

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Astley

Tyldesley

LEA area: Wigan

Unique reference number: 106538

Headteacher: Mr A E Bell

Reporting inspector: Mr R C Drew
7281

Dates of inspection: 22-24 May 2000

Inspection number: 187471

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 to 18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Manchester Road Astley Tyldesley Manchester
Postcode:	M29 7EE
Telephone number:	01942 884144
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Clegg
Date of previous inspection:	January 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL 11-14

Leadership and management are very good, providing a clear sense of direction and strong commitment to improvement, with substantial gains having been made since the previous inspection.

English provision across the school is particularly strong, offering large numbers of pupils of all ages excellent teaching within an impressively managed department.

Teaching is very good, enabling the pupils to learn effectively so that good progress is made and above-average standards attained.

Support for pupils is very good, with the school making very effective provision for spiritual, moral and social development; pupils respond with very positive attitudes and good behaviour.

The formal curriculum and the extra-curricular activities provided by the school offer pupils very good scope for academic and personal development.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED 14-16

Special educational needs provision, while much improved since the previous inspection, does not consistently use appropriate teaching materials in Key Stage 3, and lacks the close working relationship needed between the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and heads of subjects, especially English and mathematics.

A range of subjects at Key Stage 4, notably art, science, German and Spanish generally perform at nationally average levels rather than the above-average standards more typical of the school.

Accommodation is unsatisfactory in many respects and significantly constrains the school's activities.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER? 17

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St. Mary's Catholic High School is a large 11-18 comprehensive school with 1679 pupils on roll, including 238 sixth form students. Over 98 per cent of pupils are white and 183 are on the register of special educational needs, with 55 of these at stages 3 to 5 and 38 with formal statements. These proportions broadly match national averages, and other indicators also suggest that pupils enter the school with prior attainment in line with national levels.

Pupils come from a wide geographical area centred on Astley. Although the proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is below the national average, eleven per cent compared to 17 per cent, census data for the area served by the school shows that pupils have a broadly similar range of home backgrounds as that found nationally. Exclusions are low and the school is over-subscribed.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school since it has a great many strengths and remarkably few significant weaknesses. Pupils make good progress at each key stage, academic standards are above average, and pupils display very positive attitudes. Teaching and management are both very good and the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Leadership and management in the school are very good. At every level, there is a clear sense of direction and a strong commitment to improvement. Gains since the previous inspection have been good, especially in physical education and information and communications technology.
- English provision across the school is a particular strength, offering large numbers of pupils of all ages very good teaching within an impressively managed department.
- Teaching quality is very good, enabling pupils to learn effectively, so that good progress is made in both key stages and in the sixth form and above average standards are reached in many areas of the school's work.
- The school provides very good personal support for pupils, giving effective spiritual, moral and social guidance, and pupils respond with positive attitudes and good behaviour.
- The formal curriculum and extra-curricular activities provided by the school offer pupils very good scope for academic and personal development.

What could be improved

- Gains in provision for pupils with special educational needs since the previous inspection need to be extended so that pupils in Key Stage 3 with special educational needs benefit from more appropriate teaching materials and a closer working relationship between the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and heads of department, especially in English and mathematics.
- A range of subjects at Key Stage 4, notably art, science, German and Spanish, should raise standards which already match national ones, in order to equal the above-average standards more typical of the school.
- Accommodation in the school remains unsatisfactory in many respects and significantly constrains the school's activities. It adversely affects the provision for whole-school activities and for many specific subjects, whilst poor decorative order and excessive litter spoil the school environment.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1996. Since then, the school has responded well to the key issues raised at the time and has made good overall gains. It has also established management structures and a corporate attitude which give it the capacity to make good improvements in the future.

In the previous inspection report, improvement was requested in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching; the use of reports; long-term planning; use of registration time; special needs provision and multi-cultural education. The library was considered a poor resource and several statutory requirements were not being met. The school now monitors its work very well, and teaching quality has I

mproved considerably. Assessment arrangements are now well managed, registrations are streamlined, and provision for pupils with special educational needs is better, especially in Key Stage 4, though there is a need for further improvements at Key Stage 3. Pupils are now introduced to a far wider range of cultures than before, though there is less focus on the main ethnic minority cultures of the United Kingdom than in some schools. While planning in the school is already effective, its longer-term objectives and ways of reaching them are under-played in formal planning documents.

