

INSPECTION REPORT

CROFTON SCHOOL

Stubbington

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116498

Headteacher: Mr S J Horner

Reporting inspector: Paul Cosway
2734

Dates of inspection: 15 – 18 October 2001

Inspection number: 199016

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 years

Gender of pupils: mixed

School address: Marks Road

Stubbington
Fareham
Hampshire

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr K Brindley

Date of previous inspection: November 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Crofton School is a comprehensive school, educating girls and boys from the age of 11 to 16. The school serves the commuter village of Stubbington, where there are two contributing feeder schools, but a significant minority of pupils comes from further afield. It is a relatively advantaged area and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average, at 2.8 per cent.

The school is popular and over-subscribed. It is average in size. There are 993 pupils, almost equal numbers of boys and girls. Almost all the pupils are white, which reflects the ethnic composition of the local area, although 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 black African or Chinese. For three pupils, English is not their first language. Just under 30 per cent are on the school's register of special educational need. This is above the national average. Of these, six have full statements – a relatively low proportion. Most pupils on the higher stages of the special educational needs register are diagnosed as suffering from dyslexia. The rest have emotional/behavioural problems, moderate learning difficulties, physical disability or are autistic. The overall attainment of pupils on entry is above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school, with many very good and occasionally excellent aspects to its work. Targets are set for pupils and their progress towards them is monitored very effectively. Pupils are expected to work hard to attain their targets and they respond well. As a result of this, and the good teaching, pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 9, they are 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-mannered, well-behaved, and to work collaboratively with others. Their very good personal development is supported by the good examples set by all adults who work in the school. The environment is friendly, welcoming and purposeful. Very good leadership has ensured that the school has continued to improve its academic performance year on year. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Attainment is well above the national average and pupils make good progress. Some departments, such as mathematics and science, have consistently brought the best out of their pupils and gained very good examination results.
- Assessment is used well to set targets and to plan appropriate work for pupils.
- There are many examples of very good leadership, focused both on raising the attainment of pupils and on their personal development, ensuring that they are courteous and co-operative.
- There is a good and successful emphasis on raising boys' attainment.
- The procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of pupils are very good.

What could be improved

- Although attainment is high in most subjects by the end of Year 11, in some subjects, such as English, French and geography, pupils are achieving less well than they are elsewhere.

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 November 1997. Since then, it has made good improvement and it is well placed to continue to do so. The first Key Issue from the last report was the need to raise the attainment of boys. There has been extensive staff training to address this and targets have been set for pupils to encourage them to succeed. The initiatives have worked well. In most subjects, boys attain highly. The second Key Issue has also been tackled well. Heads of department have been trained to monitor their department's work and achievements and they are doing so effectively. The third Key Issue concerned the quality of development planning. This has improved as a result of clearer links being formed between departmental and school forward planning. All senior and middle managers have been trained in order to increase their understanding of the planning process. The

work done on these Key Issues has clearly contributed to the continued improvement in the school's performance, measured by test and examination results.

The fourth Key Issue questioned the provision for the spiritual development of pupils. The governors did not include this issue in their action plan, believing that spiritual development is the province of parents and families. However, the level of provision has improved since the last report and is now satisfactory. There is good provision for spiritual development in religious education, many extra-curricular activities and personal and social education lessons. There is still not a daily act of collective worship for all.

STANDARDS

The table 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
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	B

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

The school has sustained high performance in external tests and examinations. Overall, results have been well above the national average at the end of Year 9 and at GCSE for the last four years. When results are compared with those of similar schools, they are above average. The test and examination results for 2001 were broadly similar to those for 2000, except that English results improved at the end of Year 9.

Both mathematics and science have produced results well above the national average for the last four years in the national tests for 14-year-olds. Mathematics results have been in line with, science well above, those in similar schools. Results in English have been above or well above the national average over the same period, although in 2000 they were well below the average in similar schools.

