

INSPECTION REPORT

EAST BERGHOLT HIGH SCHOOL

Colchester

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124847

Headteacher: Mrs Moira Humphreys

Reporting inspector: Marjorie Glynne-Jones

2918

Dates of inspection: 12th – 14th May 2003

Inspection number: 254788

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

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Heath Road
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Colin Firmin

Date of previous inspection: April 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

East Bergholt High is a mixed rural community comprehensive school near Ipswich, on the Suffolk border with Essex. Its local education authority area is Suffolk. With 895 pupils on roll and broadly equal numbers of boys and girls, it is an average size for secondary schools. Since the last inspection it has grown by about a tenth. It is a popular school which receives pupils from six main primary schools, as well as drawing pupils from a wide area extending into Essex. Most pupils use the bus service to travel to school. The number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds or whose mother tongue is not English is extremely small. While the majority of pupils are drawn from areas of high social advantage, the circumstances of about a quarter of the pupils are less advantaged, a change since the last inspection. The proportion eligible for free school meals is below average. There is a below average proportion of pupils with special needs among whom the proportion with statements is average. Pupils' needs mainly concern behavioural difficulties and dyslexia, and a small number have a physical impairment. Pupils in the current Year 7 joined the school with well above average attainment. Incomplete data the school received for previous years show entry standards to be at least above average.

Awards: School Curriculum Award 1997, Investor in People 1997 and 2001, Beacon School 2001, School Achievement Award 2002, 2003, Sportsmark 2003.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with notable strengths. Standards are well above average and learning and teaching are good, with particularly high quality in the preparation for GCSE examinations. Good leadership and management overall, with strengths in the cohesive approach of the leadership group (senior staff team), are moving the school forward effectively. Pupils' achievement from their above average standards when they join the school is good and the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is sustaining standards which are well above average at GCSE and pupils' actual scores are rising faster than the national rise.
- A very clear sense of direction for the school's development is being set by the headteacher and governing body.
- There are very good arrangements for the professional development of teachers and other staff.
- The school gives very good attention to the welfare of all its pupils.
- Wide-ranging and stimulating opportunities are provided for activities outside the curriculum.

What could be improved

- There are some inconsistencies in the quality of provision across the school which are not always being picked up and sorted out by the school's monitoring procedures, in particular, in the way assessment and marking, homework and behaviour are dealt with.
- Although satisfactory, the range of subject and course opportunities within the curriculum for pupils of all attainment levels is limited, in part due to the school's rural location.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in 1997 the improvement is good overall. Standards are being maintained both by Year 9, where scores are rising at the same rate as they are nationally, and by Year 11, where the rise is faster. Teaching has improved well. On the two issues identified in the last report, there is good improvement in the provision for religious education in Years 10 and 11, but statutory requirements for collective worship are still not met. There

is significant improvement in the provision for physical education.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils 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	A	A	A	A

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

Similar schools are those whose pupils are drawn from similar social circumstances as indicated by eligibility for free school meals.