Reports to parents have become clear and consistent in format, but the written content does not always give sufficient information about pupils' progress and their strengths and weaknesses.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 and 18 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	B	B	B	B
A-levels/AS-levels	D	D	C	

<i>Key</i>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

At the end of compulsory education, standards are consistently above average, compared with all schools nationally and compared with those with a similar free school meals factor. 57 per cent of pupils gained five or more A* to C passes compared with 47 per cent nationally. This represents good achievement by pupils, since their attainment on entry to the school is no more than average.

In the sixth form, standards matched those found nationally in 1999 and were just below this level in previous years. The school's average points score was 15.9 in 1999, compared with 17.9 nationally. However, the open-access policy of the school allows students of widely different prior attainment to take A-level courses and these results represent good added value.

Attainment and the progress made by pupils and students is particularly strong in GCSE English, drama, business studies, music and design and technology. No subjects regularly fall below national averages in terms of A* to C passes, though art and design did so in 1999. Several of the subjects

have been below the school's impressive standards, notably art, science, Spanish, German and history, though they match national norms and indicate the basis for improvement.

In the sixth form, standards in 1999 were above the national average in English, communications studies, French, German, music, physics, physical education, Spanish, theatre studies, and GNVQ courses. Inspection evidence confirmed that these standards are being at least maintained in all subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils show high levels of enthusiasm for school life and are particularly strong in their interest and involvement in the many activities offered.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. In lesson it is consistently very good and this is matched in most respects by behaviour around the school site. However, pupils are surprisingly poor at clearing away their own litter.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils' personal development is very good. They show respect for one another; they take initiative well and work effectively in groups. Good relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are a feature of school life.
Attendance	Overall levels are broadly average. Punctuality during the day is good, though the start of the day is often spoilt by the late arrival of buses. Some classes in Year 10 and 11 have below-average attendance

Overall, the positive and constructive attitude of pupils is a striking feature of the school. The very good relationships form the basis for much of the good progress and fine teaching observed in lessons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching in the school is very good. Of the lessons seen during the inspection, three per cent had excellent teaching, 27 per cent very good, 43 per cent good and 23 per cent satisfactory.

In Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, teaching is very good; in Key Stage 3 it is good, with many of the strengths of the other two key stages, but a few areas with slightly more scope for improvement.

Teachers show very impressive subject expertise in all key stages. Their expectations of pupils are high in Key Stage 3 but even higher in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Similarly, pupil management is good in Key Stage 3 but very good and at times excellent in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. In Key Stage 3, the use of assessment is better than that found nationally, while in the remainder of the

school it is very good. Homework is used satisfactorily overall in Key Stage 3, though some staff fail to ensure that pupils use their planners to record homework properly.

Pupils' learning is very good overall, especially in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form. Pupils show strong interest and good powers of concentration.

Teaching of basic skills, especially literacy, is good in both key stages.

Teaching is particularly good across the school in English, physical education, history and information and communications technology. It is also very good in music and mathematics in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form and in communication studies and business education in the sixth form.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is good. All the required subjects are in place at Key Stages 3 and 4, others enhance provision. In the sixth form, a particularly wide range of A-levels is available, as are good GNVQ courses. Extra-curricular activities are numerous and of very good quality.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is satisfactory. There is good individual care for pupils from the special needs department and staff as a whole. There is scope for improvement in the quality of the teaching materials used and in aspects of joint planning and management with other key staff.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is very good. Spiritual, moral and social development are all very successfully promoted by the school, and so are many aspects of cultural development, though this does not yet focus sufficiently on the multi-ethnic communities of the United Kingdom.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is very good care for pupils. There are good systems in place to monitor needs and progress, and teaching and non-teaching staff show an extremely high level of commitment to their pupils

The school has augmented the statutory curriculum with many well chosen additional courses such as drama, A-level communication studies and the GNVQ programme, so that pupils have a very good range of formal subjects to study. At the same time the number and quality of extra-curricular activities is most impressive. Literacy provision is good across the curriculum as a whole and numeracy teaching has begun to develop in line with national strategies.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and other staff with key roles provide very good leadership and management. They give a strong and clear sense of direction and are good at turning aims and ideas into reality.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well informed about the school and fulfil all their responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is very good at analysing its strengths and weaknesses. More staff than usual are involved in this process at senior level and this contributes well to a shared sense of responsibility for improving performance.
The strategic use of resources	Funds are effectively developed in support of the priorities set out in development plans. The school applies the principles of best value very well in all aspects of its work.

