

# INSPECTION REPORT

**St THOMAS à BECKET RC HIGH SCHOOL**

Wakefield

LEA area: Wakefield

Unique reference number: 108299

Headteacher: Mr Brian Donnellan

Reporting inspector: Mr Andrew Henderson  
2941

Dates of inspection: 19<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> May 2003

Inspection number: 249134

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:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Barnsley Road Sandal Wakefield West Yorkshire
Postcode:	WF2 6EQ
Telephone number:	01924 303545
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Cllr. Mrs Olivia Rowley
Date of previous inspection:	10 <sup>th</sup> November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St Thomas à Becket High School is a voluntary aided Catholic comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11-16. The school is smaller than average and is regularly oversubscribed; at present, there are 780 pupils on roll, with more boys than girls. The school serves a wide, diverse area which includes areas of social deprivation as well as social affluence. The vast majority of pupils are Catholics (97 per cent), drawn from Wakefield parishes, and the remainder from parishes in Leeds and Barnsley. Attainment on entry is average, and includes the full range of ability. The proportion of pupils on the register for special educational needs (10 per cent) is below average, including an average proportion with formal statements, most of whom have emotional or communication difficulties. The school includes an integrated unit for a small number of pupils with autism. Few pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, and none is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal (6 per cent) is below the national average. Since the previous inspection, the school has gained Investor in People status and Sportsmark, and has recently been granted the School Achievement Award in recognition of its positive progress.

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

St Thomas à Becket is a very effective school that provides a high quality of education for its pupils. The school has many outstanding features, not least its high expectations for learning, achievement and the fulfilment of each pupil's potential. The school's strengths far outweigh the areas needing further improvement. Throughout the school, pupils are achieving very well because teaching is very good, and because they have very good attitudes to their learning. Results in national tests at the end of Year 9, and in GCSE examinations, are well above average. The school is very well led and managed, and provides very good value for money.

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

- Results in Year 9 tests and GCSE examinations are well above average, and are improving at a faster rate than nationally. Pupils make very good progress throughout the school.
- Teaching and learning are very good overall, and have improved since the previous inspection.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good, and provision for their personal development is a major strength.
- The excellent leadership of the headteacher and very good management of the school are keys to its many successes.

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

- Provision for ICT in Years 10-11, and its use and application in subjects, does not meet statutory requirements.
- Accommodation, including specialist provision for science, ICT, physical education and special educational needs.

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

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

Improvement since the previous inspection in 1997 has been very good. There has been impressive progress in further improving academic standards across the school. Test and examination results have improved more quickly than the national rate of improvement. This has been the outcome of very good teaching, which itself has improved, and the growing strength of pupils' attitudes to their learning and their aspirations. Issues raised by the previous inspection have been successfully tackled. Key management appointments in science and geography have proved notably successful. Work in monitoring, evaluating and sharing good practice in teaching has also been very effective, and has been supported well by a strong professional development programme, and by the school's participation in the national strategy for Years 7-9. The school acknowledges that this work is on-going, and is currently targeting the development of learning as a key factor in its drive to narrow the gap between boys' and girls' achievement.

## 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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	B	A	A	A

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

### Years 7, 8, 9

Overall results in National Curriculum tests for pupils aged 14 in 2002 were well above the national average, and were above average compared with results for similar schools (that is, schools having a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals). Girls did better than boys, in line with the national picture, with both ahead of their respective national averages. Results in English and mathematics were well above average, and were above average in science. Since the previous inspection the rate of improvement has been above the national trend. The standards of work seen in Years 7-9 during this inspection are well above average in English, mathematics and science. This is also the case in all other subjects sampled. These standards represent very good achievement and progress in Years 7-9 for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, given their average starting points in Year 7.