In GCSE examinations, attainment has been high. The proportion of pupils who attained five or more GCSE passes at the higher grades, A* to C, has been well above the national average and well above that of similar schools for the last four years. This suggests that the pupils in this school are making good progress compared with similar pupils elsewhere. All pupils gained at least five GCSE passes at grades between A* and G, and this puts the school in the top five per cent of all schools in the country for performance at this level. For the last two years the school has exceeded its targets of just over 70 per cent of pupils attaining five or more GCSE passes at grades A* to C.

There have been examples of outstanding achievement by subject departments and these high standards were confirmed by the inspection. Every pupil in 2001 who took chemistry, physics and biology, for example, obtained a GCSE pass at the higher grades. In double science, the pass rate in GCSE at the higher grades was very high, at 86 per cent. Attainment was also high in art, drama, mathematics, German and statistics. Numeracy levels are high and literacy levels are above average. However, pupils tend to attain less well in English, geography French compared with their other subjects, although overall results in the GCSE examinations for these subjects have been above or close to the national average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: the pupils like their school and are proud of it. They value the opportunities it gives them to learn and attain good results in examinations.
Behaviour, in and out of	The behaviour of pupils in and out of class is generally good. They

classrooms	listen and concentrate in lessons. They are generally courteous, well-behaved and considerate around the school, even in cramped corridors.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good around the school. Pupils generally respect their teachers and are respected in return. Pupils' personal development is very good. They develop the skills they need to work together as members of a group, show initiative and take responsibility for their learning.
Attendance	Excellent: attendance is high compared with other secondary schools, reflecting the pupils' very positive attitudes towards their schooling. Pupils learn better because they attend regularly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is generally good across the school. In around a fifth of lessons observed, it was very good or excellent. The teaching of science and mathematics is good in all years. The teaching of English is rather less good, although it is satisfactory overall. Out of 45 lessons observed, teaching was less than satisfactory in two. In these lessons, the level of challenge was inappropriate. The work set was too easy for a significant number of pupils. In most lessons, teachers have high expectations, support learning well and have good relationships with their pupils. As a result, pupils work hard to achieve the standards their teachers expect. They understand what they have to do in order to succeed. The very good use of assessment information, shared with the pupils so that they fully understand the targets they have been set and why, helps to motivate the pupils and gives them realistic short-term goals. In a lesson on study skills, a teacher told her class: *Teachers are your route to the best grades* - and her pupils nodded in agreement.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good: the curriculum is good for Years 7 to 9, broad and balanced. There are good opportunities for studying modern foreign languages and the performing arts. For Years 10 and 11, there is not as yet any provision for vocational subjects. Apart from this, there is a broad range of options.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Assessment is used well to determine the support they need to succeed.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The few pupils for whom English is an additional language receive satisfactory support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall: for social and moral development it is very good. The provision for cultural development is good, with a good range of trips to places of cultural interest and to help develop social skills. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory, with many good aspects, but it is the weakest of these aspects and there is scope for more consistent provision across subjects.
How well the school cares	The provision for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare is

for its pupils	very good. This is a very caring and inclusive school, which works hard to support the progress and welfare of all of its pupils.
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, supported by two very able deputies, has provided very good leadership over a number of years and this has brought about sustained improvement.
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	A wide range of monitoring and assessment data is used very effectively to evaluate the school's performance and to plan future development.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very good use of the resources at its disposal for the educational benefit of its pupils. The school is generally well staffed. Resources and accommodation are sufficient and of good quality.

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 effective, many are very effective, in giving leadership to their departments or pastoral areas and they monitor work well.

The school applies the principles of best value rigorously. Thorough and careful financial planning is a strong feature.

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"> 90 per cent believe that the teaching is good in the school; 96 per cent recognise that the school expects children to work hard and 90 per cent believe that their child is making good progress; 90 per cent agree that the school is helping their children to grow into responsible adults; 89 per cent recognise that their children like coming to school and that behaviour in school is good overall; around 87 per cent believe that the school is well-managed and feel comfortable approaching the school with problems or concerns. 	<p>Of those who responded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20 per cent do not agree that the school works closely enough with them; 16 per cent do not agree that they are well informed about their child's progress.

