

INSPECTION REPORT

TUDOR GRANGE SCHOOL

Solihull, West Midlands

LEA area: Solihull

Unique reference number: 104109

Headteacher: Mr John Evans

Reporting inspector: Mrs Anne Ruth Snow
2765

Dates of inspection: 13 – 15 November 2000

Inspection number: 223789

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 - 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Dingle Lane
Solihull
West Midlands

Postcode: B91 3PD

Telephone number: 0121 705 5100

Fax number: 0121 709 0455

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Dr W P Rock

Date of previous inspection: 20 November 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	
Anne Ruth Snow 2765	Registered inspector
Catherine Dumbleton 9266	Lay inspector
Eileen Leech 8655	Team inspector
Avril Leigh 8719	Team inspector
John Wright 8252	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Coventry LEA

Education Department
New Council Offices
Earl Street
Coventry
CV1 5RS

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Tudor Grange is an 11-16 community school and specialist technology college. School numbers have been constant over the last five years; the school is popular and over subscribed. It is bigger than most secondary schools nationally. There are 1254 pupils on roll and there are more boys than girls in the school. This is reflected in three of the year groups and is particularly marked in Year 7. Approximately 90 percent of the pupils are white of United Kingdom heritage. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is lower than in most schools.

The school serves a socially and economically advantaged area in the south of Solihull. Most pupils come from the area around the school or the surrounding villages. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average. Four pupils have statements of special educational needs and two pupils are being assessed.

The school is on a pleasant site and comprises of a number of blocks spread across the site. It has some temporary classrooms. Most of the buildings were constructed in the 1950s, and some have been updated. An attractive block houses the music department and the learning resources centre and the technology block is currently being extended. The school's achievement of technology college status has enabled it to update its technology facilities significantly. The school is involved in a number of national and local educational initiatives to extend pupils' opportunities and raise standards further.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. It is well managed and very effectively led to ensure pupils attain high standards. Teaching is very good and pupils respond positively and enthusiastically to dynamic teaching. The school provides very good value for money and its strengths far outweigh the areas needing further development.

What the school does well

- Pupils attain very high standards by the end of Key Stage 4 because they experience a high proportion of good and very good teaching in both Key Stages 3 and 4.
- The school has high expectations of the pupils and they respond very positively, showing excellent attitudes to school and an enthusiasm for learning.
- Behaviour is very good and teachers manage the pupils very well indeed.
- The school has a curriculum which is broad and very relevant to the pupils.
- Provision for the pupils' moral and social development is very good and has a positive impact on standards.
- The leadership of the school is very effective and committed to continuing improvement.

What could be improved

- Aspects of communication with parents.
- The quality of the management and coordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs and of their withdrawal support.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Standards at Key Stage 3 are higher than those found at the last inspection, particularly in English and mathematics. At the end of Key Stage 4 standards attained in 1999 were lower than at the last inspection for the percentage of pupils attaining 5 A* - C grades but in 2000 attainment is significantly higher. The school is improving faster than the national improvement trend. The percentage of pupils attaining 5 A* - C grades has remained consistently well above average and the proportion of pupils attaining 5 A* - G grades has increased from well above average to very high in 1998 & 1999.

The school has worked to address the key issues from the last inspection. The gap in the performance of girls and boys has narrowed considerably. By the end of Key Stage 4 the performance of boys and girls relative to their national peers is the same: both boys and girls achieve standards well above the national average. The statutory requirements with respect to religious education are now fully met and the repairs identified as necessary in the last inspection have been carried out. The quality of teaching has improved; and the progress the school has made since the last inspection is good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A*	Very high A* Well above average A Above average Average B C Below average D Well below average E

Pupils consistently achieve high standards in GCSE examinations. Standards achieved in 2000 in GCSE are in the highest 5 percent in the country when compared with similar schools nationally. Trends in the school's results at Key Stage 3 are broadly in line with the improving trend nationally and at Key Stage 4 they are above the national trend. Pupil progress shows the same positive trends. Between Key Stages 2 and 3 pupils make satisfactory progress but between Key Stages 3 and 4 they make very good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress particularly in Key Stage 4. Pupils enter the school having achieved well above average standards and leave having made good progress and having achieved very high standards.