The example given by the headteacher in knowing staff and pupils very well and offering clear, decisive leadership is a strength of the school. Other senior managers and pastoral and subject leaders ensure that management is very good at every level in the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They find it easy to approach the school • They like the progress their children make • The quality of teaching • Their children like going to school • The school is well led and managed • The help the children get to become more mature and responsive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework arrangements • The information about how their children are getting on • The degree to which the school works closely with parents

Most parents are pleased with the school and the education it provides. The inspectors' findings agree with the positive views expressed by parents.

A few parents were concerned about the amount of homework and the use of planners. Inspectors found that the amount of homework is generally satisfactory, but agree that the homework timetable could be adhered to better, and more effective use made of the planners. The school works hard to keep parents well informed and the format of the new progress reports on pupils is good: however, the reports should be more specific about what work has been covered and to what level of attainment. The school makes considerable efforts to involve all its parents in the work of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Leadership and management are very good, providing a clear sense of direction and strong commitment to improvement, with substantial gains having been made since the previous inspection.

1. There is very good leadership and management at every level in the school. This shows itself in the clear sense of education direction which governors, general managers and heads of department give. It is evident in the way the school's aims and values are closely reflected in its work. While the headteacher offers strong leadership and is a prominent figure around the school, there is good delegation to others, and through good professional development, the school nurtures the leadership qualities in those it appoints. Since the previous inspection, the school has correctly focused on the crucial areas for improvement, and its planning has led to significant changes. Its current plans also identify the right priorities, and the school's ability to monitor and evaluate progress is stronger, since senior management now involves a wider range of individuals, each with monitoring roles and other specific management responsibilities. This enables a detailed watch to be kept on progress, and staff also have more direct access to those directly in charge of specific initiatives.
2. An excellent tone is set by the headteacher. His clear, decisive leadership is matched by his detailed knowledge of staff and pupils, and by his accessibility.
3. The school's governors between them acquire a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses and this informs very effectively the support and guidance they offer. In addition to the pattern of full meetings and sub-committee meetings, governors receive and act on regular, detailed information from the headteacher. They also have representatives in school to see staff and pupils at work, and show far better first-hand knowledge of the school's activities than is usually found. As a result, they succeed in fulfilling all of their statutory responsibilities and also provide support for staff and pupils through their presence in school.
4. Management is also strong amongst heads of department. They are aware of their crucial responsibilities for standards in their subjects. In no subject is management unsatisfactory, and in most it is good or very good. It is particularly successful in history, design and technology, physical education, cross curricular information and communications technology, art, music, drama and English.
5. Collectively, managers have shown a good aptitude for tackling issues raised in the previous report. Good improvement has been made on these. In addition, many subject leaders have taken important steps to raise standards in their subjects. Sometimes the aim has been to increase existing high levels of A* to C passes at GCSE to even higher levels, as in drama, or to expand provision, as in history.
6. Administrative, clerical and technical support staff show high levels of competency, and this greatly assists in the effective management of the school.

English provision across the school is particularly strong, offering large numbers of pupils of all ages excellent teaching within an impressively managed department.

7. Whilst many subjects contribute to the school's success, the English department is particularly effective in combining a wide range of strengths. Pupils attain higher standards and make very good progress in English because of the clear leadership provided by management and very good teaching, which is well planned, stimulating and challenging. Standards are well above average, especially at Key Stage 4 and A-level, with a high proportion of pupils achieving the highest grades. All pupils do English literature as well as English at GCSE, and there is a range of options available at A-level, including theatre studies and communication studies, as well as English literature and English language. Teaching is very good at each key stage, eliciting a good response. For example, one Year 10 set gained a detailed insight into both the content and style of their poetry because they were set carefully planned tasks which challenged various groups in the class at appropriate levels for their abilities. Another Year 10 group made very good progress developing newspaper reports on the computer with the help of a framework provided by the teacher. Teachers from the English department and the information and communications technology department, with the help of the special needs assistant, co-operated well so that pupils produced accurate reports, presented to a high standard, of which they could be justly proud.
8. Written work is accurate and imaginative. Pupils write appropriately for a variety of audiences. They respond sensitively to literature and read widely, both for pleasure and to find information. They enjoy talking about their reading, including poetry, and make perceptive comments about character and style. They are confident speakers, extending their answers and using language in a more complex way as they move through the school, so that by the sixth form they can discuss at high levels such complex issues as communication models.

Teaching is very good, enabling the pupils to learn effectively so that good progress is made and above-average standards attained.