- The key judgement is on what pupils achieve from their standards on entry over their five years in the school.
 - There is evident strength in the schools' sustaining of well above average results in comparison with all schools. True for points scores and five or more A*-C grades.
 - The similar schools comparison in the box above, A, is the one normally used in inspection reports for judging achievement. However, an additional judgement, specifically related to results, is now provided by OFSTED on the gain from Year 9 test results to GCSE results. This shows an above average gain, B, and so good achievement.
 - The school is successfully improving results. Since 1998, the trend in average point scores is above the national trend, a key judgement because it refers to how well all pupils have performed. Pupils usually follow no more than nine subjects to GCSE in line with the school's wish not to overload young people at this stage.
 - The 100 per cent pass rate in 2002 puts the school in the top five per cent nationally, A*, for this comparison for pupils gaining at least one GCSE grade, as it is for five or more A*-G grades.
 - The school's targets for 2002 were well exceeded for average point scores as well as for five or more A*-Cs. For 2003, the A*-C target set in 2001 is now comfortable given the 2002 results; the school's data on pupils' prior attainment indicates that results will be lower for the current Year 11.
 - The 100 per cent GCSE pass rate in 2002 puts the school in the top five per cent nationally – A*, for this comparison.
-
- In Year 9 tests, pupils' performance in 2000, 2001 and 2002 is well above average, A.
 - Compared with similar schools, these results are above average, B.
 - However, from their Year 6 results (at primary school) to their performance in Year 9 in 2002, these pupils made well above average gains. A*, a greater gain than over Years 10 and 11.
 - Since 1998, the trend in Year 9 results matches the national trend.
 - The Year 9 targets for 2003, required for the first time, are reasonably challenging.
-
- The work seen at each stage show well above average standards overall, representing good achievement from pupils' at least above average standards on entry.
 - A strength is the good achievement of pupils with special needs.
 - In the most recent development, the school has received a new value-added measure of results from Year 9 to Year 11. In this first year of its availability, it is appropriate to refer to the measure, but also to the fact that it is early days in its use. Nonetheless the school is delighted that it is A*.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good: most pupils take their work seriously and they collaborate well in small group work. In about a quarter of the lessons seen they demonstrated very good attitudes to their work. However in too many lessons there was some low level disruptive behaviour.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good or better generally and in three-quarters of the lessons seen. The incidence of fixed-term exclusions is average while in 2001-2002 there was a high number of permanent exclusions. High number of permanent exclusions. The school's helpful internal referral system, one of the ways it is tackling behaviour issues, shows an increasing incidence of referrals.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. There are many good opportunities for pupils to raise funds for charity and take responsibility in day-to-day school life, for example as mentors and prefects to which they respond very well. However, the friendly relationships between staff and pupils are too often also characterised by lack of courteous consideration for other people by some pupils.
Attendance	Very good; the rate is well above average and unauthorised absence is well below average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

- The overall quality is equally good at each stage; in each stage, in about eight in every ten lessons seen, teaching was good or better.
- Very good teaching was seen in over a third of the lessons in Years 7 to 9, and in just over a quarter of the lessons in Years 10 and 11.
- Two excellent lessons and one unsatisfactory lesson were seen.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are well taught and the teaching in English, mathematics and science is good.
- Pupils' individual needs are generally met well.
- Strengths are the range of methods being established to cater for the different ways pupils learn, a school priority for development, and teachers' knowledge of examination requirements as well as their expertise in teaching pupils how to handle the requirements.
- Although satisfactory overall, the arrangements for marking and homework are not consistently carried out across the school.
- Consequently, pupils' learning does not always benefit from their knowing exactly how well they are doing and how to make improvements.
- The overall judgement of good class management reflects some variation in quality between very good and satisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. There is scope for extending the rather limited range of opportunities within the curriculum, a matter currently being explored by the school. Pupils benefit considerably from a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Careers education is good, with good provision for work experience and through the Young Enterprise scheme.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good, with very active governor support; good arrangements for utilising local education authority resources where these are available. Pupils are well supported in class lessons by learning support assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, both in the daily life of the school and through the curriculum. There are many planned activities for group-work in lessons, although this is not always as effective as it could be because some pupils do not listen carefully to the contributions of others. A good contribution is made to pupils' consideration of social, moral and ethical issues through the school's work for charity; a notable example is the very well supported 'sleep-in' to raise funds for the homeless. Pupils' cultural experience through sports and the arts is strong.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good: arrangements for child protection and the monitoring of health and safety are very good; governors play an active role in both. Support and guidance for pupils' personal development are good for example through very good arrangements for transfer from Year 6 to Year 7. However, strategies for improving behaviour are not always effective enough, although sometimes very good. School records show a steady rise in the incidence of anti-social behaviour, evident during the inspection for example, through several false fire alarms. Although satisfactory overall, with some very good practice, the arrangements for assessment are not implemented consistently across the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. Strong leadership by the headteacher, with very effective contributions from senior staff, is substantially improving the quality of learning and teaching. The inconsistencies in the quality of provision across subjects, for example, in assessment and marking and teacher's management of pupils, reflect the variable quality of departmental management and have been identified for improvement by the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The ably led governing body is active in exploring the school's future involvement in the 14-19 curriculum. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through very effective systems such as individual links with a year group as it moves through the school, and the presence of a governor at every parents' evening. However, governors do not ensure that the statutory requirement for collective worship is met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall, and thorough, although not sufficiently rigorous in the way the pace and effectiveness of developments are promoted and checked. Priorities for improvement are appropriately identified. Recent strengthening of the procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching bodes well for the future, although previously these were not rigorous enough to bring about improvement effectively.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. Very good use of resources for staff development. There is some flexibility in the use of staff and curriculum time, for example, for the new ASDAN course; this is being further explored in order to broaden the curriculum, for example by offering vocational courses. Satisfactory attention is given to achieving best value. Despite its best efforts, the school has not been able to recruit staff for key appointments in mathematics, but achieved this shortly after the inspection.

