

INSPECTION REPORT

LANGLEY PARK SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

Beckenham, Kent

LEA area: Bromley

Unique reference number: 101678

Headteacher: Miss J E Sage

Reporting inspector: Mrs S D Morgan
1355

Dates of inspection: 20th – 23rd November 2000

Inspection number: 223980

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Girls
School address:	Hawksbrook Lane South Eden Park Road Beckenham Kent
Postcode:	BR3 3BE
Telephone number:	020 8650 7207 / 8082
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G A Miles
Date of previous inspection:	February 1995

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REPORT CONTENTS Page

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT **5**

- 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**

Pupils achieve high standards in Years 7 to 11. In the sixth form standards are above average.

A high proportion of very good or excellent teaching enables pupils to make rapid progress.

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

The school provides a very caring environment and pupils are given excellent educational and personal support.

Pupils have excellent attitudes towards learning, relationships are of the highest quality, and the provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are excellent. They have been very effective in promoting high standards and striving for continued improvement.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

There is a relative weakness in the school's provision for pupils' spiritual development across the curriculum, as evidenced in its failure to comply with the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship and provision for religious education in the sixth form.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER? **16**

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS **17**

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Langley Park School for Girls is a large comprehensive school with 1143 girls in Years 7 to 11. There are 302 students in the sixth form, eight of whom are boys. Ten percent of the pupils in Year 11 were selected for, musical ability and fifteen percent of the pupils in Years 8 to 10 were selected on general ability. Since the time of the previous inspection, the school has gained specialist status as a technology college and the number of pupils has risen. The school is oversubscribed. On entry to the school, the attainment of the pupils is above average. Just over nineteen percent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, which is in line with the national average. These pupils have a range of difficulties, most have learning difficulties. A below average proportion of pupils have statements of special educational need. Pupils come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, although most are white. The number of pupils speaking English as an additional language is a little higher than in most schools, but none are at an early stage of learning the English language. The percentage of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school is a founding member of the South East England Virtual Education Action Zone.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good and effective school. Pupils attain high standards in academic work because of the very good teaching and their hard work. Their achievements are very good in Years 7 to 11 and good in the sixth form. Pupils' behaviour is very good and their personal development is excellent. The care and support provided is of very high quality. The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are excellent, and administrative systems are highly efficient. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve high standards in Years 7 to 11. In the sixth form standards are above average.
- A high proportion of very good or excellent teaching enables pupils to make rapid progress.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The school provides a very caring environment and pupils are given excellent educational and personal support.
- Pupils have excellent attitudes towards learning, relationships are of the highest quality, and the provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are excellent. They have been very effective in promoting high standards and striving for continued improvement.

What could be improved

- There is a relative weakness in the school's provision for pupils' spiritual development across the curriculum, as evidenced in its failure to comply with the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship and provision for religious education in the sixth form.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was last inspected in 1995, it was judged to be good. Since then, it has made very good improvement. The strengths identified have been maintained or built upon and almost all of the key issues identified have been systematically addressed. There has been excellent improvement in areas such as the provision for pupils with special educational needs and procedures for monitoring pupils' progress, and this is helping pupils achieve higher standards. The school has become a technology college and accommodation and resources have improved significantly. Pupils have very good access to computers. These are very well used to support pupils' work in a wide range of subjects and contexts. The library has been improved and there is very good provision for older pupils to study independently. At the time of the last inspection, provision for pupils'

spiritual development was found to be variable and the school failed to meet statutory requirements for collective worship. These issues have not been successfully addressed.

Examination results have shown consistent improvement at a rate faster than the national trend. The quality of teaching is better, and is now very good. The work undertaken on target setting for individual pupils has been very successful in addressing the issue of the underachievement of more able pupils. The headteacher and senior managers have built upon the management strengths identified and implemented a very effective programme to monitor teaching and learning, which has focussed on improving standards further. There is a continued drive for further improvement, as exemplified by the school becoming a founding member of the South East England Virtual Education Action Zone. Schools that are part of this initiative aspire to be part of a national and international network, which is striving for continuous improvement and excellence. The school is very well placed to improve further.

