of work is not organised well enough, and that this leads to their children sometimes having an unfair burden of homework, or too little. There is a need for the school to review and monitor its policy to ensure that homework is set consistently. The school seeks to work closely with parents and, in general, provides them with good information. However, some of the parents who responded would like to meet a selection of subject teachers on parent consultation evenings, rather than only the child's form tutor, and this would help them to support their children's learning.

The proportions of parents who are pleased with their school are high. Some bring their children more than twenty miles to Warden Park School and consider themselves fortunate to have gained a place for their child. These positive attitudes on the part of parents transfer to the pupils and contribute to the school's success. Many parents work hard to support their children's learning. The inspection team's findings support the positive views of parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Attainment is well above the national average, and boys and girls alike make good progress

1. Attainment on entry, for the cohorts that have taken the national tests for 14 year olds and GCSE examinations in recent years, has been above average. In the case of 11 year olds who entered the school in 2001, attainment in the national tests was close to the national average in mathematics, but above average in science and English. The attainment in these tests has been improving steadily. The pupils come from about 60 different primary schools, of which some are very small, village schools. In the standardised tests which the school itself sets for the pupils at the age of 11, the proportion of pupils who are graded as average and above average is higher than would normally be found, but relatively few have scores well above average.

2. Pupils achieve well during their time at the school. The school has sustained high performance in external tests and examinations. Results have been well above the national average in GCSE examinations for the last four years. When results are compared with those of similar schools, they are average. Because of the small numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals at this school, this comparison is made with some of the most successful comprehensive schools in the country. Levels of literacy and numeracy are good.

3. In 2001, in the national tests for 14 year olds, the overall results were well above the national average. When the three subjects are considered separately, the results in English and mathematics were above average and those in science were well above average. Compared with those in similar schools, results in mathematics were well below average, below average in English, and above average in science. However, pupils made good progress from their attainment on entry.

4. In GCSE examinations, attainment has been high and has risen in line with the national trend. The proportion of pupils who, in 2001, attained five or more GCSE passes at the higher grades, A*-C, was well above the national average and above that in similar schools and the proportion of pupils who attain at least one GCSE pass (100 per cent) was very high. It was in the top five per cent of all schools in the country and of similar schools.

5. A particular feature of the school's performance is the way in which it gets the best out of all its pupils. Low attaining pupils do well: all of them gained at least one GCSE pass in 2001. High attainers perform very well in GCSE examinations. The proportions of A*-C GCSE passes and of A* and A passes are well above the national averages. Unlike the situation in many schools, boys and girls attain almost equally well. Subject departments are very well aware of the need to motivate and support boys. Nationally, boys perform significantly less well than girls in tests and examinations, but that is not the case in this school. In some instances, the curriculum has been altered to make it more attractive to boys. Teachers have been made aware of the need to praise boys as much as girls for their efforts. These, and other initiatives, have been successful. In class, boys are attentive, interested and eager to ask and answer questions. Almost all boys work hard and make good progress.

6. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN), those for whom English is an additional language (EAL) and those who are reluctant to learn or even attend school are supported well and achieve well, overall. Learning support assistants give good individual help to those who need it. The school accepts pupils who have been permanently excluded from other schools and is generally successful in motivating them to learn. In 2001, as already stated, every Year 11 pupil gained at least one GCSE examination pass. This is a very inclusive school in which every pupil is valued and enabled to succeed.

7. There have been examples of high achievement by subject departments. In 2001, high proportions of entrants in English literature, geography, sociology, design and technology, food technology, integrated science, drama, French, German and history gained A* or A passes at GCSE. In history, for example, 21.5 per cent of candidates, from a large entry, gained A* grades. In English literature, almost 32 per cent gained grades A* or A. These figures are far in excess of the national averages. However, pupils attained less well in business studies and information studies, and boys less well in art, than in other subjects. Overall results in the GCSE examinations for these subjects have still been above the national average, however, except in the case of business studies in 2001.

