

INSPECTION REPORT

DEBENHAM HIGH SCHOOL

Debenham, Stowmarket

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124860

Headteacher: Mr M J Crawshaw

Reporting inspector: Mr Brian Rowe
1695

Dates of inspection: 24 – 25 September 2001

Inspection number: 189421

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Gracechurch Street Debenham Stowmarket Suffolk
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Boulter
Date of previous inspection:	September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Debenham High is a mixed comprehensive school for pupils aged 11 – 16 years. It is situated in Debenham, a village in a rural part of Suffolk. The school draws pupils from an extensive geographical region. There are pupils from a wide range of social backgrounds, but the proportion from advantaged and supportive backgrounds is higher than average. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is higher than average, but there is still a very wide spread of ability. There are 467 (217 boys, 250 girls) pupils on roll, much smaller than an average secondary school. There are very few pupils from ethnic minorities and no pupils speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils (4.2 per cent) receiving free school meals is low when compared to the national average. About 8 per cent of the pupils have been placed on the special educational needs register, seven of them having statements for special educational needs. This is lower than average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an extremely effective school. The school is highly successful in ensuring all pupils achieve very well. It achieves the highest standards possible in most of its work. There are few problems of behaviour or absenteeism. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress and they achieve standards that are well above the national average by the time they leave school. Standards when compared to those in similar schools are very high. Teaching is very good overall and staff constantly look for ways to improve. Teachers have established very positive relationships with the pupils and make challenging demands of them. There are excellent arrangements to support all pupils and care for them. This has helped to create a very special ethos in the school where pupils feel valued, cared for, and determined to do well. The leadership by the headteacher is inspirational, and has established very good management within the school. The school is governed very well and gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The standards in the national tests for fourteen year olds and GCSE examinations are well above average.
- The very good quality of teaching and learning, linked to the systems for assessing and target setting, is continually raising the standards of pupils' attainment.
- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has created a very positive environment in which both staff and pupils feel highly valued and this has ensured excellent improvements in the school's development
- The excellent arrangements to care for and support pupils ensures they develop positive attitudes to learning, behave very well, attend frequently, enjoy school and are determined to achieve their full potential.

What could be improved

- GCSE results in mathematics, although good, are not yet equivalent to the very high standards reached in English and science.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

At the last inspection, which took place in September 1996, the school was judged to provide a very good education for all pupils. Since then the school has made an excellent improvement. The key issues identified in the previous report have been successfully addressed. There have also been significant improvements in other important areas. These include a continued focus on raising pupils' attainment. The school has made outstanding improvements with test and examination results. There have been substantial improvements in many subjects. Debenham High was awarded Beacon status reflecting the very high quality of education provided. It has successfully enhanced the previous review and monitoring systems. The arrangements for assessing pupils' performance have improved and the school uses this information very effectively to set individual pupils targets for progress. The management has continually been improved and the school is very aware of its strengths and any areas that need developing. Consequently, the school has the ability and determination to sustain the current high standards and make even further improvements.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A

Key	
Very high	A*
Well above average	A
Above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

When pupils enter school their attainment is above average. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well. In 2000, the school's total GCSE/GNVQ points score¹ was well above the national average and very high (in the highest 5 per cent) when compared with that of similar schools. Over the last five years, the trend in the school's average point score per pupil has risen at a faster rate than improvements achieved nationally. In 2001 the school achieved its best ever results and the proportion of pupils gaining five or more GCSE A*-C grades rose to 89 per cent. This is well above the national averages. The number of students gaining five or more A*-C grades over the last five years has also improved steadily. In the 2001 examinations, every pupil gained five or more A*-G grades and this represents a remarkable achievement for a school with a full range of ability. This result is very high compared to the national average and for similar schools. The school has been outstanding in raising the attainment of pupils during the last few years and ensuring pupils of all abilities gain notable examination success. Boys have achieved well compared to the national trend, but overall girls continue to outperform boys, as they do nationally. Pupils' progress and achievement are excellent at Key Stage 4 in most subjects. Attainment in English and science is well above the national averages and those for similar schools. Attainment in mathematics improved in 2001 and is above average, but is still significantly below that of English and science. This difference is related to previous staffing issues that have now been resolved. The school sets itself ambitious targets for improvement and is successful in achieving them.

