

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ST.CECILIA'S R.C. HIGH SCHOOL**

Longridge, Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119800

Headteacher: Mrs M Diffley

Reporting inspector: Joan McKenna  
2485

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> December 2000

Inspection number: 223852

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:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Chapel Hill Longridge Preston
Postcode:	PR3 2XA
Telephone number:	01772 783074
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr E Curwen
Date of previous inspection:	21/11/1994

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Cecilia's is a Roman Catholic High School with 436 pupils on roll, which is smaller than average. All pupils are white. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average, although the proportion with the most severe needs is below average. Most have moderate learning difficulties, including dyslexia. The school serves an area that is broadly average in socio-economic terms, although the proportion entitled to free school meals is below average. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is broadly average.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

St. Cecilia's is a very effective school. The school is very well led and managed, and there is a clear commitment to enabling all pupils to achieve high standards in both academic and personal areas, along with the procedures and practices in place that help bring this about. Teaching is good. There are positive relationships and an effective pastoral system, which ensures that pupils' needs are known and met. Pupils behave very well and have very positive attitudes towards their learning and the opportunities provided for them. As a result, pupils achieve well and make good progress, and standards are high. The school provides good value for money. Where there are weaknesses the school knows about them and has plans in hand to tackle them.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress in their learning.
- There is very effective leadership and management, especially at senior level.
- Teaching throughout the school is good.
- There are very positive relationships, and teachers exhibit strong care and concern for pupils.
- Pupils behave very well and have very positive attitudes towards school.
- There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.

#### **What could be improved**

- The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school and especially for pupils age 14 to 16.
- The provision and organisation of some aspects of the curriculum, especially increasing the time for science, broadening the curriculum for pupils aged from 14 to 16, and increasing the range of extra-curricular activities.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in 1994. The school's leadership has responded well to the previous inspection and there has been good improvement since then. Although GCSE results were in fact lower in 2000 than at the last inspection, they have been higher for much of the intervening period, and the drop in results in 2000 was anticipated due to the nature of the group of pupils involved. The average points score per pupil has been improving faster than the national rate. Teaching has improved considerably. At the previous inspection, around 20 percent of lessons were unsatisfactory; at this inspection there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Strengths identified last time have been maintained, such as the quality of management, and pupils' behaviour and attitudes. There has been improvement in relation to all of the key issues identified last time.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				<b>Key</b>
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
GCSE examinations	A	A	B	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

The results obtained by pupils in the national tests at the age of 14 are consistently above the national average overall. Results in English are highest, being well above the national average and the results from similar schools. Results in mathematics improved in 2000, when they were well above the national average and in line with similar schools. Results in science were lower, and despite having improved between 1999 and 2000, they were above the national average but below the results in similar schools.

GCSE results have been consistently well above the national average up until a drop in 2000 when they were only above the national average, and below similar schools. This drop had been anticipated however, and the school still exceeded the performance targets that had been set. It was due to the group of pupils concerned containing a relatively high number of boys who were disaffected. Up until this year, results had been improving faster than the national rate. Results in mathematics and art and design were well above the national average in 2000, and in English language were above average. Results were well below average in French and music, although the latter was a very small group, and below average in English literature and geography. In all other subjects results were average.

During the inspection, standards seen are generally above average, and are well above average in English for pupils aged 14. The difference between the well above average test and examination results in mathematics and the above average standards seen during the inspection is due to the intermittent absence of a mathematics teacher through illness, which is depressing the standards of those pupils affected, although the department is working hard to compensate for this. The difference between the average GCSE results in science and the above average standards seen during the inspection is largely due to the lower than average amount of time allocated to the teaching of science, which means that, although pupils achieve high standards in individual lessons, their learning cannot be consolidated enough and this shows in the lower results. Standards in ICT are below average for pupils aged 14 to 16, as not all pupils cover the full curriculum.