8. The inspection findings are that attainment is well above average across the school as a whole and that pupils are achieving well. Numeracy and literacy skills are good. The pupils are confident and articulate speakers and good listeners. Almost all can read accurately and with good understanding for their age by the end of Year 11. Their writing is accurate, after redrafting, and they are competent at adapting their writing style to a range of purposes, such as report writing or expressive writing. In some subjects attainment is particularly strong.

9. Pupils excel in all aspects of science, especially practical investigations, and their understanding and facility in mathematics are high. Their levels of maturity, insight and understanding help them to attain highly in sociology, history, geography and English literature. Geography fieldwork is of a very high standard. Projects are thoroughly researched and the best are presented to an almost professional standard. The many pupils who attain A* grades in English literature show a remarkable level of maturity and insight in their commentaries on literary texts, and write about them with confidence and perception. The many high attaining pupils demonstrate high levels of skill in technology and drama. The quality of the Year 11 project work in sociology, geography and some aspects of design and technology, for example, shows care and neatness, as well as intellectual ability, beyond what would normally be expected from pupils of this age.

Teaching is good, often very good, across the school.

10. The quality of teaching is good overall. In the lessons observed, teaching was judged to be good in almost two thirds and very good in just over a quarter. There was only one unsatisfactory lesson.

11. The effectiveness of the teaching is increased by the very good use of assessment information. Pupils are set realistic targets. They take part in this process and fully understand what is expected of them. Their progress is tracked well by almost all teachers and there are very good procedures for mentoring pupils. Teachers' planning generally takes good account of the needs of individuals. All of this focuses the attention of everyone who works in the school, adults and children, on attainment and progress. It has led to the raising of standards, especially in terms of results in tests and external examinations.

12. The school has done considerable work since the last report on the development of good teaching and learning strategies. Much of this has been based recently on the teaching approaches outlined in the national literacy and numeracy strategies. Members of staff have been encouraged to learn from the principles of lesson planning and lesson structures that these major initiatives have promoted. This has built on good practice already identified and promoted in the school over a considerable period of time. Effective teaching styles have been the focus of much 'in-house' training. The results are very positive. In the many good lessons observed, it was apparent that teachers are using the techniques that have been discussed in order to motivate pupils and ensure that they get the maximum possible benefit from the lesson. In these lessons, for example, the objectives are explained to pupils at the beginning, so that they know what they are expected to achieve. There is a good variety and balance of activities so that pupils are interested and supported from one learning activity to the next. Teachers are aware of the concentration spans of their pupils and so plan a series of activities within each lesson to provide variety and maintain concentration. In the many good and very good lessons observed, they pitched the work at the correct level for each pupil, and all were challenged by the work set. In almost all cases, sequences of lessons are planned to ensure that work is revisited, so that the learning is consolidated through the repetition over time of key facts or concepts. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson, the teacher had high expectations in asking the pupils to understand the Elizabethan view of Shylock. They had to identify the issues and to use evidence to justify their conclusions. The teacher had planned and resourced the lesson well. He used questioning very well, involving many of the pupils and challenging their ideas, so that they had to think deeply and consider carefully. He refused to give them answers, forcing them to develop independence and to think for themselves, and they rose to the challenges very well. The lesson was well structured. The teacher had impressive knowledge of the subject and enlivened the lesson with his commentary on the text of the play. The inspector reported that he was so interested in the lesson that he was sorry that it ended.

13. Teachers' high expectations, illustrated above, are typical of most lessons. Their good knowledge of their subjects and the good relationships with pupils are key strengths. The better lessons are brisk, purposeful and inclusive. Almost all pupils respond well. They are hard working, good listeners, know what to do to improve and make good progress. In this inclusive school, the teaching meets the needs of all pupils well. In the one unsatisfactory lesson seen, the pace of teaching and learning was too slow and the teacher failed to motivate the pupils.