### Years 10,11

In 2002, pupils' GCSE results were well above average. Since the previous inspection results have improved year by year at a faster rate than the national picture. The governors set high, challenging targets and the school has exceeded these. Most pupils enter for more than eight subjects. The proportions gaining five or more passes at both A\*-C grades and across the full range of A\*-G grades were well above average for all schools, and for those in similar circumstances. In the majority of subjects the proportion gaining A\* grades was at least equal to, and in many instances better than, the national average. Commendably, almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs, gained at least five grades at GCSE. Girls generally do better than boys at GCSE reflecting the national difference. This was the case in 2002 when the variation was much wider than usual, with girls well above and boys above their respective national averages. Given their earlier attainment levels at the end of Year 9, boys did better than predicted whilst the girls achieved outstanding results. Results in most subjects in 2002 were well above the national average, with the remainder close to or above average. They were highest in business studies, geography, art and English literature. Standards in work seen in Years 10 and 11 reflect the school's GCSE results and are well above average overall. They represent very good achievement and progress by pupils of all capabilities from the end of Year 9.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	<b>Very good.</b> Pupils like school. They are very committed to their work and value the opportunities provided.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	<b>Very good.</b> The vast majority of pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. A very small minority are less cooperative, but are responsive to the school's high expectations. The number of short-term exclusions is average for a school of this size, but permanent exclusion is very rare indeed.
Personal development and relationships	<b>Very good.</b> Relationships are a major strength. Pupils get on very well with each other and with their teachers. They benefit greatly from the good opportunities for responsibility.
Attendance	<b>Very good.</b> Attendance has improved and is well above average. Unauthorised absence is rare.

## 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.*

The quality of teaching and learning is very good throughout the school and forms the foundation for the school's success. Teaching overall shows a marked improvement since the previous inspection and reflects the positive impact of the development work that has taken place since then. Almost half the teaching seen was very good or better whilst the remainder was never less than good. This consistency of teaching quality across subjects is a major strength and, together with pupils' very good attitudes, is the key factor in their very good achievement.

Teaching and learning are very good in Years 7-11 in English, mathematics and science. Teaching in these three core subjects meets all pupils' needs very well, making suitably challenging demands on them. Elsewhere, the best teaching is in geography (notably improved since the previous inspection) and business studies, and accounts for the pupils' high GCSE results in these subjects.

A substantial strength of teaching is the excellent knowledge and understanding of subjects which teachers combine with their very high expectations for attainment – they convey their enthusiasm in such a way as to make pupils of all abilities want to learn. Pupils respond very well and there is a shared commitment to learning that ensures their progress is very good. The great strengths in teaching lie particularly in the clarity of explanations of concepts and tasks provided by the teachers, and the effective way that they build on previous learning. The high quality of the teachers' preparation is another key factor in many lessons. Homework is used very well, although marking is of variable quality – the best practice indicates clearly how pupils can improve the work they have done. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs supports their very good progress. The overall good teaching of basic literacy and numerical skills requires sustained support to ensure it becomes an integral part of work across the whole curriculum.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	<b>Satisfactory.</b> The curriculum is well planned and mainly offers a suitable and challenging range of learning opportunities to all pupils that matches their needs and aspirations, particularly in Years 10-11. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good. Other good features include the development of alternative work-related opportunities and links with local colleges. However, current arrangements for ICT in Years 10-11 do not ensure that all pupils receive their National Curriculum entitlement.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	<b>Good.</b> All pupils with special educational needs have full access to the National Curriculum, and make very good progress. Most successfully complete GCSE courses. Their individual education plans set appropriate targets, but would benefit from more specific information as to how these can best be achieved. Provision for pupils in the autism resource is very good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	<b>Very good.</b> The very small number of pupils achieve very well, and receive appropriate support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>Good.</b> Provision for moral and social development is very good, including pupils' personal, social and health education and arrangements for citizenship. The school provides well for pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are well supported in coming to an appreciation of their own culture and, to a lesser extent, the diversity of culture in British society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	<b>Very good.</b> The arrangements for ensuring pupils' health and welfare, including child protection, are very good. The school also monitors and promotes their good behaviour and attendance very well indeed. Assessment procedures are good; pupils' progress is monitored very well on a regular basis, and the information gained is used well to set targets and inform planning.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	<b>Very good.</b> The leadership, direction and vision provided by the headteacher are outstanding. He is very well supported by a strong senior management team that is decisive in its actions, and ambitious for the school's further improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	<b>Very good.</b> Governance is a key strength. The governors are diligent, well-informed, and monitor standards well. They determine school and financial priorities, and evaluate change and development thoroughly. They are strongly committed to the school's well-being. Statutory requirements are met, except for the provision for ICT in Years 10-11.
The school's evaluation of its performance	<b>Good.</b> The school is taking stock and evaluating its performance well. Examination results are evaluated very well. Subject performance is monitored, and good procedures for the management of teachers' performance are in place. The school compares its performance with that of others, both locally and nationally, as a basis for its strategic planning.
The strategic use of resources	<b>Good.</b> Financial management is very secure, and principles of best value are applied well. Spending reflects school priorities, and specific grants are properly used. There are sufficient teachers. Resources are adequate. Accommodation has shortcomings, particularly in science, physical education, ICT and special educational needs.

