

INSPECTION REPORT

BUSHLOE HIGH SCHOOL

Station Road, Wigston Magna

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120309

Headteacher: Brian Myatt

Reporting inspector: Deborah Zachary
Rgl's OIN 2940

Dates of inspection: 20th – 23rd November 2000

Inspection number: 223961

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed secondary

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 10 to 14

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Station Road
Wigston Magna
Leicestershire

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Dennis Clarke

Date of previous inspection: 27th March 1995

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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	10
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	15
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	18
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	19

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bushloe High School caters for pupils aged 10 – 14. It is much bigger than similar schools, with 817 pupils on roll. There are roughly equal numbers of boys and girls, and about 12 per cent of the pupils are from ethnic minorities. Eighty pupils speak English as an additional language, but almost all of these speak English fluently and do not need extra support. The range of attainment of pupils who enter the school is average and there are an average number of pupils who have Statements of Special Educational Need. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, but overall the children come from an average range of socio-economic backgrounds.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Bushloe High is a good school. The pupils attend it for four years and in that time improve the equivalent of an extra year in English, mathematics and science. They do particularly well in mathematics. They also do well in almost all other subjects. The very good leadership and management ensure not only that good standards of teaching are maintained, but also that pupils are looked after well. The school costs a little more than average, but given the high results provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Very strong leadership and management mean that the school is constantly striving to improve what it does for its pupils.
- The pupils are taught well, with a significant proportion of very good teaching; as a result they expect to enjoy their lessons and they make good progress.
- Standards in mathematics are well above average and pupils make very good progress; this is not only because of the very good teaching but also because of the well planned scheme of work and effective setting arrangements.
- The strong emphasis on valuing and supporting every pupil results in very good behaviour and responsive pupils.
- Pupils' whole school experience is enriched by the quality of their music education and the extra curricular performing arts.

What could be improved

- Standards in religious education are not high enough; they are below what is expected for this age.
- The most able pupils show how well they can do in mathematics, but are not being challenged as well in other subjects.
- The school does not provide well enough for pupils' spiritual development.

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 March 1995. Since then it has made a satisfactory improvement overall. Standards in the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests in the core subjects have remained well above average since 1996, keeping pace with national trends. The school is on course to meet its 2001 targets for Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test results. Teaching has improved significantly. Although the school's improvement is satisfactory overall, this masks a variable response to the different key issues. Strengths have been maintained and satisfactory improvements have been made to pupils' learning skills. Good improvements have been made to assessment procedures, management roles, and strategic planning. However, insufficient improvement has been made on spiritual development and collective worship. The action plan drawn up following the previous inspection was sound, but, after initial activity, there was a loss of momentum. There has been significant progress during the last year on all key issues except the last. There has also been good progress in the way the school ensures cost effectiveness and best value.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 14 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
End of Key Stage 3 tests	A	A	A	A

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

- Key Stage 3 results have remained well above average in English, mathematics and science since 1996, keeping pace with national trends. In comparison to similar schools, the mathematics results are in the top five per cent nationally. Pupils move on the equivalent of 4 terms in this subject every three term year.
- Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test results appear weaker, but are just as strong when standards are compared to the attainment on entry. Although the pupils only achieved average results in 2000, a comparison of these results against the Year 5 tests taken in 1999 in the primary schools shows this is a very good achievement. On average the pupils had again moved on about 4 terms in their English and mathematics between the summer term of their Year 5 and the following May in Year 6. The school is on course to meet its year 2001 targets for Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test results.
- The work seen was above average overall by the end of Year 9. Standards of literacy and numeracy are well above average by the time pupils leave the school. Standards in science are above average. This is slightly lower than the tests show because investigation skills are not as good as factual knowledge and understanding. Standards in other subjects are all above average except for religious education. Standards here are below what is expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Achievement is poor in this subject.
- Most pupils at Bushloe achieve well; they achieve very well in mathematics. The highest attaining pupils have satisfactory achievement overall, but do not do as well in other subjects as they do in mathematics. In mathematics, for example, far more pupils achieve National Curriculum test results at level seven or higher than in English and science.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very positive. Pupils come to lessons expecting to enjoy their learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good behaviour, especially in lessons. No permanent exclusions, and the fixed period exclusions are broadly average.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils take responsibility well and show respect for others' feelings. Their ability to reflect on what they learn and to take the initiative in learning is satisfactory.
Attendance	Well above average