Pupils develop very positive attitudes to school and to their work. Behaviour is generally very good across the school.

14. Attitudes throughout the school are very good and the ethos is one that encourages and enables pupils to succeed. Almost all pupils have very positive attitudes to the school. They have a real desire to succeed, working hard and listening carefully to the advice their teachers offer in order to raise their attainment. Almost all pupils come to school regularly, enjoy many of their lessons, and show real interest.

15. Attendance is above the national average. The great majority of pupils arrive at school punctually. This allows the school day and lessons to begin on time in a calm atmosphere that prepares pupils well for the busy day ahead.

16. Behaviour is very good in lessons. This creates a purposeful ethos that helps learning. In class, almost all pupils show interest and concentrate, and pupils listen to the teacher and ask questions in an orderly and controlled environment. Around the school, pupils are very sensible, well mannered and well behaved. When pupils are on work

experience, representing the school or working as tour guides in school, the people they meet appreciate their good behaviour, good manners and positive attitudes. There have been four permanent exclusions in the last year – a relatively small number in such a large school.

17. The behaviour of pupils with SEN is very good, and this includes most of those who have behavioural difficulties when admitted to the school. Their attendance is good, although a very small number of pupils, mainly those who have transferred to this school after being permanently excluded elsewhere, do not attend regularly. Pupils with SEN are completely integrated into the activities enjoyed by the rest of the school, and they have good opportunities for taking responsibility.

The provision for the personal development of pupils is very good, encouraging them to grow into sociable, independent and confident young people.

18. Relationships between teachers and pupils, and between pupils themselves, are very good and create a supportive and caring atmosphere in which pupils feel secure and comfortable. They respect one another's feelings and are supportive of each other in lessons. There was good evidence of this in a business studies lesson in which higher attaining pupils, working on a project on different methods of payment, quietly and without fuss helped their friends who were having difficulties with aspects of the assignment.

19. Most pupils have very good relationships with all the staff. They understand that their teachers are there to help them to do well. They listen very carefully to what their teachers have to say and try hard to meet the high expectations their teachers have of them. Pupils respond well to the good opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning, and they are encouraged to initiate and take part in charity events. The younger pupils, for example, are raising £2000 for a blood-monitoring machine for a local hospital. There are many examples of successful individual initiatives, including a sponsored silence, a sale of cakes in a local office, and sponsorship to give up junk foods.

20. Older pupils mentor and support younger pupils, as part of the 'Starfish' scheme. Volunteers from Year 9, numbering 54 this year, are trained for six weeks before helping Year 7 in their tutor groups and around the school. They wear special badges so that they can be recognised. The prefect system is well established and effective. Pupils respect the prefects, and younger pupils are keen to earn this responsibility when they are older. A senior group of pupils forms a group that mirrors, in a number of ways, the work of the senior management team. They have regular meetings with senior staff to discuss issues that are of particular concern to pupils. Pupils also value the opportunities to act as democratic representatives of the pupil body on the school council. The school was one of the two pilot schools that pioneered the local Youth Cabinet, a group of young people that has an influential say in the local area, through local government links. It is planned that the scope of this will eventually be widened to become a national institution – a youth parliament.

21. The child protection procedures are securely in place. There is an induction programme for all new staff to ensure that they are familiar with the procedures, and child protection issues are raised regularly at staff meetings and the staff briefings. The At Risk Register is up to date and detailed. Any absence is followed-up immediately. The liaison with outside agencies is very good and includes strong links with the local police, social services, the local psychiatric nurse and outside specialists. Parents are very appreciative of all the school does to ensure their children's welfare. Almost 90 per cent agreed when they filled in the OFSTED questionnaire that they would feel comfortable approaching the school with any problems or questions they may have about their child. They are also

pleased with the attitudes and behaviour that the school promotes. Almost all of the parents who responded to the questionnaire think that their children like coming to school and that the behaviour of pupils is good.

