

INSPECTION REPORT

BEAUMONT SCHOOL

St. Albans

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117514

Headteacher: Graham Yapp

Reporting inspector: Marjorie Glynne-Jones
2918

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 5th October 2000

Inspection number: 223926

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 to 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Oakwood Drive
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Hertfordshire

Postcode: AL4 0XB

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Peter Vine

Date of previous inspection: February 1996

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	11
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
PROVISION FOR STUDENTS IN THE SIXTH FORM	18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Beaumont is a mixed comprehensive school, with community status. It serves an area of Hertfordshire in which family circumstances are generally very favourable. Pupils' attainment on entry is, overall, above average, while representing a wide attainment range. The school has grown in size by about 15 per cent since the last inspection. There are 1097 pupils on roll, an average size for secondary schools. This includes 245 students in the sixth form who are taught in a joint arrangement with two other schools. There are about ten per cent more boys than girls. Since 1996, Beaumont has been designated as a PNI (physical and neurological impairment) school; currently eight pupils are in wheelchairs. The proportions of pupils with a high level of special needs, and of those eligible for free school meals, are well below those found nationally. For those at an earlier stage of special needs with learning or behavioural difficulties, the proportion is below average. Because the school has received information about the ethnic backgrounds of no more than three-quarters of the pupils on roll, an overall comment about ethnic backgrounds cannot be made. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language is higher than in most schools. These pupils are generally fluent English speakers; two pupils receive language support, one of whom is at an early stage of learning English. About 90 per cent of pupils stay in education after GCSE, and over 80 per cent go on to higher education when they leave school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school, with outstanding features and a strong sense of community. It provides good value for money. Pupils' achievements are very good and their attitudes to school life and work are very positive. Overall at Key Stage 3 and at GCSE, pupils do much better in this school than they do in schools with a similar intake. Standards at GCSE and A-level are improving at a faster rate than they are nationally. Pupils receive good teaching; in the sixth form this is very good. There is strong leadership and management. Very good review procedures, which include lesson monitoring, are, however, not always backed up by rigorous evaluation and reporting, particularly of the quality of teaching and department management. Governors' contribution is strong. Parents hold the school in high regard.

What the school does well

- Standards are high and pupils achieve very well
- There are considerable strengths in both leadership and management
- Pupils with PNI participate fully in the life of the school
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very positive
- Sixth form arrangements are excellent
- Teaching in the sixth form is of very good quality
- Provision for moral, social and cultural development is very good
- Parents think highly of the school and receive very good information.

What could be improved

- The monitoring of teaching and departmental management lacks sharp focus and rigour.

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 1996. Since then there has been good improvement overall. High standards have been maintained at Key Stage 3 and GCSE, and A-level/Advanced GNVQ standards have improved. Standards in art and design, music, economics and chemistry have improved well. There has been a very significant improvement in the quality of teaching. Good improvement has been achieved in the provision for information and

communication technology (ICT). Sufficient improvement has been made in the provision for special educational needs and also for religious education, except in the sixth form, where although not an issue at the last inspection, requirements are currently not fully met. There has been no improvement in meeting the requirement for daily collective worship.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Standards are high and pupils' achievements are very good.

At Key Stage 3, standards have remained high over the last three years, although they were not sustained in the top 5 per cent nationally after 1997. In 1999, the overall results were well above those for schools with a similar intake. From entry, when their attainment is above average, pupils make good progress over Key Stage 3 to achieve these standards at the end of Year 9. The trend in results from 1997-1999 did not keep pace with the trend nationally, although remaining well above average.

At GCSE, high standards have also been maintained since 1997, while rising at a faster rate than national results. Pupils' average points score was well above that in schools with a similar intake. Between 1998 and 1999 the proportion of pupils gaining ten or more grades A*-C increased significantly from 38 per cent to 54 per cent.

There has been an improvement overall in A-level/ Advanced GNVQ results since 1997 so that in 1999 the results were well above average. In 1999, results were above those that would be expected from the GCSE results in 1997.