- One of the reasons reflection skills and initiative are not as strong is that opportunities are restricted. This lack of opportunity also limits the achievements of the most able and restricts spiritual development.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 10-11 years	aged 11-14 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 was satisfactory or better in 100 per cent of the lessons seen during the inspection. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. It was good or very good in 63 per cent and very good in 31 per cent. Although a short inspection provides a smaller sample, this is still a very good improvement on the last inspection, when 10 per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory and 43 per cent good or very good. The school meets the needs of most of its pupils well, but the most able are not always fully challenged.
- Learning is also good in both key stages. Pupils move on quickly in their knowledge and understanding because teachers are very clear about what their learning objectives are in lessons. They plan a well thought out sequence of activities to get learning points across. The very good attitudes the pupils bring mean that they try hard and keep up a good pace.
- On a short inspection the time for lesson observations is short, so they may not fully cover a subject, and subject judgements are based on small samples. However, judgements on teaching based on lessons are supplemented by analysis of pupils' work. Numeracy teaching is very good, with challenging activities finely tuned so that pupils' exact needs are met. Literacy teaching and science teaching are both satisfactory overall, but lessons ranged from satisfactory to very good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good in Key Stage 2: pupils have the opportunity to start French a year earlier than normally. Satisfactory in Key Stage 3.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good – support staff well used and pupils carefully monitored.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Those who need extra help identified appropriately; well-targeted individual support provided where needed.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Very good provision for social development, good provision for moral and cultural development. Unsatisfactory provision for spiritual development. Statutory requirement for collective worship not met.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Pupils are valued, and staff use praise well to keep their self esteem high. All staff made aware of individual pupils who may need extra support. Grateful parents provided numerous examples.

- Although religious education is taught for a shorter time than in many schools, this is not the main reason for the weakness in standards. It is more to do with the emphasis in the school's scheme of work. This focuses too much on factual knowledge, at the expense of pupils' personal response in exploring deeper meanings.
- Pupils' opportunities for developing their learning skills have been improved by the recent developments in information and communication technology. The good accommodation and careful planning have enabled full coverage of all aspects of the subject.

- Pupils' social and cultural development is very well supported through the example set by teachers and the opportunities for extra curricular activities. However, pupils are seldom asked to reflect on their learning or encouraged to see the spiritual side of the work they are studying. Assemblies focus on the moral or social aspects of a theme rather than the spiritual in its widest sense.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Headteacher in post just over a year; excellent leadership thus far. Other key staff - assistant heads, heads of department and heads of year - show good, and in some cases very good, leadership and management overall.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Fulfil responsibilities well, apart from ensuring the requirement for collective worship. Good arrangements for monitoring and supporting the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good evaluation of school's performance using financial and examination data. Good monitoring of curriculum and teaching. These developments are recent so too early to see effects of actions taken.
The strategic use of resources	Funding used appropriately. Expenditure well planned from year to year with adequate longer term view.

- The school applies the principles of best value well – it compares itself with similar schools both financially and in terms of results. It ensures purchasing is cost-effective. It has also carried out surveys to review the extent to which pupils and parents are satisfied.
- The school's current process of review and development has been established by the headteacher since his arrival. It ensures that subject needs are identified and concerns of staff heard and dealt with sensitively. National data are studied and are well used to inform the process. Improvements are then taken forward at a sharp but realistic pace. This demonstrates the headteacher's excellent leadership.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school expects their children to work hard and do their best. • It helps their children to be mature, and they behave well. • Their children like school. • Teaching is good and their children make good progress. • The school is well led and approachable 	<p>Fewer than one per cent of parents had strong feelings about improvements being needed. Some points for improvement were identified at the parents' evening and in comments on questionnaires. However, these were individual rather than echoed by significant numbers.</p>

The inspection team agreed with these positive features highlighted by parents. The biggest area of weakness was identified on questionnaires as homework, but comments showed some parents wanted more and some less. The inspection team are satisfied that the homework is the appropriate amount.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Very strong leadership and management mean that the school is constantly striving to improve what it does for its pupils.