The standards pupils attain by the end of Key Stage 4 are particularly high in the subjects chosen as options, especially in art and design, information communications technology and physical education. Performance in English, mathematics and science was lower than pupils' average performance in other subjects. This has been addressed by the school and standards in these core subjects improved at GCSE in 2000. The school significantly exceeded the targets it had set for 2000 and its target for 2001 is not sufficiently challenging given the attainment of this cohort on entry and at the end of Key Stage 3.

In the work seen during the inspection and in lessons, standards are above average. Pupils' presentation of their work is of a high standard. Standards in literacy and numeracy are high. Pupils are taught a range of skills and methods enabling them to present statistical information in a variety

of forms including graphs and diagrams to illustrate their work. They contribute orally with confidence and take part in debate and discussion in a very articulate way.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and are enthusiastic learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Fixed period exclusions have been above average but are being reduced as a result of new initiatives.
Personal development and relationships	Students show a high level of maturity in their response in lessons, moving quickly to their lessons and settling to work. Relationships are very positive and productive.
Attendance	Very good, above average levels of attendance.

The school's very focussed work on improving methods of learning has led to the creation of a strong learning culture. Pupils value the commitment of their teachers and lessons are productive, have pace and vigour. Pupils respond positively to the learning opportunities provided, including extra-curricular activities. The very positive relationships evident between teachers and pupils are very important in encouraging pupils and helping them attain high standards.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is a strength of the school. English, mathematics and science are taught well at both key stages. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. The pupils benefit from a very high proportion of very good teaching. Three quarters of the teaching is good or better. At Key Stage 4, teaching in nine out of ten lessons is at least good. Teachers' knowledge of their subjects is very good and they plan the work for the pupils conscientiously. Across the school, teachers' enthusiasm for their subject is infectious and pupils are engaged in their learning, responding very positively to their teachers. Lessons begin promptly with the teachers discussing with pupils what they will be able to do by the end of the lesson. This gives a clear focus to the learning and the pupils can then assess their own achievement. Lessons are well structured and move at a good pace. There is a wide range of interesting and demanding activities and teachers have high expectations of their pupils. The basic skills of numeracy and literacy are well taught, and by the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have well developed study skills. During the inspection, some excellent teaching was observed in English, history, religious education and music. In these lessons pupils learn at a very fast rate and achieve very high standards.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is very well planned to give the pupils a broad range of relevant learning experiences. This is further enhanced through very good work experience programme and a very good range of extra curricular opportunities. However, at Key Stage 4 a small number of pupils do not receive their curriculum entitlement in information and communication technology.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in most subjects and they make progress in lessons. However, the curriculum for pupils with special needs who are withdrawn for additional support is not well developed and does not meet their needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Provision is well managed and pupils successfully take part in all aspects of the curriculum and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for the pupils' moral and social development is very well established and has a positive impact upon the life and work of the school. Pupils are gaining an increasing appreciation of cultural traditions and differences. There is still a need to further develop the pupils' spiritual awareness although overall provision is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils very well. There are very good procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare. Staff know pupils well and pupils are enabled to recognise their strengths and areas in which they need to work harder. In the best practice, negotiated targets are set for the areas that need improvement.

The breadth of opportunities available to pupils through the range of subjects, courses and extra curricular activities is very good. A strong feature is the work experience programme. Key Stage 3 pupils with special educational needs are not satisfactorily supported because the work for pupils when they are withdrawn is not well planned. The personal support and care provided to pupils are very good and appreciated by the pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very effectively led and managed and this has a positive impact on standards. The headteacher is thoughtful, considered and strategic in the leadership he provides. He manages the school in close collaboration with the leadership group. He is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. The governing body fulfils its statutory roles and works very efficiently through its committee structure.