The proportions of parents who are pleased with their school are high. The school engenders positive attitudes in parents. Very many are very pleased that their child has a place at Crofton School and consider themselves fortunate. These very positive attitudes from parents are a factor in the school's success – they rub off onto pupils and the partnership between home and school is a

very real one. Almost all pupils get strong support in their studies from home. The inspection team's findings support the positive views of parents. The amount of detail about the targets that pupils are set and their progress towards meeting them is above average. Parents are well-informed. The school seeks to work closely with parents and to involve them. There are no weaknesses in this area of its work.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Attainment is well above the national average and pupils make good progress. Some departments, such as mathematics and science, have consistently brought the best out of their pupils and gained very good examination results.

1. Attainment on entry to the school, for the cohorts that have taken the national tests for 14-year olds and GCSE examinations in recent years, was above average. The proportion of pupils that gained the expected levels and above in English, mathematics and science in the national tests for eleven-year-olds has been higher than the national average. At the end of Year 9, after three years in the school, these pupils have achieved well, making good progress. Their results were well above the national average, overall, in the tests for 14-year-olds since the last report.
2. Over time, science and mathematics results in the tests for 14-year-olds have been better than those in English. English results were below average in 1996 and average in 2000, compared with results nationally. Compared with other similar schools, the 2000 results in English were well below average. The other two subjects have been well above the national average consistently through these years. In comparison with performance in similar schools, science results were well above average and mathematics results were average in 2000. In 2001, although comparative figures are not available, mathematics and science continued their run of excellent results. English results improved. The proportion of pupils attaining above the expected level in English (at levels 6 and 7), for example, rose from 23 per cent to over 40 per cent. National comparative figures for 2001 are not yet available, but, based on the national figures for 2000, this represents well above average attainment. The department has been in the forefront of the implementation of the Key Stage 3 Literacy Strategy. The inspection found that attainment in mathematics and science is indeed well above average by the end of Year 9 in the school. Attainment in English is clearly improving and is above average, currently.
3. Attainment in GCSE examinations has shown a rising trend. It has been well above average for the past four years and is likely to be so again when the national comparative figures for 2001 are published. The proportion of pupils who gain five or more GCSE passes at the higher grades (A* to C) has been consistently well above the national average. Between 1996 and 2000, this proportion rose from 64 per cent to 75 per cent. In 1996, the figure of 64 per cent was 21.4 percentage points above the national average. By 2000, the school had risen to be 27.6 percentage points above the national average. This demonstrates very good attainment, improving more rapidly than is the case for the country as a whole.
4. The inclusiveness of the school, its desire and ability to do as well as possible for every pupil, is clearly illustrated in the success that all pupils achieve in their GCSE examinations. It is not only those who are capable of attaining the highest grades who do well. In 1999 and 2000, every Year 11 pupil gained at least five GCSE passes at grades A* to G. This is a remarkable performance for a school with a comprehensive intake and puts this school into the top five per cent of schools nationally. The overall GCSE performance is above that of similar schools – for this school these 'similar' schools are those with the lowest proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals. This is a particularly highly attaining group of schools.
5. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress during Years 10 and 11 from their levels of attainment at the end of Year 9, bearing in mind that the levels then were already high. In many subjects, however, they exceed the grades that were predicted for them on the basis of their attainment at the age of 14. High levels of attainment were confirmed by the inspection findings, when pupils' work was scrutinised and lessons observed. In the separate sciences in 2001, all 26 candidates gained a GCSE pass at a grade between A* and C in all three subjects

- chemistry, physics and biology. Of the pupils who took the double science examinations, 86.3 per cent gained a GCSE pass at these higher grades. The predicted A* to C pass rate, based on prior attainment, was 75 per cent. Other subjects where the predicted proportion of A* to C grades in the GCSE examination was exceeded were drama (where 72 per cent were predicted and 88 per cent actually obtained an A* to C grade), mathematics (where the predicted numbers were exceeded by 11 per cent), single science, art, business studies, geography, German (where 92 per cent gained a higher grade pass against a predicted 83 per cent), history, technology and religious education.