1. The headteacher took up his post fifteen months ago. It is too early to judge the lasting impact of developments since his arrival; however, at this stage his leadership is excellent. At the time of his arrival National Curriculum results were well above average and the challenge was to maintain these high standards whilst making any changes needed. This meant involving staff in identifying the ways the school needed to move on and ensuring the pace of change was both fast enough but realistic. He has achieved these things through a rigorous programme of review and development with a sharp focus on teaching and learning.
2. The school development plan was drawn up with the active involvement of both staff and governors. It draws on departmental priorities but roots these in analyses of data and resources. The overall plan then gives shape to the detail of the departmental plans, so that the smaller scale tasks at departmental level feed into the whole school priorities. Heads of department and the assistant headteachers who line manage them have key roles in monitoring and ensuring the progress of these plans. Set agenda are agreed for discussions during line management meetings, and this ensures that the monitoring takes place. Information is then effectively fed back to other assistant heads and the headteacher at senior management discussions. The whole approach empowers both assistant heads and heads of department to make a strong contribution to the leadership and management of the school.
3. Heads of year are very well informed about pupils and their families, and they demonstrate drive and enthusiasm in discussing their work. The weekly staff meeting provides an important forum at which they and the special educational needs co-ordinator exchange necessary information about pupils with all teaching staff, succinctly and sensitively. The established referral system and the pupil profiles, together with pupil reports, provide the basic material for analysis and monitoring of progress by heads of year; any deterioration of pupils' performance is effectively picked up. Assistant heads of year are a new venture at Bushloe. They are currently updating the 'HELP' programme which covers personal, health and social education, including citizenship. As the content is recent, it has not yet been formally evaluated. The work of tutors is also monitored informally, rather than in a structured way, and this is an area which heads of year are aware needs development.
4. One of the key improvements made in the school has been in the area of information and communication technology. Imaginatively refurbished and improved accommodation and new machines give the visitor a feeling of entering an up to date working environment. Computers are scattered around the departments so that casual use is possible, but there are also now three suites in which whole classes can work. One of these can be booked by other subject departments, and the other two are used for specific lessons in information and communication technology. This ensures that the demands of subject information and communication technology do not make it harder for information and communication technology to be used across the curriculum. All strands of information and communication technology are covered. This is evident in plans, and a range of coverage was also seen in the lesson observed. Pupils were developing their ideas about the use of a spreadsheet formula, testing out how it worked with different variables. Some also took it further, thinking about how the tool might be used in their own future work and the world outside. They not only discussed their work and helped each other, but also, at the start of the lesson, briefly checked and sent emails to contacts inside and outside the school.
5. The governing body and the Chair of Governors make a good contribution to the school's success. A majority of the governors have joined since the last inspection and the Chair was elected at about the same time as the headteacher was appointed. Despite this, most – though

not all - of those interviewed had a sharp grasp of standards, and of strengths and weaknesses in the school. The Chair is very aware of the needs of fellow governors, reflecting well during the inspection on what action the inspection itself was highlighting for him. The system of link governors attached to curriculum areas provides a useful way in which the governing body as a whole becomes informed about the needs and achievements of the school. This ensures that they are in a strong position to set strategy and work with the headteacher. The governors have a particularly strong grasp of the immediate financial issues facing the school, as well as those relating to standards. They have planned the use of their budget carefully; money carried forward, for example, is being used to cushion funding changes as the school moves from grant maintained to foundation status. They have given less attention as yet to longer term strategy - in terms of what they would want as an 'ideal' use of funds or management structure. However, the school applies the principles of best value well – it compares itself with similar schools both financially and in terms of results. It ensures purchasing is cost-effective. It has also carried out surveys to review the extent to which pupils and parents are satisfied, and both governors and staff are aware of their views.

6. One of the strengths of the leadership of the school is that the pace of change is being well judged. When numerous developments are identified there is always a danger that staff suffer an overload of targets and initiatives. The headteacher has developed an extensive knowledge of his staff and their capabilities; he has at times made a correct decision to accept a slower rate of change in order that, longer term, the outcomes for pupils are improved. There are still, for example, inconsistencies in the allocated responsibilities in relation to allowance points in the pay structure at middle management level. This has rightly been identified as a point for future rationalisation, but too quick a change could easily have undermined the whole school development planning process. Given the other necessary priorities and achievements of the last year, the decision to take the pupils' spiritual development and collective worship no further at that stage was justifiable. It was identified immediately to the inspection team as an area in which action had not yet been taken, and the weakness is not incompatible with the judgement of very strong leadership and management that the inspection team are making. However, there was a period between the writing of the action plan from the last inspection and the arrival of new governors and headteacher when the identified actions concerning collective worship were not carried through. Governors and the senior managers still at the school are aware that this lack of review was not well handled.

The pupils are taught well, with a significant proportion of very good teaching; as a result they expect to enjoy their lessons and they make good progress.

