

INSPECTION REPORT

STRATFORD GRAMMAR SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Stratford-on-Avon

LEA area: Warwickshire

Unique reference number: 125730

Headteacher: Mr Roger Stanbridge

Reporting inspector: Mr John Beardsmore
16429

Dates of inspection: 7-9 November 2000

Inspection number: 223707

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Grammar (Selective)

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11-18

Gender of pupils: Girls

School address: Stratford-upon-Avon Grammar School for Girls
Shottery Manor
Stratford-upon-Avon
Warwickshire

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr C Towner

Date of previous inspection: 30 October 1995

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Stratford-upon-Avon Grammar School for Girls is a small, selective, 11 to 18, community school. It draws its 492 pupils from an extremely wide area and is heavily over-subscribed. It has a large sixth form for its size, of 169 pupils, some of whom have come from other schools. Attainment on entry in Year 7 is well above the national average, as pupils are selected for entry on the basis of ability and are drawn from the top 15 per cent of the ability range. Twenty-seven pupils are designated as having special educational needs, 11 for dyslexia and 15 for emotional and behavioural difficulties. Only a tiny proportion of the pupils come from ethnic minorities, mainly from the Indian subcontinent, and all have a good command of English. An even smaller number are entitled to free school meals. The school seeks to enable its pupils to achieve the highest standards in all that they do, especially in their academic work, within the context of a caring, yet challenging community.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a highly successful school, where leadership is very effective and the quality of teaching is good. Pupils achieve well in relation to their ability and reach high standards in their academic and in their personal development, in a purposeful but friendly atmosphere. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils achieve well academically and reach very high standards throughout the school
- Their standards of personal development, behaviour and relationships are also very high
- The quality of teaching is good, with a high proportion of very good and excellent teaching at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form
- There is a very good learning ethos; pupils are confident, very well motivated and highly committed to their learning
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good
- The headteacher provides effective and very strong leadership
- The school provides very good value for money.

What could be improved

- The school does not meet statutory requirements at Key Stage 4 for design and technology and information and communication technology; accommodation and resources in these areas remain inadequate
- Funding for subject departments and accommodation for music are inadequate
- There are minor shortcomings in some lessons which are satisfactory, rather than good
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching within departments could be more systematic
- Performance data could be more systematically used to track pupils' progress and set targets for attainment.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made further strong progress since the last inspection, building on its already high standards. Results at GCSE and GCE Advanced level have improved at a rate which is above the national trend, indeed, well above at Advanced level. The increase in the proportion of the highest grades in both examinations is quite exceptional and this is matched by corresponding increases in the average points scored by candidates. The quality of teaching has improved markedly, with an especially marked rise in the proportion which is good or better. The school has also made good progress in dealing with the issues for improvement identified in the last inspection report.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			grammar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	A*	A*	A*	B
A-levels/AS-levels	A*	A*	A*	

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

(A in the chart above indicates that the school's performance was in the highest five per cent nationally).*

National Curriculum test and assessment results at the end of Key Stage 3 are very high in comparison with all schools and well above those for grammar schools. GCSE results in 2000 were even higher than those in 1999, especially in relation to the proportion of A* and A grades, which reached 75 per cent of all entries. The school's candidates in science performed better in comparison with their other subjects, than did girls nationally. The GCE Advanced level results were better in 2000 than in 1999, with a large rise of 15.4 per cent in the proportion of grades A and B, and with a 100 per cent pass rate A-E.

Over the past five years, the trend in average point scores at the end of Key Stage 3 has been broadly in line with the national trend. At GCSE, the upward trend in average point scores has been above the national trend, whilst at GCE Advanced level it has been well above. The school has set realistic targets for further improvement.

Pupils achieve well at Key Stage 3 and their achievement at GCSE is also good, when compared with their average point score two years previously in Key Stage 3 tests. A computer-based analysis (ALIS) of candidates' GCE Advanced level results in 1999, compared with those they achieved two years earlier in GCSE, indicated that their achievement was at least satisfactory, and good in the case of mathematics.