The 2000 Key Stage 3 National Curriculum tests taken at the end of Year 9 reveal that the combined average points score for English, mathematics and science is well above the national average, and very high compared with similar schools. Results over the last few years have improved at the same pace with the national trend. In 2001 the level of attainment improved and the school achieved its best ever results that are most likely to be again well above national averages. There was a significant improvement in mathematics. Standards in all subjects remain high. In both key stages the standards seen in lessons and pupils' books reflect the attainment indicated by the test and examination results. Pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are used well throughout the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils are generally enthusiastic about their lessons. They come to school with very positive attitudes and a willingness to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Behaviour around the school, in lessons and assemblies is mature and self-disciplined.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Relationships between staff and pupils, and between the pupils themselves are very supportive. This creates a positive atmosphere for learning in which pupils flourish both academically and personally.
Attendance	Very good. Well above the national average. Pupils are keen to come to

¹ The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by their pupils with the grades attained by pupils in another school. At Key Stage 3 the Level attained by each pupil, for example, in mathematics, is given a score. A Level 4 = 27 points, a Level 5 = 33 points and so on. Therefore the average points score in mathematics is worked out by adding up all of the points based on the Level attained by pupils and then dividing by the number of pupils who took the test. Therefore, a school whose average points score for mathematics in the end of Key Stage 3 tests is greater than 33 is one whose pupils are performing above that expected for their age. The calculation is similar for the GCSE points score. The only difference is the value of the points assigned to an individual grade, for example, an A* grade is worth 8 points, A is 7 points, B is 6 points and so on until grade G which is worth 1 point.

	school. Punctuality is very good, despite some problems with school buses.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Overall, the quality of teaching is very good, has improved since the last inspection and is a strength of the school. There were no unsatisfactory lessons seen during the inspection. The teaching of English and science was very good in all years. There is evidence of very good teaching in most departments. Teaching of mathematics is good. There are no general weaknesses in the teaching and specific strengths include the management of students, the use of assessment to set targets, the effective teaching of the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Teachers are building on pupils' willingness to learn to develop independence and an enjoyment of learning. Pupils' learning is very strongly promoted through the teachers' subject knowledge, their good planning and organisation and the excellent relationships that exist throughout the school. Teachers have high expectations and set the pupils demanding challenges. As a result of knowing each pupil very well and a determination that every pupil will reach his or her full potential, teachers are successful at matching the work to meet the needs of all pupils. In a small minority of lessons teaching did not sufficiently involve all pupils. Consequently, the interest of pupils' was not sufficiently capitalised upon for them to take initiative and develop their own ideas. Teachers provide pupils with individual support when necessary and make very good use of systematic assessment to ensure a good rate of progress is maintained, both in lessons and throughout the units of work. Homework is used well to consolidate learning and develop pupils' enquiry skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum are good. The curriculum is very well supported by visits and activities. The school has developed its curriculum to raise pupils' attainment. The result is that a high proportion attend school regularly so they make excellent progress in their subjects and personal development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils are supported very well. The school provides extensive and effective support for pupils with special educational needs. This includes those with learning difficulties as well as those who need additional academic challenges.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' personal development. In particular, their moral and social development is excellent. The school has improved the provision for assemblies but does not fully meet statutory requirements for collective worship.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Excellent care is provided for pupils. There are very good procedures to ensure child protection and pupils' welfare. Pupils' progress is reviewed regularly and there are very good systems to monitor and support pupils' academic and personal development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, who is well supported by key staff and governors, provides outstanding leadership and gives a clear direction for the school. Most aspects of the school are very well managed and many are implemented to an extremely high level of effectiveness.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very well informed about school issues. Governors fully understand their responsibility and contribute well to the school's strategic development. They are not fully meeting statutory requirements for providing a daily act of collective worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has established very good review and monitoring procedures that help to identify both its strengths and weaknesses and provide information about future developments.
The strategic use of resources	The school applies good principles of best value. It makes very good use of a number of specific grants. Financial planning and control systems are very good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Four hundred and sixty seven questionnaires were sent out, of which 136 (29 per cent) were returned. Approximately 21 parents attended a meeting prior to the inspection to express their views about the school.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Children make good progress • The teaching is good. • Children behave well • The school has high expectations of the pupils. • They feel comfortable in approaching the school with problems. • The school is very well managed and led. • The school helps children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework. • Providing more information about their children's progress.