7. Teaching was good or very good in nearly two thirds of the lessons seen and very good in nearly one third. Learning is also good in both key stages. The fruits of this good learning are demonstrated in the high standards achieved in almost all subjects at the end of Year 9. Results of National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science are well above average. Teacher assessments in the other foundation subjects demonstrate similar standards. The pupils themselves contribute to their success. The very good attitudes they bring to lessons mean that they try hard and keep up a good pace. However, one of the reasons the pupils bring good attitudes to lessons is that they do expect to enjoy their learning.
8. The high levels of enjoyment result both from good challenge and from lively delivery. For example, in a very good Year 6 literacy lesson on the characteristics of the non-fiction genre, the teacher's animated style stimulated the pupils to produce good ideas. Similarly, in a middle ability Year 9 science lesson about displacement reactions, the teacher's lively interchanges with pupils drew the best from them. They really wanted to impress him despite the difficulty of the subject, and very good progress resulted. In the best lessons, there is usually a lively delivery, but the key strength is usually that the level of the subject matter is finely judged to meet the needs of all the pupils present. This was frequently the case in mathematics, but there were examples in a variety of curriculum areas.
9. Pupils move on quickly in their knowledge and understanding because teachers are very clear about what their learning objectives are in lessons. In a very good Year 9 lesson in design and

technology, a clear recap and demonstration gave the lesson a crisp start. Pupils knew exactly what their brief was, and so they were enabled to proceed at a good pace, whilst making their own decisions. They achieved high standards.

10. Teachers complement these clear objectives by planning a well thought out sequence of activities to get learning points across. In a French revision lesson the teacher ensured that what might have been a chore for a group of lower ability Year 8 pupils was instead valuable and interesting. She achieved this through a good pace and a variety of well chosen tasks which demanded that pupils use all their four skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening in the language. They responded with very good concentration and involvement.
11. Teaching was sound or better in all the lessons seen during the inspection. Even where there were some weaknesses, the basic teaching skills were in place so pupils made satisfactory progress. In general in these satisfactory lessons the pupils' learning of new knowledge was stronger than their development of new understanding or their development of new learning skills. This was because questioning and activities were focussed on factual learning targets, but as such the lessons were effectively delivered. The challenge to the school now is to maintain its strengths in the delivery of knowledge, and build on the very strong teaching that exists in so many areas. The points for improvement identified in this report do involve refining aspects of teaching, such as challenge to the most able or additional open-ended questioning. However, the teaching is already a strength of the school.

Standards in mathematics are well above average and pupils make very good progress; this is not only because of the very good teaching but also because of the well planned scheme of work and effective setting arrangements.

12. Key Stage 3 results have remained well above average in mathematics since 1996, keeping pace with national trends. When the school is compared to similar schools the 2000 mathematics results are in the top five per cent nationally. Although the Key Stage 2 pupils only just achieved average results in 2000, a comparison of these results against the Year 5 tests taken in 1999 in the primary schools by the same pupils shows this is a very good achievement. On average the pupils had moved on about four terms in their mathematics between their Year 5 assessments in the summer before entering Bushloe and taking the Year 6 tests the following May. An analysis of performance shows that this progress is maintained: pupils move on the equivalent of four terms every three term year.
13. The teaching in mathematics is very good overall. Teachers are well supported by a carefully thought out scheme of work, well adapted to the setting arrangements that are in place. Pupils are put into teaching groups according to their mathematics attainment throughout their years at Bushloe. This setting means that individual teachers have a limited range of abilities within any one mathematics class. Nevertheless there is an expectation that teachers will vary the work in the class even for that small range of abilities. During the inspection there were several occasions when teachers set different homeworks, or gave different tasks to different pupils, based on observations of their understanding in the previous lesson. In a Year 6 lowest ability lesson on 'time', an additional teacher took a small group outside to work on quarter hours. This group had been identified as needing this help the lesson before. The rest worked on slightly more complex ideas such as 'twenty past' or 'twenty to' the hour. Teachers are supported in their choice of work for their group by a scheme of work that shows clearly what the range of standards in the year group might be and what the progression of understanding should be from each point. The pupils' work and comments also show that extension group arrangements are effective.
14. The department is ably led by two teachers, who share the role of head of department. They work together closely and both have a strong understanding of the subject. They have successfully implemented the numeracy hour in Year 6, and have echoed many features successfully through the other year groups – for example the emphasis on whole class teaching and mental calculation. In Year 7, for example, a very good lesson on data handling

commenced with mental number work delivered at a good pace. Pupils relished the challenge and competitive nature of this. At the same time they learnt a great deal from the teacher's emphasis on explaining calculations. The discussion helpfully included debate about how calculators decide what to do first in a calculation with several mathematical operations in it. This focus on methods also underpinned the very good teaching in a Year 8 high ability group. The pupils' willingness to experiment was more evident in their individual work than in the whole class session. However, they responded well to the teacher's probing questions as she moved around.