## 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 teaching is good, and their children are make good progress.</li> <li>Their children like school, and their behaviour is good.</li> <li>Their children are expected to work hard, and helped to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>The school is well led and managed, and is approachable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some parents are concerned about inconsistencies in homework.</li> <li>Some parents feel that the school does not work closely enough with them, and does not provide enough information about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>Some parents would like a more interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Parents hold the school in high regard and have considerable confidence in it. Inspectors strongly endorse their positive views. The range of extra-curricular opportunities is considered to be good. Homework is used very well by most teachers to support learning – parents' concerns have some foundation, however, and there is need to check the consistency with which homework is set and marked. The reports to parents meet statutory requirements, although inspectors judge there is room for more informative comments in some subjects. Relationships between the school and parents are good, but inspectors feel, and the school acknowledges, that they could be more involved in the life and work of the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**The results of Year 9 tests and GCSE examinations are well above average. Pupils make very good progress throughout the school.**

1. The school ensures that its pupils achieve well in national tests and examinations. Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 and in GCSE examinations at the end of Year 11 are both well above average for all schools nationally. This represents very good progress and achievement for the pupils across their five years in the school because their standards of attainment when they join the school in Year 7 are generally average. Parents are very happy with the school's standards, and justifiably so.

2. The results of the national Year 9 tests have improved since the previous inspection at a faster rate than the national trend. In 2002, results in English and mathematics were well above average, and were above average in science. Taken together, the overall results were well above average for all schools nationally, and were above average for those schools having pupils from similar backgrounds. Girls did better than boys, in line with the national variation, but both boys' and girls' results were ahead of their respective national averages. Given their overall average starting points, these results reflect the very good progress made in Years 7-9 by pupils of all ranges of attainment, including those having special educational needs, or for whom English is not their mother tongue.

3. The GCSE average points score for 2002 was well above average for both all schools, and similar schools. The rate of improvement has been ahead of the national trend. The results for both boys and girls are above their respective national averages. Whilst girls do better than boys, generally the variation has fluctuated. In 2001, the difference between boys' and girls' results matched the national picture, whilst in 2002, girls achieved particularly well and the variation was much wider than usual. Given their prior attainment in Year 9, boys did better than predicted in 2002 whilst the girls achieved outstanding results. The proportion of pupils gaining five or more passes at the higher A\*-C grades has steadily improved, year by year, since the previous inspection, and in 2002 was well above average for all schools, and for similar schools. The proportion gaining five or more passes across the full A\*-G range was also well above average both for all schools and similar schools. Pupils with special educational needs do well in examinations, and very few fail to achieve GCSE passes in at least five subjects. Overall, this high level of performance has ensured that the school exceeded its challenging targets for GCSE by a considerable margin.

4. GCSE results for subjects in 2002 were significantly above average in English, mathematics, science, English literature, geography, art, business studies, design and technology, and drama. They were above or close to average in all other subjects. Results in business studies, geography, art and English literature were particularly high, and included very high proportions of pupils achieving the highest A\* and A grades. Indicative of the outstanding GCSE performance by girls in 2002 were their exceptional results in English literature (where close to one third of girls achieved A\*) and geography (where a quarter of them gained A\*).

5. Standards in work seen reflect these GCSE results, and throughout Years 10 and 11 pupils continue to build on their improving attainment. Standards are well above average, and pupils' achievement and progress are universally very good across all abilities. Pupils with special educational needs make very good advances in their learning; the progress made by those for whom English is not their mother tongue matches that of their peers in relation to their prior attainment.

**Teaching and learning are very good overall, and have improved since the previous inspection**

6. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good in Years 7-11. During the inspection every lesson seen was at least good, and almost half were very good or better. Teaching in each of the core subjects, English, mathematics and science, is very good. This consistency of teaching quality serves pupils' needs very well, and enables them to access advanced knowledge and greater skills both within each subject and across the whole curriculum. Both parents and pupils recognise and appreciate the

very good quality of teaching provided by the school.