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
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A
A-levels/AS-levels	C	B	n/a*	

Key

very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

* At the time of writing no national comparative figures were available.

The table shows that the average results achieved by all pupils were well above average at GCSE compared with schools nationally and similar schools (that is, comprehensive schools with a similar proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals). The number of pupils gaining five or more GCSE A*-C grades was very high when compared to similar schools – the school's results were in the top five percent of similar schools. The school slightly exceeded its challenging targets for GCSE results in 2000. The trend of improvement in GCSE grades is greater than the national rate. A-level results were above average in 1999 and results are similar in 2000.

In the 1999 GCSE examinations, pupils did better in biology, combined science, drama, history, information technology, mathematics, physics and vocational studies than in other subjects. They did relatively less well in art and design, English, French and religious education. Overall, when pupils enter the school their levels of attainment are above average. Results in national assessments in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 3 have been consistently well above average. In 2000, results were well above average. In English and science they were well above average for similar schools and in mathematics they were in the top five percent of similar schools. This shows that pupils made good progress.

Standards of work observed in lessons and pupils' previously completed work are similar to the Key Stage 3, GCSE and A-level results. Standards are consistently well above average in English, mathematics and science. This confirms that pupils' achievement is very good in Key Stages 3 and 4 and good in the sixth form. Standards are particularly good in science at Key Stage 4 where even the lowest attaining pupils are working at GCSE grade C level. The very good progress of many pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 is evident because their GCSE grades are higher than those predicted by the nationally recognised tests which they take on entry to the school. In all subjects, the high quality of

pupils' written English makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved. They write with precision and accuracy, and show the ability to analyse a problem and

come to a reasoned and well-argued conclusion. Pupils make very good use of information technology. They are able to use a range of applications and this enables them to produce projects and coursework, which are of high quality and very well presented. In subjects such as drama and music, pupils have particularly good skills of evaluation and reflection. Pupils listen very well and this supports their progress in lessons. Although pupils' speaking skills are satisfactory and often good, they are less well developed than their listening skills, particularly in the sixth form.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Exceptionally good in all years. Pupils are enthusiastic learners who take an active part in all aspects of school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave well and settle quickly in lessons; around the school they are friendly to one another and courteous and welcoming to visitors. Last year there were 29 fixed-period exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Throughout the school, relationships are extremely positive with pupils and all adults showing an impressively high level of respect for one another. Responsibilities are taken seriously and pupils develop a strong sense of citizenship.
Attendance	Good. Above the national average with little unauthorised absence. The school monitors attendance carefully. Pupils are punctual and very little time is wasted.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Overall, the quality of teaching observed was very good, with many significant strengths. All of the lessons observed were satisfactory or better, 45 percent were very good or excellent. Of the lessons observed, a higher proportion of good or better teaching was seen in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form than in Key Stage 3. Over 90 percent were good or better for 14-18 year olds, compared with just below 80 percent for 11-14 year olds. The proportion of very high quality teaching observed was similar throughout the school. The significant amount of very effective teaching is a major factor in the high standards and very good achievements of the pupils, particularly at GCSE.

The teaching of English, mathematics and science is effective at Key Stages 3 and 4. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well with a clear focus on developing key specialist vocabulary. Teachers have high expectations and show a high level of commitment. This has a very positive effect on teaching and learning. A significant strength is the very good subject knowledge and understanding of examination course work requirements shown by the teachers. A-level and GNVQ teaching is consistently good and teachers work hard to create a learning atmosphere where there is trust and they