In 2000, results at Key Stage 3 were much the same as in 1999 and halted the downward trend. The average total points score at GCSE in 2000 was much the same as in 1999, although the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C was not as high. A-level/Advanced GNVQ results in 2000 were much the same as in 1999. They were very considerably higher than would be expected by the GCSE results in 1998.

The GCSE targets for 2000 were met for the average total points score but were not reached for five or more grades A*-C or for one or more grades A*-G.

In the work seen standards in English, mathematics and science were above average. There were particular strengths in English at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, in mathematics and science in the sixth form, and in personal and social education at Key Stage 3. Overall standards in the work seen in the sixth form were well above those expected. At Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 they were above average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: pupils show enthusiasm for learning; their response creates a good working atmosphere and strengthens as they move up the school. Pupils are good humoured, friendly and lively.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good overall, often excellent, although the number for both permanent and fixed-term exclusions is average. Behaviour was unsatisfactory on the one occasion when teaching was poor.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: pupils show respect for other people as individuals and a high level of understanding of the differing needs of their peers. Pupils carry out duties responsibly, contributing with mature thoughtfulness in the school councils.
Attendance	Well above the national average. Pupils make it clear that they enjoy school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

- In 96 per cent of lessons teaching is satisfactory or better; in 73 per cent it is good or better; and in 43 per cent it is very good or excellent; in 4 per cent of lessons it is unsatisfactory or poor.
- Because the teaching was not 100 per cent satisfactory the overall judgement cannot be better than 'good'.
- Significant improvement has been made since the last inspection when teaching was satisfactory in only 75 per cent of lessons.
- Sixth form teaching is particularly strong.
- Teaching is good in English, good overall in science, and very good in mathematics.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well at Key Stages 3 and 4, and taught very well in the sixth-form.
- There are particular strengths at Key Stage 3 in art and design and drama, and, in the sixth form, in mathematics, science, art and design and history. In addition some very good teaching was seen in personal and social education and in learning support at Key Stage 3; in English, art and design, history and religious education at Key Stage 4; and in design and technology at both key stages.
- Teaching was unsatisfactory in one Year 7 physical education lesson and poor in one Year 7 science lesson; the main weakness was in planning.
- The needs of all pupils are generally met well across the school, although the learning targets for pupils with special needs are not always used sufficiently in planning.
- The strengths in pupils' learning are the level of interest they show, the sensible and independent way they go about their work, the good pace of working which they set themselves, and, particularly, the high quality of thought they give to the tasks.
- A small number of instances of near-challenging behaviour are not always dealt with confidently by the teacher.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Rich and varied throughout the school; excellent joint sixth form arrangements with partner schools extend students' access to advanced courses; pupils with PNI have very good access to learning opportunities. Because requirements for religious education in the sixth form are not fully met, the curriculum overall has to be judged unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school now provides effective support for pupils with special needs, an improvement from the finding of the last inspection. Pupils' individual targets are in place and available for all teachers, though not always used sufficiently in planning work. There is still a lack of planned liaison with subject departments about provision. The quality of support for the group of pupils with PNI is high.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The support is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The schools' ethos strongly reflects the concern for pupils' moral, social and cultural development; there is less success in providing for spiritual development, although this is strong in religious education. Provision is very good overall and excellent for social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The care for all pupils is good, and particularly strong for pupils with PNI. The school provides a safe environment. It ensures that individual pupils are given effective support when it is needed.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good leadership by the headteacher; generally good leadership by staff managers, although not achieved equally well by all subject leaders. The values of the school community are put into practice exceptionally well, to the benefit of pupils, staff, governors and parents. The school is stronger on managing development than on monitoring teaching and departmental management: although the overall procedures for review are very good, the monitoring lacks focus and rigour. Very good attention is given to achieving best value.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body shows considerable energy and commitment, carrying out its responsibilities generally very well. Governors play a strong part in creating the vision for the school's development and in the work to achieve it; they give thorough, often exemplary consideration to all aspects of their responsibility. However, in respect of daily worship across the school and religious education in the sixth form, this has not led to requirements being fully met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good analysis and evaluation of test and examination results; individual pupil targets are being established well across the school. The same detailed thoroughness is not applied in department reviews or in monitoring teaching. Other aspects of its performance, for example, pupils' behaviour, are evaluated well. Procedures for performance management are being set in place appropriately.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources very effectively to achieve its priorities for improvement and development.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • Their children make good progress • The behaviour is good • The teaching is good • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with a problem • The school expects their children to work hard • The school is well led and managed • The school helps their children to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children always having the right amount of homework • The range of activities outside lessons