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 are expected to work hard and achieve their best. • Their children like school and make good progress. • They feel confident about approaching the school with an enquiry or problem • The teaching is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements for homework being put into practice equally well across the school • The range of extra-curricular activities • The school working more closely with parents

The 44 per cent return of completed parents' questionnaires is good. These returns together with the comments made by the 57 parents (6 per cent) at the pre-inspection meeting and the 58 parents who responded with written comments, show that in general, parents have a good regard for the school. However, a significant number are very concerned about the effects of staff vacancies on their children's education, the inconsistencies in the work of departments, and the way behaviour is managed. A small number are concerned about the way exclusions are dealt with. The inspectors find that parents are right to be concerned about staffing issues, as indeed are staff and governors, and that there is scope for strengthening the school's monitoring of temporary staffing arrangements. Inspectors agree with the concern of parents about the inconsistencies in the way subject departments carry out their responsibilities, for example about homework and the code of conduct, although they find the arrangements to be satisfactory overall. They find that the school has rightly identified inconsistencies in practice across the school as an area for improvement. Procedures for managing exclusions are carried out correctly and meticulously. There is good practice in asking parents to complete a written evaluation when they have received their child's annual report. The returns in the current year are very positive.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The school is sustaining standards which are well above average at GCSE, pupils' actual scores are rising faster than the national rise and their achievement is good.

1. In comparison with all schools nationally, pupils' GCSE scores have been well above average for the last four years up to 2002, when the target was well exceeded. The trend over the last five years, from 1998, has been a rising one. The pupils' scores have risen more than twice as fast than nationally is the case. This is true for boys' scores, while those for girls have risen nearly three times as fast. This improvement is reflected in the grades pupils have gained. Parents will have enjoyed the school's newsletter celebrating the achievement of 81 per cent for five or more A*-Cs in 2002. Since 1998, this figure has risen by 17 per cent. Each of the grades A, B and C were gained in about a quarter of the GCSE entries in 2001, and A* grades were gained in an eighth. Nearly all pupils in 2002 gained five or more A*-Gs; the figure has been well above average since 1999 and has also risen since 1998. All pupils gained grades in all the examinations they took in 2002 which puts the school in the top five per cent nationally - also true in 2001.

2. As shown in the 'Information about the school' on page 6, the overall standard of the current Year 7 is well above average as measured by their scores in the Year 6 national tests, although when looked at by subject, there are differences in standards. English scores were well above average, science scores above average, and mathematics scores below average. Their Year 6 results in terms of the levels achieved were in the top five per cent nationally in each of the three subjects, English, mathematics and science. In previous years, the school has not received full information about Year 6 results to help in the tracking of pupils' progress. The reasonable amount of data on the standards on entry for the current Year 10, suggests that overall, standards were at least above average.