encourage pupils to put forward their ideas during discussions. Excellent relationships have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Lessons are very well planned, ensuring that pupils receive teaching which effectively builds on previous work. Teachers know their pupils well and ensure that the needs of all in the class are met.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of learning opportunities in the curriculum are very good. Very good provision is made for pupils' personal, social and health education. Provision for extra-curricular activities, including sport, is excellent, with notable strengths in music and drama. Whilst the curriculum has many strengths, the school does not fulfil its statutory responsibility for religious education in the sixth form curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. A very well managed programme supports pupils through extra help in class and through carefully targeted withdrawal groups for literacy and numeracy. Pupils make very good progress and often achieve good GCSE results.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Moral, social and cultural development are excellent and a strength of the school. This is reflected in the pupils' positive attitudes to learning and excellent personal development. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory, although the school does not meet statutory requirements for collective worship.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The quality of pastoral and academic care is excellent. Pupils' academic progress and personal development are closely and very effectively monitored. Assessments made of pupils' achievements are used well to improve teaching and learning, and pupils are set targets to improve. Procedures for child protection are excellent.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher has inspired and enthused others to create a climate of academic challenge in a highly supportive and caring environment. Senior managers share the vision and ensure that it is put into practice. The management of subjects and year groups is very good. The performance of teachers and pupils is closely monitored and guided. This has a very positive effect on standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are committed to helping the school raise standards. They are well informed and supportive, but aware of the need to question and check. The governing body fulfil their statutory responsibilities well in almost all respects, however, they have not ensured that that religious education is adequately provided for in the sixth form and that there is provision for a daily act of collective worship.
The school's evaluation of	Excellent. Regular monitoring of teaching, detailed analysis of examination results, together with a comprehensive tracking system

its performance	have been central to the continued improvement in standards. The school seeks the views of those it serves, and is responsive to them. It has successfully used outside systems in order to extend its own self-evaluation, and has gained external accreditation, including “Charter Mark” and “Investors in People” status.
The strategic use of resources	Funds are extremely well managed and thoughtfully used. What most benefits pupils’ education is always at the forefront. Priorities are clearly identified in development planning. The principles of best value are very well applied.

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 in school. • The teaching is good. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • The school expects their children to work hard. • The school is well led and managed. • The school helps their children become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No significant issues were raised by more than a few parents.

Parents expressed great satisfaction about what the school provides and what their children achieve. The inspection evidence agrees with parents’ and carers’ very positive comments.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils achieve high standards in Years 7 to 11. In the sixth form standards are above average.

1. Overall when pupils enter the school their levels of attainment are above average. The results in the national assessment in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 3 were well above average in 2000. In English and science they were well above average for similar schools (those with a similar proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) and in mathematics they were in the top five percent. This shows that pupils made good progress.

2. The schools' examination results at GCSE have been well above average for several years. The high proportion of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades reflects the successful assessment and target-setting procedures, and the effective support provided for pupils to enable them to achieve examination success. The school slightly exceeded its challenging targets for the number of pupils gaining five or more A*-C grades and the number of pupils gaining one or more A*-G grades in 2000. The trend of improvement in GCSE grades is greater than the national rate.

3. Compared with similar schools in 2000, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more A*-C grades is very high – the school's results are in the top five percent. The proportion gaining five or more A*-G grades is well above average and the proportion achieving one or more A*-G grades is above average. The average point score per student is well above average. Analysis of the school's statistical data for those pupils who took GCSE in 2000 indicates that pupils performed very well. Many pupils gained higher grades than those predicted by the nationally recognised tests which they took on entry to the school. These measures indicate that pupils of all levels of attainment achieve very well. Attainment of pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 is well above average and their achievements are very good. This is due to very good teaching and the pupils' excellent attitudes and hard work.

4. A-level results have shown improvement and were above average in 1999 (no national data is currently available for 2000). The results in 2000 are similar to those in 1999. Pupils make good progress in the sixth form. The school is very successful at enabling pupils to achieve very well at GCSE and some pupils who did better than their predicted GCSE grades find the demands of A-level courses considerable. In lessons and in written assignments they find aspects of the work difficult. Whilst both the pupils and staff work very hard, a number of pupils find the content of the courses very challenging and this has an impact on the results achieved. This has been recognised by the school. Pupils who have taken vocational courses such as GNVQ have achieved well.

