

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE COMPTON SCHOOL**

Finchley

LEA area: Barnet

Unique reference number: 101352

Headteacher: Teresa Tunnadine

Reporting inspector: R C Drew  
7281

Dates of inspection: 10 – 12 June 2002

Inspection number: 244862

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Summers Lane Finchley London
Postcode:	N12 0QG
Telephone number:	0208 368 1783
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms Mel Parker
Date of previous inspection:	20 May 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Compton School is an 11 to 16 mixed comprehensive, with 752 pupils on roll, serving a mixed social and economic catchment in north London. Unemployment and other factors are generally favourable, but there are several selective grammar and faith schools nearby attracting a disproportionate share of pupils from advantaged families. The school has 17.2 per cent of its pupils claiming free school meals, slightly above the national average. Pupils come from many ethnic backgrounds, with about 50 per cent from families of white European background and 20 per cent from families of Indian heritage. Significant minorities come from a Black (African) background and refugee communities. About 300 pupils use English as an additional language, with 31 at an early stage of acquisition. Overall, the school's pupils broadly match the national range in terms of social and economic advantage. About 41 per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register - more than double the national proportion - and 4 per cent have formal statements of special educational needs, again, twice the national average. While the school also receives many high-attaining pupils, its intake is, on balance, below average.

At the time of the last inspection, the school was still building up its intake after having opened as a new school several years earlier. This phase is now finished and the school has acquired Beacon School status, renewed this year, and will receive Technology College status in September 2002. It is consistently heavily over-subscribed and is due to expand in the near future, with a building programme designed to accommodate an additional class on entry each year.

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

This is an excellent school, in which very good teaching and first-rate leadership and management enable pupils to make very good progress. Standards of attainment are well above those found in similar schools and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Value for money is very good.

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

- Pupils from an unusually wide range of backgrounds make very good progress.
- Teaching is very good, with much that is excellent.
- Leadership and management are excellent and have a marked beneficial effect on all aspects of the school's work.
- The whole staff show an excellent collective commitment to improvement.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, reflecting well on the high-quality procedures applied by the school.
- The school has established very good links with parents and the wider community.
- Relationships between pupils of different ethnic and social backgrounds and between teachers and pupils are excellent.

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

- The use of assessment data to help pupils to work towards their challenging targets is improving, but is not yet on a par with most aspects of the school's work.
- Standards in modern languages have been below the school and national averages in recent years, although an improving trend is now being established.
- Attendance is broadly average by national standards, but absence is still the main hindrance to progress for a minority of pupils.

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

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

The school has made very good improvement since the previous inspection in May 1996. It has greatly increased opportunities for higher-attaining pupils and for helping pupils to become more self reliant. It has successfully introduced strategies to ensure that boys realise their potential as effectively as girls. In addition, it has further raised teaching standards from an already strong position and created excellent planning and monitoring strategies for all aspects of the school's work. Additional funding, expertise and

breadth of provision have also been achieved through acquiring Beacon School and Technology College status.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	B	C	C	B

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

Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is generally below average, especially their reading and writing skills. Nearly 40 per cent have special educational needs. However, by the end of Year 9, pupils reach national average levels of attainment, and do better, sometimes considerably so, than pupils in similar schools. English, mathematics and science results are all in line with national averages for all schools, although compared with standards in similar schools, the 2001 results were well above average in mathematics.

Amongst the other subjects, standards seen during the inspection were well above average in history and geography. In no subjects were they below national averages. Across Years 7 to 9, therefore, pupils make good progress. They overcome some of their gaps in literacy, concentration and study skills as a result of very good teaching and the school's very strong ethos. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language also make good progress because the school diagnoses and provides for their needs very effectively.

By the end of Year 11, standards are above national averages. This indicates very good progress across Years 10 and 11, and that pupils make very good gains from entering to leaving secondary schooling. The normal calculations for average grade scores show that the school matches national standards at GCSE. However, GCSE A\* to C grades in recent years have been above or well above average. Results are also above or well above those for similar schools. In addition, when allowance is made for the fact that normal calculations include pupils with special educational needs who do not take GCSE at the same time as their peers, results exceed national ones by an even clearer margin.