There are many examples of excellent leadership, directed towards raising the attainment of pupils and developing their self-confidence and self-esteem.

22. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteachers and the senior and middle managers, are excellent. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities very well. The senior managers and the heads of many subjects, especially science, geography, history and sociology, monitor pupils' performance well. Effective action has been taken to improve the work of the school. This has led to good progress since the time of the last report, and the school is very well placed to improve in future. Resources are deployed well to improve the quality of education for the benefit of pupils, and the school succeeds well in getting the best value from its use of its funds and resources. Levels of staffing are good. The teaching staff is of high quality, and the learning support assistants are very well deployed and are particularly effective in supporting pupils' learning.

23. The headteacher, along with the other senior managers, provides very clear direction for the work of the school. He believes that the school should promote both high attainment and the personal development of pupils into responsible, confident young adults. The inspection has found the school to be successful in both these areas. There is also a commitment to inclusiveness. The school motto is *The Best From All*, and analysis of examination results and the scrutiny of work during the inspection shows that the school is indeed succeeding in getting the best from the very large majority of pupils, especially boys. This has been achieved over a long period of time. There are high expectations of both teachers and pupils. There is a strong focus on the further improvement of the already high examination results, without losing sight of the importance of other aspects of school life, such as pupils' personal development.

24. The process of management is very effective. It is consultative and leads to a shared commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed. Governors are fully involved in helping to shape the direction of the school. Teachers are consulted regularly and their views taken into account. Almost all the parents who replied to the Ofsted questionnaire believe that the school welcomes them and responds very well to their views and concerns. The school runs smoothly. Systems and policies are generally shared and understood. There is a consistent approach throughout the school to ensuring that all pupils behave courteously, take responsibility for their learning, and value the educational opportunities the school provides.

25. In general, those with delegated responsibilities for a subject or for pupils' welfare carry out their roles very effectively. The provision for pupils with SEN is well co-ordinated. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) ensures that teachers follow the correct procedures, and provides good support to pupils, parents and staff. Subject leaders give good, sometimes excellent, leadership to their departments. Some examples of guidance, such as department handbooks in modern foreign languages and science, are of a very high quality. Parents praise the pastoral staff for the way that pupils are supported in their personal development. Form tutors are led very effectively and the procedures for praising good behaviour and modifying inappropriate conduct are consistently applied.

26. The governing body carries out its responsibilities very well. It is very well organised and many of its members are highly qualified in their own professions. They bring very good

management experience to their roles as governors. They are well informed, thorough in their monitoring of many aspects of the work of the school, including the budget, and have a good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Involvement in the working of the school is, over time, developing the governors' knowledge and understanding of the school and its work. They choose issues to follow through, such as the introduction of performance management, and their visits are organised to enable them to explore these issues and then report back to the governing body.

27. The monitoring of the work of the school is very effective. The outcomes of the monitoring are acted upon to bring about further improvement. The art department, for example, was highlighted as an area where some pupils were underachieving. Monitoring of examination results showed that the problems were mainly with boys. The curriculum was revised to make it more motivating to boys in Years 7 to 9. More emphasis was placed on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in art, and work was introduced on digital imaging, including the manipulation of images using computers. Short-term targets, which proved more effective with boys, were introduced and positive moves made to praise boys more. So successful were some of these strategies that they have extended to other departments. Attainment in art, even at an early stage, is beginning to rise, showing a significant improvement in GCSE results in 2001 from the levels gained in 2000.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Although attainment is high in most subjects by the end of Year 11, in some subjects, such as business studies, information studies and art, pupils are achieving less well than they are elsewhere.