9. Teaching in the school as a whole is very good, particularly in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form; it is good in Key Stage 3. Its effectiveness stems from a wide range of strengths and the rarity of major weaknesses. Teachers are especially good at pupil management, taking the initiative in showing respect while setting high expectations. At the heart of most lessons is care for the pupil, a commitment to understanding and meeting their needs, friendship and a collaborative approach. This is backed up by firm and clear statements on what is expected regarding behaviour, and academically demanding and stimulating work. Confrontation in the classroom is remarkably rare.
10. In practical terms, these strengths can be seen in the very good relationships in lessons; in the high degree to which work is designed to meet all ability levels in a class; in the attention paid to literacy skills and in the way that pupils are expected to participate orally and take initiative for researching written and other practical tasks. As a result, teachers successfully guide pupils into being good learners so that they are better equipped than usual in taking in new information and ideas. Pupils show a keen awareness of the standards they have reached and those to which they should aspire, especially in Key Stage 4 and the sixth form, and their interest and concentration are very good.
11. This strong teaching and very effective learning have a very positive impact on progress and standards. Given that pupils enter the school with prior attainment matching national levels, it is impressive that Key State 3 tests and GCSE results clearly exceed national averages. It is equally commendable that standards in A-level and GNVQ courses reach their current level, since students begin many of these courses from a lower base than most sixth forms would accept. Achievement or 'added value' is therefore good in all three key stages, and is largely

the outcome of challenging, constructive teaching and well-developed learning habits. In a Year 10 English lesson, for example, there was excellent use of differentiated questions for various ability groups in the class, so that all pupils were challenged by the lesson. Group discussions flourished because instructions were clear and tasks appropriate, and pupils responded with a high level of involvement. In a Year 12 music lesson on harmony, the very good progress made by students arose from effective questioning by the teacher in order to ensure that key ideas had been securely grasped. The lesson had a well-planned structure, which allowed the teacher time for detailed explanation but safeguarded periods in the lesson for students to work independently and then have their work evaluated.

Support for pupils is very good, with the school making very effective provision for spiritual, moral and social development; pupils respond with very positive attitudes and good behaviour.

12. The school emphasises the importance of spiritual development in its aims and in the way it interprets the curriculum it offers pupils. In addition to formal worship, it provides many other opportunities for pupils to reflect, to appreciate beauty, suffering and the excitement of discovery in lessons across the curriculum. Moral and social development are also very well promoted by the combination of factors; the school's policies and day-to-day rules are unambiguous; the pastoral and academic work of the school consistently operate to these policies; and staff provide many very good role models. In particular, the guiding statement that "all pupils should be valued and treated with respect" is very successfully carried into the daily practice of the school. In addition, the encouragement of social development is particularly strong because of both the rich variety of extra-curricular activities on offer and the teaching style of most staff, which is one of dialogue, with pupils taking responsibility.
13. The school underpins these aspects of its work with good monitoring systems. These ensure that pupils' personal progress is carefully tracked and that there are good systems in place to monitor behaviour, attendance, and to ensure that academic progress is frequently checked and promoted. Staff with pastoral responsibilities succeed in ensuring that a very good level of care is provided for all pupils.
14. Largely as a result of this well-planned and implemented provision, pupils respond with positive attitudes and good behaviour. While a small minority indicates less commitment through absences from school or poor behaviour, the vast majority has an infectious enthusiasm for life in school. Pupils show far more interest and involvement in both lessons and in wider provision than is common, and they show a high level of maturity. Their eagerness to be involved in charity work, in school productions and in clubs and societies, as well as their active participation in lessons, all indicate a most constructive approach to school. The maturity which they acquire is central to the very good relationships found in the school.

The formal curriculum and the extra-curricular activities provided by the school offer pupils very good scope for academic and personal development.

15. The formal curriculum is good and the school more than meets statutory requirements. It offers both English language and literature as well as drama to all pupils in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. There is good access to these three subjects. There is more specific support for pupils with special educational needs than usual in Key Stage 4. Liaison between Key Stages 2 and 3 is good, with a helpful exchange of teaching and curricular expertise on literacy between Year 6 and Year 7. Unusually, information and communications technology provision in Key Stage 3 is very well co-ordinated, so that a range of subjects providing teaching in this area all meet their

obligations successfully. In the sixth form, the curriculum has been extended to include several relatively new and very popular A-levels, such as communications studies, and the provision of GNVQ courses. In addition, the enrichment course for all sixth formers is given high status.