The standards attained by pupils represent good levels of achievement and they make good progress in their learning throughout the school. The local education authority undertakes an analysis of the value the school adds to the standards being achieved by pupils, and this confirms these positive findings. The school sets appropriately challenging targets.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes towards school and their learning and respond well to teachers and the opportunities provided for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. Pupils are co-operative, polite and considerate towards each other.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are very good, with a mutual respect evident. Pupils are mature and responsible.
Attendance	Attendance is very good.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good. All lessons seen were at least satisfactory, and 70 percent were good or better. Of these 37 percent were very good or better. Teaching is good for pupils of all ages seen, although Year 11 pupils were out on work experience during the inspection and so it was not possible to observe them being taught.

The teaching in most subjects included some lessons that were satisfactory and others that were better. The strongest teaching was seen in lessons in English, French and art and design, where there was some excellent teaching. Very good teaching was seen in geography, English, history and technology. Lessons that were satisfactory rather than better were seen in science, technology, mathematics, French and music.

In the best lessons, teachers have excellent subject knowledge, a stimulating approach and high expectations. They plan activities which develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding well and ensure very good progress in learning. Good attention is given to ensuring a high standard of presentation and there is high quality marking of work and feedback to pupils, which encourages a real pride on the part of pupils towards their work. In the lessons that are satisfactory rather than better, although the teaching is competent, tasks do not require as much active involvement on the part of pupils and their understanding is not always checked sufficiently. Some good homework is set, but the provision is not consistent. Nevertheless, teaching is good overall and makes a significant contribution to the high standards being achieved by pupils.

The school has a literacy policy and the literacy skills are well taught in English lessons and across the curriculum. The mathematics department has a numeracy policy but this has not yet been adopted across the school.

The school meets the needs of all pupils well and is committed to enabling all to make good progress. Those with special educational needs receive very good teaching and support and, as a result, make very good progress in relation to the targets set for them.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Statutory curriculum requirements are met with the exception of ICT for pupils aged from 14 to 16. There are some weaknesses in the organisation and provision, however, such as low curriculum time for science, a lack of vocational education and other subjects such as GCSE in PE and drama for pupils aged 14 to 16, and a narrow range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The co-ordinator has a very good understanding of pupils' needs and how to meet them, and as a result they make very good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The attention given to pupils' spiritual and moral development is very good and is grounded in the Catholic commitment and ethos of the school. Opportunities for social development are good, and for cultural development are satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is a strong sense of care and concern for pupils. Teachers know their pupils very well and work hard to ensure they are happy and able to learn effectively. Some health and safety issues require addressing, and the school has these in hand.

The school works well with parents, who are very supportive of the school.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and deputy provide strong and effective leadership. There is a clear commitment to enabling all pupils to achieve high standards and procedures, and practices are in place to help bring this about. The quality of middle management is good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its responsibilities very well. Governors monitor practice and know and understand the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is an improving area. There are systems in place for monitoring, and regular line management discussions are held. There has been a system for monitoring teaching, but this has been voluntary, which is a weakness, although it is now to be compulsory. Some analysis of performance data takes place, but it is not yet comprehensive. It does not identify issues or trends about groups of pupils in order to inform planning and practice.
The strategic use of resources	Generally good. The school has a small deficit budget, but has an appropriate recovery plan in place. The principles of best value are applied to decisions about spending. The school provides good value for money.

The school has adequate staffing, but there have been difficulties caused by illness in the mathematics department, which are now being tackled. The accommodation for physical education is unsatisfactory.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school expects pupils to work hard.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school is helping children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school keeps parents well informed about pupils' progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of a wider range of extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>• Provision of a more consistent approach to homework.</li> </ul>

The inspection findings support all of the positive views expressed by parents. The school does expect pupils to work hard, and it regularly informs parents about pupils' attitudes towards their work. Teaching within the school is good, and the school is very well led and managed.