6. The inspection findings, based on lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work, are that attainment is well above average across the school as a whole and that pupils are achieving well. Numeracy skills are very good. 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, pupils' attainment is particularly high. They excel in all aspects of science 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 religious education. They demonstrate high levels of skill in technology, art and drama.

Assessment is used well to set targets and to plan appropriate work for pupils.

7. The quality of teaching is good overall. Its effectiveness is increased by the very good use of assessment information. Pupils are set realistic targets. The pupils 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 all who work in the school, adults and children, on attainment and progress and leads to the raising of standards, especially in terms of results in tests and external examinations.
8. Many schools offer one full report to parents in one term of the school year, with, perhaps, effort grades or target grades reported in the other terms. The policy and practice at this school is to provide parents with a full report on their child's progress at the end of every term. This includes, for every subject, a National Curriculum level, an effort grade, a target GCSE grade for Years 10 and 11, a teacher comment and an indication of how further progress could be made. These are regarded by parents and pupils as very useful documents, providing regular and up-to-date information on attainment, attitudes and progress. Unlike a single, end-of-year report, they allow tutors and parents to respond quickly if it seems that targets are not going to be met.
9. The targets themselves are set at the beginning of each term and pupils record them in their personal planner in Years 10 and 11 or in their journals in Years 7,8 and 11. In many subjects, particularly mathematics and science, teachers regularly remind the pupils of their target grades. Frequent tests or assessment tasks are marked using GCSE grades, so that both teacher and pupil can check the progress made towards the targets.
10. All students agree their target grades with their teachers and, in Years 10 and 11, the pupils help to work them out using *chance graphs*. These graphs relate a pupil's attainment at the end of Year 9, as measured by external tests, to likely outcomes in GCSE examinations. A real strength of this process is the involvement of pupils in it. They understand how the prediction is made. Crucially, they can see from the graph that a range of outcomes is possible for children with their levels of prior attainment and that the outcome depends on their commitment and work rate. This helps to motivate them to concentrate on their studies.
11. The process begins in Years 7 to 9. For these year groups, targets are based on attainment in the Year 6 tests and on previous reports. Heads of year and tutors monitor these targets regularly. The effort grades indicate effort that is exceptional, good or causing concern. Pupils showing exceptional effort are rewarded with certificates and they value these. Pupils whose lack of effort is a concern are given additional support by their heads of year.

12. Together, these processes involve pupils in monitoring their own learning and ensure that the minds of staff, pupils and parents are focused on the importance of working to a consistently high standard. Backed up by a successful mentoring programme in Year 11, that concentrates support and guidance on pupils who are borderline in terms of GCSE success, they help to explain the school's high rate of academic performance. It is partly as a result of the very good use of assessment information that the school can ensure that a very high proportion of pupils leaves at the end of Year 11 with five or more GCSE examination passes at the higher grades and that every pupil will achieve five or more GCSE passes.

There are many examples of very good leadership, focused both on raising the attainment of pupils and on their personal development, ensuring that they are courteous and co-operative.

13. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher are very good and he is ably supported by the deputy headteachers and the senior and middle managers. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. The senior team and heads of department monitor the school's performance very well and this is an area of strength. As a result of this analysis, effective action is 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 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 well qualified and all teach their specialist subjects. The learning support assistants are very well deployed, sufficient in number to meet the needs of pupils, and are supporting pupils' learning very effectively. Leadership and management are very good across the school as a whole.
14. The headteacher, along with the other senior managers, provides very clear direction for the work of the school. The senior managers have a clear vision of a high attaining school that is inclusive and seeks to develop every aspect of the child. The result is strong leadership in those areas that matter, including the personal development of pupils. The school believes that it has the minimum number of systems to ensure that it operates coherently. Areas of the school have autonomy to develop their own approaches, within subject areas, for example. The headteacher believes that members of staff perform better if they are allowed to make decisions about the aspects of their work that affect them most directly. Heads of department, in consultation with their staff, have as much flexibility as possible in determining teaching styles and groupings. However, they are accountable and have to monitor standards within their departments. They must also ensure that the results within the department are good and that the systems they adopt are not in conflict with whole-school policies. When decisions are taken by the senior managers that affect all staff, they listen to the views of others and work to explain the reasons for their decisions and to win people over to their position. Ultimately, however, the decisions and the responsibilities rest firmly on the shoulders of the headteacher and his two deputies. Leadership is honest, open and clear. Its success can be judged by the sustained high standards of care and personal development since the last report, alongside continually improving examination performance.
15. Performance management is very securely in place. The most recent review by an external assessor gave it the highest possible grade for implementation and effectiveness. Very effective monitoring systems, which include senior managers being linked to heads of department to support them in the monitoring of work in subject areas, are coupled to very good procedures for professional development. As far as possible, teachers' accountability for the effectiveness of their work is complemented by a positive approach from the senior managers designed to provide support to help everyone to improve. The outcomes of monitoring are therefore not threatening; the process is open and helpful. Staff meetings are reserved for regular work on professional development. Administrative matters are dealt with at the briefings for all staff before school starts every morning. These are valued by the staff, keeping them up-to-date on what is going on in the school and allowing information to be exchanged between teachers quickly and efficiently.
16. The excellent systems for assessment and target setting, which have played such a significant part in keeping pupils on track towards their target grades in external examinations, are good examples of initiatives that have emanated from senior managers. They have helped the school to improve its results significantly year on year. This is clear evidence that the

headteacher, deputies and assistant headteachers have vision, understand where improvements are needed and have the leadership and management skills to implement development successfully. The challenge for the school and the governing body will be to sustain the quality of leadership in the light of forthcoming changes to the senior management team.

There is a good and successful emphasis on raising boys' attainment.

17. Following the last inspection report, in which the relatively low performance of boys compared with girls was a Key Issue, one of the deputy headteachers researched the reasons for boys' under-attainment. A number of factors were identified both from national research and from a questionnaire prepared and distributed amongst the pupils in the school. Interestingly, parents were also questioned and, at the meeting for parents, they showed good awareness of the school's initiatives in seeking to raise the achievement of boys and their appreciation of them. The outcomes of the survey indicated, amongst other things, that both boys and girls felt that the efforts that boys made were not recognised by staff and that teachers were less tolerant of boys than they were of girls.
18. Several initiatives were introduced to help boys to achieve better and to raise their self-esteem. Teachers now award effort grades on pieces of work and end-of-term reports using different criteria for boys and girls, grading boys against other boys rather than against the cohort as a whole. Teachers now understand, for example, that fifteen per cent of boys should be praised for their levels of effort and fifteen per cent of girls, rather than, say, five per cent of boys and 25 per cent of girls. This is helping to motivate boys who now feel that the efforts that they make are being appreciated. Teachers are directed not to expect the same level of maturity of response from boys as from girls and to understand the nature of teenage boys' humour! These, and other similar instructions, are intended to help teachers not to judge boys unfairly against girls and to value their contributions as highly. As a result of the highly effective in-house training that has resulted, departments have reviewed their teaching and learning styles and the contents of their courses to ensure that they are appropriate for boys. Some have experimented with single gender classes and this continues in English, where some benefits are detected.
19. The outcomes have been very positive. In the year of the report, boys attained almost as well as girls in the national tests for 14-year-olds, against the national trend. In the four years since, they have, on average, attained more highly than girls, attaining an average point score of 36.3 against the girls' average point score of 36.1. In GCSE examinations over the same period, girls have consistently outperformed boys. However, the difference between the average point score for boys at this school and the average point score for boys across the country as a whole is greater than that for the girls compared with girls nationally. Therefore, the boys are now attaining better, in comparison with girls, than boys across the country as a whole. This is shown by analysis of results in GCSE examinations by gender.
20. Over the last four years, up to the year 2000, boys have, on average, exceeded the average point score for boys by 11.4 points, whilst girls have outperformed girls nationally by 9.9 points. In the year 2000, boys attained almost the same average point score as that of the girls, 49.5 compared with 50.1 for girls. These two facts alone would have been significant evidence of the school's success in motivating boys. However, when the difference is examined between the average score for boys nationally and the average point score gained by boys at Crofton School, the success of the school is seen to be even more startling. Boys outperformed boys nationally by no fewer than 13.7 points (by 49.5 points compared with 35.8). Girls also outperformed girls nationally, but by 9.1 points. The performance of girls and boys is likely to be similar in 2001, but, at the time of the inspection, final results were not available because of appeals and remarking taking place.

The procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of pupils are very good.

21. Not only are the procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance very good, but also the levels of support and guidance for their personal development are very effective. There is a very good personal social and health education course for all pupils that covers appropriate topics well, such as study skills, health education and drugs awareness. Pupils value their tutors and there are regular sessions, once every term, in which tutors and year heads review progress with individual pupils. Tutors remain with their tutor groups for their entire time in the school, from entry at the beginning of Year 7 to leaving at the end of Year 11. They get to

know their charges very well indeed and care for them very well. The termly reports ensure that parents are kept up-to-date with the academic and personal development of their children and they are invited to come into school if they have any concerns. The school does all it can to ensure that all pupils, whether high attainers or school-refusers, are given every chance and encouragement. It is school policy that praise is used whenever possible to raise children's self-esteem – a policy that has worked particularly well in giving boys positive attitudes towards school. The success of the school's caring and inclusive ethos can be seen in the GCSE results. Every pupil in this comprehensive intake leaves school in recent times with five GCSE passes. This remarkable achievement puts the school in the top five per cent of all schools nationally in this measure of all round success.

22. 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 daily staff briefing. The *At-risk* register is up-to-date and detailed. Any absence is followed up immediately. If no explanation comes from home on the first day, parents are telephoned to ensure that their children are safe and the absence is condoned. 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 – for Asperger's Syndrome, for example.
23. There are no health and safety issues around the site. The buildings and grounds are supervised very well indeed by the school facilities officer and his team, who carry out regular health and safety checks.
24. 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.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Although attainment is high in most subjects by the end of Year 11, in some subjects, such as English, French and music, pupils are achieving less well than they are elsewhere.

25. A higher proportion than nationally of pupils gained above the expected levels in English, mathematics and science in the national tests for 14-year-olds. Over time, however, science and mathematics results have been better than those in English. English results were below average in 1996 and average in 2000, compared with results nationally. Compared with other similar schools, the 2000 results were well below average. The senior managers targeted support to the English department in the form of professional development time, additional funding for teaching resources and advice and support from the local education authority's advisory service. The outcomes show that well-directed support can improve performance within subject departments, especially when (as was the case in English) the teachers work hard to improve and the initiatives have the full support of the hard-working head of department. The proportion of pupils who reached level five (the expected standard nationally) or above in English rose from 79 per cent to 86 per cent from 2000 to 2001. Higher attainers benefited also. The proportion gaining level 6 or above in the national tests for English rose from 23 per cent to 41 per cent. Attainment in English began to approach that in science and mathematics, but the proportion of pupils who attain level 6 or above is still significantly lower than in these other two subjects.
26. In GCSE examinations, however, there are wide discrepancies between levels of attainment in different subjects and in the progress that pupils make. In some subjects, pupils are exceeding their predicted grades, based on their prior attainment, by wide margins and attainment overall 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 English,

geography and music. In two 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 was also relatively weak in 2000.