7. Teaching shows notable improvement since the previous inspection, particularly in Years 7-9, and is the main reason for the school's marked progress. Unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated. Overall, the consistency of the quality of teaching that now obtains is a key feature of the school's success. The impact of the school's work since the previous inspection on improving teaching and learning by the identification and sharing of good practice has clearly been effective. This has been consolidated through the school's professional development programme and by the recent intensification of focus on the different ways in which pupils learn. As a result, the strong teaching quality combines with pupils' very good attitudes and learning skills to ensure that they make rapid progress, leading to the improving test and examination results evident since the last inspection.

8. Teaching is notably effective in business studies. The improvement in geography is also particularly impressive, and accounts for the high GCSE results in both these subjects. However, across the school, examples of very good teaching feature in every subject sampled. Teachers know their subjects very well, and their enthusiasm, even passion for some, communicates itself to the pupils and creates an atmosphere of real enquiry in many lessons. In a very good science lesson on the refraction of light in Year 8, for example, the teacher's enthusiasm and strong understanding of the subject led to clear explanations of key concepts and encouraged focused investigation by the pupils. Teachers' careful planning, positive presentation of their subjects, and expectation that pupils are engaged in critical analysis and review were clearly illustrated in a very good Year 9 geography lesson in which pupils effectively developed their understanding of the environmental issues affecting Antarctica. Many teachers have successfully created very good learning environments in which pupils are able to develop both their academic and personal potential.

9. The clarity of the beginning of lessons is a strong feature of much teaching. Teachers are very effective at setting the scene, explaining the aims of the lesson and ensuring that pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn. The positive impact of the school's involvement in the Key Stage 3 initiative has extended widely to include all subjects. Pupils' progress and understanding are regularly checked in lessons, and drawn together in effective summaries. A Year 10 mathematics lesson where pupils investigated the effectiveness of various cross-sectional guttering shapes demonstrated many of these qualities. In this lesson, the clarity of purpose from the outset, the benefits of sustaining a good pace and of keeping pupils challenged were clearly evident. Teachers generally have a very good awareness of setting time limits to activities to ensure that lessons move at a good pace and pupils feel challenged by the tasks.

10. The management of pupils is a considerable strength of the teaching. Relationships are very good. Teachers are very good role models and relate well to pupils, providing a high level of individual support and encouragement. Their expectations of behaviour and response are high – pupils do not fall short of these, and their aspirations and commitment to their work are notable. Many teachers are good listeners, and treat all pupils with equal respect. As a result, the school is free from tension and confrontation, and has a strong atmosphere of trust and consideration in which pupils are able to thrive in their learning and personal development. The high level of trust was clearly evident in a very good Year 7 English lesson. Pupils were able to confidently explore sensitive issues, such as suicide and drug abuse, arising from their presentations about their personal reading.

### **Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good, and provision for their personal development is a major strength**

11. The school successfully promotes very good attitudes amongst its pupils. These strong attitudes support learning very effectively, and are reflected in the pupils' rapid acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils work well, are very motivated and organise their work, including homework, efficiently. They apply themselves to their studies with increasing confidence and concentration as they move through the school. Pupils are placed in a strong position to take responsibility for their own learning by being made aware of their potential as learners, and of their progress towards the clear learning objectives set by teachers. Good use is made of assessment information relating to pupils' prior attainment to set targets for individuals. The tracking of pupils' progress is good, and helps both pupils and teachers identify any barriers to learning. There is a tangible culture of learning in the school,

and little variation in the commitment to ensuring that all pupils reach standards that do justice to their capabilities.

12. Pupils like school and value the opportunities it offers. Their attendance is very good, and they are attentive and cooperative in lessons. Around school, pupils are friendly and helpful. They respond well to the levels of responsibility expected of them, and their parents recognise how the school is helping them to develop into mature, sensible young people.

13. The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils, both in class and around school, is very good. The school's codes of conduct and expectations encourage a high degree of personal responsibility. Most pupils respond well because these are clearly understood, valued and supported by the school community.

14. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Pupils relate well to their teachers and trust them. Bullying is rare, and pupils say they feel safe and at ease in the school. The good relationships amongst pupils are a very strong feature – pupils from varied social and ethnic backgrounds are very well integrated. Most share a common faith and this results in a high level of harmony across the school. Pupils of all backgrounds collaborate effectively in lessons, and show respect and concern for each other.