The team also agrees with the small number of areas that parents felt could be improved. Although homework is taken seriously and some good homework is set, pupils confirm that the provision is inconsistent. Although some good curriculum enrichment occurs and opportunities for visits and residential activities are good, there is nevertheless a narrow range of regular extra-curricular activities offered.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Pupils achieve well and make good progress in their learning.**

1. The results obtained by pupils in the national tests at the age of 14 are consistently above the national average overall. Results in English are highest, being well above the national average and the results from similar schools. Results in mathematics improved in 2000 when they were well above the national average and in line with similar schools. Results in science were lower, and despite having improved between 1999 and 2000, they were above the national average but below the results in similar schools.
2. GCSE results have been consistently well above the national average up until a drop in 2000 when they were only above the national average, and below similar schools. This drop had been anticipated however, and the school still exceeded the performance targets that had been set. The drop was due to the group of pupils concerned containing a relatively high number of boys who were disaffected. Up until this year, results had been improving faster than the national rate. Results in mathematics and art and design were well above the national average in 2000, and in English language were above average. Results were well below average in French and music, although the latter was a very small group, and below average in English literature and geography. In all other subjects results were average.
3. The standards of work seen in English during the inspection are well above average for pupils aged 14 and above average for pupils aged 16. Pupils are able to read for information from a wide range of texts, although their understanding and appreciation of literature is not well enough developed. They can write well for a wide range of audiences, with drafting and redrafting a particular strength, and standards of presentation are high. Whilst many pupils are able to express themselves clearly and confidently, especially in small group discussion or on a one to one basis, the ability of some pupils to talk more publicly or give extended answers to questions is more limited.
4. The standards of work in mathematics seen during the inspection are above average for pupils of all ages. Pupils have good computational skills, with a good understanding of mathematical concepts, and they are generally secure in their ability to apply their knowledge to solve new problems. Pupils' mental and oral abilities are less well developed, as is their ability to explain some of the applications they had made. The intermittent absence through illness of a mathematics teacher is lowering the standards attained by affected pupils, and this is largely responsible for the difference in the test and examination results in 2000 and the standards seen during the inspection. Much hard work is being done by the mathematics department in order to compensate for this problem, and their results are very creditable in the circumstances.
5. The standards of work seen in science are also above average for pupils of all ages. They are steadily gaining knowledge and practical skills across all areas of the science curriculum, but the understanding of many pupils is not as good, and they are not always able to explain the results they are obtaining in experiments. The lower than average amount of curriculum time allocated to science throughout the school mainly accounts for the difference between the standards seen in lessons and in pupils' work, and in examination results. Although pupils achieve above average

standards in individual lessons, the curriculum cannot be covered fully or in sufficient depth, and pupils' knowledge and understanding cannot be consolidated fully enough and this shows in the examination results just being average. In addition, in 2000, a group of lower attaining pupils were entered for single science in an attempt to meet their needs better, but none gained a grade C or above, and this depressed the science results. This option has now been discontinued.

6. Standards in ICT for pupils aged 14 as seen on the inspection are broadly average overall, although their ability to use ICT to undertake measurement and control is below average. Standards are below average overall for pupils aged 16, as not all pupils cover the full curriculum. Those taking the GCSE option have higher standards.
7. The standards attained by pupils represent good levels of achievement and they make good progress in their learning throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs make particularly good progress due to the high quality provision made for them. The local education authority undertakes an analysis of the value the school adds to the standards being achieved by pupils, and this confirms these positive findings. The school sets appropriately challenging targets.