The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is good at evaluating most aspects of its performance. Good analysis of data about the performance of individual pupils is used well to set targets. Monitoring of standards of work is managed well although more systematic monitoring of teaching and the progress of particular groups of pupils would help the school improve further.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The use of funding is well linked to the priorities identified in the school improvement plan.

The quality of leadership is enabling the school to move forward to achieve higher standards and improve learning opportunities. Overall the school applies the principles of best value well. Results compare very favourably with those of similar schools. The school challenges itself strongly, participating in several national initiatives to help raise standards further. It consults staff but does not systematically canvass the views of parents and pupils in a way which has an influence on planning. It ensures fair competition and gets good value for the services it purchases. The school gives very good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils are expected to work hard. • Pupils are making good progress. • Teaching is good. • The school is helping pupils become mature and responsible. • Behaviour is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school working more closely with them. • More information on their child's progress. • The effectiveness of communication and the receptiveness of the school when they have a problem. • The range of extra curricular activities. • The consistent setting of homework.

The inspectors agree with parents' positive views of the school. The inspection revealed that homework is generally regularly set but this is not consistent across all classes. The range of extra-curricular activities was found to be very good. However, the school does not ensure that parents are informed of the reasons for the cancellation of activities. The school was surprised that some parents do not feel comfortable in contacting the school with concerns and complaints; the school accepts the need to address this. Parents receive sufficient written information on their child's progress, supported by three parents' evenings in Year 7 and two parents' evenings in each other year. A number of parents feel they cannot talk to the subject teachers they wish to see at these meetings. The school does not intend the arrangements that have been put in place to act as a barrier to parents. An unusually large proportion of parents feel that the school is not working closely with them. The school does not systematically canvass the views of parents about aspects of its work. Newsletters and information are sent regularly to parents and the school holds a range of school events to which parents are invited. The information provided and opportunities for finding out about the work of the school are of satisfactory quality. However, too many parents feel communication is not effective.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils attain very high standards by the end of Key Stage 4 because they experience a high proportion of good and very good teaching in both Key Stage 3 and 4.

The standards attained by pupils at Tudor Grange at sixteen are very high compared with national averages and with standards attained by similar schools nationally. All groups of pupils in the school are attaining well. The attainment of both boys and girls is very good compared with their national peers. Pupils from minority ethnic groups reach standards commensurate with other pupils. Able pupils are appropriately challenged and reach very high standards. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at Key Stage 4 and, given their starting points, many achieve creditable passes at GCSE. This is due to the quality of teaching within subject departments. The work in the withdrawal groups in Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory.

Standards in English at Key Stage 3 are consistently well above both the national average and those of similar schools. GCSE results in English Literature and English Language have been consistently above the national average for pupils attaining A*-C grades. Compared with other subjects there was under-achievement in 1999 particularly by girls in English Literature. Results in 2000 improved significantly. Within lessons pupils demonstrate high standards of work and commitment. At both key stages pupils offer detailed analysis of the books being studied. They write at length with great pleasure, read fluently and talk confidently, interestingly and with excitement about their work in English. Pupils are learning the skills of language analysis from Year 7 and are working on both fiction and non-fiction texts with lively involvement. Group work at Key Stage 4 allows pupils to share their thinking and develop their ideas around complex texts very successfully.

In mathematics at Key Stage 3 pupils achieve above average standards of computation, and confidently multiply and divide decimal fractions. They recognise equivalent fractions and explain the strategies they use to solve mathematical problems. They know the properties of regular polygons and work out the interior and exterior angles of shapes. Standards in mathematics in Key Stage 4 are well above average and have improved considerably in the last school year. In lessons there is an increasing emphasis on the development of pupils' numerical skills and good standards are reached. These skills are then used very well by the pupils in other subjects. They collect information in geography and science, work out percentages and plot graphs using their data. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils working at the higher levels use angle measures to plot bearings and can construct complex shapes, given information about angles and sides. Pupils use their knowledge of the powers of numbers to solve equations. They work very co-operatively in groups and support each other in their learning.