The strong emphasis on valuing and supporting every pupil results in very good behaviour and responsive pupils.

15. When pupils enter Bushloe, the school is very careful to give them a sensitive introduction. Formal liaison arrangements take place before the pupils arrive, with visits by the current Head of year 7 (normally Head of year 6) to the feeder primaries. A large number of pupils also meet individually with their future head of year before they arrive – this year 94 per cent. On their first day they spend most of the time with their form tutor, getting to know them. The provision of a Year 6 base is effective, giving security and forming a bridge between primary and secondary organisation. The security it engenders allows pupils to make a good start to their Year 6 learning.
16. As pupils make progress through the school the caring approach continues. Pupils are supported unobtrusively, but in such a way that their academic progress is maintained. Heads of year know their charges very well, and effectively transmit this knowledge to subject teachers. Although the school has over 800 pupils, it has the feel of a smaller institution, with pupils and staff greeting each other by name in the corridor. Pupils are valued, and staff keep pupils' self esteem high by good use of praise in lessons. Parents both wrote to the inspection team and commented at the parents meeting on specific instances where their children had needed unusual and timely help, and had received it unstintingly.
17. Pupils are also supported by good discipline and challenging work in most lessons. Often overt discipline is not needed because the lesson structure and content are well managed. The discipline structures of the school operate smoothly and staff are consistent in their expectations. As a result pupils behave very well. This ensures that they concentrate on their learning in lessons and it contributes to their good progress. Even in the few parts of the school where the accommodation is unsatisfactory, the behaviour of the pupils (and the organisation of the staff) ensures learning takes place. In the mobile science laboratory, where walls, floor and ceiling are old and in places cracked, and where all work involving water or gas must take place at the sides of the room, Year 9 pupils behaved immaculately. Safety practices were at all times rigorously observed, and concentration was good. Similarly, in the changing rooms which are cramped for the numbers of pupils needing them, pupils reacted sensibly, wasting no time.
18. Relationships between the pupils themselves and between pupils and staff are very good. Staff show that they respect and value the pupils and this gives the pupils models to emulate. As a result the pupils respond well to what teachers ask them to do. In lessons, some carefully pitched questioning by teachers often gives pupils the confidence to respond. The teachers know their pupils' capabilities and are careful to involve lower ability pupils in mixed ability lessons by pitching questions at a level they can manage. The result is a raising of self esteem. Pupils throughout the school are very polite and helpful to visitors, and show a pride in what they are doing, at whatever level.

Pupils' whole school experience is enriched by the quality of their music education and the extra curricular performing arts.

19. Very good music teaching was seen during the inspection. The practice of setting different targets for some pupils was particularly effective in that it helped them to develop self discipline and independence. The style of the teaching was challenging but friendly, and interventions were well judged. Questioning pushed the pupils to think, for example 'How did the student know how Mozart wanted the piece to sound?' (to a Year 7 class about a piece completed after his death). Unplanned interventions were also most effective, based on very strong subject knowledge and really teaching pupils about the nature of the subject. In the same Year 7 lesson, for example, when two pupils performed and waited for each other if necessary rather than ploughing on, the teacher drew the class's attention to them saying 'That is musicianship'. As a result the pupils learnt very well, developing significant new knowledge and skills. A middle ability group, they achieved standards above what is expected. An example of very good drama teaching was also seen during the inspection, and the drama teaching seen was never less than good. Very effective attention to drama skills and well judged interventions were strong features of this subject area.

20. The pupils' music education is enhanced by the strong extra curricular provision that is offered every lunchtime and most nights after school. Clubs include orchestra, wind band, 3 choirs and a flute choir, and varied performances are organised each year. There are also two drama clubs for two terms of the year. Both music and drama departments are led by dedicated and dynamic heads of department. They work together, particularly, at this time of year, to put on the annual production. The school's commitment to the importance of the performing arts is exemplified by the effort and commitment put into this. At a rehearsal about 200 pupils took on a high level of responsibility for involvement in many different aspects. The sheer variety of their activities – taking notes, setting the stage, producing programmes, posters, costumes, running the lights as well as acting and playing - was exceptional. Driven by great energy and commitment by the staff involved, there was real learning taking place on all fronts, but, very importantly, also great enjoyment. The annual production also provides a notable opportunity for the singular talents of the senior management team to be demonstrated! Video evidence of past productions reveals a breadth of musical opportunities and the results of careful rehearsal. The orchestra consists of many confident performers and the flute choir demonstrate good standards. Some flautists are able to play quite rapid parts with good articulation. Pupils perform and act with confidence and conviction.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in religious education are not high enough; they are below what is expected for this age.