Inspectors agree with the positive views of the 46 per cent of parents who completed questionnaire returns and the seven per cent who attended the pre-inspection meeting; in particular, that children make good progress, that behaviour is good, and that the school helps children to become mature and responsible. Where parents' responses were less positive, the inspection findings do not confirm the concerns about homework. The findings do not confirm parents' concerns about the information provided on children's progress and the range of activities outside lessons. For these two questions, ten per cent of parents recorded a 'don't know', including some whose children had only recently joined the school. Inspectors found that homework was planned and followed up well; that the school provides very good information for parents on children's progress; and that the range of activities is good and notably enhanced by the opportunities provided on activity days.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Standards are high and pupils achieve very well

1. Pupils' 1999 results at Key Stage 3 were much better in this school than they were in schools with a similar intake. Since the last inspection, in comparison with all schools, standards have remained high. In 1997, results were in the top 5 per cent nationally although this was not sustained in 1998 and 1999. While the school has maintained its results at a well above average level, the trend in National Curriculum points over the last three years, 1997-1999, was down, although nationally the trend was rising.

2. From entry when their attainment is above average, pupils make good progress over Key Stage 3 to achieve well above average results at the end of Year 9. The school's analysis using local education authority data shows that pupils make better than expected progress in mathematics and science.

3. In 1999, the average points achieved in all three subjects of English, mathematics and science together were well above average. Boys and girls attained equally well, boys doing better in comparison with the national figure (for boys) than girls. The proportions of pupils achieving the higher Level 6 or above were well above average in mathematics and science, while above average in English. The 2000 results show similar achievement at Level 6 or above, but with improvement in English.

4. At GCSE in 1999, the average total points achieved by both boys and girls was well above average. Between 1997 and 1999 there was a notable rise in the average total points achieved by boys. Since the last inspection the average total points score has remained at a level well above average. However, the trend for all pupils is rising at a faster rate than nationally. In 2000, the average total points achieved were much the same as in 1999, girls gaining some ground and boys losing some.

5. The proportions of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades and five or more A*-G grades were well above average in 1999. The proportion of pupils achieving these results has risen steadily since 1994. There was a steady rise in the proportion achieving 10 or more grades A*-C, which between 1998 and 1999 showed a notable rise from 38 per cent to 54 per cent. In 2000, the achievement of five or more A*-C grades dropped slightly. Given the size of the year group, a change of less than seven per cent is not likely to be significant.

6. At A-level/Advanced GNVQ in 1999, the average points score for pupils entered for two or more subjects was well above the national average. Since the last inspection results have improved. The trend in average points scores from 1997 is rising. The 1999 results were better than would be expected by the standards achieved at GCSE in 1997; the gain was good. In 2000, the average points score remained much the same as in 1999. The gain from GCSE was considerably greater.

7. The school is rightly addressing the issue of fluctuation in the Key Stage 3 English results at the higher Level 6 or above, with some success. The 2000 results have halted the falling trend from 1997-1999 in the results for all core subjects together.

There are considerable strengths in both leadership and management

8. School aims and values are put into practice exceptionally well. They are reflected in virtually every aspect of school life, in the interaction between adults and pupils, and in school

decision-making. Many of the strengths found during the inspection stem from the school's success in putting its aims into practice. The strengths also reflect exemplary practice in development planning and evaluation.

9. The headteacher gives strong leadership. His commitment to consultation with staff, pupils and parents, in which governors are fully involved, is effective in improving the quality of pupils' experience. The responsibilities of the senior team are clearly defined. These have recently been revised to incorporate some helpful parallel responsibilities that support the development of team approaches and accountability. Senior staff are rightly aware of the need to strengthen their management link with heads of departments and of areas such as special educational needs. A start has been made in establishing a common agenda for the regular link meetings.