The inspectors agree with the positive views identified above. With reference to the areas that the parents would like to see improved, the inspectors found that homework is regularly set and contributes positively to pupils' learning. The quality and quantity of information provided to parents about their child's progress is good and there are many opportunities for parents to make contact with the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The standards in the national tests for 14 year olds and GCSE examinations are well above average.

- 1 Pupils enter school at the age of 11 with levels of attainment that are above those expected for their age nationally. Pupils are admitted from a large geographical area around the school and they have a wide range of attainment on entry.
- 2 The standards of attainment on entry are rapidly extended during Years 7 to 9 (Key Stage 3) and by the age of 14 a very high proportion of pupils achieve the higher Levels 6 – 7 in the national tests. During the last four years, pupils' attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science has been well above the national average at the end of Year 9. Results when compared to similar schools² are very high (in the top 5 per cent of all schools). In 2001 the average points score improved for the fifth successive year and the school recorded its best ever results. Overall, attainment is well above average when compared to all other schools.
- 3 Pupils' attainment by the age of 16 has been consistently well above the national average for at least the last six years. Pupils' average points score in 2001 was the highest ever at 55.0. Also 89 per cent of pupils achieved five or more A"-C grades and this represents an outstanding performance for an intake who represent the full ability range. In 2001 a very high proportion (36.5 per cent) of the grades awarded were the highest A*/A grades. This placed the school within the top 15 of all comprehensives in the country for this achievement. These high grades were achieved in many subjects, but were especially noteworthy in art and design, science, English literature and language, design technology, modern foreign languages, music and the humanities subjects.
- 4 At each key stage pupils achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and make very good progress. Literacy skills are high throughout the school and pupils make very good use of these skills throughout the curriculum. Numeracy skills are used well in many subjects although for the lower attaining pupils they are not as well developed. There is no significant difference between the standards attained between boys and girls. Each year the school sets itself very challenging academic targets and in 2001 was very successful in achieving them. Very good teaching, positive pupils' attitudes to learning, excellent relationships, high levels of attendance and the excellent care provided for pupils are all significant factors in their very high level of academic success throughout the school.
- 5 For the past five years at least, attainment in English has been well above the national average. In the 2000 national tests for 14 year olds, the performance of pupils in English was well above the national average and very high when compared with similar schools. In 2001, performance overall was slightly better than the previous year, but fewer pupils achieved the higher grades of level 6 or above. Over the past three years (1998-2000) girls have performed better than boys by about the same amount as in most other schools.
- 6 GCSE results have been well above the national average for a number of years. In the 2000 GCSE English language and English literature examinations results were well above average. Although girls performed better than boys, the gender difference was not as large as in many schools. Results in both subjects in 2001 were broadly the same as in 2000. An especially noteworthy feature was that only two pupils in both English examinations failed to achieve at least as high as a grade D. Given the wide ability range of the intake this is a remarkable achievement. The gap between the results of girls and those of boys widened considerably in 2001 and this reflected the prior ability of this year group.
- 7 Over the last four years, results in the mathematics national tests for 14 year olds have remained well above the national average. The results dipped in 2000, but improved considerably in 2001 when the school achieved its highest ever points score for mathematics. In 2000, attainment in mathematics was above that for similar schools, but this contrasted with English and science that were very high in comparison to similar schools. However, the mathematics results in 2001 are similar to those in English and science as each is well above average when compared to similar schools. The boys have

achieved a slightly higher level than girls, but there has not been a significant difference in the results.