16. Beyond the formal curriculum, the staff of the school show their commitment to pupils by offering very good extra-curricular activities. These include sport, music and drama, as well as visits and exchanges linked to languages, history and geography work. In addition, charity work involves many pupils, and staff and raises significant amounts of money. Extra-curricular activities at the school are very good because they are very numerous, the take up is very high (nearly 200 pupils take instrumental lessons, for example) and the quality can be exceptional. Drama productions illustrate this vividly, since they frequently progress from the initial performances in school to critical acclaim in national competitions or international festivals.
17. Collectively, these activities vastly enrich the pupils' personal development. For several, they have been the launch-pad for professional careers in sport, drama and music, but for all they bring enormous benefits, promoting team work, fostering co-operation with adults, setting unusually high challenges in performance and allowing pupils to see staff and activities held on school premises as fun.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Special educational needs provision, while much improved since the previous inspection, does not consistently use appropriate teaching materials in Key Stage 3, and lacks the close working relationship needed between the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and heads of subjects, especially English and mathematics.

18. The grouping of pupils with special educational needs into special classes at Key Stage 3 provides a secure foundation and does much for the social development and confidence of these pupils. However, the special educational needs specialist teaching of mathematics and English is not sufficiently co-ordinated with the work of mainstream departments. A greater involvement at management level would facilitate more flexibility in the grouping of pupils and enhance further the school's cross-curricular policy for raising standards in literacy. Close co-operation will be essential for the success of the initiative presently being undertaken by the mathematics department to address the issue of numeracy across the curriculum and to plan the school's response to the national numeracy strategy.
19. There are occasions when the teaching resources used for mathematics and English for the special educational needs teaching groups are inappropriate. Some of the materials used for English are too difficult, and some of the work in mathematics is over-reliant on work sheets that encourage a mechanical approach rather than addressing understanding.

A range of subjects at Key Stage 4, notably art, science, German and Spanish generally perform at nationally average levels rather than the above-average standards more typical of the school.

20. The school's above-average standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are quite marked, with 57 per cent of pupils gaining five or more A* to C passes, compared with 47 per cent nationally. These are achieved by many subjects recording A* to C passes for 60 to 80 per cent of the candidates, when nationally most of the candidates averages are between 40 and 60 per cent. Drama, for example, had 83 per cent A* to C passes in 1999 when the national percentage was 67; and in

design and technology the school's 63 per cent greatly outstrips the national figure of 49 per cent.

21. However, in a range of other subjects standards are not as high. This can represent a dip, possibly quite a temporary one, from previously high standards: in 1999, for example in art and design, only 51 per cent of candidates gained A* to C passes, compared with 61 per cent nationally while in history the school and national figures broadly match. However, in both subjects results in 1998 and before had been well above national levels. Elsewhere, for example in science, Spanish and German, the 1999 results are not unrepresentative, and standards have for several years in these subjects have not been as good as the school's average results across all subjects and, in particular, not as good as in English and mathematics.
22. A range of factors is involved. In science, for example, the quality of teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4 is satisfactory overall, with some examples of good teaching. However, there are several aspects of the teaching in the satisfactory lessons which contribute to pupils learning at a satisfactory rate, but not as quickly as they could. In some lessons, the pace is slightly slow, often because there are long periods of practical work with little change in activity. In these circumstances, the pupils become relaxed and lack a sense of urgency. In a very few teaching groups, pupils' progress has been restricted by poorer behaviour in lessons than is common in the school. The department has identified this problem and taken action to overcome it, either by using the school's behaviour-management strategies or by providing additional support in the classroom. The teaching in these groups is now satisfactory, but, particularly in Year 10, there remains a need to ensure that enough demands are made on these pupils to maintain their interest and concentration.
23. The examination results in science in 1999 were affected by marks in pupils' investigative coursework which were lower than usual. The department has increased its emphasis on achieving high standards for investigations, and this year's provisional marks for coursework are significantly better than those in 1999.
24. In history, the most recent results were not as high as they might have been. However, in all other respects the subject is flourishing under very effective leadership, and there is now greater attention to the use of challenging resources, materials, a variety of teaching styles and stimulation. Monitoring of pupil progress is rapidly becoming a strength and standards are set to return to their previous high levels. Similarly in Spanish and German, standards need to continue to rise through the full implementation of the well-chosen strategies the head of faculty has introduced.

Accommodation is unsatisfactory in many respects and significantly constrains the school's activities.

25. Although the school has the amount of accommodation deemed adequate for the number of pupils, the disposition of different types and sizes of teaching spaces is seriously inadequate.
26. The lack of large spaces restricts assemblies, visiting speakers, presentations and examinations and causes frequent disruption to physical education, drama and dance and therefore restricts the curriculum in those subjects. Lack of dining accommodation enforces split lunch-times, which restricts the time table, creates difficulties for extra-curricular activities and limits opportunities for staff developmental work.