By the end of Key Stage 3 standards in science are generally above average and in the sets of more able pupils the standards are well above national expectations. In lessons pupils explain clearly the differences between conduction, convection and radiation when studying conservation of energy. They also know the essential elements of a balanced diet and can explain their value. By the end of Key Stage 4 standards in science are well above average and pupils are confidently operating at consistently high standards across all aspects of their coursework. They use and define an increasingly complex scientific vocabulary with confidence and apply this knowledge to their current learning. For example, Year 11 pupils explain the difference between aerobic and anaerobic respiration when studying the effect of exercise on the body. At both key stages effective teaching ensures that pupils make real gains in scientific knowledge and understanding. They organise themselves very effectively in practical work, they use previous learning to predict the outcomes of

their investigations accurately and they use a growing range of effective methods to record their findings.

Standards in the foundation subjects are well above average by the end of Key Stage 4 and these subjects contribute significantly to the high standards attained by pupils. Work of a very high standard was seen in all subjects. For example in religious education and history pupils confidently discuss their opinions showing sensitivity to the issues raised. In music and physical education pupils work with infectious enthusiasm and evaluate their performance accurately. In art pupils use the work of established artists such as Kandinsky and Mondrian to support their own effective artwork. In geography a fieldtrip to Dovedale has been used as a basis for pupils to undertake a geographical study that indicates considerable pupil understanding and commitment. In information and communications technology pupils very effectively gain essential skills which they confidently apply in their work in many other subjects. In modern foreign language lessons at both key stages pupils are encouraged to see patterns in their learning and to be inventive in their use of the target language; they are creative and experimental in their responses and achieve high standards. Drama provides opportunities for pupils to perform with flair and to evaluate their work with sensitivity. Teachers' thoughtful questioning extends the range of pupils' ideas very powerfully.

The high standards pupils achieve are directly attributable to the quality of teaching. This is a strength of the school and has improved since the last inspection. Teachers' knowledge of their subjects is very good and the pupils are very confident learners. They make at least satisfactory progress at Key Stage 3 and very good progress at Key Stage 4.

All lessons begin well. Teachers share the objectives with the pupils, setting targets for individuals and for the class. This gives a clear focus for the learning. At the end of a very good mathematics lesson, Year 7 pupils were asked to evaluate what they had learned about fractions. They recalled their targets, their answers to the teacher's questions and clearly demonstrated they had made progress in their understanding of how to find fractions of given quantity.

There is a good range of teaching methods used in lessons. Pupils work co-operatively in groups and in pairs. In English lessons they explore texts together in mixed ability groups. Pupils with special educational needs are supported by others in the group and by their teachers. The work is generally appropriately differentiated to meet the needs of all pupils. There is an interesting and wide range of demanding activities in lessons and pupils are both challenged and engaged in their learning.

The quality of teachers' questions is very good. In a science lesson on conduction, convection and radiation with Year 10 pupils, the teacher's skills enabled the pupils to consolidate their understanding of difficult concepts. They were then able to predict the outcome of their investigation very accurately.

Teachers' enthusiasm for their subjects is infectious. The teaching of drama offers an exciting variety of activities to motivate and extend the pupils. Music lessons give the pupils good opportunities to play percussion instruments and sing together. They do this with great enjoyment, responding enthusiastically to teachers' dynamic approaches. In religious education at Key Stage 4 there are excellent opportunities for pupils to reflect on a range of sensitive issues and they discuss these with their teacher showing high levels of maturity for their age.

The school has high expectations of pupils and they respond well, showing excellent attitudes to school and an enthusiasm for learning.