28. In GCSE examinations there are wide discrepancies between levels of attainment in different subjects and in the progress that pupils make. In most subjects, pupils' attainment is well above the national average. In other subjects, they achieve less well, even though the overall results are close to or slightly above the national average. The inspection found that the quality of provision is lower in some subjects than in others, and that pupils make relatively slower progress in gaining skills, knowledge and understanding. If the school is to continue to improve its external examination results, it needs to raise levels of attainment in business studies and information studies and, to a lesser extent, in mathematics and art. In all of these subjects, pupils achieved less well, relatively, than they did in their other subjects in 2001. A number of factors can cause a subject area to underachieve in one year, but the pupils' performance in these subjects, though there have been peaks and troughs, has, over time, been relatively weak compared with that across the curriculum as a whole. Except in the case of business studies in 2001, examination performance has been above the national average, but not so far above as in the other subjects and pupils have not achieved as well.

29. The inspection found that the situation in mathematics and art is already improving. In mathematics, pupils have, over time, achieved less well in the national tests for 14 year olds and in the GCSE examinations than they have in the other core subjects. Evidence from the school and from parents identifies disruptions caused by staffing difficulties as the main cause. Some classes, for example, have had their education disrupted because of long absences of their permanent teachers. The leadership of the department has been

weakened by the unavoidable absence for extended periods of the department manager. These difficulties have only recently been resolved and it is now necessary to develop, improve and stabilise staffing, policies and teaching quality throughout the department. The school has already recognised this and much has already been done.

30. The problems in art are of under-achievement by boys. In 2001, for example, the proportion of girls who attained A*-C passes was well above the national average. Overall, over 80 per cent of candidates attained passes at these levels, compared with just over 60 per cent nationally, but this success was largely due to the successes of girls. Again, the school has analysed the results and identified the problem. The curriculum has been modified to make it more interesting to boys. Teaching styles have been modified. For example, girls tend to work more assiduously and more carefully at course work and so get more praise from teachers, whilst boys bear the brunt of criticism. It has been recognised that there is a need, in art and elsewhere, to share praise and encouragement more evenly between the sexes. The finding of the inspection was that boys' interest and attainment levels in art are beginning to rise, though there is still a need for the initiatives to continue and to develop further.

31. In design and technology, attainment is well above the national average, and pupils achieve well. This only applies, however, to those pupils who take design and technology subjects in Years 10 and 11. The school is not able to provide all pupils with their statutory entitlement to follow such a course. This was also the case at the time of the last inspection, although the situation has improved slightly since then. There are two problems that have to be overcome. The first is one of resources. The school has too few teachers qualified in design and technology to provide lessons for every pupil. It has not been able to recruit sufficient staff. The area the school is in is one of very high housing costs and recruitment of staff is difficult. The second problem is one of the school's accommodation. There are not sufficient specialist teaching rooms to extend design and technology courses to all pupils in these year groups. This was acknowledged by the local authority at the time of the last report, but no action has been taken to remedy the situation. As a result, not all pupils can benefit from the high quality of teaching in these departments. There is an urgent need to improve provision so that statutory requirements can be met to teach design and technology, or a design and technology related subject, to all pupils.

32. In business studies and information studies, examination results have fluctuated, but over time they have been lower than in other subjects. When pupils' results in these subjects are compared with the same pupils' results in their other examination courses, it is evident that there is a tendency for them to achieve least well in this area of the curriculum. On the evidence of the business studies lessons that were observed during the inspection, and of the pupils' work from previous lessons, it is apparent that some pupils are under-achieving. There are minor problems with the quality of provision. Not all of the computers were working satisfactorily in one of these lessons, for example. In addition, the quality of teaching was generally lower in these areas than it was elsewhere. In one lesson, the aims of the lesson were confused. Many of the pupils were struggling with an ICT task and some, by the end of the lesson, had failed to master the lesson objective as a result. The teaching is sometimes not as motivating or interesting as it is elsewhere in the school, with the result that some pupils do not listen carefully enough to the instructions given by the teacher or do not work hard during the lessons. There is a need for continued monitoring in order to develop further teaching and learning in these subject areas.