Inspection evidence indicates that the pupils' attainment is closely in line with their recent test and examination results and that they achieve well throughout the school. Their standards of literacy are exceptionally high.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Extremely positive: pupils are highly motivated and committed to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good overall and excellent in many classes.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: pupils are thoughtful, confident and articulate; they show considerable initiative and willingly take on responsibilities.
Attendance	Excellent: unauthorised absence is non-existent and that which is authorised is very low.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Very good	Very good

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

Teaching was at least satisfactory in all the 47 lessons observed. It was good or better in 75 per cent and very good, and sometimes excellent, in 37 per cent. These proportions are very high. In the core subjects, teaching observed was good in mathematics and science and very good in English. Both literacy and numeracy skills are well taught, exceptionally so in the case of the former. Overall, the teaching strongly promotes learning and the needs of all pupils are well met in the great majority of lessons.

The most important strengths of the good teaching are strong specialist knowledge, often allied with a love for the subject which is conveyed to the pupils, and with detailed knowledge of examination requirements; appropriately high expectations of what the pupils can achieve; careful planning to ensure that objectives are met, lessons are varied and the pace of learning is maintained; systematic assessment of progress, thorough and often constructive marking; good use of homework to extend learning and to identify areas where more progress is needed.

Occasional shortcomings in lessons which were satisfactory rather than good were excessive direction by the teacher, not allowing pupils to show initiative in their learning, or contribute their own ideas; lack of pace and challenge, for example, for higher attaining pupils in Year 7; marking which was not sufficiently constructive and detailed to show how the work could be improved.

The pupils respond very well to the effective teaching and the quality of learning in the great majority of lessons is high. It is usually good, even in the lessons where the quality of teaching is not so high.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good: wide range of subjects at all levels, though the school does not meet statutory requirements in respect of design and technology and information technology at Key Stage 4; enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes satisfactory provision for the few pupils with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good: assemblies are dignified and thoughtful; religious education encourages pupils to reflect and to develop their own beliefs; pupils are also encouraged to consider the needs of others, to take initiative and to exercise responsibility.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are very well known by the staff and they are well cared for by the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very strong and effective leadership, working closely with other senior staff and with the governing body. Monitoring of teaching by senior staff is well established, but needs to be extended at middle management level.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is well informed about the school and fulfils its responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is making increasing use of statistical data to evaluate its performance and set targets but teachers recognise that this needs to become more sophisticated.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning and monitoring are sound; the school makes every effort to secure value for money and has regard for the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their daughters like school • The quality of the teaching is good • The school has high expectations of pupils • They achieve high standards • They develop confidence and independence • Standards of behaviour and attendance are high • There is a wide range of opportunities for personal development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minority do not feel well informed about how their daughters are doing • A minority do not feel that the school works closely enough with parents • A number are concerned about the adequacy of funding and of resources in the school

The responses to the parents' questionnaire were exceptionally positive about the school. The inspectors agree with the positive views set out above. In respect of what some parents would like to see improved: the inspectors agree that resources and accommodation are inadequate in some curriculum areas; there was no evidence from the inspection that the school is failing to inform parents or to work closely with them, though it is clear that a small minority of parents, mainly of pupils in Years 7 and 8, do believe this; the school accepts the need to respond to these concerns.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The pupils achieve well academically and reach very high standards throughout the school