- 8 The 2000 GCSE examination results in mathematics were just above the national average. All the pupils achieved a grade A*-G, which is a good achievement given the wide ability range, and that virtually all the pupils on roll were entered and completed the course. However, the proportion of pupils gaining the higher grades was not as high as expected from their prior attainment. In the 2001 examinations there was a considerable improvement in the proportion of pupils gaining A*-C grades. However, the attainment achieved was still not as high as that in English and science and most other subjects in school. Significantly, there were also fewer of the highest A/A* grades achieved when compared to other subjects.
- 9 During the last five years the results of the science tests taken at the age of 14 have been well above the national average and very high when compared to similar schools. During the last four years, boys have outperformed girls at a slightly greater level than national trends, although both achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment. The results in 2001 were similar to those in the previous year with a slight increase in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels.
- 10 The 2000 science GCSE results were well above national averages and very high compared to similar schools. In 2001, the results were even higher and over 90 per cent gained an A*-C pass. In addition, all the pupils gained a pass grade between A*-F. The proportion of pupils reaching the highest grades of A*/A was very close to 50 per cent. These results reflect an outstanding achievement by the staff and pupils.
- 11 The standards in nearly all subjects are well above the national average and this reflects the commitment of the teachers to achieving the highest possible results for pupils of all abilities.

The very good quality of teaching and learning, linked to the systems for assessing and target setting are continually raising the standards of pupils' attainment

- 12 Overall, the quality of teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. There were no unsatisfactory lessons observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching is a strength of the school and since the last inspection it has been sustained and improved. Examples of very effective teaching were evident in many subjects.
- 13 Teachers provide the pupils with the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology they need to learn effectively and gain success in public examinations. Teachers effectively build on pupils' positive attitudes to the school to develop an enjoyment of learning. Consequently, there is a culture in which pupils embrace learning positively. They have a desire to improve and gain academic success. There are very few, if any, disaffected pupils who reject learning. Pupils of all abilities regularly come to school with a willingness to work. Pupils' learning and achievement are very strongly promoted through the teachers' high level of subject expertise and enthusiasm for teaching. They frequently present interesting material in a lively manner, such as seen in a Year 11 science lesson when pupils were introduced to variations of inheritance and evolution. Most teachers have very high expectations and set the pupils demanding challenges. This was evident in an ambitious Year 8 science lesson, when pupils had to assemble the apparatus for an experiment and enter the data collected into a computer to analyse the results. Excellent relationships between the pupils and teachers in the classroom create a very positive learning environment where pupils learn effectively and with enjoyment. This was seen in a very successful Year 10 history lesson when pupils had to decide which people in rural Britain were 'winners or losers' when land was enclosed in the early 18th Century. In a very few lessons pupils' interest is not sufficiently capitalised upon for them to take the initiative and develop a deeper understanding of the topic.
- 14 Teachers provide pupils with individual support when necessary and make very good use of systematic assessment to ensure a good rate of progress is maintained, both in lessons and throughout the units of work. Homework is used very well to consolidate learning and develop pupils' enquiry skills.