33. Considerable progress has been made by the school in the analysis and use of assessment data. This is evident from some of the examples of improvements outlined above. Overall, it is used well and is a strength of the school's provision. It is now a vital management tool, used by the senior managers to monitor the progress of cohorts of pupils

and the effectiveness of teachers and departments. They use well the information they gain from this analysis, to concentrate resources and professional development where they are most needed. Similarly, most department heads, heads of house and form tutors are making good use of assessment data to monitor the work of pupils and to set them targets for future attainment. Some department leaders have been quicker than others to recognise the full potential of the information available to them. The science and the humanities departments have a particularly good understanding of assessment information and of the ways in which it can be used to set realistic and yet challenging targets for pupils, and to provide regular information on pupils' progress towards attaining them. In these subject areas there is regular constructive dialogue between teachers and pupils, who share and understand the target setting process. These subjects are amongst the most successful in the school. In all departments there is a growing awareness of the value of assessment information, but its use is not everywhere as well developed as in these two examples. In other departments, for example, assessment is not used consistently well to ensure that the work set in class is well matched to the needs and abilities of all of the pupils. In lessons in art and business studies observed during the inspection, for example, the tasks set by the teachers were the same for all pupils, irrespective of their needs. For some, the work was too easy. For others, it was too difficult. As a result, some worked slowly and made little progress in the lesson or finished quickly and were not challenged by the tasks.

34. Overall, considerable progress has been made since the last inspection, but the school needs to continue to train teachers and heads of department in the best use of the impressive amount of assessment information now available to them.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

35. This is a very successful school. In order to continue to improve and to raise levels of attainment even further, the governors, headteacher and teaching staff, with the support of the local education authority (LEA), should:

- Continue to seek ways of raising attainment in subjects which, at GCSE, are relatively less successful than others in ensuring that pupils make the best possible progress in their learning. To achieve this, they should:
 - * continue to focus the monitoring of teaching and learning on the recognition and sharing of the most successful practice, including clear, shared lesson aims and thoroughly planned lessons, appropriate for all pupils in the classes;
 - * ensure that the expectations of pupils and teachers are equally high across all subjects and that teachers work to motivate and interest pupils, both boys and girls, in their subjects;
 - * ensure that the setting of targets and use of assessment data are consistent and equally effective across all subjects;
 - * seek ways to meet the statutory requirement to teach design and technology to all Year 10 and Year 11 pupils.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 - 11	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Years 7 – 11							
Number	1	10	27	4	1	0	0
Percentage	2.5	23	63	9	2.5	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 the percentages for Years 7 – 11 as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1509
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	38

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	44
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	142

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	42
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	42

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.6
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	1.1

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	165	146	311

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	120	133	150
	Girls	123	119	121
	Total	243	252	271
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	78(72)	81(79)	87(80)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	37 (35)	52 (54)	55 (50)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 5 and above	Boys	91	144	149
	Girls	102	125	124
	Total	193	269	273
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 5 or above	School	62 (75)	86 (81)	88 (84)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 6 or above	School	29 (35)	52 (48)	55 (44)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	148	122	270

GCSE results		5 or more grades A*-C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	97	146	148
	Girls	93	118	122
	Total	190	264	270
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	70 (74)	98 (96)	100 (97)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	46.5
	National	39 (38.0)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	6
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	5
White	1476
Any other minority ethnic group	17

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	152	4
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	82
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.3

Education support staff:

Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	34
Total aggregate hours worked per week	695

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	26
Key Stage 4	23

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	3496195.00
Total expenditure	3503302.00
Expenditure per pupil	2320.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	0.00
Balance carried forward to next year	-7108.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7.8

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	6.2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	6.2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

993
321

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	31	58	7	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	35	55	3	1	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	23	66	3	2	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	60	10	2	6
The teaching is good.	30	60	2	1	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	49	13	3	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	37	48	8	4	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	46	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	22	55	17	3	4
The school is well led and managed.	37	50	2	2	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	61	4	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	48	11	2	14