1. By the end of Key Stage 3, National Curriculum test and assessment results are very high in relation to those of all maintained schools. More significantly, the pupils' average point score in English, mathematics and science is also high in relation to those of grammar schools. In 1999, this was particularly marked in English, where an exceptionally high proportion of pupils reached levels 7 and 8. Results in science were well above average for similar schools in the same year, and those in mathematics were above average. In 2000, the results remained well above average for grammar schools, despite a fall in English in the proportion of those reaching levels 7 and 8.
2. These results indicate that the pupils make good progress during Key Stage 3, and achieve well in relation to both their Key Stage 2 tests and the cognitive ability tests which they take in Year 7. A significant proportion advance by two National Curriculum levels (rather than the expected one level) during Key Stage 3 and their test results compare favourably with expectations based on the cognitive ability tests. For example, the proportion of levels 7 and 8 in English in 2000 is entirely consistent with the profile of the year group revealed two years earlier when they were in Year 7.
3. The pattern of high attainment and good achievement continues in Key Stage 4. Candidates' average total point score (the broadest measure of success at GCSE) was above the average for grammar schools in 1999. Significantly, the proportion of GCSE A* and A grades is now very high, having reached 75 per cent of all entries in 2000. The profile of well-above average proportions of the highest grades was evident this year in all subjects except sociology, where it was around the average for all schools. A further noteworthy factor was that candidates in science performed better in relation to their other subjects than girls do nationally. Comparison of the GCSE results in the core subjects, with the candidates' average point scores two years earlier at the end of Key Stage 3, indicates that achievement is good in English and science and satisfactory in mathematics. Across the curriculum as a whole, achievement is good during Key Stage 4.
4. The 1999 GCE Advanced level results were well above average in relation to the average for all schools (no comparisons with grammar schools are available), with even better results in 2000. The proportion of A and B grades achieved reached 68 per cent and all candidates gained at least a grade E. A computer analysis of candidates' performance in 1999, in relation to their previous performance at GCSE, indicates that their achievement was at least satisfactory in all subjects, and that it was good in mathematics.
5. A significant feature at both GCSE and GCE Advanced level is the strong trend of improvement in the school's results over the past five years, which in both cases has been above the national trend. This is evident in the average point scores in both examinations and also in the rising proportion of higher grades gained.

6. The work seen during the inspection confirms the pattern of very high attainment indicated by the results of National Curriculum tests, GCSE and GCE Advanced level examinations. Standards of literacy and numeracy are high throughout the school and both areas of skill are used well by pupils across the curriculum. Levels of literacy are outstanding. The great majority of pupils are articulate and have a good command of vocabulary and structure, so that they can express their views cogently in speech or in writing. Many read widely both for pleasure and research and show real enjoyment in their study of literature. In mathematics pupils rapidly build on, and extend, the skills they bring with them from primary school. They are able to use their knowledge to the solution of increasingly complex problems. In particular they develop strong skills in number and algebra, and this helps their progress in other subjects. Pupils have a very good grasp of theory across all aspects of science. They carry out experimental and investigative work confidently and confidently, drawing conclusions from their findings and achieving high standards throughout the school. On the basis of the work observed and the progress which they have made, pupils' achievement is good throughout the school.

Their standards of personal development, behaviour and relationships are also very high

7. A noticeable feature of the school is that its pupils reach high standards, not only in their academic work, but also in their personal development, and the two are closely linked. The pupils' attendance is excellent. Their academic success is strongly underpinned by their attitudes to work, their very high levels of motivation, their interest in work and their keenness to succeed. These attitudes create a very positive climate for learning, which enables pupils to derive maximum benefit from the quality of the teaching. Their motivation is such that they apply themselves diligently even in the minority of lessons where the tasks seem dull and teaching is less inspiring.
8. Behaviour in the school is very good, and often excellent in lessons. The pupils are lively and cheerful, sometimes exuberant, around the school, but they quickly settle down to work in class with the minimum of fuss. Particularly striking is the way in which they readily work without direct supervision, for example, in pair or group work, in the library or on computers, with very little time wasted or spent on irrelevant chatting. When a mild rebuke is necessary they quickly come to order. This is not to say that behaviour is always perfect: there have been occasional problems with a very small number of pupils, though this must be seen in the context of the very high standards of the majority. The school takes firm action in such cases and always involves the parents.
9. Pupils are self-confident and articulate. They have strong views on many subjects and are not afraid to express their opinions. Relationships between pupils are very good and they are prepared to listen to and respect the views of others in classroom discussion and debate. There is much evidence that senior pupils in particular take an active part in school life, taking the initiative, for example, in organising charity events and in extra-curricular activities. There is an active school council and a sixth form consultative group. The head girl and deputy head girls have a meeting each week with the headteacher, in which they have a significant input.