27. Accommodation is inadequate and is restricting curricular opportunities in music and in the library; in physical education both indoor and outdoor facilities are limited. The total number of non-specialist classroom spaces is just sufficient for the number of teaching groups, but the proportions of large and small rooms in the many separate buildings do not match needs. This seriously affects the school's ability to group subjects together in rooms properly resourced for specialist teaching. Time is lost because pupils and teachers carry large quantities of equipment about the site, setting arrangements cannot be used flexibly to respond to changes in the performance of individual pupils, and the sixth form centre cannot be dedicated to a more mature, and appropriately adult, style of education.

28. The standard of repair and décor inside many parts of the school is poor, despite the high levels of care shown by pupils and the vigilance of staff. The school is constantly being compelled to effect short-term alterations in use of accommodation in order to respond to curricular developments. There is an urgent need to undertake a long-term review of the inadequacy of the accommodation and to plan for the changes in the National Curriculum which will affect the next five to ten years in education.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

29. Provision for pupils with special educational needs should be improved by (Paras 18,19):

- ensuring that appropriate teaching materials are consistently used in Key Stage 3; and that less reliance is placed on the mechanistic approach of published worksheets, which are too hard in some subjects, such as English;
- developing a much closer working relationship between the SENCO and the heads of English and mathematics to plan and monitor pupils' work

For standards in a range of Key Stage 4 subjects, notably art, science, Spanish, and German the school should build on current performance, which already broadly matches national levels, in order to reach the above-average standards more typical of the school. To do this the school should ensure that challenging pace and expectations in lessons are more consistent in these subjects and that effective monitoring of pupils' progress, a strength in some subjects, becomes a feature of all (Paras 20, 21, 22, 23, 24).

The school should take all possible steps to improve accommodation, addressing in particular problems caused by (Paras 25, 26, 27, 28)

- the lack of large spaces, in areas such as physical education and dining facilities
- the poor disposition of large and small classrooms, which prevents the grouping of specialist subjects areas
- the limitations in accommodation for music, design and technology, physical education and modern languages
- the relatively small size of the library
- the lack of regular redecoration
- the serious problem of litter around the buildings and grounds

In addition, attention should be given to:

- Reports, ensuring that clear, consistent references are made to strengths, and weaknesses in attainment in subjects
- Multicultural experience, especially Afro-Caribbean and Asian.
- Attendance in some Year 10 and 11 classes.
- Long-term planning of the school improvement plan.
- Consistent use of planners and homework Key Stage 3.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	66
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	27	44	24	0	2	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1441	248
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	167	11

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	38	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	183	0

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.2
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	1999	148	140	288

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	88	102	97
	Girls	111	96	78
	Total	199	198	175
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	69 (76)	69 (65)	61 (60)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	27 (46)	43 (41)	25 (26)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	79	98	80
	Girls	103	99	68
	Total	182	197	148
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	63 (75)	68 (68)	51 (69)
	National	64 (62)	64 (63)	60(62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	33 (41)	37 (44)	17 (38)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	139	141	280

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	74	134	139
	Girls	85	133	136
	Total	159	267	275
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	56.8 (53.5)	95.4 (94.0)	98 (98)
	National	46.6 (44.6)	90.9 (89.8)	95.8 (95.0)

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	41.9 (41.2)
	National	38.0 (36.8)

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for General Certificate of Education A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	55	46	101

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	14.8	17.3	15.9 (16.5)	2.7	2.1	2.4 (2.4)
National	17.7	18.1	17.9 (17.6)	2.7	2.8	2.8 (2.8)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	9	100
	National		75

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	1
Indian	2
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	7
White	1657
Any other minority ethnic group	9

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani	1	
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	11	1
Other minority ethnic groups		

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)	108.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	8.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	306

Deployment of teachers: Y7 - Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.2
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	20.3
Key Stage 4	19.5

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	3,866,232
Total expenditure	3,805,859
Expenditure per pupil	2301
Balance brought forward from previous year	137,521
Balance carried forward to next year	197,894

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1679
Number of questionnaires returned	250

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	52	6	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	50	7	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	50	5	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	53	17	6	2
The teaching is good.	36	56	5	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	42	24	8	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	46	6	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	32	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	25	47	20	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	50	40	2	2	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	47	4	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	44	10	2	8