Pupils demonstrate extremely positive attitudes throughout the school day and in activities outside lessons. Many are involved in the very good range of extra-curricular opportunities and give high levels of commitment. They are very seldom absent from school. They arrive at school and lessons promptly and positively. The pupils have been involved in the formation of a Code of Expectations for behaviour in lessons that is followed very effectively. No time is lost in lessons. Pupils respond very positively to the rigour of learning by concentrating hard throughout their lessons, listening attentively and applying themselves to their work. They enjoy the challenge and stimulation of their lessons. They eagerly play an active part in their learning by asking and answering questions, taking part in presentations and demonstrations and by selecting and using resources to support and enhance their work. They are also discerning; for example, in a GNVQ business studies lesson pupils evaluated visual aids and decided whether they would enhance or detract from individual presentations.

Pupils want to learn. They are interested, committed and show a strong sense of purpose. For example, in a Year 11 English lesson pupils listened with complete attention to the reading of a poem, and worked enthusiastically in mixed gender groups discussing the poem in detail and making useful notes. They explore rhetorical questions and analyse its impact, making astute observations which challenges the group and extends their thinking. Their oral responses are of high quality, with excellent use of technical vocabulary.

Pupils show self discipline. When there are rare instances of antisocial behaviour in lessons other pupils do not encourage it and they do not let it distract them from their work. When required to work co-operatively pupils show initiative and most are independent in how they organise themselves, the resources and the workload. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to take initiative and responsibility. Such valuable opportunities include the prefect system, the school council, Year 11 pupils acting as mentors to Year 7 pupils, a wide range of charity events and community service, which includes the organisation of a Christmas event for local pensioners.

Behaviour is very good and teachers manage the pupils very well indeed.

Behaviour is very good. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school. They are very polite to adults and to one another. The pupils care for their own and other people's property. Equipment is handled safely and with care. The number of pupils permanently excluded from the school during the last school year is below the national average. The pupils do not consider bullying to be a serious problem at the school. If they have concerns, they find staff approachable and are confident of their support. Instances of bullying are taken seriously by the school and there are well developed procedures in place to assist teachers in dealing with incidents of bullying. The incidents are recorded and investigated and parents are informed. Most parents consider their children to be happy at school and they are satisfied with standards of behaviour.

Overall, pupils' attitudes to school are excellent and therefore they behave very well. Pupils come to school in a positive frame of mind. Some arrive early to meet with friends and play games. Some make use of the early morning canteen arrangements and behave very responsibly. Pupils move around the site and buildings calmly. They are generally confident in talking to adults. Pupils show very high levels of involvement in their lessons. In lessons pupils are enthusiastic, attentive, willing to concentrate and remain engaged in set tasks. They make mature and serious contributions to discussion and in physical education lessons they have a sense of fair play whilst being competitive. They show an interest in school life and many are involved in the very good range of extra curricular activities which is available to them.

Teachers manage their pupils extremely well. Their relationships with pupils are very good. There are clear expectations of pupils and they respond positively and give of their best. Teachers are quick to recognise the potential for disruptive behaviour and intervene very appropriately, often defusing the situation with humour before it becomes an issue that requires a more formal approach. However, when the situation requires it, teachers are firm and enforce the school's expectations of pupil behaviour. In a Year 10 class the teacher effectively dealt with three pupils who were not meeting the expectations of behaviour and learning by moving from a low key reminder of the task through to a formal warning when the pupils remained off task. At no time did this interrupt the flow of the lesson or distract other pupils. Teachers redefine the tasks if pupils are having difficulties and this maintains high levels of interest in lessons which leads to good behaviour. The nature of the tasks in lessons is a motivating factor. Pupils are generally challenged and engaged by a variety of activities and resources and so behaviour is very good.

The school has a curriculum which is broad and very relevant to the needs of the pupils.

The recent reorganisation of the school day to provide six teaching periods has given the school considerable flexibility in how it delivers the curriculum for pupils in both key stages. This is the first stage of a thoughtful review of the timetable which aims to give pupils more choice and make it easier for the school to meet the pupils' individual needs. Initial problems with the new timetable are now resolved.