Particularly good results are achieved regularly in history and geography, while modern language results have been below the school and national norms over the last three years. In the work seen during the inspection, broadly similar standards were observed, although signs of improvement were evident, suggesting that the school's higher targets for 2002 GCSE results should be reached. While girls outperform boys in results at the end of Years 9 and 11, both groups make very good gains in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. In most years, the school admits more lower-attaining boys. While year by year GCSE results rise and fall against national levels, this variation reflects differences in the prior attainment of each year group. Every year group achieves very good added-value.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Strongly positive attitudes to study and school life predominate. Fixed-term exclusions are high, but have a beneficial impact in sustaining an excellent climate for learning for the school as a whole, and encourage offenders to adopt more positive attitudes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. In the vast majority of lessons, behaviour is very good and frequently excellent. Around school pupils are lively, remarkably mature

	and caring towards one another, to adults and the school environment.
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Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils take opportunities very readily, both in lessons and other activities. As a result, they are self-reliant, co-operate well with other pupils and with staff and show unusual confidence and initiative. Relationships between boys and girls of different social and ethnic backgrounds are excellent, as are relationships between pupils and teachers.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance levels broadly match national ones, although unauthorised absence is slightly higher. Punctuality for lessons is excellent.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good

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

Teaching in the school as a whole is very good. All teaching seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory and in over half the lessons, teaching quality was very good or excellent. This proportion of high-quality teaching has doubled since the last inspection. Learning is also very good in both stages, Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11, reflecting both teaching quality and an ethos pervading the school in which a desire to do well is the accepted view of pupils.

Teachers are particularly effective in their planning, which gives lessons strong pace and clear purpose. Their management of pupils is also excellent, based on setting very high expectations, treating pupils with obvious care and respect and applying rewards and sanction procedures with a consistency rarely observed. No aspects of teaching are less than good by national standards, but the use of assessment data to help pupils appreciate what targets they should aim for is less well developed than other features, especially in Years 7 to 9.

Learning is very good in virtually every respect across Years 7 to 11, including learning by pupils with special educational needs, English as an additional language and those deemed gifted and talented. Underlying this success is a particularly positive attitude amongst the vast majority of pupils and very good behaviour, even from those with the inclination to misbehave. Pupils are good at working and thinking independently and in pairs. In Years 7 to 9, their awareness of what National Curriculum level they are at, or should aim for, is less well developed, although still satisfactory by national standards.

Teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science are very good. The quality of both is outstanding in history and geography, and good or very good in all other subjects.

Literacy skills are very well taught across the school. Numeracy teaching is good. The school meets the needs of all pupils very well through its exceptional planning and detailed awareness of pupils' abilities. Special educational needs and English as an additional language support staff are very successful at promoting the learning of those pupils to whom they have been allocated.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. All National Curriculum subjects and religious education are in place, with very good, sometimes exemplary, schemes of work across the subjects. All statutory requirements are met. Equality of access is excellent and the provision for literacy, links with partner institutions and

	the local community are all very good.
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Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils' needs are very well diagnosed and teaching staff very effectively informed. Support teachers are fully involved with subject specialists in providing very effective support in class.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. A substantial proportion of pupils use English as an additional language and they are very effectively supported in lessons, progressing as rapidly as pupils in general.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. There are more opportunities than usual for pupils to reflect on their own lives and on major issues. The school makes excellent provision for moral and social development, and this has a major beneficial impact on attitudes and behaviour. Cultural development is very well promoted.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. This is a very caring school with excellent systems in place to promote positive behaviour and minimise what is unacceptable. Arrangements for monitoring personal development and improving attendance are very good and the staff are well aware of child protection issues. Arrangements for monitoring academic progress are good, but there is scope for a more effective approach to target-setting.