**There is very effective leadership and management, especially at senior level.**

8. The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher and her deputy provide strong leadership and command the respect and confidence of the staff and the governing body. There is a clear commitment to enabling pupils to achieve high standards in both academic and personal areas and to ensuring that pupils develop high self-esteem through experiencing success. Effective management has resulted in the school having the procedures and practices in place to help bring this about. The headteacher and deputy set clear expectations. For example, guidelines about what should feature in curriculum plans have been given, which heads of department report as being very useful in their work with colleagues within their departments. Support is given to staff in implementing agreed priorities. There has been whole staff training on literacy, for example, in order to support efforts across the curriculum to improve pupils' skills. Good line management, which takes the form of regular discussions between senior managers and middle managers, ensures that staff are held accountable for the practice within departments, and also serves the purpose of ensuring that senior staff are very well informed about the work of the school. The quality of middle management is good. Particular strengths are in the areas of English and special educational needs, and these effective managers have a positive impact on pupils' learning both within their departments and across the school.
9. Senior managers recognise the importance of self-evaluation and are committed to developing practice across the school. For some time there has been a scheme for monitoring teaching and learning in place, aimed at sharing and building on good practice as well as tackling shortcomings. A weakness is that until now participation has been on a voluntary basis. During the inspection some correlation between the quality of teaching and participation in the scheme was observed, which is testimony to its success. The monitoring of teaching is now to become a compulsory activity for teachers. Other forms of self-evaluation have been introduced. Following the most recent GCSE results, heads of departments were asked to complete a detailed questionnaire outlining the results, and reasons for the levels of success. The responses then formed the basis for a discussion with the headteacher, which included plans to effect improvement.

10. The school also analyses performance data and uses the local education authority's value added analysis to identify strengths and weaknesses in practice. This work, whilst valuable, is not yet comprehensive. Much work is done using performance data at an individual pupil level to set targets and monitor progress. Less is done with data about whole year groups of pupils to identify trends or issues that could then inform planning and practice. For example, there is not a general awareness amongst staff about data relating to pupils' attainment on entry to the school and the trends that are apparent in the standardised test scores and results of tests taken at the end of primary school. This shortcoming is recognised and there are plans to improve this area.
11. The governing body is also very effective. Governors are very committed to the school. Individual governors are linked with specific departments, and this helps them to know, and understand the reasons for, strengths and weaknesses and to monitor practice. They ensure that the Catholic foundation beliefs are upheld in a sensitive manner. Governors monitor expenditure carefully and have agreed a recovery plan to ensure that the school's budget deficit is reduced in 2001. The governors have not, however, ensured all pupils receive their entitlement in ICT, although developments in this area are in hand.

**Teaching throughout the school is good.**

12. Teaching is good. All lessons seen were at least satisfactory, and 70 percent were good or better. Of these 37% percent were very good or better. Teaching is good for pupils of all ages seen, although Year 11 pupils were out on work experience during the inspection and so it was not possible to observe them being taught.
13. The teaching in most subjects included some lessons that were satisfactory and others that were better. The strongest teaching was seen in lessons in English, French, and art and design, where there was some excellent teaching, although in the first two subjects there were other lessons where the teaching was not as strong. Only one lesson was observed in art and design. Very good teaching was seen in geography, English, history, and technology. Lessons that were satisfactory rather than better were seen in science, technology, mathematics, French and music.
14. In the very best lessons teachers have excellent subject knowledge and a stimulating approach which captures the interest and imagination of pupils. They have very high expectations of pupils, and use a range of activities which progressively develop their knowledge, skills and understanding and ensure very good progress. There is also very good feedback to pupils on how well they are performing and what they need to do to improve. In an excellent French lesson when Year 7 pupils were being encouraged to express likes and dislikes, for example, the lesson started with quick-fire questions and answers that ensured all pupils were actively involved from the outset, and was followed by a good range of activities that maintained that involvement and developed their self-confidence. The very good use of the French language throughout the lesson by the teacher ensured that pupils heard correct pronunciation and intonation, which was a good model for their oral skills. An excellent art and design lesson was characterised by very high expectations of pupils and an exceptional belief in their abilities. The teacher employed high calibre artistic skills to demonstrate the scaled up drawing of a guitar that inspired pupils, who then worked very industriously for the rest of the lesson. The teacher gave extremely effective guidance to pupils to develop their techniques and artistic interpretation, as well as considerable encouragement to succeed. In the very effective English lesson there was an excellent attention to planning for and meeting the individual needs of pupils within the group, many of whom had special educational needs, and very high

quality feedback given to them on their performance. In general there is very good attention given to ensuring a high standard of presentation of pupils' work, with the school marking policy consistently applied by teachers, and this encourages a real pride on the part of pupils towards their work. Pupils' learning is good. They work very hard, are keen to do well, and do what teachers ask of them to the best of their ability in most cases.