The quality of teaching is good, with a high proportion of very good and excellent teaching at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form

10. The quality of the teaching makes a major contribution to the high standards which the pupils achieve and to the establishment of a highly effective learning ethos in the school. Teaching was at least satisfactory in all the lessons observed during the inspection. More significantly, the proportion which was good or better was very high, at around 75 per cent, as was the proportion which was very good or excellent, at 37 per cent. Teaching was satisfactory, though with some good features, at Key Stage 3, and strongest in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, where it was very good. In the core subjects, teaching observed was good in mathematics and science and very good in English.
11. Prominent features of much of the teaching are the teachers' excellent subject expertise, their enthusiasm for their subject and their ability to communicate this to their pupils. A good example is the teaching of English literature, where pupils were observed responding enthusiastically to high quality teaching and becoming totally absorbed in discussion of character, plot and literary devices. A sixth form history group made excellent progress and worked with relish because of the teacher's skill in arousing their interest in Elizabeth I's personality and strategies in dealing with the problems that faced her. A Year 9 music group worked with great enjoyment and commitment in response to the teacher's infectious love for the subject and high level of subject expertise. In many of the lessons observed, including those in mathematics and science, the teacher's enthusiasm was conveyed through effective presentation of the subject matter, based on strong subject expertise.
12. A second feature of the more effective teaching is that the teachers have appropriate expectations of what the pupils can achieve, based on a detailed knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses and, in the upper school, of examination requirements. Knowledgeable teaching in a Year 13 mathematics lesson, for example, was based on a very clear understanding of examination requirements but there was no "spoon-feeding". Explanations were clear, but pupils were expected to think for themselves and move on to more demanding questions. Demanding, but well-judged, use of the foreign language in a Year 12 French lesson provided challenging practice in understanding the spoken language. Conversely, a lower ability Year 10 French group were encouraged to make progress by teaching which was much less demanding, but carefully structured to their learning needs. Several instances were observed, in various subject areas and especially at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, of teachers asking probing questions, both to develop their pupils' thinking and to check their understanding. This was often allied with a rigorous use of relevant technical vocabulary in the subject concerned.

13. Teachers plan their lessons with care, so as to ensure that they make good use of time and that the pace of learning is maintained. They are clear about their objectives, and often share these with the pupils, so that the latter understand what they are supposed to learn during the lesson. Successful lessons are often characterised by a variety of activities related to the learning objectives, so that learning is reinforced in different ways, pupils are consistently involved and actively thinking about what they are doing, and their interest is maintained. One example of this was in science, where the whole of Year 11 spent a day on course work based on scientific enquiry. This was very successful because of the teachers' careful planning, the clarity of their objectives, the structure and the organisation of the activities, and the swift establishment of an effective working environment, as well as the teachers' skilful interaction with individuals and small groups of pupils. A Year 9 English lesson was very well planned to involve the pupils in a range of relevant activities (individual research and feedback, research in threes, whole-class discussion and recapitulation); a brisk and purposeful pace was maintained throughout, no time was lost and the pupils made very good progress. A very well-planned, Year 11 religious education lesson on racism and religious belief, involving judicious use of video, dialogue and discussion skilfully managed by the teacher, led to learning of exceptionally high quality.
14. The great majority of lessons are characterised by cordial and productive relationships between teachers and pupils. The atmosphere is relaxed but purposeful, rather than repressive. Because the pupils respond well to this, it enhances the learning ethos and encourages the pupils to do their best. Teachers rarely have to rebuke pupils for misbehaviour. When they do, it is almost always effective.
15. Teachers mark pupils' work thoroughly, so that they are very familiar with their standards and progress and are able to gear the teaching to their needs. Much, though not all, of the marking contains helpful and constructive advice on how to improve, especially in English, where some of the guidance is exceptionally detailed. Pupils' progress in their work is often helped by the individual guidance which teachers are able to give in lessons because they know their pupils well.
16. The learning ethos in the school is exceptionally good. This is a function of both the quality of the teaching and the attitudes and commitment of the pupils. The atmosphere in most lessons is extremely purposeful and productive, with the majority of pupils working to capacity. Levels of interest are very high and pupils are keen to follow up a presentation by the teacher with research on their own or in groups. They respond especially well to teaching which is challenging but well judged, and where the tasks are well planned. Their intellectual effort is often remarkable, for example, in some of the class and group discussions observed during the inspection.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good

17. The ethos of the school, particularly the attitudes of the pupils and the climate of relationships, is strongly supported by the provision which it makes for the pupils' personal development. This gives the school community its particular character and ensures that it is more than a successful academic institution.