- 15 Teachers assess pupils' progress through regular testing and the marking of class and homework. Teachers make very good use of assessment to set realistic but challenging targets for pupils to achieve. This is especially effective in English and science. The marking of work is usually diagnostic and informs pupils about how to improve their understanding of the topic. Pupils who are not making sufficient progress are quickly identified and teachers take appropriate action to support them. Departments also monitor progress by undertaking reviews of pupils' work and analysing the results of tests throughout the year. The good use made of assessment and monitoring linked to very good teaching supports the continual rise in academic standards and examination success.
- 16 Teaching in English is very good. The teachers have good subject knowledge and have very high expectations of pupils. This was particularly seen with a low attaining group in Year 9 who were successfully being taught how to use the colon. Pupils respond very well to being challenged to achieve their best and this helps them to make very good progress. Teachers use various methods during lessons to assess whether pupils are making enough progress. All teachers use the department's policy of assessment and target setting. In Years 7 to 9 this ensures that both the teachers and pupils know the targets set for each unit of work. When the teacher marks the pupil's work, the comments refer directly to how far the pupil has achieved the targets set. The same system is used in Years 10 and 11 using GCSE grade descriptors as targets. The attention to detail means that all pupils know exactly what they need to do to meet their targets. Because of their very good attitude to learning they respond positively to the comments.
- 17 Pupils' learning and progress are significantly enhanced by their good literacy skills. They listen very well, although a very small number of boys show they would be prepared to let their attention wander if the teacher did not take appropriate action. This was the case in a Year 9 lesson. The well-developed listening skills are a major factor in pupils making very good progress. Pupils' oral skills are very good and Year 11 pupils in group discussions reached sound conclusions about the various characters in *Of Mice and Men*. All participated in the discussions in a thoroughly civilised way. When making individual presentations to the class they showed confidence, clarity and the ability to use appropriate language. Reading skills are also very good and this enables pupils to access work and information readily. The progress of some pupils is very rapid. It is not uncommon for pupils who enter the school with a very low reading age to leave five years later with a grade C in GCSE English and other subjects. Although there are some pupils in Year 9 whose reading is rather stilted, most have thoroughly mastered the skill by Year 11. This shows, for example, in the thorough knowledge of *Macbeth* seen where pupils suggest sensible directions for the actress playing Lady Macbeth. By Year 9, most pupils write competently while the best have total command as is seen in the following example: "...controlled consortium of tactically defensive waves". By Year 11, the lower attaining pupils are still making spelling and punctuation mistakes but the best write flawlessly in a whole range of genres as can be seen in "having developed mainly through the twentieth century into a massive recreational industry".
- 18 Leadership and management of the English department are excellent. The units of work have very clearly defined targets in line with the National Curriculum. Excellent use is made of the available data about pupils' attainment in order to track their progress. Consequently, pupils of all ability make very good progress.
- 19 In mathematics pupils make particularly good progress in Years 7 to 9 due to recent changes to the schemes of work and teaching strategies. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has resulted in higher standards for pupils and many reached the higher grades in the 2001 national tests. The head of department is still in the process of establishing strategies after a considerable time of staffing difficulties. Teaching at Key Stage 4 is competent and developing. Pupils make good use of their numeracy skills in a range of subjects, including, science, technology and geography.
- 20 In science, the quality of teaching is often outstanding. Detailed lesson planning, very high expectations and an enthusiasm for the subject stimulates pupils' interests and a commitment to learning. The teaching provides well-managed experimental and investigative work that supports and builds on pupils' knowledge and conceptual understanding, as well as developing their skills of planning, practical work, drawing conclusions and evaluating investigative work. Teachers capture pupils' interest by relating

the science taught to everyday applications and by providing an effective range of resources, including computer software, which demonstrate visually what pupils have learned in theory. Due to the excellent quality of leadership in the department and very high teacher expectations, pupils' progress in science is of the highest order.

The outstanding leadership by the headteacher has created a very positive environment in which both staff and pupils feel highly valued and this has ensured excellent improvements in the school's development

- 21 One of the main strengths of the school is the quality of management at all levels. The headteacher demonstrates inspirational leadership. He has a clear vision for the future of the school and is determined to ensure a continual improvement to the quality of education by providing a very high level of personal care and commitment to both staff and pupils. The school has a clear set of aims and objectives that are expressed in the mission statement. The school is very successful in implementing its aims to ensure the educational and personal progress of all its pupils.
- 22 The headteacher has established a very special ethos in which staff and pupils feel highly valued. This in turn has created a culture where learning is highly valued by pupils and very few of them are disaffected with their education. All pupils, both the highest attaining and those with learning difficulties, strive to achieve their full potential. One person alone cannot provide the necessary support for teachers to promote consistent improvements. In this respect the school is well served by a hard working and cohesive senior management team. Since the last inspection, there have been excellent improvements in many important aspects of school life. The school is aware of any weaknesses that have to be addressed.
- 23 The management structure is very effective and the school has established clear roles within the senior and middle managers. Aided by the size of the school, daily morning briefings and supportive relationships, communication amongst staff is very good. The work of all academic and pastoral managers is supported through an appropriate structure of meetings that ensures good communication. The school takes very rapid action to intervene if any pupil does not perform to the expected standard. The heads of department are efficient, and have ensured improvements have taken place. Much of the departmental management is very good. For most teachers this is an exciting and innovative school to work in. Many demands are placed upon them, but they know they will be well supported by colleagues and the headteacher. There are very good systems to induct new staff, who speak very highly about the support available. This support ensures the positive ethos continues, even in times of staff changes. The school has been successful in gaining Beacon status because of the very high quality of education it provides.
- 24 The governors are aware of their responsibilities to meet all statutory requirements and for the overall performance of the school. With the exception of not fully complying with the requirements to provide a daily act of collective worship, the governors fulfil their statutory requirements. The governing body has a strategic view of the school's development due to the very good review and monitoring procedures. Governors are confident with regard to fulfilling their role. They are committed to the school's improvement and work hard in a well-organised committee structure to ensure continuous development. The governors are very well informed about the school's successes and areas for development. They maintain close monitoring of finances and make informed decisions based on accurate budget information. The chair of finances works closely with the finance officer to keep track of all expenditure. The school has been highly successful at gaining additional funding throughout the year. Although the level of funding carried forward to the next year appears high the school can account precisely for how it is to be spent. Both senior managers and governors are clear about the cost of developments and the identified targets in the development plan. The school applies best value principles very effectively.
- 25 The quality of the school's development planning and the systems for monitoring have improved since the last inspection. The thorough school development plan has been written after a process of review, involving the staff and the governors. The plan identifies appropriate targets based on detailed review procedures. The planning is firmly linked to staff appraisal and their training needs. The school is in a good position to sustain the current high standards and continues to improve.