21. At the time of the inspection the head of religious education was absent and had not been in school for several weeks. She carried out the bulk of the subject teaching and her classes had been covered by a succession of temporary staff. This circumstance limited the range of evidence that the inspection team could gather in the subject. The judgements made are primarily based on the pupils' work available and the scheme of work, together with the observation of standards achieved in one Year 9 lesson during an assessment task. A Year 7 lesson also provided the opportunity for a single judgement of teaching, which was satisfactory.
22. Pupils learn the groundwork of facts about Christianity and other religions during their religious education lessons. In the Year 7 lesson, for example, they learnt of the use of prayer mats and the calling of Muslims to prayer. The lesson was the first on the Mosque as a place of worship, and as such definitions of terms and new vocabulary and facts were appropriate content. However, the study of work shows that there is not enough consistent progress beyond this factual level. Some tasks, including colouring in and wordsearch grids, fill time up with minimal progress in learning. Too much of the work involves completion of worksheets by filling in one word gaps, and has no demand for explanation or reflection. Year 8 work shows the names of Hindu gods have been studied, but there is no reflection on the way the tradition is regarded by believers and others today. A more positive example in Year 8, however, is the work on 'events that changed my life'.
23. The planning for the subject does not take sufficient account of the levels of reflection, interpretation and understanding of significance demanded by the Locally Agreed Syllabus attainment statements for Key Stage 3. The Agreed Syllabus attainment statement for Key Stage 2, for example, from work about how religious beliefs and values affect ways of living, states 'describe the religious origins and/or meanings of special food, clothing, markings and symbols and explain the lack of emphasis upon these features in some religions'. The equivalent for Key Stage 3 is 'appreciate the significance for believers of motivation and intention in observing rules for living'. This demands a leap in empathy that is unlikely to be achieved without specific targeted opportunities, identified through the scheme of work.
24. Religious education currently receives less curriculum time than is typical for Key Stages 2 and 3. However, the shorter time is not at the moment an important factor restricting standards. Additional time would have little impact unless teachers' expectations of pupils were raised. The school is currently updating its programme of personal development, health education and citizenship (HELP), and this is approaching the evaluation stage. One of the areas that could usefully be examined as part of this evaluation is the overlap between 'HELP' and other subjects. For example, the health education element currently repeats some factual elements covered in the Key Stage 2 and 3 science National Curriculum. There may equally be scope for the delivery of some of the religious education syllabus to be delivered through HELP, as an alternative to raising the time allocation. The strand on developing a more reflective and caring approach to life is a possible example.

The most able pupils show how well they can do in mathematics, but are not being challenged as well in other subjects.

25. Over the last three years the most able pupils have performed significantly better in mathematics National Curriculum assessment tests than in English or science. In 1998, 1999 and 2000 the proportions of Year 9 reaching level 7 or higher in mathematics were, respectively, 24 per cent, 26 per cent and 34 per cent. In English the corresponding figures were 2 per cent, 7 per cent and 6 per cent, whilst in science they were 7 per cent, 12 per cent and 9 per cent. It is true that nationally more pupils reach these levels in mathematics than in science and English, but, allowing for this, the figures still show that the pupils do better in mathematics. In mathematics in 2000, the percentage reaching level 7 or higher at Bushloe was 15 percentage

points above the mathematics national results. In English the proportion was one percentage point below the national, and in science two percentage points above.