5. Standards of work observed in lessons and pupils' previously completed work are similar to the Key Stage 3, GCSE and A-level results. This confirms that pupils' achievement is very good in Key Stages 3 and 4, and good in the sixth form.

6. The standard of pupils' written work is often high. For example, in Year 11 geography pupils produced high quality studies of land use in Greenwich. Their work contained a careful and detailed analysis, high quality maps and plans and the presentation was excellent. A-level pupils work in design and technology shows very thorough research, together with detailed analysis of the design problem and systematic development of design ideas. Sketching and

presentation are of very high quality. In sixth form art, pupils complete journals which contain research and critical studies of very high quality. In all subjects, the quality of pupils' written English makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved. They write with precision and accuracy, and show the ability to analyse a problem and come to a reasoned and well-argued conclusion. Pupils are able to write at length and, in Year 7, they are able to write with accuracy when working under time pressure.

7. Very good use is made of information technology. There is use of digital cameras in art to produce a sequence of images that can be developed into large-scale paintings. In mathematics and science, there is extensive use of data logging, and use of graphical calculators. Pupils produce excellent presentations in English, using PowerPoint, to analyse poems. There is wide use of the Internet for research to support pupils' work across the curriculum. Pupils are able to use a range of information technology applications and this enables them to produce projects and coursework, which are of high quality and very well presented.

8. In subjects such as drama, music, religious education and physical education pupils have particularly good skills of evaluation and reflection. In drama, they have excellent group and social skills. They make thoughtful comments and well considered suggestions when evaluating the work of others. In physical education, sixth form pupils were able to undertake a detailed analysis of a video, looking at how techniques and performance could be improved.

9. Pupils listen very well and this supports their progress in lessons. They are able to make planned presentations to the class. For example, in a Year 12 GNVQ lesson, pupils worked in groups to prepare an argument for and against charging people who bring cars into London, as a means of cutting traffic and improving air quality. The pupils worked well together sharing ideas and respecting the views of others. They were then able to present their work to the rest of the class. However, when making presentations most pupils tend to read text rather than speaking to brief notes. In a number of sixth form lessons teachers had to work very hard to encourage pupils to contribute to class discussions. Overall, pupils speaking skills are satisfactory and often good but they are less well developed than their listening skills, particularly in the sixth form.

A high proportion of very good or excellent teaching enables pupils to make rapid progress.

10. Overall, the quality of teaching observed was very good, with many significant strengths and very few relative weaknesses. All of the lessons observed were satisfactory or better, 45 percent were very good or excellent. Of the lessons observed, a higher proportion of good or better teaching was seen in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form than in Key Stage 3. Over 90 percent were good or better for 14-18 year olds, compared with just below 80 percent for 11-14 year olds. The proportion of very high quality teaching observed was similar throughout the school. The significant amount of very effective teaching is a major factor in the high standards and very good achievements of the pupils, particularly at GCSE.

11. Teachers have high expectations and show a high level of commitment. This has a very positive effect on teaching and learning. At the start of lessons, teachers talk with pupils about the work to be covered, and they give clear instructions about how the tasks are to be completed. Pupils are told how long to spend on aspects of the work and this ensures that very little time is wasted. In some lessons of the highest quality, work is carefully reviewed in plenary discussions. For example, in drama where through well led discussions teachers help pupils consider aspects of their performance and how characterisation can be further developed and improved.