At Key Stage 3 the inclusion of classical studies, three modern foreign languages (French, German and Russian), Latin and a wide range of extension subjects in Year 8 and 9 offers pupils a wide choice of what to study. Pupils study all aspects of the subjects of the National Curriculum and this ensures that all statutory requirements which relate to the Key Stage 3 curriculum are met. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs who are withdrawn from lessons for targeted support is not so well developed.

The curriculum at Key Stage 4 is also well constructed to provide pupils with choices in support of their needs, their interests and their talents. The good practice of creating option blocks, after pupils have declared a priority list of choices, ensures that almost all pupils follow a chosen curriculum in support of the next stage of their education or finding work. Pupils take good advantage of the very good work experience programme.

Information and communications technology is well integrated across the curriculum of many subjects. Pupils have good opportunities to learn new and essential skills and to apply them in a wide range of contexts. When producing project work, following a visit to Dovedale, Year 9 pupils in geography confidently used computers to create text and present data in ways that were well considered and often very well presented. There are a very few pupils at Key Stage 4 who are not receiving their full entitlement to teaching in information and communications technology. Although they may be using computers and other equipment as an integral part of other courses, they are not receiving dedicated teaching in this subject and may not be covering the required subject content.

The curriculum throughout the school is enhanced by a wide range of extra curricular opportunities which operate during lunchtimes and after school. These activities have a positive impact on standards, for example in PE where the school achieves good results against other schools in competitive sports, and in music through the high standard of the school's orchestras and choirs. The school supports the curriculum very well through the wide range of visits and residential experiences that are offered to the pupils. In the recent past the school has visited an impressively wide range of places in the local area, elsewhere in Great Britain, Europe and the rest of the world.

Tudor Grange has very good relationships with the main primary schools the pupils come from and also with schools and colleges that the pupils may move to after Year 11. These very positive

relationships are used well by the school to ensure continuity for the pupils as they move from one phase to another.

Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and this has a positive impact upon the life and work of the school.

The moral development of the pupils is very well established and pupils understand and demonstrate the principles that distinguish right from wrong. The school actively fosters values such as honesty, fairness and a respect for truth. Pupils know what is expected of them in terms of behaviour. They are very aware of the school rules and follow the additional subject specific codes that operate in some classrooms such as science. The school's approach to managing behaviour positively impacts in classrooms. It helps achieve a positive climate for learning and therefore supports the school's achievement of high standards of attainment as well as the very high standard of the pupils' attitudes to the school. In some lessons, especially in religious education and drama, pupils are given opportunity to discuss moral issues which are relevant to aspects of the curriculum they are studying. They express opinions and respond to a range of viewpoints with great maturity and understanding.

The pupils' social development is very well developed. Adults in school provide very positive role models and work hard to make good relationships with pupils in their classes and tutor groups. The many opportunities the school provides for visits and residential experiences enable pupils to develop their social skills effectively in a very wide range of contexts. This positive approach helps to establish the good social behaviour that almost all pupils demonstrate in lessons and when moving around the school.

The leadership of the school is very effective and committed to continuing improvement

The school is very effectively managed and this has had a positive impact on standards. The GCSE results for 2000 for the percentage of pupils attaining 5 A*-C grades puts the school into the top 5 percent of schools when its performance is compared with similar schools. The headteacher is thoughtful, considered and strategic in the leadership he provides. He manages the school in collaboration with a very able deputy headteacher and a recently restructured leadership group. The leadership group is committed to raising standards even further.

Tasks are clearly delegated to senior staff, heads of department and year heads who provide good leadership and direction for the work of teachers in their teams. Senior staff are well supported in carrying out their responsibilities. The effective organisation and management of departments and year teams helps to ensure that the work of the school runs smoothly. The quality of professional support for the work of teachers is good and helps create a positive ethos for learning and pupil support across the school. The school has consistently high expectations of behaviour and attainment, and action is taken to ensure that the expectations are carried through into practice. There is comprehensive, detailed guidance for all staff about a wide range of aspects of their day-to-day work both in terms of school policy and the procedures to be followed. This leads to consistency of practice.