15. All teaching is at least satisfactory but in some lessons is not better than that. In these lessons, the teaching is competent but it is delivered in a way that pupils find less interesting. There is a slower pace to learning and tasks do not require as much active involvement of pupils. Fewer demands are made of pupils, with, for example acceptance of one word answers to questions, rather than requesting fuller responses, and insufficient opportunities are created to promote pupils' understanding throughout the lesson. For example, in a French lesson aimed at developing pupils' understanding of, and ability to talk about, daily routines using present and perfect tenses, the teacher introduced appropriate vocabulary and spoke in French throughout the lesson, but did not encourage the pupils to use that vocabulary themselves in conversation enough. Their listening skills and understanding were enhanced but not enough opportunities to develop their speaking skills were made. In a science lesson on writing chemical formulae the teacher had prepared an imaginative resource to assist pupils to understand the principles involved and write the formulae correctly. Pupils found this very helpful. Nevertheless, in some cases they did not arrive at the correct answer, and some pupils wrote the correct answer without fully understanding the underlying principles. The teacher recognised and dealt with some of these instances but not all, and attention was not drawn to these points at the end of the lesson. Pupils had to finish off the work for homework and as a result were likely to replicate the mistakes and misunderstandings apparent in the lesson, thus slowing the rate of progress. Some good homework was seen being set and used in lessons, but the provision is not consistent. Nevertheless, overall teaching is good and makes a significant contribution to the high standards being achieved by pupils.
16. Pupils' work is well marked on the whole. Teachers follow the agreed school marking policy, which gives grades for effort and achievement, and pupils understand the criteria well. In many cases these grades are supplemented by comments which correct misunderstandings and give information to pupils as to how to improve their work. Good marking was seen in all curriculum areas, and it was particularly thorough and helpful in English. Some mathematics books are less thoroughly marked. This is due to the intermittent absence of a member of staff and the fact the classes affected are taught by supply teachers on these occasions.
17. The school has a literacy policy and the literacy skills are well taught in English lessons and across the curriculum. Correcting pupils' spelling and grammar in their work across the curriculum is a feature of the good marking. The mathematics department has a numeracy policy but this has not yet been adopted across the school.
18. The school meets the needs of all pupils well and is committed to enabling all to make good progress. Those with special educational needs receive very good teaching and support, and, as a result, make very good progress in relation to the targets set for them.

**There are very positive relationships, and teachers exhibit strong care and concern for pupils.**

19. Relationships within the school are very good. There is a mutual respect between pupils and staff, and between pupils themselves. Pupils are mature and act in a responsible way. Pupils as young as Year 8 are peer counsellors, able to deal with sensitive and confidential matters in a way that their fellow pupils value very much. Pupils are able to work co-operatively and collaboratively within lessons.
20. The ethos within the school promotes care and concern for each pupil. The pastoral system ensures that there is an effective structure for overseeing their personal needs, and pupils are well known to staff. Staff work hard to ensure that pupils are happy and able to learn effectively. There is a warm atmosphere within the school and pupils feel that there are individual teachers that they can relate to well, and that they have someone that they can go to if there is a problem. Parents also feel that staff are approachable and that they deal with any problems raised quickly and sensitively. The strong pastoral system and the relationships it promotes make a good contribution to the effectiveness of the school.

**Pupils behave very well and have very positive attitudes towards school.**

21. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. The school is a very orderly community and pupils know the rules and expectations well and are prepared to abide by them. They are co-operative, polite and considerate towards each other. Exclusions are low and no pupils last year were permanently excluded.
22. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards school and respond well to teachers. They are punctual to lessons and behave well within them. They also respond very well to the opportunities provided for them. Extremely positive examples of the degree of maturity and the willingness to work on behalf of their peers is the peer counselling scheme, which is much appreciated by pupils.