26. In other subjects, teachers assess the level pupils have reached at the end of Year 9. There are national figures to use to make comparisons. In 2000, the data show that the majority of pupils are doing well. Subject results are well above average for the numbers of pupils achieving what is expected for their age (level 5 plus in history, geography, design and technology and information technology, level 4 plus in French, and 'A' or 'B' in art, music and physical education. Most subjects do well in terms of numbers of pupils achieving higher than expected (level 6 represents this in most subject areas). However, there are not enough pupils reaching the highest levels – level 7 in history, geography, design and technology and information and communication technology, and level 6 in French, and 'A' in art, music and physical education. The subjects that do best at these highest levels are French and design and technology, where percentages reaching these standards are above the national average. However, even in these subjects, results are not as good as those in mathematics.
27. Evidence seen during the inspection supported the picture shown by the above results. The work of the most able Year 9 pupils shows that in mathematics they are constantly challenged in the level of the work set. Much of it, including work on using and applying mathematics, is at level 8. In science, however, opportunities to stretch the most able are sometimes missed. Written work on short and long sight records the type of lens to use but not why, for example. Questions about colour focus on the simpler primary colours rather than the secondary. This, though reasonably challenging for an above average pupil, is not enough for the most able. The same issue was seen in a science lesson for the most able Year 9 pupils. Though teaching was satisfactory overall, opportunities for real extension and challenge for the most able were again missed. Standards of scientific enquiry are significantly lower than standards of factual knowledge and understanding. The prompt sheet in use effectively limits attainment to level 6, because it is over prescriptive.
28. In English, an analysis of work showed that more pupils could be developing critical responses to literature at a higher level. They could be presenting their ideas in extended discussion and debate, and writing with confidence in a range of styles. They should be using more sophisticated vocabulary and showing a greater fluency in their use of linguistic effects. It is this level of sophistication and range and depth of ideas for larger numbers of pupils that needs greater development and support at departmental level. The most able pupils interviewed stated that they often found Year 9 work easier than Year 8.
29. The success of the mathematics department has been described earlier in the report. Mathematics teaching is very challenging, and is finely tuned to the pupils' needs. Setting arrangements help, but the scheme of work is also very explicit about what needs to be done to reach level 8 standards. Neither the English nor the science schemes of work give this detailed help to teachers who deal with the most able. This means that there is not enough consistency of high expectations among teachers, and challenge to the most able depends on the quality of individual teaching. In science, for example, a Year 8 lesson on moments did provide sufficient challenge, largely because of the teacher's own initiative in the pace of the lesson. She moved the pupils very quickly through the initial lower level activity onto applying the ideas they had learned. The challenge now to the English and science departments is to take on their praiseworthy achievements in terms of numbers achieving level 6 standards into a real focussed drive for the most able. Both heads of departments are committed and knowledgeable subject specialists who have the capability and drive to take this forward.
30. A short inspection does not give sufficient time for a thorough analysis across all the subjects. A full analysis of the schemes of work in all subjects, for example, was not practical. However, lessons were seen in each curriculum area, and high ability pupils were interviewed both formally and informally. The evidence was that there are pockets of challenging work in a variety of subject areas, but that challenge for the most able is not sufficiently consistent. Some good work has been carried out in history, for example, in teaching essay structure, which enables the most able to write with confidence and conviction in the work seen. The pupils themselves

listed a variety of subjects in which they felt they were not stretched, but were also able to give examples of occasions on which extension activities had been demanding. These included some homework in a variety of subjects, and lessons in French and design and technology. They were rightly critical of over directed work such as worksheets in which they have to fill in single word gaps, and questions which demand single word answers. Over-use of this sort of questioning was observed by inspectors in lessons across the school. Teachers use it effectively to establish factual knowledge, but do not all move on to questions that demand reflection or enquiry, or which demand that pupils make links between cause and effect.

31. A senior member of staff has the responsibility for oversight of able and talented pupils' learning. A start has been made in identifying pupils of high ability in Year 8, and the headteacher and senior management team are well aware of the differences in National Curriculum assessment results and their implications. The responsibility holder is aware of the need to encourage heads of department to cater for the most able. However, there are no quantifiable targets for this area of the school's work, nor formally defined expectations. There is no consistent identification and monitoring of this group of pupils. There is as yet insufficient whole school management of this area of work.

The school does not provide well enough for pupils' spiritual development.