The excellent arrangements to care and support pupils ensure they develop positive attitudes to learning, behave very well, attend frequently, enjoy school and are determined to achieve their full potential.

- 26 Exceptional care is taken of the pupils. Staff know individual pupils extremely well. They are fully aware of their abilities, and their emotional, physical and intellectual needs. Efficient systems are in place to identify quickly any difficulties which pupils may encounter. This early identification is followed by rapid and highly effective action by the pastoral and academic teams. Pupils are given good guidance and support, linked to achievable academic and personal targets. This enables them to remain fully included in lessons and school life. The school works closely with external agencies that contribute to this excellent support. As a result of such support the school rarely has to exclude pupils. The school is very successful at keeping pupils motivated and positively involved in their education. .
- 27 The arrangements for inducting new pupils into Year 7 are excellent. The head of pastoral care visits all new pupils in their primary school and she makes a point of learning all their names. Pupils and their parents particularly value this. Pupils have three opportunities to visit the school and attend taster lessons before starting full-time. On a 'new intake' evening pupils and parents are welcome and can sample the excellent food in the canteen. Pupils and their parents are given informative induction booklets and staff ensure new pupils feel very welcome. As a result of these procedures, pupils settle quickly, and this contributes to the progress they make in their learning and their enjoyment of school.
- 28 Pupils have excellent attitudes to their learning and make the most of the opportunities provided for them. They keenly contribute to lessons and readily answer and ask questions. They have come to expect a consistently high standard of teaching and arrive in each lesson ready to work hard. Pupils talk about lessons being imaginative and stimulating. Their high levels of motivation make a significant contribution to the excellent progress they make, as do the targets they are set within specific subjects.
- 29 Due to the very supportive relationships with the teachers and high quality of pastoral care, the majority of pupils behave very well in and around the school. During lessons, they work constructively and co-operatively in groups and productively on their own. This was evident in the English and French lessons that were observed. There are a few pupils who present challenging behaviour although this is so well managed by staff that it rarely disrupts learning. The school works extremely hard to keep pupils in school and if they are absent for any reason great care is taken to provide the necessary support for them to catch up with their study.
- 30 Relationships within the school are excellent. Pupils have respect for each other and members of staff. It is this respect which underpins their desire to do well in all their subjects. They talk about "wanting to please their teacher" and "respecting each other's right to work". Pupils value the individual interest which teachers take in them and give examples such as teachers' willingness to provide one-to-one tuition at lunchtimes or after school in order to ensure pupils have every chance to achieve their full potential.
- 31 Pupils' attendance is very good when compared with the national average. They enjoy coming to school. There are very good systems to ensure internal truancy is quickly spotted and this rarely occurs. Pupils usually arrive at school punctually although there are occasional delays with school transport.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

GCSE results in mathematics, although good, are not yet equivalent to the very high standards reached in English and science