10. There are very good procedures in place for departmental review. This has been an appropriate school priority for development. The process involves an internal team visit with an external adviser, and incorporates lesson observation and scrutiny of planning. Reports of reviews are considered by the governing body; this is good practice. However, the reports themselves are not sufficiently helpful in identifying strengths and weaknesses. Additional review papers offered to the inspectors during the inspection week show the interest in, and commitment to review by heads of department. There is a high quality of professional thinking and understanding among the heads of department. This is shown, for example, in the successful work in English to raise boys' attainment. Good opportunities are provided for staff to become associate members of the senior team for a given period as part of their career development. The quality of the school's attention to staff training is reflected by the findings of the second *Investors in People* survey which found that there had been improvement in each of the aspects considered in the initial survey.

11. The governing body serves the school very well. The minutes of its meetings reflect wise and thorough deliberation about the school's work. Issues are followed through with energy and commitment, and a determination to achieve best value. Governors play a strong part in creating the vision for the school's development and support the school well in achieving improvement. Since the last inspection there has been a number of staff changes. Governors play a full role in staff appointments. Particular attention is given to teaching skills when appointing staff to management posts and this has contributed well to the improvement in the quality of teaching. Governors have high expectations of their own contribution and give time to reviewing it. The governing body carries out its responsibilities very well, except in two respects: the requirements for worship across the school and for religious education in the sixth form are not fully met.

Pupils with PNI participate fully in the life of the school

12. The school very successfully promotes equal opportunity for all pupils, particularly those with PNI. Care is taken to ensure that school values regarding respect for individuals and for individual dignity are fully understood and expressed in the context of physical difficulties. This is achieved, for example, through training for support staff. Pupils with PNI are very positive about the school's provision and the fact that they are not excluded from anything. They appreciate the friendliness, that staff and other pupils are supportive, that the school is accessible, and that pupils have been educated about the nature of their difficulties. Some parents attending the pre-inspection meeting made similarly appreciative comments.

13. Pupils follow the same timetable as other pupils. In the lessons seen, PNI pupils received the same opportunities for work as other pupils. They take part in physical education lessons as appropriate, in assemblies, activities like the orchestra, and as far as is possible in educational and residential visits. Care is taken to avoid organising activities at lunchtimes

that would prevent them from using the social areas with other pupils. Pupils are sensible and courteous to wheelchair users as they all move round the school, for example at lesson change. A parent spoke of the excellent support given to PNI pupils by the physical education department.

14. Physical access to classrooms and other internal areas is almost fully in place. Since designation for PNI in 1996, the school has worked with the local education authority to ensure that all aspects of the accommodation support pupils well and meet requirements. The medical and toilet facilities are adequate. Further upgrading of toilet facilities is scheduled. Future plans include completing the installation of automatic doors round the school.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very positive

15. The ethos of the school is that learning is a joint venture between pupils and staff. Pupils' response is generally very good: they show a good level of interest, are attentive and co-operative and take their work seriously. Pupils show enthusiasm for learning; this response creates a good working atmosphere which strengthens as they move up the school. Their good behaviour and very positive attitudes enable teachers to give help where it is needed when pupils are working individually or in groups. Relationships are a strength in most lessons and pupils have confidence in the teachers' ability to help them make progress.

16. Around the school, at breaks and lunchtimes, pupils are good humoured, helpful, friendly and lively. Their helpfulness is not affected by the rather crowded conditions in some circulation areas. They behave impeccably in assemblies. Pupils' response to the considerable freedom given them is mature and responsible. This shows, for example at lunchtimes, when they have access to all parts of the building, including their form rooms.

Sixth form arrangements are excellent

17. Students are very appreciative of the opportunities the sixth form provides. They feel that they are treated sensibly and are supported well.

18. This appreciation is fully justified. The joint arrangements with two other schools are highly effective and ensure that a very good range of academic and vocational courses is available. The additional opportunities provided have recently been well evaluated and revised in preparation for curriculum 2000. A new tutorial system is being implemented; it is through this that students are expected to receive key skills accreditation by the end of Year 12. Many students benefit from taking part in community service. However, the religious education provided is insufficient to meet syllabus requirements fully. The three schools, through strong collaboration and strategic management, operate effectively as a unit, with a common timetable and calendar, common entry thresholds, and common policies and procedures. These are clearly documented. Students benefit highly from the

coherence, focus and thoroughness of the joint operation. The effect on standards and students' personal development is very positive.