3. For the first time, there is national data available to track individual progress in national tests from Year 6 to Year 9. In 2002, this 'matched' data from test results shows that pupils made well above average gains over Years 7 to 9 – a very good achievement. Nonetheless, as the school now rightly recognises, it still needs to be fully informed 'up front' about pupils' Year 6 results in order to track their progress in each of the core subjects over Years 7, 8 and 9. For example, to explore why in 2002, the improvement made in English and science was well above average, as was true of pupils' scores overall, while in mathematics the amount of improvement was better and in the top five per cent of schools nationally.

4. The national 'matched data' is not yet available for tracking individual progress from Year 9 to Year 11. The system used is to compare the school's average Year 9 scores in 2000 with its average scores at GCSE in 2002. This shows that pupils' gains were above the average gain of schools whose Year 9 results were broadly the same as at East Bergholt. Over Years 10 and 11 therefore, pupils' achievement overall is good. In terms of A*-Cs, the results in almost all subjects were significantly above the national average in 2002. The exceptions were business studies and geography where results at A*-C were broadly average, and German, where they were below average. School documents prepared for the inspection outline the staff changes and recruitment difficulties which in 2002 affected pupils' performance in German, as well as the findings of the school's monitoring which lead to greater optimism about the 2003 results. The modern languages department has benefited from work by the local education authority languages consultant on the provision for German. Helpful strategies have been put into action to bring about improvement in geography. For example, consultancy from the local education authority advisor for geography, training for the department, visits to other schools and a review and change of examination syllabus.

5. At GCSE, there is also data to show how well pupils did in each subject in comparison with the rest of their subjects that can be compared with the national picture. The data show that boys and girls together did significantly better in three subjects than is the case nationally: English literature, double award science and French. It also shows that in five subjects, pupils did significantly less well than nationally is the case: art and design, business studies, geography, German and mathematics. The business studies option at GCSE has been replaced by information and communication technology (ICT). Recruitment difficulties in mathematics are however, recorded. These have clearly been a worry for many parents as evidenced by comments at the pre-inspection parents' meeting as well as those written for the inspection team on questionnaire returns.

6. Good teaching is leading to pupils' good achievement, in particular teachers' subject expertise and generally very good knowledge of examination requirements. Pupils are taught how to revise. Some very good revision lessons were seen. For example, using ICT to ensure speed revision and feedback in physical education. The use of flash cards in science gave the teacher instant feedback about how well pupils knew chemical formulae, enabling the teacher to give very good speedy feedback to individuals. In mathematics, the teacher kept the pace of learning high and used praise well to motivate pupils. The planning took detailed account of specific areas where individuals needed to consolidate their learning. In excellent French teaching, quite pacy movement between oral and written activities, with frequent recapping about the format of the examination and how to interpret the layout of the paper, drew confident responses from a potentially challenging group of young people. Pupils feel they are very well prepared for examinations through help with study skills, revision skills, a revision timetable, and lots of practice papers.

A very clear sense of direction for the school's development is being set by the headteacher and governing body.

7. The school is justifiably proud of its rising results, while rightly determined to continue to raise pupils' achievement. The spread of GCSE grades from C to A* reported in paragraph 1 shows where this can be achieved. To this end, substantial development work is underway focused on the quality of pupils' learning. In particular, this is targeting the range of ways which lead to successful learning for different individuals and how teachers can facilitate this through their planning. The lead by the headteacher and senior staff is strong, demonstrated over the last year by the stimulating training programme for the whole staff involving external speakers, and by the persistent attention given to learning in school documents, especially the development plan. The confidence and enthusiasm which the programme has engendered among staff is clearly in evidence, both in their teaching and in discussion. For example, Year 7 pupils were highly motivated by their active learning focused on research and evidence, so that their historical knowledge, understanding and skills were enhanced. Heads of department are in agreement that the school needs to improve the variety in the teaching and feel that the staff are receptive to new approaches.