12. A significant strength is the very good subject knowledge and understanding of examination course work requirements shown by the teachers. In many lessons, in a range of subjects, including science, design and technology and geography, teachers gave very good advice on examination techniques. In design and technology, for example, teachers discussed how to approach revising for examinations and provided very good study materials. Coursework was carefully marked and pupils were given detailed advice on how to improve their work. In a number of subjects, including design and technology and art, very good use is made of high quality exemplar materials and this encourages pupils to aim for higher standards in their own work. Pupils respond very well to the support they are given and put in a considerable amount of time and effort, both at school and at home. Very good subject knowledge enables teachers to set challenging tasks and provide very interesting teaching. In a Year 11 science lesson, with a lower ability group, the teacher used a variety of techniques to make the subject matter interesting and to enable pupils to understand how chromosomes contain genes. These techniques included good quality work using an overhead projector, the use of balloons to illustrate certain teaching points, together with good suggestions to help pupils remember difficult technical language such as heterozygous and homozygous. In art, teachers use their very good subject knowledge to pose challenging questions and give very good feedback which is well matched to pupils' attainment. Teachers set challenging tasks for higher attaining pupils and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. In a Year 11 mathematics lesson, for example, the pupils had already completed their GCSE and were working on modelling to find the formula for the volume of an egg. The teacher ensured that there were very good opportunities for independence, as well as giving support and encouragement when needed. The lesson provided very good opportunities for the extension of previous knowledge and skills into new areas of work.

13. Lessons are very well planned. Thorough planning ensures that pupils receive lessons which effectively build on previous work and this helps them make significant gains in their learning. In information technology, for example, all pupils take a GCSE short course, results are good and pupils achieve very well. Teachers have produced an effective programme of work which makes very good use of the teaching time available. Although the amount of curriculum time is quite limited, all pupils receive similar experiences and cover the course requirements. A range of teaching methods are effectively used by teachers. There is now extensive and effective use of information technology to support pupils' learning across subjects.

14. Excellent relationships between teachers and pupils have a positive impact on pupils' learning. In music, for example, pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own performances as well as those of others. They show considerable confidence and respond in a mature and thoughtful manner, making helpful suggestions as well as positive comments. In A-level English, pupils work confidently because teachers create a learning atmosphere where there is trust. There is an understanding that there are no right and wrong answers. Pupils are encouraged to be reflective when considering questions related to the texts they are studying such as "when did you stop being a child?" In almost all lessons, teachers provide a range of interesting and stimulating work, and pupils respond positively. A high quality Year 12 GNVQ lesson on environmental issues included whole class discussion, group work and presentations by individuals. The task was challenging and the teacher managed the lesson very well and enabled pupils to understand and reflect on the reasons for differing viewpoints.

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

15. Since the time of the previous inspection, there has been excellent improvement in the provision for pupils with special educational needs. The management of special educational

needs is very good and pupils are given high quality support. Very good procedures are in place to identify difficulties when pupils enter the school in Year 7. There is careful analysis of range of information. Each pupil with special needs is assigned to a member of the special needs department. The member of staff has responsibility for the individual education plan and checks on the pupil's progress. The individual education plans are detailed and are regularly issued to staff. They contain clear targets and suggestions for teaching staff, and are reviewed at the end of each term. Pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties meet with members of the special needs department for weekly counselling sessions and there are also regular anger management classes. Staff know the needs of each individual and there has been a range of inservice training to develop expertise. Consultation procedures between the school, parents and pupils are very good. Comprehensive and effective monitoring procedures are in place.

16. Very good support is provided for pupils through a variety of strategies for literacy and numeracy development. These include in-class support and the withdrawal of pupils to work in small groups. Pupils' literacy skills are developed through targeting in Year 7 for extra reading and spelling and literacy classes in Years 8 and 9 for those not following a second modern foreign language. In-class support is also provided for lower attaining mathematics sets in Years 7 –11 and for lower attaining English sets in Years 10 and 11. This year key skills lessons have been started for a small number of girls in Year 10. These focus on improving literacy, numeracy and information technology skills. Special classes are also provided for dyslexic pupils.

17. The use of information technology is encouraged to support pupils' learning. Over 40 pupils are using an independent learning system to develop their skills in reading, mathematics and spelling. The work is planned to meet the needs of each pupil. In a high quality lesson observed using this system, pupils were motivated and wanted to succeed and achieve a high percentage of correct answers. The work was planned in short sections and this maintained the interest of the pupils. The teacher provided support when needed but encouraged the pupils to think for themselves and try to resolve difficulties. During the lesson pupils made excellent learning gains.