32. The school does not have a planned approach to pupils' spiritual development and does not sufficiently value this aspect of their education. There is no daily act of collective worship, and so statutory requirements are not met. A significant number of staff and governors associate spiritual development almost exclusively with religious education and collective worship. Few have a wider view of what spiritual development means and how it can be promoted across the curriculum. There are isolated examples of positive work, but it is not planned in a coherent way. Subject schemes of work do not routinely identify opportunities for discussion of spiritual aspects, nor the way the subject might contribute through the nature of what is being studied.
33. Assemblies develop pupils' social and moral awareness consistently, but approaches to the spiritual vary too much. In one assembly pupils were encouraged to reflect about feeling at peace and there was an appropriate spiritual dimension. For example, the point was made that looking at the Earth from outer space shows a beautiful planet, and it is only when one gets closer that one sees the ravages of war. In another assembly, which had an interesting and effectively delivered social theme concerning noise, opportunities were missed for the spiritual. In all assemblies observed the abrupt end and lack of music, for example, limited possible reflection. Neither assemblies nor tutor time meet the collective worship requirement.
34. There are some examples of pupils being encouraged to reflect in Year 9 history work. One task concerned the lives of the rich, middle class or poor in the nineteenth century. One pupil, for example, wrote that "It is not always good to be rich because the children don't get to see their parents very often". This comment shows that the group had been encouraged to look beyond the obvious (beyond the idea that more money meant more comfort) and to consider deeper values. Another example of a good reflective outcome appears in a Year 9 pupil's comments on her work shadowing – she wrote about how lucky she was after visiting a school for children with cerebral palsy.
35. Standards in religious education are too low and the balance of coverage too skewed in the direction of factual knowledge. This means that the subject does not make the contribution it should. In other subjects, too many opportunities to reflect on meanings or the nature of experience are missed. During the inspection few questions encouraged reflection as opposed to factual knowledge. This does not mean that teaching was unsatisfactory, but over a period of time, if the inspection evidence is typical, there will be little cultivation of spiritual awareness.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

36. The governors, headteacher and staff should carry out the following actions in order to raise standards and improve provision still further.

- 1) Raise standards in religious education by:
 - raising the challenge of the tasks given to pupils;
 - ensuring sufficient emphasis is given to the levels of reflection, interpretation and understanding of significance demanded by the agreed syllabus attainment statements for Key Stage 3;
 - improving guidance to teachers in the scheme of work;
 - examining alternative routes for delivery as part of the evaluation of the HELP programme; and
 - reviewing standards once these steps have been taken and deciding whether an increase in curriculum time is necessary

(Paragraphs 21-24)

- 2) Raise the achievements of the most able pupils by:
 - implementing a clear system of identification of the very able and the monitoring of their progress through the school;
 - ensuring that all subjects identify appropriate work for the most able in schemes of work;
 - ensuring that teachers challenge the most able fully in lessons, including the use of more open questions and individual investigation and enquiry work; and
 - improving their standards of investigation in science (attainment target one).

(Paragraphs 25-31)

- 3) Improve the provision the school makes for pupils' spiritual development by:
 - helping teachers and governors to gain further insight into the ways in which spiritual development can be supported, through specific professional development;
 - identifying areas in which every subject may contribute to that development, and planning specific opportunities through schemes of work; and
 - meeting the statutory requirement for daily collective worship*.

(Paragraphs 32-35)

* The school had identified this to the inspection team, though it is not a target of the current school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	35
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	31	32	37	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	Y6 – Y9
Number of pupils on the school's roll	817
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	67

Special educational needs	Y6 – Y9
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	17
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	107

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	80

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.4

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 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
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Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	89	109	198
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National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	77	68	84
	Girls	89	64	88
	Total	166	132	172
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (71)	67 (68)	87 (82)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	70	57	71
	Girls	84	56	81
	Total	154	113	152
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (61)	57 (57)	77 (67)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest 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	113	87	200

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	87	98	91
	Girls	81	80	68
	Total	168	178	159
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	85 (84)	89 (80)	79 (82)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	40 (51)	70 (61)	44 (34)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	87	98	85
	Girls	78	83	65
	Total	165	181	150
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	83 (73)	91 (83)	76 (75)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	57 (28)	62 (55)	40 (44)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	0
Indian	62
Pakistani	7
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	1
White	741
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	1	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	14	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: Y6 – Y9

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	41.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y6 – Y9

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	278

Deployment of teachers: Y6 – Y9

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76
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Average teaching group size: Y6 – Y9

Key Stage 2	24.7
Key Stage 3	26.8

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	1904432
Total expenditure	2011693
Expenditure per pupil	2506
Balance brought forward from previous year	151637
Balance carried forward to next year	44376

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	810
Number of questionnaires returned	258

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	47	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	47	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	45	1	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	55	12	1	1
The teaching is good.	46	51	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	55	10	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	38	2	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	71	28	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	31	60	6	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	48	47	1	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	47	2	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	48	10	0	9

Other issues raised by parents

Positive points raised by parents are covered by these questionnaire responses. Some additional concerns were raised, but these were individual rather than echoed by significant numbers.