19. Students' decisions about advanced studies and their understanding of the sixth form programme are very well supported in a number of ways: for example, through individual interviews, advice from external careers advisors, family consultation evenings, and a four-day induction conference. The common two-year tutorial system being introduced has a helpful focus on student target-setting and tracking progress.

Teaching in the sixth form is of very good quality

20. In the great majority of sixth form lessons teaching was good. In over half it was very good and in over a third it was excellent. There is a substantial base of outstanding practice on which the school can draw to raise further the standard of teaching at the other stages. This excellent practice was observed in lessons in mathematics, science, art and design and history.

21. In mathematics, the quality of the teacher's contribution was high and well matched to students' individual needs. It was always very specific and well-focused. For example, it clarified the methods that were needed, capitalised on previous work and extended thinking rigorously. Rigorous thinking was insisted on in students' contributions and work was moved on in a pleasant but forceful way. The teaching was inspirational. It achieved excellent learning in a co-operative and responsive seminar atmosphere.

22. In science, the interventions by the teacher were judicious and very stimulating. They enabled the argument to be refined, redefined or redirected as appropriate. As a result students showed a sophisticated grasp of arguments, and the ability to marshal and manipulate equations with great facility and confidence.

23. In art and design, the teacher seized every opportunity to take learning forward. The questioning forced students to clarify their ideas and challenged them to present their ideas clearly to others. When clarity was not initially achieved, the teacher skilfully questioned the speaker until it was. The teacher's subject expertise was used expertly both in questioning and in the suggestions for further work. The learning that resulted was excellent. In quite a large group, students confidently expressed their ideas, supporting one another through good critical analysis. There was a good group feeling and students bounced ideas off each other.

24. In history, the teacher's excellent grasp of the topic was communicated very effectively to the students, with a feeling of excitement. A fascinating exposition was achieved through a mixture of narrative and questioning. At every stage of the lesson, rigorous responses were demanded of students, the teacher insisting on clear understanding and use of correct terminology. Homework research assignments matched the differing levels of ability in the group. The high level of commitment from the teacher was reflected in students' responses. Their learning was excellent. After only three weeks of the course their work showed academic rigour and very good understanding.

25. A feature that distinguished the teaching that was very good from that which was good was the clear and direct sharing of the learning targets for the lesson with the students. They knew exactly what they were expected to have learned by the end of the lesson, not merely the content and activities that they were to cover or complete. A sharp awareness of the learning targets was evident at all stages of the lesson so that students' learning was maximised. There was a sense of momentum in those lessons where the teaching was very good that was not evident in those lessons where the teaching was good; these progressed at rather an undemanding pace. On occasion, where the teaching was no better than

satisfactory, opportunities were missed to develop students' learning to the full, for example, through focusing sharply on literacy development; not enough thought had been given to planning the introductory part of the lesson so that pupils were not at first clear about the task; and the approach was somewhat mundane and lacking in stimulation because points were not pursued in depth.

Provision for moral, social and cultural development is very good

26. This provision is very good overall. For pupils' social development it is excellent. It is very well supported by the quality of relationships between all members of the school community which foster pupils' growth into mature and responsible young people. The organisation of the lower, upper and sixth form school councils and the executive council, offers experience of elections, representation and decision-making in a large organisation. For two pupils, such experience is extended to membership of the governing body. Of particular value is pupils' experience of being consulted and kept informed by the staff, and the fact that the school makes it clear that pupils' views are respected. The encouragement to consider other people's point of view is a strong thread of school life, particularly at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form. There is a tradition of community work in the sixth form from which students benefit well.