The school provides a very caring environment and pupils are given excellent educational and personal support.

18. The school provides high quality care for all pupils. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance, welfare and personal development are excellent. The assessment system is excellent. It is used very effectively to raise standards in all subjects by tracking pupils' attainment and effort throughout the school. A wide range of data, including the results of nationally recognised tests, is used to predict GCSE results from Year 7. Tutors are provided with high quality information and this enables them to offer pupils effective advice and support. Target grades for both GCSE and A level are communicated to pupils and these are reviewed and amended if the standard of work improves. The system is very effective as pupils often exceed their original GCSE predictions by two or more grades. The school also undertakes value-added analysis and high quality data is provided for departments.

19. Pupils are very well known by their teachers, particularly form tutors and heads of year. Pupils said that they felt very well looked after and that their heads of year and form tutors were very supportive and willing to help. The mentoring system for older pupils is effective in ensuring that not only is progress and development monitored, but pupils are kept fully informed about what they need to do to improve. A very good programme of careers education and work experience is provided for pupils. Very good guidance on subject choices

is provided for pupils before they enter Years 10 and 12. All of these procedures are effective in helping to raise pupils' levels of achievement.

20. The school is very successful in developing pupils' confidence and sense of responsibility. Throughout the school, pupils care for each other and there is an expectation that everyone will show courtesy and respect. Pupils are encouraged to discuss any issues which are causing them concern and older pupils are trained as mentors. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour, such as bullying are excellent. Pupils' welfare is very well supported by heads of year who effectively promote regular attendance and high standards of behaviour. Pupils are rarely late either at school in the morning or getting to lessons. There are high expectations of attendance and the pupils accept this and comply. The considerable strengths in the school's provision for pupils' academic achievement and personal development contribute to the ethos of high expectations, which are shared by all.

21. Health and welfare are promoted successfully through a very well planned programme for personal, health and social education. Outside speakers are used appropriately to enhance the teaching of this programme and they make a valuable contribution to it. Arrangements for child protection are excellent. All staff are kept well informed and are knowledgeable about procedures. Health and safety matters are regularly closely monitored.

Pupils have excellent attitudes towards learning, relationships are of the highest quality, and the provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

22. Pupils' attitudes to school are excellent and similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils are very positive about all aspects of school life and a significant number take part in school productions and the wide range of extra-curricular activities. In lessons, pupils' attitudes are almost always good or better. They show high levels of motivation, arrive at lessons on time and settle to work quickly. This has a positive impact on learning. They work hard and maintain concentration for significant periods of time. Pupils work very well both individually and in groups, and are fully involved during lessons. They are willing to share ideas and value the contributions of others. Pupils are conscientious about completing research and homework tasks. They listen carefully to their teachers and each other, and often make thoughtful contributions to class discussions. During a discussion, Year 9 pupils said, "you go to lessons knowing what is expected of you".

23. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. At lunchtime and breaks, they behave in a very mature manner. They are courteous and polite, they open doors for visitors and during the inspection helped inspectors find their way around the school. Pupils interviewed said that they did not know of any bullying, but were very confident that if any incidents occurred they would be sorted out quickly. Behaviour in lessons is of a high standard and this enables pupils to make rapid progress. No instances of unsatisfactory behaviour were observed during the inspection. There have been no permanent exclusions during the past year, however, there were 29 fixed-term exclusions. These were mainly for incidents such as theft or smoking. Pupils show respect for the school building and the equipment they use. Relationships in the school are excellent, with mutual respect between pupils and all other adults. Pupils are taught to distinguish between right and wrong through the personal examples of staff. Teachers set a first-class role model by showing that they value each person and by fostering pupils' independence and initiative.