8. Having identified the particular challenges for 14-19 developments for a rural 11-16 school like East Bergholt, governors are exploring with the local education authority and other similarly placed schools how they can respond to this initiative. Rightly, the governing body wishes to make sure that pupils at the school have an equal opportunity to benefit from work-related studies and activities in the curriculum. The timely explorations have the capacity to serve pupils well and move the school forward through rigorous review of existing provision and budget priorities. As yet, the school's strategies for responding to the changing needs of the curriculum are at an early stage, as reported in paragraph 21. There is, however, a useful two-year arrangement for two senior staff posts to oversee the two stages, Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11. These posts are mainly aimed at strengthening the corporate sense across

pupils' year groups at each stage, and as a consequence across the school. Although they do not coincide with the 14-19 age span, they are nevertheless providing a helpful basis for looking at the curriculum with sharper differentiation of the particular needs at each stage, particularly through establishing the national Key Stage 3 Strategy strongly. Also, for example, through the close links with Connexions, now providing careers advice and guidance in the school. The range of possibilities currently being explored are significant features of the plans for specialist college status.

There are very good arrangements for the professional development of teachers and other staff.

9. The school's documentation shows a thorough and systematic approach to providing for the professional development of newly qualified teachers, and comprehensive and well-planned programmes for the staff as a whole. This applies equally to the arrangements for performance management. There is a relevant programme for induction with clear guidance about what needs to be done and when. Newly qualified teachers receive detailed assessment reports on their lessons which have been observed. New staff feel well supported, particularly when seeking advice. A sample was seen of impressive individual staff portfolios prepared for ICT training made possible through the New Opportunities Fund (NOF). Staff commitment to professional training and development is high. For example, because new teachers in the physical education department had missed the NOF training, the head of department (also new) arranged a very good programme for the department. An outcome was the excellent use of ICT seen in a revision session with Year 11 pupils who were well motivated by the use of an interactive screen.

10. The recent training days for the whole staff on different ways of learning have generally enthused teachers. For example, in preparation for the inspection, many provided information about lessons planned to incorporate a range of approaches. Broadening pupils' experience of the ways they can learn through developing teachers' skills is a major priority in the school's improvement plan. This was demonstrated by lower attaining pupils in Year 9 who collaborated effectively in groups to prepare a holiday brochure. The teacher skilfully adapted comments to harness boys' energy and draw girls into the discussion. Staff have found the training sessions on behaviour management helpful. However, when talking about areas for improvement, staff often referred only to their own subject's approach, rather than also taking a whole-school perspective.

The school gives very good attention to the welfare of all its pupils.

11. Staff give high priority to the care of pupils, both in school and on trips and visits. Health and safety matters are thoroughly dealt with and given good attention in key subjects such as science and design and technology. Governors are fully involved and oversee procedures rigorously, through an annual premises inspection backed up by termly reports from the staff responsible. There is daily discussion with the caretaker about matters reported by staff through the school's referral procedure. The reporting procedures are thoroughly monitored by senior staff. Safe use of equipment was suitably emphasised in lessons seen in science and design and technology. Longer-term priorities identified in the premises improvement plan for further improvements to the security of the buildings are being explored. A good number of staff, both teachers and support staff, are trained in first aid. The nominated staff member responsible for child protection issues has had up-to-date training and ensures that new staff are well informed about the procedures, while personally briefing teacher trainees. All staff have received in-house training on child protection issues. A particularly strong feature is that a governor has a specific remit for child protection and is fully trained

12. Through the pastoral system, there is strength in the care taken over the personal well-being and development of pupils with special needs, including those with behavioural needs and those experiencing difficulties in their lives. Evidence of the school's success is demonstrated for example by the fact that the majority of pupils who have been temporarily excluded once do not re-offend. Individual support plans are prepared for pupils identified as in particular need of personal support and every effort is made to keep them on track. The pupils benefit, as others, from the school's current focus on improving learning. For example, in science, the teacher ensured that pupils with a special needs target of maintaining concentration well were involved in the class-work. The school's tracking sheets, recording pupils' assessments over their years in the school, show for example that some lower attainers with below average science results in Year 6 are on course to achieve an average standard at GCSE.