27. Social issues are explored within the curriculum. For example, in religious education pupils worked with challenging source materials when exploring prejudice. They had visited the Imperial War Museum to extend their understanding of prejudice and persecution through studying the Holocaust. When studying *The Lord of the Flies*, Year 10 pupils considered the experience of those who are different from themselves in some way, for example, because of their accent or size. A drama topic on a girl with loss of speech encouraged consideration of others and a positive view of disability. Pupils in Year 9 assembly were encouraged to consider collecting shoe-boxed Christmas gifts for sending to Romania and were given a deadline for signing up to do this.

28. There are frequent opportunities in lessons for pupils to undertake practical work responsibly, work in pairs and groups, and acquire the skills of collaborating, negotiating, persuading and compromising. Drama, music and sports activities provide opportunities for experience as members of a team. On a rota basis, groups of pupils are asked to deal with the organisation of dirty dishes and cutlery in the dining hall, and do so cheerfully and efficiently.

29. Provision for moral development is very good. The school places high value on respect for others. In school day-to-day life, this is shown both by adults and pupils who set a good example by the way they treat the people they encounter, both in lessons and at other times. For example, a pupil commented about bullying, that rather than joining in any bullying behaviour, other pupils will stop it happening. Of particular significance for pupils' development is the way in which the school's arrangements for PNI pupils ensure that they are fully integrated into school life. These arrangements support pupils' understanding of individual rights and responsibilities in a profound way.

30. During the inspection, the lower school council discussed sanctions for breaches of the rules about chewing gum and uniform, and the question of warnings being written by teachers in pupil planners. Being able to take part in such debate over issues in the community successfully encourages pupils to see an argument from both sides and to come to a view about the fairness of rules and the application of sanctions. Work in drama encourages pupils to consider moral and ethical issues and issues such as parent-child relationships. Personal relationships are discussed in personal and social education, for example, Year 7 pupils thought about what makes a good friend. In geography and history, pupils are helped to consider a variety of viewpoints, for example, when discussing coastal planning or the divine right of kings.

31. The school's provision for cultural development is very good. There are rich opportunities for engagement with the arts. Strong teaching in art and design and drama enables pupils to consider contemporary issues thoughtfully. There is stimulating display of pupils' art-work round the school. In English, a wide variety of literature is read and discussed in some depth. There are very good opportunities for a range of music groups to play and sing in shows and concerts. During the inspection, GCSE and A-level students confidently presented a lunchtime concert to an attentive audience of pupils and staff.

Parents think highly of the school and receive very good information

32. Parents hold the school in high regard. This is reflected in the questionnaire returns. The 79 parents attending the parents' meeting consider the school to be a caring community in which problems are dealt with in a very caring way and usually promptly. Their children love coming to school and know how they are getting on. They find the staff very approachable and appreciate that they are consulted and their comments listened to. They feel that all children's successes, academic and personal, are celebrated by the school.

33. A very high quality of information is provided for parents. The prospectus is exceptionally well presented and reflects the school's valuing of its partnership with parents. It gives very full information about standards. Of a similarly high quality is the governors' annual report to parents, although a small number of required contents are not included. *Beaumont Life*, the school newsletter, is a splendid publication that powerfully reflects the school's partnership values. It conveys a positive sense of community life and an ethos of enjoyment, satisfaction and determination. It is very informative, comprehensive, and a stimulating read.

34. Reports are a very effective means of communicating with parents about their children's progress, attainment and personal development. Parents were consulted about what they wanted to know about their child's progress. The reports are clear about progress, clear about where improvements need to be made, and many contain clear targets for improvement. There is good pupil self-assessment in the reports throughout the school. Parents' involvement is reflected in their many positive, constructive, and often lengthy written comments.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The monitoring of teaching and departmental management lacks sharp focus and rigour

35. There is some weakness in the reviews of departments although the overall procedures are very good. In general, the written evaluations of these reviews are less than helpful, both for the department concerned and for the school. Some fail to identify clearly the strengths and weaknesses in provision. Reporting can be rather bland and, in adopting a very positive and appreciative approach, can give the impression that there are no aspects of the work that could be or that need to be developed. Because a common format is not used for reporting, senior staff and governors cannot gain a clear understanding of comparative strengths and weaknesses across the school. This limits improvement.