18. Assemblies, which are held at the start of the day for the whole school, for key stages or for houses, are dignified, reflective and thoughtful. These follow monthly themes, for example, Remembrance at the time of the inspection. Each of the assemblies invited pupils to reflect on the sacrifices made in war and evoked a thoughtful response from the pupils. Religious education offers many opportunities for pupils to develop their own beliefs, consider those of others, and reflect on moral and social issues. For example, pupils in a Year 10 class were invited to explore the question of suffering, whose responsibility it is and how it might be avoided. This resulted in some very perceptive contributions from pupils, who showed a good level of awareness of the issues involved. Discussions in other subject areas, for example, English and history, often deal with fundamental moral issues at a personal or political level. The school's behaviour policy sets out clearly the moral attitudes which it expects pupils to display within the school community.
19. The school provides many opportunities for pupils of all ages to demonstrate initiative and exercise responsibility. Senior pupils act as prefects and house officials. The head girl and deputy head girls are influential members of the school community and meet the headteacher regularly. Prefects are allocated to a lower school form, get to know its pupils and assist in a variety of form activities, including fund-raising events. There is a sixth form consultative group and a whole-school students' council. Junior forms conduct their own assemblies and forms from throughout the school take responsibility for leading whole-school assemblies. Pupils are strongly encouraged to take an active interest in those less fortunate than themselves. In addition to whole-school activities, each form chooses a charity to support during the year and organises fund-raising events, including concerts and quizzes. Year 9, for example, held a number of fund-raising events in support of a breast cancer charity. Individual pupils from Year 8 upwards are chosen and trained as peer counsellors, to whom other pupils can turn if they have a problem which worries them. Younger pupils in particular are appreciative of their contact with form prefects and the opportunity to talk to peer counsellors.
20. The pupils' social and cultural development is strongly underpinned by a very wide range and variety of extra-curricular activities, which also significantly enhance their academic learning. Many of these are subject-related, for example, the involvement of pupils in several years in the national mathematics challenge, or cross-curricular, such as the visits by Year 7 to France and Year 10 to Holland, and Years 8 and 12 to Italy. There are many sporting activities. Clubs are held at lunchtimes. Other activities contribute directly to the pupils' personal development and give them a wider perspective on life: pupils from Years 10, 11 and the sixth form take part in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme; sixth formers participate in Young Enterprise; Year 9 pupils take part in mini-enterprises, as well as a residential experience based on team building. The school has a number of links with schools in other countries, as well as annual exchanges with a school in Germany. Its provision for cultural development is particularly strong in English literature and drama, pupils take part regularly in concerts and their interest in music is growing. The school has links with the Royal Shakespeare Company and there are numerous theatre visits during the year, as well as annual drama productions. The religious education programme provides insights into non-Christian faiths; Year 8 takes part in a cross-curricular cultural project on a developing country, which last year included a visit to a Buddhist temple.