Wide-ranging and stimulating opportunities are provided for activities outside the curriculum.

13. Pupils are enthusiastic about the very good range of activities and opportunities available out of lessons. They support these activities well and the extra buses on one evening a week make this possible, although not serving one village. There was a 'buzz' around the building on the Tuesday of the inspection when many different activities were taking place after school. A good example is the very high standard achieved in the 'Young Enterprise' Scheme where pupils set up and run small companies. The activities involved help them develop a wide range of personal skills, including very high quality presentations of their work with sophisticated use of ICT. A group was observed holding an efficient board meeting, with agenda and minutes, and effective discussion of ideas.

14. A good contribution is made to pupils' consideration of social, moral and ethical issues through the charity work in the school. Many pupils participate, notably in the recent 'sleep-in' to raise funds for the homeless, an event about which parents spoke appreciatively. Opportunities for taking part in cultural activities are strong in music, drama and sport, including football for girls, and visits have been arranged to the Tate Modern gallery. In the current year, the school's sports prowess has been recognised through the Sportsmark award. During the inspection, in the absence of the head of music, the senior choir rehearsed for 'The Lion King' with skill, commitment and a very good sound. From time to time, the school welcomes performers with expertise in different cultural traditions. There are also occasional whole-school activities such as a week with a multicultural emphasis. As support for their citizenship studies, 30 pupils from Years 9 to 11 have taken part in World Issues Activities and 12 pupils in Years 10 and 11 attended the recent Amnesty International Conference.

15. Pupils in Year 11 are particularly appreciative of the drop-in revision sessions that are provided in all subjects. Subject sessions support pupils well, for example, through enabling lower attainers in design and technology to complete a task and achieve well. The Average attendance in history is 12; in ICT, 20 pupils were busily engaged in ICT, many continuing work, some just 'playing'. All showed enthusiasm for computers, concentration and perseverance, and were practising techniques and using structured programmes. A study group held in the library provides help from a teacher and from a learning support assistant for pupils who feel in need of support, including those with special needs. The computer rooms are open and used until 5.00 each evening.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

There are some inconsistencies in the quality of provision across the school which are not always being picked up and sorted out by the school's monitoring procedures, in particular, in the way assessment and marking, homework and behaviour are dealt with.

16. Inconsistencies in the quality of provision are having some negative effects on pupils' learning. The scrutiny of samples of pupils' work in subjects to check on quality is a regular feature in the school's calendar. In a similar scrutiny during the inspection* pupils' work revealed considerable variation in the quality of practice across the year groups. For example, some pupils' work receives only ticks, while that of others receives detailed diagnostic guidance. It is clear that teachers give useful oral feedback to individuals in lessons, for example as seen in some very good revision sessions and in English, French and German. Nonetheless, teachers' written marking comments should make a significant contribution in pupils' self-directed work to make improvements for themselves, an aspect of well-developed independent study skills. Some books seen lacked such helpful comment. In others, the comment was mostly about presentation or about the need to complete work. Work is not always dated and it is not always clear which work is homework, both essential information for tracking progress. It was not possible to discern a regular pattern of homework provision in the work seen, confirming a point made by pupils in discussion about the irregularity with which homework is sometimes set. Parents feel that homework arrangements could be improved. Some pupils commented about the lack of marking during periods of staff absence and a significant number of parents expressed worries about their child's progress in mathematics because of the staffing situation. These comments about marking apply to pupils' work in between the formal assessments carried out at the end of units of work. For these assessments, efficient cover sheets are used to record the marks which tell pupils the standard they have reached. In mathematics, for example, these assessments take place three or four times a year. There is scope for strengthening the policy to ensure that the school's expectations of staff are absolutely clear and that concise guidance for easy reference is provided.