24. Many opportunities are provided for pupils' personal and social development, and pupils are enthusiastic about what the school provides. There is a culture of celebrating achievement and effort within the school. The efforts of all are valued through the merit system. Pupils of all ages have opportunities to take a range of responsibilities such as form captains and charity representatives. Sixth formers provide good role models, for example, helping at lunchtime in the computer rooms and acting as mentors. There is a strong commitment to a range of causes, such as Breast Cancer Awareness Week and pupils take the initiative in many fund raising events. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and contributes to their understanding of citizenship. A wide range of drama and music productions and strong links with the community provide many valuable opportunities for pupils' social development. Very good links with the business community have been developed which enable pupils to take part in events such as business and industry day and provide work experience opportunities. Pupils' cultural development is very effectively promoted through the school's wide range of extra-curricular activities, and wide-ranging programme of educational visits and cultural exchanges. Good cultural development takes place through the curriculum, with aspects from a wide range of cultures being explored in subjects such as design and technology and English. The very good displays around the school show a strong awareness of other cultures.

The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff are excellent. They have been very effective in promoting high standards and striving for continued improvement.

25. The headteacher's leadership is excellent, giving a very clear direction for the school. She has inspired and enthused others to create a climate of academic challenge in a highly supportive and caring environment. The headteacher is reflective and forward looking, continually seeking further improvement in all aspects of the school. The very positive response to the issues raised in the last inspection report are an indication of the school's appropriate priorities for action and the success in achieving them. There is a drive for excellence, and a confidence and belief that it can be achieved. The headteacher has a very strong and effective working partnership with senior managers who share her vision and ensure that it is put into practice. As a result, the management of the school by the headteacher and senior managers is also excellent. Their effectiveness is evident in the high standards achieved and the excellent ethos and relationships within the school. Heads of faculty are effective managers and leaders and, together with heads of department, work extremely hard to enable pupils to achieve their potential.

26. The reflection of the school's aims and values in its work is excellent. All staff, both teaching and associate (non-teaching), are committed and they promote the values of working hard and striving for improvement and excellence. The contribution of each member of staff is valued. Staff understand the importance of their particular roles, whether it is teaching, supporting teachers with very efficient administration or ensuring the site and buildings are a pleasant and stimulating learning environment. Equality of opportunity is evident in all aspects of school life. For example, the school has worked hard to ensure that higher attaining pupils are challenged, providing opportunities for particularly able pupils to attend a summer school for the gifted and talented and introducing special courses such as On-line Latin, as well as additional classes in English, science and mathematics. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is also very good.

27. The school has excellent procedures for monitoring and evaluating its performance, and has a very clear focus on continuing to raise academic standards. It is very effective in this aspect of its work. A regular programme of monitoring lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning is in place. Both senior managers and heads of faculty are effective in its implementation. There is sharing of good practice as well as support for staff if weaknesses are identified. Teaching has improved as a result of this strategy. The comprehensive pupil tracking system is well understood by pupils and parents, and has been central to the significant improvement in standards, particularly in Key Stage 4. The school seeks the views of both parents and pupils and is responsive to the issues that are raised. It has successfully used outside systems and criteria against which it can be judged in order to extend its own self-evaluation, and has gained external accreditation including "Charter Mark" and "Investors in People" status. A culture of self-review leading to improvement is evident in all that the school does.

28. The school development plan is of excellent quality. Priorities are clearly related to the central focus of improving teaching, learning and achievement. Department action plans are detailed and targets are well linked to whole-school priorities. Targets in the school development plan reflect those of the Technology Colleges Trust and the South East England Virtual Education Action Zone and are discussed with staff and approved by governors. The school has taken very good action to meet its targets for improvement. This is shown by its efforts to further improve standards in the sixth form. Careful analysis of examination performance is undertaken. Senior managers meet with heads of faculty and heads of department to discuss examination performance and assess the progress made towards meeting identified targets.