The school provides regular, high-quality information for parents and ensures that very good day-to-day links are maintained through pupils' planners and direct phone calls or letters. Parents rightly judge the school to be very approachable.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The school benefits from great clarity of vision and excellent planning, monitoring and staff development arrangements. The headteacher sets the tone in all these areas and leads exceptionally well. However, another key feature of the school is the strong unity of purpose engendered in staff. This is a result of collaborative decision making and senior managers giving the headteacher and their other colleagues excellent support and guidance. Systems are used with remarkable consistency by staff, thus making it very clear to pupils what the school expects of them and will offer them in return.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors meet all their statutory duties and they are collectively very well informed about the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result they offer good strategic advice to and support for senior managers.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. The school as a community is united in its commitment to improve constantly. Its monitoring and reviewing procedures are excellent and it has managers who act wisely and decisively to bring in change and a staff keen to implement improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. Financial control is very efficient, and linked to clear educational planning, allowing funds to be very effectively deployed. The school is most adept at comparing its performance with that of other schools and comparing different providers for its services. It uses funds to support the best-value option on all occasions and is very proficient at securing additional sources of funding, including £2m for expansion.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fact that the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• The very approachable nature of school staff at all levels.</li> <li>• The progress their children make.</li> <li>• The high quality of leadership and management.</li> <li>• The good behaviour in school.</li> <li>• The way school helps their children mature.</li> <li>• The quality of teaching.</li> </ul>	<p>A small proportion of parents had concerns about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the amount of homework their children receive;</li> <li>• the range of extra-curricular activities on offer;</li> <li>• the quality of modern languages provision.</li> </ul>

Inspectors fully endorse the very positive views expressed by parents about so many aspects of the school's work. Inspectors find that, contrary to concerns expressed, appropriate homework is set and marked with far greater efficiency than usual. They agree that modern language provision has been an area requiring improvement, but find that teaching and management are now good, following monitoring and subsequent action by the headteacher and governors. Inspectors find that the school makes better than average provision for extra-curricular activities for pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

#### **Pupils from an unusually wide range of backgrounds make very good progress**

1. When they first start at the school, pupils' levels of attainment vary widely, but they are, on balance, below the national average. While a growing proportion of higher attainers now enter the school, many more pupils come with reading ages significantly below their chronological age and with low scores on standardised tests. Nearly 40 per cent of pupils each year have special educational needs that present a variety of challenges to successful learning, and a significant minority of pupils use English as an additional language. However, while standardised tests for GCSE candidates in 2001 would have predicted about 30 per cent of pupils gaining five or more A\* to C grades, the school's actual figure was 53 per cent. Standards at the end of Year 9 are in line with those for all schools and in most years above average when compared with similar schools. This good progress is built upon and gains momentum in Years 10 and 11 so that GCSE results are at least in line with national average points scores and, in terms of A\* to C passes, above average for all schools and well above compared with similar schools. Cumulatively, this amounts to very good progress.
2. This very substantial 'added-value' applies to all groups of pupils: gifted and talented pupils; those with learning difficulties; average attainers; pupils with English as an additional language; boys and girls. While there are some marked differences between pupil groups in terms of standards reached by the end of Year 11, these reflect noticeably different starting points on entry to the school. For example, girls' results at GCSE exceed boys' by a wide margin, but the boys had much lower scores in national tests in Year 7 and have made even better progress than girls to narrow the gap between them by the end of Year 11.
3. This impressive progress or 'added-value' is the outcome of several factors. Crucially, all pupils receive very good teaching from high-calibre subject specialists who are consistently effective and expect a great deal of pupils, while at the same time offering them every encouragement. Support staff contribute significantly to the progress of those pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language and to the classes as a whole.
4. Very good progress is also achieved because pupils have a very positive attitude to learning. The consensus amongst them is very clearly that they are in school to study and make the most of the opportunities they are given. Parental support for their children's education is high, reflected in the school being over subscribed each year, and contributes to these very good attitudes. Most striking of all is the way the school has established an ethos for learning which pervades all aspects of school life, including lessons. Its insistence on very high standards of behaviour is implemented successfully; its commitment to pupils being valued at all times and actively involved in the work of the school permeates classrooms. As a result, pupils in lessons appreciate that, as with school life as a whole, there are opportunities to be rewarded for enterprising work; equally, that the full weight of the school's sanctions policy reaches very readily into every classroom.