The school carefully analyses information about the attainment of individual pupils, and uses the analysis both to set targets and to evaluate the school's overall performance. A thorough analysis is carried out of the attainment of boys and girls. However, the performance and progress of other groups in the school is not systematically evaluated. For instance there is no separate analysis of the work of pupils with special educational needs, gifted and talented pupils or pupils from minority ethnic groups. Evaluation of the work of departments is systematically and undertaken mainly by the deputy headteacher who works with the head of departments using agreed criteria for evaluation. Departmental reviews are thorough and are thoughtfully used by departments in planning for improvement. These reviews do not include monitoring of teaching or departmental self review and evaluation.

The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities very well and works efficiently through its committee structure. It holds the school to account through reports to committees and monitors the significant aspects of the work of the school. Its work is not sufficiently informed by first hand evidence of the work of the school. Very good financial planning supports educational developments and priorities. The school has been successful in attracting significant additional income and these resources are used to raise standards. The school makes very good use of new technologies to support teaching and learning which contributes to the high standards the school achieves.

The school has proper regard for best value principles in its management and use of resources. Performance data are used to good effect to compare the school's progress and attainment with similar schools and then to set appropriate targets for further improvement. This data analysis, coupled with the school's own developing self-evaluation work, provides a good basis for the effective targeting of resources and for satisfying itself that spending decisions are based on thorough evaluation. Parents are consulted about home school developments and pupils' views are sought via their year councils. However, the quality of consultation with parents is not sufficient: a high percentage of those who returned questionnaires believe that communication with the school is not effective.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Improve Aspects of Communication with Parents.

Thirty per cent of the parental questionnaires sent out were returned to the inspection team and 90 parents wrote to the inspectors in addition to completing a questionnaire. Forty three parents attended the parents' meeting. Overall, parents have a positive view of many aspects of the life of the school including the expectation of the school that their children will work hard; the high quality of teaching in the school, particularly in music and history; the progress made by their children; and the efforts the school makes to develop personal qualities and foster maturity. Their children like to come to school. However a significant number of parents who returned the questionnaire feel that the school is not communicating with them sufficiently well. A large number of parents expressed concern about the quality of the school's links with parents and felt they were not sufficiently well informed about their child's progress. Other areas of serious concern are how complaints or parental concerns are dealt with, the range of extra-curricular activities and a lack of consistency in the setting of homework.

Broadly the major areas of concern involve perceptions about poor school communication or lack of consultation on major changes. These were reported through concerns about the arrangements for parental consultation, reporting arrangements, the quality of reports, management of major change such as the lap top project and the timing of the school day. Other issues were raised about bullying, timetabling, lack of recruitment to key posts and behaviour at lunch time.

With respect to some of the issues which are causing parental concern the inspectors' judgements do not support parents' view. The range of extra-curricular activities is very good, parents receive sufficiently detailed reports on the progress made by their child, there is a satisfactory range of informative literature for parents, bullying is taken seriously by the school, homework is generally regularly set but not consistently across all classes and behaviour at lunchtime is good. The school has made several attempts to recruit new staff to vacant posts without success.

Senior managers and parent governors were not aware of the extent and depth of parents' concerns about communication and consultation with them. The required consultation does take place on major changes but a significant minority of parents believe it is done at a stage when the options are limited and therefore they do not perceive it to be open consultation. Some parents believe there are barriers to their communication with the school and feel that the school's response lacks warmth. A

number of parents particularly expressed this view when they talked about meeting subject teachers at parent consultation evenings. Their perception of arrangements is that they are not welcome to meet the teachers they wish to see but are directed to particular teachers because of the school's concerns about their child's performance in that subject. The school does not intend their arrangements for these meetings to signal barriers to parents. The school needs to anticipate negative interpretation or impact of the changes it proposes and seek to help parents make the best use of the opportunities provided. The school does not systematically canvass the views of parents about aspects of its work.