36. Departmental reviews are not a substitute for regular and systematic checking of the quality of education, particularly teaching. There is varied monitoring practice across departments. This matters because it inhibits a whole-school view being established of where, and to what extent attention to specific areas is needed. For example, in the least successful lessons seen, the learning targets were not made clear to pupils although it was made clear what activities would be carried out. This has the effect of reducing the sharpness of teachers' contributions and limits pupils' own understanding of how well they are doing. It can limit progress. In those lessons where it was done well, pupils' learning profited substantially. There is no evidence of any checks on the quality of lesson assessment and marking. While pupils and parents spoke appreciatively of the helpfulness of marking, some pupils commented that marks and grades mean different things in different departments. Two parents commented that there were long gaps in the marking last year. The school needs to be confident, from direct evidence through checking pupils' books, that satisfactory marking standards are being consistently achieved across the school; and that the marking helps pupils to gain a clear understanding of how well they are doing and where they need to improve.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

37. In order to ensure that standards are as high as they should be the following key issue should be included in the governors' post-inspection action plan. The action taken to bring about improvement should be reported to parents in the governors' annual report.

- ◆ Strengthen substantially current arrangements for monitoring the school's work, particularly the quality of teaching and departmental management through giving attention to:
 - determining the specific aspects of the school's work which should be systematically monitored;
 - clarifying the specific monitoring responsibilities of senior staff and of staff with management responsibilities for subjects, special educational needs and pastoral provision;
 - implementing an annual monitoring programme for all departments;
 - sharpening further the link line-management procedure to take full account of the monitoring programme;
 - sharpening further the use of the analysis of results to identify areas needing attention in teaching and the curriculum across subjects;
 - ensuring that all teachers benefit from the rigorous evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses in their teaching;
 - ensuring that all heads of department benefit from the rigorous evaluation of strengths and weaknesses in departmental management;
 - establishing common approaches, criteria and reporting frameworks for department reviews, whole-school monitoring and monitoring within departments, so that a clear picture of strengths and weaknesses across the school can be gained;
 - ensuring that both the staff and the governing body are fully informed about the strengths and weaknesses identified through the monitoring programme.
(Paragraphs 10, 35-36)

THE PROVISION FOR STUDENTS IN THE SIXTH FORM

38. This is an additional feature specified for the inspection. It is a school strength and as such is reported in the section 'What the school does well', paragraphs 17-25.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12	31	30	23	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	852	245
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	37	0

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	13	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	122	2

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	43

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	82	82	164

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	68	73	65
	Girls	78	71	66
	Total	146	144	131
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	89 (83)	88 (86)	80 (81)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	34 (49)	66 (69)	51 (59)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	67	71	69
	Girls	80	70	73
	Total	147	141	142
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	90 (89)	86 (87)	87 (92)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	49 (67)	60 (57)	52 (64)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

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
	1999	92	69	161

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	74	87	89
	Girls	58	69	69
	Total	132	158	158
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	82 (73)	97 (98)	98 (98)
	National	46.6 (45)	90.9 (90)	95.8 (95)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score	School	54 (50)

per pupil	National	38.0 (36.8)
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	45	41	86

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	20.4	20.0	20.3 (18.0)	3.2	5.5	4.8 (4.0)
National	17.7	18.1	17.9 (17.6)	2.7	2.8	2.8 (2.8)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	19	57.9
	National		72.9

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	7
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	9
Pakistani	9
Bangladeshi	10
Chinese	11
White	811
Any other minority ethnic group	41

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	1	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	2	0
Bangladeshi	1	0
Chinese	0	0
White	40	1
Other minority ethnic groups	2	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 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	64.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	15.9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	517

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.5
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	26.4
Key Stage 4	21.1

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	2 664 037
Total expenditure	2 706 223
Expenditure per pupil	2 623
Balance brought forward from previous year	73 295
Balance carried forward to next year	31 109

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1097
Number of questionnaires returned	503

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	46	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	45	49	1	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	57	2	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	57	11	2	3
The teaching is good.	45	50	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	45	12	0	10
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	36	4	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	30	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	34	50	8	1	7
The school is well led and managed.	55	39	2	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	45	3	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	40	7	1	11