#### **Teaching is very good, with much that is excellent**

5. All lessons seen during the inspection had teaching that was satisfactory or better and in about 80 per cent the quality was at least good. Sixteen per cent had excellent teaching. This consistently strong position is the major factor behind the very good progress pupils make in school. The style of teaching, with its marked emphasis on pupils' involvement in lessons, equality of respect for all pupils, and first-rate application of rewards and sanctions policies, is also a major reason why relationships and pupils' behaviour are so good.
6. Teachers show very good specialist expertise and are equally adept at building literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology reinforcement into lessons. They are far more effective than is common in liaising effectively with support staff, setting homework as an integral

part of the learning process, and in marking pupils' work consistently and with constructive comments on how to improve. Above all, the planning of lessons and the management of pupils are both excellent. Planning is of such a high standard that it is the norm for lessons to have a very clear structure, with pupils gaining a full awareness of its objectives and a strong sense of purpose. Plans ensure variety in tasks; timings are built in, which promote good pace; attention to the specific needs of different pupils and pupil groups is consistently present; activities such as question and answer sessions and paired work are again included consistently several times in each lesson; every lesson includes well-timed sessions, reviewing progress part way through and at the end of lessons. Teachers make especially good use of paired work and, through the use of seating plans, ensure that pupils work in different pairs each lesson. In a Year 7 history lesson with excellent teaching, for example, the strictly enforced three minutes for discussion in pairs prompted every pupil to refresh their memory of earlier work on the Peasants' Revolt of 1381, try out their ideas on their partner, learn from each other and then make impressive oral contributions to the whole class – all as a prelude to further research. A Year 9 English lesson on War Poetry also stimulated very successful discussion and understanding of the vocabulary and structure of the poem by paired work on a very well-thought-out resource pack, moving on to whole-class discussion.

7. The excellent quality of management of pupils benefits learning immensely and contributes to, and feeds off, the high-quality relationships that characterise lessons. Teachers are not only more aware of their school's rewards and sanctions policy than is usual but they apply it with a consistency that is rarely seen elsewhere. The habit of praising pupils for good work is pervasive; equally, the speed with which corrective comments are given at the first sign of poor attention is impressive. Staff use the 'on-call' system of seeking senior management assistance in serious cases very effectively; it is welcomed as supportive and carries no suggestion of failure by the teacher using it.
8. The quality of teaching reflects the high quality of applicants for posts, the school's extensive induction procedures for all new staff, the benefits of a very extensive support and monitoring programme and the strong focus in staff training on teaching and learning processes.

### **Leadership and management are excellent and have a marked beneficial effect on all aspects of the school's work**

9. The school has outstanding leadership and management. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and acts decisively. She and the senior managers use extensive, good-quality consultation with all staff, as well as with pupils and parents. The high standard of leadership is evident in the excellent planning for school improvement and the highly effective staff induction and continuous professional development programmes. Managers have created a school in which staff operate as a very united team, committed to making its policies work. Crucially, senior managers monitor and support colleagues with a far more extensive, rigorous, yet constructive, observation programme than is common. As a result, policies, on-going practice and new developments are all implemented very effectively. The consistency with which staff apply policies and seek to introduce change is of an unusually high standard.
10. The content and process of the construction of school improvement plans illustrate many positive features of management. Currently, for instance, the bold decision has been made to have just one objective, focused on teaching and learning. Because monitoring of initiatives and on-going work is so widespread and effective, staff can pursue this single-minded route to improvement, secure in the knowledge that other vital activities will not be overlooked. This and previous school improvement plans have been discussed and reshaped by a far better consultation process than is common. Staff from the newest recruit to the longest serving member contribute and are listened to. The senior management team arranges for considerable time to be set aside for the process, sometimes off-site, and ensures that discussion groups place staff at various times in different pastoral groups, subject departments and other combinations. The early and regular reviewing of the plan ensures that its implementation proceeds smoothly and that modifications, if needed, are built in at the earliest opportunity.