15. The school's provision for pupils' personal development and welfare is a major strength. Their very good attitudes are the outcomes of this provision, which ensures personal recognition and concern for the individual pupil. Induction into the school in Year 7 ensures that pupils settle quickly and happily. The subsequent house system develops a strong family cohesiveness that promotes very good social development, whilst provision for moral development is of very high order. In addition to the school's faith and religious education teaching, the good PSHE programme is a key vehicle for promoting good citizenship and developing pupils' personal values. The school council also develops good citizenship by giving pupils from every year the opportunity to demonstrate initiative and social responsibility. The good programme of extra-curricular opportunities that include extensive and well-supported sports activities provides both enrichment and further enhancement of pupils' social development.

**The excellent leadership of the headteacher and very good management of the school are keys to its many strengths.**

16. The overall leadership and management of the school are very good. As a result, the school is a strong, harmonious community of learners with a clear sense of purpose and direction that permeates its day-to-day practice. The school aspires to 'develop the potential of every individual by providing the best education...' and is succeeding to a high degree. Pupils, parents, staff and governors are in no doubt about the school's determination to establish and sustain the highest standards of learning, achievement and personal development. High expectations of effort and behaviour are set within a framework of very good relationships and care, and have a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes and response to school. The consistently high expectations are set, monitored and driven by the excellent leadership of the headteacher.

17. Since tackling the issues raised in the previous inspection the school has gone from strength to strength. The headteacher, ably supported by a very good senior management team, has skilfully harnessed the energies of the teachers. He has been the driving force behind the school's catalogue of initiatives and improvements since the previous inspection; the success of these and the progress made are testimony to the decisive, yet humane leadership of the headteacher.

18. The headteacher and senior team work very well together in providing consistent leadership, expectation and support for the school. A key improvement has been the revision of the management structure following the previous inspection. The leadership team is committed and hardworking, and their complementary skills and expertise are used effectively. Systems of accountability and support are clear and very effective, and both curricular and pastoral coordination are strong.

19. School development planning is clearly focused on improving teaching and learning. Realistic targets are set for development. The current plan is skilfully constructed and is rooted in a clear analysis

of the school's needs, incorporating both local and national priorities. There is clear concern for pupils at all levels of attainment.

20. The management of subjects is very good – relationships with senior management are strong, and subject priorities are closely linked to the school development plan. There is a growing responsibility for departmental monitoring of teaching and learning, and for self-evaluation. Regular subject reviews are held, and a good system of performance management is in place. The staff have formed themselves into a cohesive, self-critical team. Though there are strong informal systems for exchange of information, care is taken to hold regular meetings. All the staff have the opportunity to make a contribution to discussions on key decisions. As a result, there is a very strong unity of purpose and drive to improve across the whole school community.

21. The governing body does its work well. Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and are playing a major part in its development. Through their clear committee structure and appropriate programme of meetings, governors are very well informed and provide strong support for the school. They have very productive links with the headteacher and senior staff, and take an active part in determining the school's priorities. Governors are well-informed about target-setting, and properly hold the school to account for the educational standards achieved and the quality of education provided. Statutory responsibilities are generally met, except for the provision for ICT in Years 10-11. The school's finances are in good order, and the headteacher and governors monitor the budget very well. They work hard to ensure that the school obtains best value and that money is well spent. Taking all factors into account, the school gives very good value for money.

22. The outcomes of the very good quality of leadership and management across the school are reflected in the improvements in academic standards and in the quality of teaching. Despite shortcomings in the school's accommodation standards have improved steadily, and this is testimony to the clarity of leadership, and to the commitment and dedication of staff. The school is extremely popular amongst parents and their children. They recognise that the quality of its work is unusually good. It is the very good quality of leadership and management, and the very good relationships that enable the school to function as successfully as it does. The results of national tests and examinations are used well by the school to judge its effectiveness. The school continues to learn from its evaluations and experience and reveals a strong commitment to continued improvement.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **Provision for ICT in Years 10-11, and its use and application in subjects, does not meet statutory requirements.**

23. Although ICT is taught well in Years 7 and 8 and good standards are achieved, in Years 10 and 11 the use and application of ICT are not given sufficient emphasis in other subjects. As a result, statutory requirements are not met.