**There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development.**

23. A very good range of opportunities is provided for pupils' spiritual development. Retreats, including some that are residential, are organised for pupils, along with specific events to mark festivals and holy days. Very good acts of collective worship promote these values well. There is a voluntary Mass each week, which is attended by a large number of pupils. Pupils say prayers at the beginning and end of sessions with their teachers. Prayers are written into pupils' planners to assist with this. Some additional enrichment work takes place, for example on the Holocaust and remembrance, which develops these values well. In November, for example, there was a display in the entrance hall on remembrance, with a book for pupils to sign which was then presented and placed on the altar during voluntary Masses throughout the month. The spiritual development of pupils is grounded in the Catholic commitment and ethos of the school. Although this area is already strong there are plans to strengthen it further, for example making liturgical life stronger by recognising that it can go beyond the Mass and collective worship.
24. There is a strong sense of moral purpose within the school that is based on the mission statement. There is an insistence on high standards of behaviour and conduct, and pupils accept and work within this framework with a clear sense of respect for others. The personal and social education programme gives opportunities for pupils to consider a range of moral and ethical issues and to consider issues relevant to their own personal and social experience. Pupils are encouraged to act in

a morally responsible manner. There is very good support for charities which promotes pupils' moral awareness and sense of social responsibility, and this also gives pupils the chance to express moral concern in practical and helpful ways. Pupils have generously supported a wide range of charities recently, Barnados, Amnesty International, Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, Catholic Children's Caring Society, and local organisations such as hospices.

**The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.**

25. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well organised and managed. The co-ordinator is extremely knowledgeable and effective and has a very good understanding of pupils' needs and how to meet them. Other special educational needs staff, including support assistants, are well qualified and trained and effectively deployed. A very useful handbook for teachers, which gives information about the specific needs of individual pupils, and suggestions for appropriate types of support for teachers to use in their planning, has been produced. The individual education plans that have been written for relevant pupils are very detailed, with subject specific targets relating to the individual needs of pupils. The tracking of the progress of pupils is thorough. There is particularly good support for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, through one-to-one counselling and target setting using a variety of techniques, including 'anger-management' and peer-counselling. A system is in use, which allows pupils to monitor their own behaviour against a 'good standard model'.
26. There is very good teaching of pupils with special educational needs overall leading to good success for pupils. In a very well organised and taught English lesson with Year 7 pupils on developing their research skills using the learning resource centre, the teacher's clear aims, well-focussed support, good reinforcement of skills which built on prior learning, and the encouragement to pupils to set themselves personal targets, resulted in very good progress being made. In a geography lesson with Year 9 pupils, the teacher's very good understanding of the requirements of those with special educational needs and the adoption of appropriate methods and activities resulted in pupils acquiring a good basic understanding of the causes and effects of deforestation. All pupils are entered for a GCSE examination in English.

**WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school and especially for pupils age 14 to 16.**

27. The provision of ICT is a weakness within the school. Statutory curriculum requirements are met for pupils aged 11 to 14, although provision for pupils to use ICT for control and measurement is less well developed than other areas. For pupils aged 14 to 16, statutory requirements are not met in full. Pupils who choose as one of their options GCSE ICT or business education have access to and use ICT regularly, but those who do not choose these options rely on the use of ICT in other subjects for their entitlement. Until recently this was restricted by a lack of equipment, as most of the machines were in the rooms where ICT and business education lessons were taught, and the teachers of other subjects did not have access to the machines to use in their lessons. This situation has improved recently. In addition to the ICT room, the new learning resource centre is equipped with 15 computers and staff from any curriculum area can book it for use in their lessons. There is now the means, therefore, to ensure that all pupils receive their full entitlement, although its use is in early stages. Not all staff feel confident or competent in the use of ICT,

however, and so a training programme to develop their skills is planned. The weaknesses in ICT have been recognised by the school and acted upon, although the new arrangements are too recent to have had the necessary impact on pupils' attainment as yet. The ICT co-ordinator has clear ideas about how she would like to see the subject developed further within the school.