11. Middle management in the school is very good and links closely with senior management. For example, whether newly appointed or well established, heads of department expect to take responsibility for standards in their subjects, but equally expect to share successes with the school as a whole and seek advice and support from senior managers as a matter of course. As a result, departments do not adopt eccentric styles of their own and pursue their own agendas, but reflect accurately whole-school priorities.
12. Essentially, the leadership and management of the school succeed because they combine two features: senior managers are remarkably well organised and systematic in planning and administration, yet at the same time elicit the best possible commitment from staff because they handle people well. All staff encountered during the inspection found their professional and personal situations unusually well appreciated and supported by senior management. Their voices are heard, opportunities to develop are created and they receive day-to-day help in carrying out their tasks.

**The whole staff show a collective commitment to improvement which is excellent**

13. In all areas of school life, the consistency with which agreed policies are enforced is remarkable, leading to the school's central policy of improvement being adopted whole-heartedly by all staff. Teachers in every department, with or without formal responsibilities, constantly review their own effectiveness. Teachers, educational support staff and administrative personnel show a particularly high awareness of the school's objectives, how these relate to their own individual roles and why the school's collective progress depends on their taking personal responsibility.
14. This very advantageous position arises out of senior managers being clear, decisive and very supportive of colleagues and reflects the fact that all staff share heavily in defining school policies and strategies for implementing them. Successful appointment procedures and staff development arrangements ensure that 'the Compton approach' is understood and supported by those new to the school, who clearly benefit from the pleasant working environment created by the staff.
15. This high standard of leadership and management has helped to ensure very good improvement since the last inspection. Teaching in all subjects continues to improve as initiatives such as literacy, numeracy and a distinctive system of paired learning are implemented swiftly and consistently.

**Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good, reflecting well on the high quality procedures applied by the school**

16. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour were satisfactory or better in all lessons seen during the inspection and very good or excellent in over 60 per cent. This constructive approach has a major beneficial impact on standards, because it allows teachers to concentrate on their principal task and allows pupils to focus on learning with minimal distraction.
17. Both in lessons and in discussions with inspectors, the vast majority of pupils showed a high level of enthusiasm for school. They are confident and aware of being highly valued, they expect to contribute to school life and anticipate success in their studies. The numbers involved in extra-curricular activities are high and pupils take their responsibilities in the School Council and other consultative bodies very seriously. Pupils show an excellent awareness of, and respect for, the feelings, values and beliefs of others. They are knowledgeable, for instance, about the religious festivals and cultural traditions of fellow pupils from different ethnic backgrounds to their own, and see this variety as enhancing the school and their own experience.
18. In lessons, pupils show very marked respect for the expertise and standing of teachers. They generally build on this to question, pursue lines of thought, and seek advice rather than assume a passive role. The vast majority respond enthusiastically to being drawn actively into lessons through such strategies as paired work, presentations and question and answer sessions. Around school in general, even in crowded areas, such as dinner queues, behaviour is mature.

Whilst lively, pupils are rarely destructive and the school site is remarkably free from graffiti and litter. Overall, pupils show a very high level of pride in their school.

19. These positive traits reflect well on the pupils themselves and on their parents. They are also very much the result of sustained, well-directed effort by the school. All policies regarding opportunities for pupils, teaching and learning styles and rewards and sanctions are the outcome of extensive discussion and have all involved consultation with pupils. They are also more clearly understood and more fully subscribed to by pupils than is usual. Most significantly, the school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and minimising oppressive behaviour are applied with excellent consistency. Rewards are instantly available when merited; sanctions are applied in good time and lifted as soon as it is wise. It is significant that some pupils enter the school with a lack of self-discipline and some have negative attitudes. Short-term exclusions in the school are high but effective: relatively few pupils reoffend, virtually none move on to permanent exclusion and the dominantly positive attitude to school prevails and gradually converts many of those initially inclined to misbehaviour.