29. Financial management is excellent and funds are thoughtfully used. What benefits pupils' education is always at the forefront. Audit reports are positive and indicate that practices are effective and efficient. Spending priorities are clearly identified in development planning. There is scrupulous use of specific grants for their designated purposes. All of these factors result in very good resources, which are well used. For example, information technology resources have greatly improved since the time of the last inspection and are very well used. Staff are very effectively deployed, making use of their specialist expertise. The school has invested in developing an associate staff who undertake a wide range of responsibilities. The school has focussed on using these staff to take many of the administrative tasks away from teaching staff to allow them to concentrate on their work in the classroom. Associate staff make a significant contribution to the smooth and efficient running of the school. The administration of the school is very well supported by a wide use of information technology and is very efficient.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

There is a relative weakness in the school's provision for pupils' spiritual development across the curriculum, as evidenced in its failure to comply with the statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship and provision for religious education in the sixth form.

30. At the time of the last inspection, provision for pupils' spiritual development was judged to be variable and this remains the case today. The school has no policy on spiritual development. In some lessons, for example in English, drama and religious education, teachers make good use of opportunities that arise for pupils to reflect and consider moments of particular emotion. However, in many lessons, opportunities are not maximised to develop pupils' spiritual awareness. Non-examination religious education is not taught in

the sixth form, although a one-day annual conference takes place. The school is, therefore, not meeting statutory requirements.

31. The school is still not meeting statutory requirements for the provision of collective worship. Assemblies that were observed during the inspection were of good quality and offered opportunities for pupils to reflect. The school still faces the problem of a lack of suitable accommodation for bringing large groups of pupils together. However, it is not making suitable provision for class-based acts of collective worship. Teachers use the morning form time sessions for activities such as holding discussions on world events. In the sixth form, the time is used for administrative purposes, such as arranging interviews or completing work. In none of the form time sessions observed during the inspection was there any evidence of collective worship, or an opportunity for pupils to reflect.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

32. In order to raise standards further and fully meet statutory requirements the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) improve the school's provision for pupils' spiritual development across the curriculum. Comply with the statutory requirements for a daily act of collective worship and provision for religious education in the sixth form. Key points include:
- development of a whole-school policy on spiritual development;
 - meeting the statutory requirement for the provision of collective worship;
 - meeting the statutory requirement for the teaching of non-examination religious education in the sixth form.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

93

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12	33	43	12	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

Y7 – Y11

Sixth form

Number of pupils on the school's roll	1143	302
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	69	9

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	9	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	273	2

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	76

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	39
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.6
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	0	223

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	199	191	182
	Total	199	191	182
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	90 (84)	86 (84)	82 (80)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	50(46)	66 (62)	50 (44)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	195	186	168
	Total	195	186	168
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	87 (85)	83 (83)	75 (85)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62(60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	54 (56)	65 (64)	48(51)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29(28)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	0	215	215

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	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	164	211	211
	Total	164	211	211
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	76 (82)	98 (100)	98 (100)
	National	49.0 (44.6)	88.8 (90.9)	95.5 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	48.6 (52)
	National	38.7 (38)

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

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

Attainment at the end of the sixth form *

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	0	100	100

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	n/a	17.8	17.8 (17.2)	n/a	7.2	7.2 (4.7)
National	17.7	18.1	17.9 (17.6)	2.7	2.8	2.8

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	29	100
	National	n/a	n/a

International Bacculaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Bacculaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0	n/a
	National		82.5

* At the time the report was written no national figures for the year 2000 were available for 6th form courses the tables above include data from 1999.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	29
Black – African heritage	14
Black – other	40
Indian	33
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	12
White	1272
Any other minority ethnic group	38

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage	1	
Black – other	3	
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	24	
Other minority ethnic groups	1	

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)	85
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7– Y13

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	57

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.2
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Average teaching group size: Y7– Y11

Key Stage 3	26.4
Key Stage 4	22

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	3936872
Total expenditure	4066745
Expenditure per pupil	2982
Balance brought forward from previous year	198796
Balance carried forward to next year	68923

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1445
Number of questionnaires returned	226

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	46	44	8	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	43	2	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	48	3	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	54	12	3	2
The teaching is good.	39	53	3	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	49	8	3	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	43	5	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	24	2	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	35	49	10	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	56	40	1	1	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	46	3	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	43	6	2	8

Other issues raised by parents

Parents expressed great satisfaction about what the school provides and what their children achieve.