- 32 The mathematics department has undergone a period of considerable staffing difficulties over the last few years. This has adversely affected the smooth running of the department and the development of teaching and the curriculum. The school has recognised this issue and ensured the department has been well supported. The staffing difficulties are now resolved and there is evidence that good improvements are being achieved. The new head of department has already made considerable changes to the curriculum for 11-14 year olds. These improvements, together with the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, have resulted in higher standards for pupils at Key Stage 3.
- 33 Whilst teaching is very competent for older pupils in Key Stage 4, including some good ideas for capturing pupils' interest and motivating them, it does not yet sufficiently develop their confidence and understanding so that the highest possible grades are reached. There is evidence of some good practice, and one example was seen with a lower ability Year 11 group. The teacher motivated the pupils by setting a graphical activity in a real situation. They were asked to use graphs to compare the cost of different mobile phone tariffs and to find the best tariff for individuals who use their mobile phone for different amounts of time. Consequently, pupils set about the tasks purposefully and made satisfactory progress for their ability.
- 34 Pupils' work in lessons is satisfactory, but although keen to do well the older pupils are sometimes reluctant to respond to the teacher's questions. They work best when activities are clearly set for completion in a certain time, such as the teacher setting a quick calculation practice at the start of lesson to make sure pupils had the required skills for a topic. This strategy was used to good effect with a Year 11 group and ensured the lesson had a very brisk and purposeful start. Such practice ensures pupils work at the fastest possible pace, are motivated and make good progress. Some of the lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 still have weak numeracy skills, such as the quick recall of tables up to ten. More able pupils sometimes use their calculators unnecessarily to work out calculations. These issues can restrict pupils' development and understanding of mathematical concepts.
- 35 The head of department has good procedures in place for monitoring pupils' progress and has already identified areas where improvements can be made in the curriculum for older pupils. This includes for example, setting pupils in ability groups at an earlier stage and a greater focus on teaching the skills needed, such as problem solving, to improve the quality of course work. These should help to raise further GCSE results. In many other departments, such as English and science, a particular strength of the teaching is the assessment procedures and resultant target setting. This ensures that pupils know what they are expected to achieve in each specific unit of work. They then receive precise feedback at the end of the unit on how well they have done and importantly what they need to do to improve. The head of mathematics plans to set up a similar system. The mathematics faculty, particularly new staff, has benefited from the support of the headteacher and external consultants during the last year in helping to improve standards. The school is aware that the improvements need to be maintained if the standards are to reach the same very high standards achieved in English and science.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Improve the GCSE results in mathematics to reach the very high standards reached in English and science by:**

- ensuring a brisk pace is achieved in all lessons;
- setting sufficiently demanding challenges to pupils so that the higher examination grades are achieved;
- developing teaching strategies to ensure pupils gain a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts;
- adopting the excellent assessment and target setting procedures that already exist in several other departments in school.

(paragraphs 32 – 35)

** The school is aware of this issue and already has strategies in place to accomplish an improvement of standards in GCSE mathematics examinations.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	18
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	6	8	3	0	0	0
Percentage	6	33	44	17	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	467
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	19

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	35

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	38	45	83

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	36	35	32
	Girls	44	42	41
	Total	80	77	73
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	96 (81)	93 (86)	88 (90)
	National	64 (64)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	57 (51)	70 (60)	70 (67)
	National	31 (31)	42 (39)	33 (29)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	36	35	32
	Girls	44	42	41
	Total	80	77	73
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	96 (81)	93 (86)	88 (90)
	National	64 (64)	66 (65)	66 (59)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	57 (51)	70 (60)	70 (67)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	37	42	79

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	30	37	37
	Girls	40	42	42
	Total	70	79	79
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	88.6 (78)	100 (97)	100 (97)
	National	49.8 (47.4)	88.8 (90.6)	94.5 (95.6)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	55 (52)
	National	39.1 (38.4)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	467
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	32.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14.5

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	11.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	227

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	70.5
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	23.2
Key Stage 4	18.2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	11.4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	6	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	1,458,757
Total expenditure	1,395,595
Expenditure per pupil	3074
Balance brought forward from previous year	30,000
Balance carried forward to next year	101,712

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	467
Number of questionnaires returned	133

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	47	3	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	42	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	62	2	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	56	16	3	3
The teaching is good.	47	47	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	45	10	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	40	1	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	34	2	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	31	53	9	0	7
The school is well led and managed.	61	35	0	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	47	3	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	49	8	0	8