The quality of the management and co-ordination of provision for pupils with special educational needs and of their withdrawal support.

Overall the progress of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and pupils are well supported by their subject teachers. However, the management of the school's policy for the education of pupils with special educational needs is ineffective. Although individual education plans are in place, they are not always clear and do not indicate precisely what needs to be done to support the pupils. The process for allocating additional support in lessons is not well defined and the criteria used by the Learning Support Department for withdrawing pupils from other lessons are not clear.

The quality of teaching of those pupils in Year 9 who receive additional support to develop their communication skills is poor. Work is not differentiated to meet their needs and there is no clear focus or structure to the lessons. There is limited use of the available resources and they do not make progress in their learning. The standards of their written work have deteriorated and they are not motivated or challenged by their teacher.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- Improve aspects of communication with parents by:
 - identifying what parents perceive to be obstacles to effective communication with the school and taking action to remove any such barriers;
 - systematically seeking out the views of parents about the school;
 - anticipating the impact of proposed school actions on parents and planning a range of ways in which to explain the reasons for change.

- Improve the management and co-ordination of provision for SEN pupils and of withdrawal support by:
 - establishing more effective procedures for identifying and allocating support for these pupils;
 - ensuring that individual education plans indicate clearly what needs to be done to support pupils;
 - tracking the progress of pupils by analysing attainment regularly and using the outcomes of this analysis to target additional support;
 - improving the quality of teaching for those pupils who are withdrawn to develop their communication skills;
 - ensuring that the tasks set in withdrawal lessons are appropriately matched to individual need;
 - ensuring that the withdrawal lessons are planned and delivered more effectively to support learning.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	51
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12%	29%	33%	22%	2%	2%	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	1254	
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	42	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4	
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	137	

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	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7%
National comparative data	7.9%

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0-1%
National comparative data	1-1%

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	131	119

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	117 (117)	112 (116)	115 (107)
	Girls	120 (113)	103 (102)	104 (97)
	Total	237 (230)	215 (218)	219 (204)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	95% (89%)	88% (84%)	88% (79%)
	National	63% (63%)	65% (62%)	59% (55%)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	55% (61%)	67% (59%)	55% (37%)
	National	28% (28%)	41% (38%)	29% (23%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	101 (107)	107 (119)	103 (115)
	Girls	112 (108)	112 (93)	102 (105)
	Total	213 (215)	219 (212)	205 (202)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	85 (84%)	88 (82%)	82 (85%)
	National	64 (64%)	66 (64%)	62 (60%)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	34 (33%)	62 (52%)	44 (51%)
	National	31 (31%)	39 (37%)	29 (28%)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	134	116	250

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	112 (84)	132 (121)	133 (122)
	Girls	104 (97)	116 (124)	116 (124)
	Total	216 (181)	248 (245)	249 (245)
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	86 (74%)	99 (100%)	99 (100%)
	National	47.8 (46.4%)	91.2 (90.9%)	96.1 (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	54.6 (51)
	National	38.7 (38)

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

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	4
Black – African heritage	6
Black – other	2
Indian	56
Pakistani	17
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	12
White	1135
Any other minority ethnic group	19

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	1	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	1	0
White	55	2
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)	71.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.6:1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	2.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	42

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	73%
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 2	()
Key Stage 3	26.3
Key Stage 4	21.2

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	3,021,308
Total expenditure	3,064,757
Expenditure per pupil	2439
Balance brought forward from previous year	180090
Balance carried forward to next year	136641

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1254
Number of questionnaires returned	384

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	32	56	10	2	0.5
My child is making good progress in school.	30	61	6	0.3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	22	67	4	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	63	15	4	1
The teaching is good.	21	67	4	0.5	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	11	45	29	8	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	28	47	17	6	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	41	4	0.3	1
The school works closely with parents.	11	41	35	10	3
The school is well led and managed.	25	54	8	4	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	26	62	7	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	49	17	4	12