### **The school has established very good links with parents and the wider community**

20. High priority has been given by the school to building very strong and effective links with parents. The school provides far better than average information to parents at very frequent intervals and canvasses parental opinion regularly on key issues. Parents responded very positively indeed to the pre-inspection questionnaire and to similar surveys conducted by the school. With only very rare exceptions, parents indicate that the school listens to them and responds very promptly and appropriately to any issues they raise.
21. 'Beacon School' status has enhanced and made formal the very effective links the school had already established with primary schools and the post-16 colleges nearby. Similarly, cultural and business links are very strong. These reflect the high-level personal and organisational skills of the staff setting up these links.
22. Collectively, these very positive relationships ensure that the school remains popular and continues to have parents who strongly support their children's learning. There is also a marked beneficial impact on the curriculum, which shows very good continuity from primary and into post-16 education, and which is enhanced by vocational and cultural links

### **Relationships between pupils of different ethnic and social backgrounds, and between teachers and pupils, are excellent**

23. A great strength of the school is its success in establishing a context in which excellent relationships prevail. Pupils represent both economically and educationally advantaged families, and, more often, families with significant disadvantage. Over 40 languages are spoken at home and a very wide range of ethnic groups of European, Asian and African origin is represented in school. In virtually all lessons seen during the inspection, boys worked very well with girls, pupils of one ethnic group with those of another, high-attaining pupils with lower attainers. This integration often took place in the formal context of paired work, but positive, informal relationships were also typical of lessons in all year groups. Pupils demonstrate a very high level of respect for their teachers, yet see them as very approachable. They behave and speak pleasantly to staff and show no reluctance in offering answers, asking questions and admitting when they need help. For their part, teachers care for their pupils and want to help them to succeed. Fairness and consistency in speaking to pupils are of a very high order; all are called by their forenames and dialogue is conducted face-to-face.
24. Outside the classroom, pupils speak of teachers as being amongst their best adult friends. The mix of boys and girls of different ethnic backgrounds at break times, and as they moved between lessons, is typical of the interaction of pupils.

25. Pupils see extensive evidence that the school staff wish to treat them as young adults: their opinions and wishes are listened to in lessons, through formal consultations on aspects of the school improvement plan, and through the School Council. Informally, they are strongly aware that teachers go out of their way to support their personal and academic progress.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **The use of assessment data to set challenging targets for pupils is not yet as good as most aspects of the school's work**

26. There are aspects of use of assessment that the school carries out very effectively. However, target-setting, while satisfactory in comparison with schools nationally, is not as effective as it might be.
27. In Years 7 to 9, there is limited use of National Curriculum Levels to help to define pupils' standards of attainment on entry to the school, and then to suggest the levels they might expect to reach by the end of Year 9. Whilst day-to-day marking is analytical, regular and very constructive, pupils' progress is not as well planned for on a longer time scale. Similarly, the strategies for pupils' improvement in a subject are not usually expressed in terms of the National Curriculum criteria by which they will be assessed at the end of Year 9. This partly reflects the need for staff to use National Curriculum assessment criteria more regularly, interpreting them and exemplifying them to pupils in accessible language. Teachers in some subjects have begun this process, but it is not widespread.
28. Both in Years 7 to 9 and in GCSE courses in Years 10 and 11, the targets set reflect the likely outcomes if pupils are to sustain steady progress. They lack the added challenge of reflecting the 'best possible result' indicated by the pupils' full potential as shown in standardised assessment tests. In schools with best practice, both types of targets are commonly used.
29. There is also less involvement of pupils in setting and working towards targets. In Years 7 to 9, they have little knowledge of longer-term expectations, though they are well informed about specific day-to-day features of their work in need of improvement. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have a better knowledge of their predicted grades at GCSE, though practice is inconsistent. Across the school as a whole, targets are well used to guide teachers' planning, but less well used to motivate and challenge pupils and to allow them to take joint responsibility with teachers for the standards they reach.