**The provision and organisation of some aspects of the curriculum, especially increasing the time for science, broadening the curriculum for pupils aged from 14 to 16, and increasing the range of extra-curricular activities.**

28. Although the school provides a sound academic curriculum, which meets statutory requirements with the exception of ICT for all pupils aged from 14 to 16, there are some weaknesses which have a negative impact on pupils' experience and learning.
29. The time allocated for the study of science is below average for pupils of all ages. This limits progress and depresses attainment. Within individual lessons good standards are achieved, and this is reflected in pupils' written work. However, as not enough time is given to allow full coverage of the curriculum to an appropriate depth or provide enough consolidation of pupils' learning, examination and test results are lower than would be expected.
30. GCSEs in subjects that are often popular options, such as physical education (PE) and drama, are not offered within the school. Both of these subjects are usually particularly popular with boys, and their introduction could potentially play a part in addressing any lack of motivation by boys, such as that responsible for the drop in GCSE results in 2000. However, accommodation for PE is unsatisfactory. There is no gymnasium, and PE is taught in the hall, which also has to be used for other activities such as examinations. At these times there is no access for the teaching of PE, and in wet weather pupils cannot undertake practical work. Outside pitches are prone to flooding, and this also places restrictions on pupils' work on occasions. Given that some pupils lack confidence in oral work, the introduction of drama could assist in developing their confidence in speaking more publicly.
31. There is no vocational education offered through the General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) route, although there is a business studies option for pupils aged 14. The school is considering the introduction of GNVQs, as it regards it as an option that some pupils could benefit from.
32. The range of extra-curricular activities provided is limited. The PE department offers some provision, but this is not extensive and is restricted to one evening a week. The provision offered by the music department has increased recently, and there are now two choirs and a band, although membership of the choirs is predominantly female. There are no school drama productions. There are some homework clubs organised within departments, but few after-school clubs are offered. There are also some very valuable curriculum enrichment activities such as residential visits, trips abroad, and participation in specific projects within some subjects. Regular opportunities for pupils to broaden their experience and develop their interests and talents, however, are weaker.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

33. In order to improve standards and the quality of education provided for pupils the headteacher, staff and governors should: -

(1) Improve the provision of ICT by : - (paragraph 27)

- Ensuring that all pupils aged from 14 to 16 receive their full entitlement to ICT, by ensuring that provision across the curriculum is systematically planned, taught and monitored;
- Providing more opportunities for pupils aged from 11 to 14 to use ICT for control and measuring.

(2) Tackle the weaknesses in curriculum provision by: - (paragraphs 28-32)

- Increasing the time allocated to the teaching of science;
- Considering broadening the curriculum for pupils aged from 14 to 16 to include other GCSE subjects such as PE and drama, and vocational opportunities;
- Widening the range of extra-curricular opportunities on offer to pupils.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	27
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
11	26	33	30	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	436	N/a
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	30	N/a

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6	N/a
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	71	N/a

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	7.4
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	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	39	49	88

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	27	31	28
	Girls	45	43	35
	Total	72	74	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	82 (84)	85 (73)	72 (73)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 ( 55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	50 (51)	55 (46)	36 (29)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30( 23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	23	30	29
	Girls	41	42	40
	Total	64	72	69
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	72 (64)	82 (78)	78 (79)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (70)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	32 (31)	46 (46)	30 (33)
	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	46	40	86

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	18	40	43
	Girls	26	36	38
	Total	44	76	81
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	51 (60)	88 (99)	94 (99)
	National	49 (47)	89 (91)	94 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	40.7 (44)
	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	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	436
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	8	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– Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	27.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.6

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Education support staff: Y7– Y11**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	145

### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	78.9
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### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	21.5
Key Stage 4	19.8

## **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	1,037,160
Total expenditure	1,047,629
Expenditure per pupil	2,443
Balance brought forward from previous year	-5,698
Balance carried forward to next year	-16,167

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	436
Number of questionnaires returned	158

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	45	6	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	55	39	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	51	5	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	53	10	3	4
The teaching is good.	50	48	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	42	3	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	31	1	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	29	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	52	42	5	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	54	38	3	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	47	3	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	38	18	3	11