** in the sample provided by the school as required in English, mathematics and science in Years 7, 9 and 11, and in some books seen in lessons in other subjects.*

17. The school is improving its practices for assessment by developing a more effective, coordinated approach to its work. It analyses its results and has provided training to help staff to evaluate the results in their own subject. Most departments are now doing this well. Pupils in Year 11 are given general targets for the number of GCSEs they should be aiming for, with a 'gold target' which aims higher. A copy of individual target sheets is posted to parents. However, a general target for a number of GCSEs does not give pupils a clear idea of how they have progressed in individual subjects and what they could aim for in each of them. In talking with inspectors, pupils commented that they would like more information and discussion on an individual basis. Currently, there is no school requirement that departments should set subject targets for each pupil and regularly review individual progress against them.

18. A minority of pupils offer challenging behaviour in lessons, a circumstance about which all staff managers are well aware, as are the pupils themselves, across year groups. Staff have received helpful training on approaches to behaviour management although the skills involved were not securely in place in all the lessons and registrations seen. A lesson seen taught by one of the heads of department had to be put on hold on two occasions because there was a need to support a teacher in an adjacent classroom as well as deal with off-task behaviour in his own lesson. In too many lessons, there is some low level disruption for example, through an undercurrent of off-task chat, very evident in one of the

Year 11 lessons seen with a top set and in a Year 7 mixed ability group. In lessons in Year 8 and a Year 11 middle set, good learning was achieved by good teaching, but only because of the teacher's constant reminders to keep pupils on task. Some heads of subject commented that dealing with such low level disruption takes up their time. On occasion, teachers responded to interruptions from older pupils with requests that were made quite rudely, but did not remind them about the school's code of conduct. By contrast, in Year 9, similar attitudes were quickly scotched by a timely reminder about courtesy and respect. As they move round the school, pupils do not always show an acceptable level of courtesy towards each other and towards adults. Staff are finding the new, temporary key stage manager posts helpful in dealing with behaviour issues, although this was not the rationale for the creation of these posts. Rather the aim is to support the development of a new learning ethos across the school.

19. There is enthusiasm among staff for developing learning. The school's expectation (in the development plan) is that teaching should utilise the guidance in the national 'Key Stage 3 Strategy' to plan lessons. Despite the enthusiasm and the expectation, the framework of beginning lessons with a 'starter' activity and concluding with a 'plenary' is not consistently in evidence. There is no record from monitoring showing how well this framework is being established, a factor which can slow the pace of improvement. Nonetheless, the evidence from the inspection shows a very good variety of learning activities was planned in two-thirds of the lessons observed.

20. A range of the school's lesson observations was scrutinised during the inspection which were recorded by senior staff as part of the subject self-review processes. This self-review process is very helpful practice, as demonstrated for example, by the very good review recorded by the English department. However, although the findings from lesson observations have been drawn together for the subject and reported to subject leaders, the findings for different subjects have not been drawn together for the school as a whole, nor reported to all the staff and the governors. As a consequence, the school's self-review document prepared for the inspection did not incorporate judgements about specific strengths and areas for improvement in the quality of teaching across the school. This is being put right in the current term. The evidence from lessons and pupils' work seen during the inspection is that the school's procedures have not always been effective in ensuring consistent quality either between subjects or within subjects. There is scope for strengthening the school's monitoring, including the monitoring within subjects and for additional checks on the effects of staffing situations, such as those in mathematics, in order to safeguard pupils' learning and achievement.

Although satisfactory, the range of subject and course opportunities within the curriculum for pupils of all attainment levels is limited, in part due to the school's rural location.