27. One reason for under-performance has been a high turnover of staff. English, music and modern foreign languages have suffered particularly from this problem. Temporary members of staff have had to be employed on occasions and some of these were not fully qualified in the subjects they were teaching. This was beyond the control of the school, but has had an adverse affect on standards. These issues have now been resolved, but there is a need to work with new members of staff, especially in English and music, to develop their skills and confidence and to ensure that they fully understand and put into practice the school's teaching and learning policy. There are many strengths in the work of these departments and the teachers are dedicated and hard-working. In English, for example, the department is trying several approaches to try to improve the achievement of pupils. Staff recognised that boys do not perform as well as girls, so, last year, boys and girls were taught in separate groups in Year 10. This has continued this year. Teachers feel that the trial has shown that boys will contribute more to discussion if they are with other boys, and therefore extend their learning. It is too soon to see if this move has improved achievement, although girls achieve well in single gender groups in Year 11.
28. However, although there is evidence that standards are rising in these subjects, the following areas for further development were identified by the inspection team.
29. Some teachers make the aim of the lesson clear to pupils so that they know what is expected of them. Where this is happening, pupils' learning is good. It does not happen in all lessons. Sometimes pupils are unaware of the lesson aims and do not understand why the topic of the lesson changes during the course of the period, even though the reason is clear to the teacher and part of a planned progression of tasks. In Years 10 and 11, teachers use the GCSE syllabus as guidance and so do not plan lessons in detail. This works well for experienced teachers, who understand the best way to teach examination skills to their pupils, but it is less successful for newer teachers, who need to plan more thoroughly.
30. In some English and music lessons, the match of task to the attainment of pupils is sometimes inaccurate, leading to higher attaining pupils underachieving as they finish early or find the work too easy. Where there is no support, lower attaining pupils sometimes find the work difficult and so struggle. In a few examples, their frustration led to them losing interest and becoming disruptive. Sometimes, the reliance on printed materials and worksheets does not motivate lower attaining pupils or those with special educational needs and they find the work irrelevant and so lose interest quickly. Examples included work on opinion and bias. The use of articles from newspapers about topics that were of interest to pupils could have engendered more enthusiasm.
31. In some lessons, across all these subjects, there is predominantly one style of teaching, that of working as a whole class. Although this can be successful for a short time, it gives little opportunity for pupils to engage in sustained dialogue or discussion. Only one pupil could contribute at a time and many began to lose interest. In lessons where pupils worked for part of the time in pairs or groups, more pupils had the opportunity to share and develop their points of view and so their learning was extended. In an excellent English lesson, with Year 11 girls, the quality of discussion when working in pairs led to very high achievement.
32. Teachers mark work assiduously, but not all make comments about how work can be improved. All teachers have information about how well pupils are progressing. This includes information about pupils' performance when they left primary school. Targets are set for their performance at the end of Year 11. This good information is used well by some teachers in English and modern foreign languages to ensure that pupils are on track to reach their targets. This information is, however, not used consistently, partly because of recent staff changes, so there is a danger that underachievement may not be picked up.
33. Overall, all pupils attain well in this very effective school. If it is to improve further, however, there is a need for the quality of teaching to be raised in those lessons and subjects that are less effective than others in motivating pupils and extending their knowledge and skills. This

can be done by ensuring that all teachers have clear lesson aims, shared with their pupils; plan the work well to match the abilities and needs of all of their pupils; use a wide and appropriate range of teaching methods and make full use of assessment information.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

34. This is a 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, should:
- Continue to seek ways of raising attainment in subjects that, at GCSE, are relatively less successful than others in ensuring that pupils make the best possible progress in their learning. In order to do 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;
 - ensure that the setting of targets and the use of assessment data are consistent and equally effective across all subjects and that pupils' progress towards their targets is monitored effectively.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 - 11	45
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
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Years 7 – 11

Number	3	6	19	15	2	0	0
Percentage	7	13	42	33	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 two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	993	
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	28	

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6	
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	297	

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	per cent
School data	4.1
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	per cent
School data	0.6
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
		2000	92	107

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	66	74	82
	Girls	92	88	86
	Total	158	162	168
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	79 (92)	81 (85)	84 (82)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	53 (51)	61 (65)	58 (42)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	70	73	75
	Girls	97	90	98
	Total	167	163	173
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	84 (73)	82 (90)	87 (88)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	45 (38)	60 (53)	53 (47)
	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	91	109

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	64	91	91
	Girls	86	109	109
	Total	150	200	200
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	75 (69)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	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	50 (47.8)
	National	38.4 (38.0)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	988
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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	13	1
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)	58
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.1

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	379

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25.6
Key Stage 4	21

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	2759403
Total expenditure	2736792
Expenditure per pupil	2751
Balance brought forward from previous year	226624
Balance carried forward to next year	249235

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	12.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	16

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	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	993
Number of questionnaires returned	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