The headteacher provides effective and very strong leadership

21. The headteacher has a very clear view of how the school should develop and provides a clear educational direction for the work of the school and firm leadership to his staff. He works in close partnership with the governing body, whose respect he enjoys. Governors, in turn, have a clear understanding of their own role in governance and how this interacts with school management. They are well informed about the work of the school, for example, through the attachment of individual governors to subject departments. The headteacher also works closely with the other members of the senior management team, who provide very loyal support. The school staff, teaching and non-teaching, are committed and hardworking.
22. Under the leadership of the headteacher, the school has made significant progress since the last inspection, building on a firm base of already high standards. His key priorities have been, firstly, to improve the quality of the teaching and thereby to raise standards of attainment further, and, secondly, to ensure that the school provides maximum opportunities for the pupils to develop the confidence and qualities required for success in life. There is considerable evidence that the school has succeeded in these aims. As this report has already stated, standards of attainment have risen significantly over the past five years, with a remarkable rise in the proportion of higher grades which candidates have achieved at GCSE and GCE Advanced level. The quality of teaching has also improved since the last inspection: the proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching observed is now high. The confidence of the pupils, the high standards of their personal development and the range of opportunities available to them are testimony to the school's success in meeting the second broad aim.
23. This is a small school in comparison with most secondary schools and much professional contact between teachers is therefore informal. The school does nevertheless have formal management structures to ensure a rigorous approach to accountability. Members of the senior management team, for example, have line management responsibility for a number of departments, which includes a programme of meetings and detailed discussion about examination results. It has various strands, including a rolling programme of lesson observations within those subject areas, so that each teacher receives professional feedback according to agreed criteria. This ensures that the senior management team is well informed about the quality of teaching across the school, that discussion of relevant issues is well founded and appropriately focused and that the issues are addressed.

The school provides very good value for money

24. The school is funded by the local education authority according to its standard formula but its per capita income is below the national average for secondary schools, despite its large sixth form, which attracts extra funding. In the light of this, given the very high standards which the pupils reach, the progress which they make during their time at the school, and the high quality of the education provided, the school provides very good value for money.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The school does not meet statutory requirements for design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT) at Key Stage 4

25. The school teaches the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for design and technology and information and communication technology in Key Stage 3 but not at Key Stage 4. In the case of design and technology, the subject cannot be taught at Key Stage 4 without additional specialist accommodation and equipment, as well as additional subject staffing. In ICT, despite its shortages of equipment, the school plans to meet National Curriculum requirements within the near future.
26. The school suffers from a shortage of specialist accommodation and equipment in design and technology. In particular, there is only one technology room, which has too few working surfaces and no facilities for computer-aided design and manufacture (CAD-CAM). The school compensates for this at Key Stage 3 by sending pupils for two days to facilities owned by the Rover Car Company. At Key Stage 4, the only allied subject taught is food technology, and the great majority of pupils do not take a technology course. The school has applied a blanket “disapplication” of the National Curriculum to the whole of Year 10, on the grounds that pupils need to be specialising in other subjects, though this is not in the spirit of the new National Curriculum. It should be said that there is no evidence that parents are dissatisfied with this decision.
27. Many of the pupils already have high levels of skills in ICT and frequently use computers at home. However the school’s provision in this curriculum area has been patchy, especially at Key Stage 4, where there is no systematic recording of what training is provided by subject departments, or of pupils’ levels of competence. Moreover, the ratio of computers to pupils in the school is very low by national standards. Plans are now in hand to ensure that National Curriculum requirements are met, following the recent appointment of a new ICT co-ordinator. Further computers are to be provided, with the financial assistance of the parents.

Funding for subject departments and accommodation for music are inadequate

28. There are general shortcomings in the accommodation, in addition to those mentioned in paragraphs 26 and 27, above. In particular, the accommodation for the teaching of music is cramped and unsuitable. This restricts the range of possible activities and the progress which pupils are able to make in the subject.
29. The finance allocated to subject departments is below, and in some cases, well below, the per capita average for schools in other areas. There is no hard evidence that this is adversely affecting pupils’ standards or progress, though it does affect the quality of the learning materials used by pupils (for example, photocopied worksheets because of insufficient up-to-date textbooks) and the workload of the teachers, who have to spend a disproportionate amount of time producing their own resources.

There are minor shortcomings in some lessons

30. Although none of the teaching observed was unsatisfactory, some shortcomings were noted in lessons which were satisfactory rather than good, in marked contrast to the features mentioned earlier. In some, the quality of learning was restricted because the teacher did not take advantage of the pupils' interest and motivation, give them sufficient opportunity to take the initiative or invite them to contribute their own ideas. Occasionally the pace of learning slowed because too much time was spent on specific tasks, or because the teacher did not explain the tasks clearly enough and subsequently check whether they had been properly completed. Occasionally the teaching in Year 7 did not take account of what the pupils already knew, so that the brightest were not stretched. Finally, although written work had been marked, the teachers' comments did not always offer sufficient guidance on how the work could have been improved.