21. Pupils all follow the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education in Years 7 to 9, with personal and social education and separate drama lessons in Years 7 and 8. With the exception of drama, all these subjects can be taken in Years 10 and 11. The school's wish to offer a drama option at GCSE has not yet been realised due to unsuccessful efforts to recruit a drama teacher. This is now on hold pending the planned review of the curriculum. Most pupils follow nine examination courses, mainly from the subjects studied in Years 7 to 9, including the recent addition of a GCSE physical education course, examination courses in ICT, and the religious studies course taken by most pupils. However, across the range of attainment, pupils have little choice in developing interests and career possibilities beyond National Curriculum subjects. There are no courses offering an opportunity for vocational study or 'mixed economy' programmes incorporating part-time placements at a further education college. There are no courses aimed specifically at extending the most able

pupils, or for the very small minority of pupils at risk of becoming sufficiently disaffected to reject the school's values and codes of behaviour. Pupils commented that they would like more choice of subjects at GCSE. The school's response to the 14-19 curriculum is set to tackle this and as part of its bid for specialist status the school is looking to develop courses in the separate sciences. Its strategic plan identifies vocational education as an area for development for example, and consultations are underway with other schools and the local education authority to find a way forward. A successful start has been made in the current Year 10 through the ASDAN course aimed at improving the provision for the small number of pupils who need an alternative to the usual curriculum on offer to suit their capabilities better.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

22. To ensure that the school realises its aim of giving all pupils an equal opportunity to succeed, the governing body, with the headteacher, other members of the leadership team and staff, should attend to the following priorities for development.

- (1) Ensure that there is consistently good practice across subjects by strengthening the school's arrangements for monitoring its work, by:
 - determining the essential aspects of the school's provision which should be regularly monitored in the period between subject reviews
 - determining how the two-yearly cycle of subject reviews should draw on routine monitoring
 - determining the frequency of monitoring to ensure timely improvements
 - providing training for all staff managers on monitoring
 - determining the contribution of governors to the monitoring programme
 - reporting to the whole staff and the governing body on the findings of monitoring
 - giving high priority to implementing additional monitoring arrangements to check the effects of specific circumstances such as those resulting from inability to recruit staff(Paragraphs: 16-20)

- (2) Broaden the range of courses in Years 10 and 11 to:
 - include a wider range of academic courses which lead to AS- and A-level courses post-16 and degree courses in higher education
 - include vocational courses which lead to a range of post-16 vocational opportunities, including advanced vocational study
 - strengthen the alternative provision for pupils whose needs are not well met by a full range of school-based academic courses
 - provide flexibility for gifted and talented pupils, for example through early opportunities for taking GCSE(Paragraph: 21)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	Years 7 – 11	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils		23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	12	18	8	1	0	0
Percentage	5	29	44	20	2	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 the percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 - 11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	895
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	36

Special educational needs

	Y7 – 11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	20
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	129

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	4.9
National comparative data	7.8

School data	0.4
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	88	92	180

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	57	64	66
	Girls	82	83	81
	Total	139	147	147
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	79 (77)	83 (87)	83 (83)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	48 (41)	65 (66)	54 (50)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	66	64	66
	Girls	65	82	80
	Total	151	146	151
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	86 (90)	83 (84)	86 (76)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	61 (50)	51 (31)	63 (34)
	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	93	88	181

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	71	91	92
	Girls	76	89	89
	Total	147	180	181
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	81 (77)	99 (99)	100 (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	52.1 (48.2)
	National	39.8 (39.0)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	863	27	5
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	1	1

The 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)	48.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.5

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	19
Total aggregate hours worked per week	447

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	74.7
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	25.4
Key Stage 4	23.8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/2003
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	£
Total income	2 810 153
Total expenditure	2 785 144
Expenditure per pupil	3 112
Balance brought forward from previous year	222 330
Balance carried forward to next year	247 339

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	21
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	21

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	895
Number of questionnaires returned	390

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	36	52	8	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	51	6	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	17	63	11	4	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	55	19	6	2
The teaching is good.	21	67	6	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	50	10	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	42	48	6	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	44	3	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	20	59	14	3	4
The school is well led and managed.	30	56	5	3	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	52	9	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	53	13	2	11

Other issues raised by parents

- A small number of parents expressed concern about the way exclusions procedures are handled by the school.
- Many parents expressed concern about the school's managing of the staffing situation in mathematics.