### **Standards in modern languages have been below the school and national average in recent years**

30. GCSE results in modern languages, while indicating broadly satisfactory added-value in most years, have been below school and national averages over the last four years, reflecting areas of leadership and teaching which were less successful than the school's norms.
31. Inspection evidence indicates that teaching and leadership in modern languages are now good. This is because of close monitoring and evaluation of the work of the department by senior managers, the appointment of a new head of department and other changes to provision. There is, as the school acknowledges, a need for improvement to sustain momentum to ensure that standards soon match those in other subjects.

### **Attendance, while broadly average by national standards, remains a hindrance to progress for a minority of pupils**

32. Much good work is being done to raise the level of attendance, and especially to reducing the rate of unauthorised absence. The poor attendance of a small group of pupils, however, and the taking of holidays during term time, have a disproportionate impact on the school's attendance figures. While pupils' progress is very good, overall, the school only achieves this by sustained collaboration between teachers and pupils to ensure continuity in learning and the interruption in attendance hinders progress.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

33. In order to help raise standards still further in this very successful school the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) ensure that target-setting acquires the features of best practice nationally by
  - introducing in Years 10 and 11, as already planned, greater pupil participation in setting and meeting targets, with these reflecting the best possible GCSE grades based on earlier testing, as well as projected grades based on current trends.
  - establishing similar systematic and challenging targets for all pupils in Years 7 to 9, based on National Curriculum levels and the criteria they contain, and giving pupils considerable responsibility for meeting them.  
*(see paragraphs 26-29)*
- (2) ensure that pupils' attainment in modern languages at least matches the school's average by monitoring and supporting teaching and leadership in the department so that the current improving trends are sustained.  
*(see paragraphs 30-31)*
- (3) take all possible steps to improve the attendance levels of the minority of pupils with significant absences, so that the continuity in their learning is no longer interrupted to the detriment of their progress.  
*(see paragraph 32)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	37
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	15	8	8	0	0	0
Percentage	16	41	22	21	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	752
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	128

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	32
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	307

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	300

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.7
National comparative data	8.1

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.4
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 (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	72	77	149

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	41	54	52
	Girls	62	61	47
	Total	103	115	99
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	69 (80)	77 (62)	66 (58)
	National	64 (63)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	22 (20)	38 (32)	25 (25)
	National	31 (28)	43 (42)	34 (30)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	53	52	57
	Girls	63	61	61
	Total	116	113	118
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	79 (63)	76 (56)	80 (71)
	National	65 (64)	68 (66)	64 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	32 (20)	37 (31)	29 (39)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	73	79	152

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A* to G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	33	64	70
	Girls	48	74	76
	Total	81	138	146
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	53 (51)	91 (94)	96 (96)
	National	48 (47)	91 (91)	96 (96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	38.1
	National	39.0

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

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	9
Black – African heritage	38
Black – other	6
Indian	164
Pakistani	7
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	4
White	376
Any other minority ethnic group	147

### Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	7	0
Black – African heritage	7	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	10	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	69	0
Other minority ethnic groups	7	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 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	52.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.2

#### Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	29
Total aggregate hours worked per week	537

#### Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	61
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#### Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25.2
Key Stage 4	20.9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

### Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	2,716,965
Total expenditure	2,743,129
Expenditure per pupil	3,648
Balance brought forward from previous year	84,664
Balance carried forward to next year	58,500



### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	16.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	28.2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	752
Number of questionnaires returned	224

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	42	9	4	1
My child is making good progress in school.	45	48	6	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	56	4	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	47	19	6	0
The teaching is good.	39	51	4	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	44	12	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	51	44	3	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	33	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	31	51	13	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	46	43	4	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	48	5	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	44	14	0	12

### Other issues raised by parents

- A minority of those present at the parents' meeting were concerned about standards in modern languages, although others contended that these problems had now been largely resolved.