24. Since the last inspection, the provision of computers has improved, and two dedicated teaching rooms have been established. Further improvement is planned including increased computers in the library, but the school's limited accommodation is holding back development. Currently there is insufficient access to enable subjects to develop their use of ICT effectively in Years 10 and 11 – notable exceptions are mathematics and design and technology. The introduction of a GCSE ICT course next year will resolve the problem only for the limited number of pupils who are able to choose the course, and may further reduce opportunities for other subjects. More improvement is required, and this is acknowledged by the school.

25. There is need to ensure that the use and application of ICT across the curriculum fulfils requirements. Appropriate assessment procedures are required that record both pupils' experience and levels of attainment, and ensure that pupils in Years 10 and 11 successfully access the skills required to enhance their learning across the full range of subjects. At present, ICT is not well embedded in most subjects in Years 10 and 11, and current provision requires urgent development.

## **Accommodation, including specialist provision for science, physical education, and special educational needs.**

26. The school was established in the 1960s for fewer than 500 pupils. Currently there are 780 pupils on roll. There has been insufficient capital investment to increase the accommodation and properly meet the needs of the pupils at present in the school. As a result, accommodation is unsatisfactory. The school has clearly identified the shortcomings of the current provision, and their need has been acknowledged. However, funding has not been made available to rectify the shortcomings. Classrooms are too small for some classes, there is a lack of social areas, and toilet accommodation urgently requires refurbishment. Priority has been given to improving the toilets with the governors approving the allocation of monies from the school's own fund to ensure that this takes place.

27. Whilst recognising that there is little that the school can do to improve the situation without the allocation of funding, inspectors judge that the following areas are of particular concern:

- science laboratories are insufficient and inadequate;
- inadequate provision for ICT;
- poor changing accommodation, and limited indoor facilities for physical education
- unsatisfactory base accommodation for special educational needs.

28. The standards in the school are well above average overall, and are improving despite, rather than because of the school's accommodation. It is a tribute to the commitment and professionalism of the staff and the attitudes of the pupils that the potentially debilitating effects of the weaknesses in accommodation have been overcome whilst standards have been improved.

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

29. The school has few weaknesses. However, in order to maintain its momentum for improvement and to raise standards further, the governors, headteacher and staff should now:

(1) Improve provision for ICT in Years 10 and 11 by:

- ensuring the widespread development and application of skills in ICT for all pupils, across all subjects;
- developing effective assessment procedures which audit and record pupils' experience and achievement in ICT across the curriculum;
- improving computer provision, as finances allow.

(2) Improve accommodation by:

- refurbishing toilet accommodation at the earliest opportunity;
- continuing to seek urgently funding for capital improvement projects that will overcome the difficulties created by the present unsatisfactory accommodation in science, physical education and special educational needs.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	29
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	11	17	0	0	0	0
Percentage	3	38	59	0	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.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	780
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	50

#### Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	20
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	82

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

#### 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	14

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.7
National comparative data	7.8

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	1.2

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
	2002	80	80	160

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	53	63	60
	Girls	70	65	59
	Total	123	128	119
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	77 (75)	80 (78)	72 (82)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	50 (44)	60 (61)	44 (47)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	55	60	70
	Girls	73	70	75
	Total	128	130	145
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	80 (82)	81 (83)	94 (89)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	40 (42)	51 (51)	48 (43)
	National	32 (31)	44 (42)	34 (33)

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
	2002	75	67	142

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	40	71	74
	Girls	54	66	67
	Total	94	137	141
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	66 (62)	96 (99)	99 (100)
	National	50 (48)	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	46.8 (46.9)
	National	39.8 (39)

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



### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	-
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	-
Indian	2
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	-
Chinese	-
White	739
Any other minority ethnic group	29

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	-	-
Black – African heritage	-	-
Black – other	-	-
Indian	-	-
Pakistani	-	-
Bangladeshi	-	-
Chinese	-	-
White	46	0
Other minority ethnic groups	4	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	46.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.2

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

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	320

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.2
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 3	25.7
Key Stage 4	21.4

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001-02
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	£
Total income	1,891,280
Total expenditure	1,793,632
Expenditure per pupil	2,326
Balance brought forward from previous year	126,350
Balance carried forward to next year	97,647

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	11.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	14.6

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
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	780
Number of questionnaires returned	235

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	39	52	7	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	48	47	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	54	6	1	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	51	20	5	1
The teaching is good.	31	62	2	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	50	19	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	46	47	3	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	36	3	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	21	47	20	4	8
The school is well led and managed.	30	58	2	2	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	54	3	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	45	17	3	12