The monitoring of teaching should be more systematic within subject departments

31. Heads of departments work closely with their colleagues in planning schemes of work and a few have observed their colleagues' lessons, particularly in science, mathematics and design and technology. However, this process is far from systematic and there has been little lesson observation in other subject areas. Lesson observation will shortly become a statutory part of performance management in schools. It is necessary in order to ensure that all teachers receive subject-specific feedback on their teaching and share best practice, and also to enable heads of departments properly to fulfil their management role. The school recognises that this needs to happen and has planned appropriate training for heads of departments.

Performance data could be more systematically used to track pupils' progress and to set targets for attainment

32. The school collects a considerable, and increasing, amount of statistical data about pupils' attainment and potential. This includes, in Year 7, the results of their Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests and of cognitive ability tests which they take in their first term to establish their potential; Key Stage 3 tests in Year 9; and a computer-generated analysis of basic predictions for GCE Advanced level, based on the pupils' GCSE performance. The school is making increasing use of this wealth of data and has recently appointed a senior head of department to pursue this aim. However this is still at a relatively early stage and is not yet systematic or rigorous enough. Some heads of department are not yet taking full advantage of the data to set targets which are both realistic and challenging, or to measure the value added by the teaching.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The headteacher and the governing body should:

1. Meet statutory requirements for information and communication technology and for design and technology at Key Stage 4 by:

ensuring that National Curriculum requirements for ICT are met at Key Stage 4, as planned by the school
(paragraph 27)*

seeking additional funding to provide specialist accommodation for design and technology
(paragraph 26)*

2. Improve the accommodation for music, as far as resources will allow
(paragraph 28)*

3. Improve the resourcing of subject departments by making maximum use of any additional funding which becomes available
(paragraph 29)

4. Improve aspects of teaching which are satisfactory rather than good
(paragraph 30)

5. Strengthen the monitoring of teaching by involving all heads of departments in the observation of lessons
(paragraph 31)*

6. Continue to develop the use of statistical data to track pupils' progress and set appropriately challenging targets
(paragraph 32)*.

(Items marked * already feature in the school's development plan)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	47
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
11	28	36	26	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	323	169
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	3	0

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	18	9

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	0	64	64

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys			
	Girls	64	64	64
	Total	64	64	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	100	100	100
	National	(63)	(62)	(55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	100	98	95
	National	(28)	(38)	(23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys			
	Girls	64	64	64
	Total	64	64	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	100	100	100
	National	(64)	(64)	(60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	95	100	95
	National	(31)	(37)	(28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	0	65	65

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	0	0	0
	Girls	64	65	65
	Total	64	65	65
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	99	100	100
	National	(46.6)	(90.9)	(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	64
	National	(38.0)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	N/a
	National		N/a

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	0	75	75

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	N/a	30.72	30.72	N/a	N/a	N/a
National	(17.7)	(18.1)	(17.9)	(2.7)	(2.8)	(2.8)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	N/a
	National		N/a

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the	School	0	N/a

percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	National		N/a
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Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	8
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	473
Any other minority ethnic group	5

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	1	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	5	0
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: Y7-13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	29.44
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	136

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77.4
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	27.89
Key Stage 4	19.93

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	1190321
Total expenditure	1238950
Expenditure per pupil	2498
Balance brought forward from previous year	13097
Balance carried forward to next year	(35532)

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	495
Number of questionnaires returned	185

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	36	3	1	-
My child is making good progress in school.	57	37	2	-	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	53	5	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	56	11	2	2
The teaching is good.	45	47	4	-	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	15	44	25	2	14
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	32	7	-	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	17	1	-	1
The school works closely with parents.	18	51	22	1	8
The school is well led and managed.	50	38	5	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	38	4	-	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	53	9	2	7