

# INSPECTION REPORT

**LUDLOW CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL**

LUDLOW

LEA area: Shropshire

Unique reference number: 123587

Headteacher: Dr B A Cartwright

Reporting inspector: Mr K Davitte  
15029

Dates of inspection: 25<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> September 2000

Inspection number: 223721

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:	11-16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Shropshire
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T Curthoys
Date of previous inspection:	13-17 November 1995

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Ludlow Church of England school is a voluntary controlled 11-16 comprehensive school in the local educational authority of Shropshire. There are 834 pupils on roll and the school is about the same size as other secondary schools. The proportions of boys and girls is fairly balanced in Years 8, 10 and 11 but there are more boys than girls in Year 7 and far more in Year 9. There are only small numbers from minority ethnic groups and the percentage of pupils speaking English as a second language is low. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The majority of pupils enter the school having attained expected standards in National Curriculum tests at the age of 11. What distinguishes Ludlow from other secondary schools is the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the well above average proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need.

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

Ludlow is a good school which is effective in moving pupils on from predominantly average standards on entry to mostly above average standards by the time they leave the school. The most influential factor in achieving this is mainly good teaching. Current management policies are beginning to ensure that pupils with special educational needs are equally well provided for and the appointment of a new Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) from September 1999 has been a key factor in this progress. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The GCSE pupil points score is above average compared with all schools and well above average compared with similar schools.
- Higher attainers achieve well at GCSE in the percentage of A\*/A grades awarded.
- The department of physical education not only consistently achieves well above average results at GCSE but is very successful in fostering a sport for all philosophy throughout the school.
- The 'fast track' scheme enables higher attainers to sit their GCSE science examination in Year 10 providing added motivation and opportunities to pursue the separate sciences of physics, chemistry and biology in Year 11.

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

- Monitoring through classroom visits and observations by senior and middle management to continue to identify good practice, to eliminate weaknesses more rapidly and to ensure that school policies are implemented consistently, including in marking and homework.
- Departmental planning which does not always reinforce whole school policy and which sometimes lacks clear strategies for raising standards further.
- The integration of information and communication technology (ICT) into all subjects as is required by the National Curriculum.
- A whole-school drive to improve standards of literacy for lower attaining pupils.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1995 and since that time improvement has been good. The biggest improvement has been at GCSE where the average points score per pupil was below average in 1995 and is now above average. The trend in the school's average points score over that period was above the national trend. The gap between the performance of boys and girls has narrowed considerably. Progress in implementing some whole-school policies uniformly has been too slow particularly in assessment and homework. Overall attendance has improved and is now average. The provision for special educational needs suffered during the period 1997-9 when the school operated without a specialist SENCO in response to budget cuts. That has been rectified. Insufficient progress has been made in the use of ICT in subjects across the curriculum.

### STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 year-olds based on average point scores in GCSE. (Calculated using A\* = 8 points, B = 7, C = 6, D = 5, E = 4, F = 2, G = 1)

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
GCSE examinations	B	B	B	A	well above average      A above average              B average                        C below average                D well below average        E

GCSE results show that the overall progress of pupils from Year 7 to Year 11 is good. Most start in Year 7 as average and leave the school with above average results when compared with all schools nationally. The school does even better at GCSE when results are compared with similar schools. The strongest and most consistent results at GCSE are in physical education and food technology where results have been well above average. Pupils also achieve significantly better results in these subjects than the same pupils achieve in their other subjects and geography too achieves well in that respect. The progress of lower attainers, particularly boys, is held back in some subjects by weaknesses in literacy skills, particularly in writing, which remain with them from their time of entry into the school. Boys have usually been below average overall in English and English literature compared with boys nationally whilst girls have been at least average compared with girls nationally. Results in mathematics and science have been consistent, with mathematics usually average and science above average. GCSE results in French and German were well below average in 1999 but improved considerably in French in 2000. The school has exceeded the realistic targets which it set itself for the average GCSE points score. It came near to the target set for the proportion attaining five or more GCSE grades A\*-C in the summer 2000 examinations.

Although overall progress from Year 7 to Year 11 is good it has not been even. Progress has usually been satisfactory from Year 7 to Year 9 and at least good from Year 9 to Year 11. GCSE results have usually been better than the school's results in national results at the age of fourteen, but there was a more balanced picture in 2000. In 2000, English, mathematics and science improved markedly in the percentage of pupils achieving national expectations particularly in English and science, representing good progress overall for that particular year group.

Standards of work seen at the inspection were similar to recent GCSE results and the improved national test results of 2000. The quality of much of the practical work seen in design and technology, including food technology and textiles was well above average. Standards in French were closer to the improved results of 2000 than the weaker results of earlier years. Standards in ICT were below average as a result of the school not making proper provision for this subject.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good: most are keen to learn and enjoy busy and challenging lessons. They are courteous and readily discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the school in a constructive and mature manner. A minority have unpredictable attitudes to learning and to others.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory: good by the majority. Behaviour is orderly in nearly all lessons. It deteriorates towards the end of the one hour long lunch-break when some pupils are over-boisterous. Records show isolated examples of extremely disruptive, intimidating and aggressive behaviour. The above average number of fixed-period exclusions is justified.
Personal development and relationships	Good: very good for the majority. Pupils show initiative when given opportunities and are nearly always supportive of each other and their teachers. Most develop a maturity in discussion, in listening to and absorbing different views and in seeking fair judgements. A minority struggle to form ongoing constructive relationships.
Attendance	Satisfactory: overall attendance is average. Unauthorised absence is above average but lower than at the time of the last inspection. The school is working successfully to reduce the latter.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 11-14 years	Aged 14-16 years
Good	Good	Good

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

Of 49 lessons observed at the inspection teaching was excellent in six per cent; very good in 26.5 per cent; good in 26.5 per cent and satisfactory in 37 per cent of lessons. Teaching was unsatisfactory in four per cent of lessons. Teaching is good overall including in English, mathematics and science. There were examples of excellent teaching in food technology, textiles and physical education with very good all round teaching in the latter. There were examples of very good teaching with high expectations in most subjects. The majority of pupils thrive on challenging lessons and attempt to get the most out of lessons even where teaching is only satisfactory. Higher attainers are challenged appropriately in most lessons. Pupils with special educational needs benefit considerably from in-class support geared to their individual education plans. The lowest attaining set in English in Year 8 was skilfully taught using a variety of resources and made good progress but lower attainers, particularly in Years 10 and 11, sometimes struggle when they are required to write at length. This results from weaknesses in literacy skills, which can also be a factor leading to unco-operative behaviour. The teaching of literacy skills is not sufficiently co-ordinated across subjects but the teaching of numeracy is good. The management of pupils is nearly always good but there are weaknesses in some teaching in art. An impressive feature of most teaching is the relationships established with pupils. Pupils are not won over easily and teachers have to earn their respect. The use of computers across subjects is unsatisfactory as pupils wait for good school plans to be unleashed. Day-to-day assessment is good in lessons where teachers give accurate verbal feedback to pupils. The consistency of that aspect of feedback is not matched by the quality of marking. It is often not the lack of marking but quality of the comments which too often miss setting targets for improvement. The setting of homework was satisfactory during the inspection but

sometimes too rushed, and the lack of a homework timetable causes an uneven workload for pupils. Opportunities are missed to set different homework for different pupils aimed at improving writing skills of lower attainers. Time is mostly used well but not in tutorial time observed at the inspection, where some pupils did very little in the time available.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory: the 'alternative curriculum' for those unable to cope with a full GCSE programme is beginning to work. ICT provision does not meet requirements. Extra-curriculum opportunities are good including a range of visits in this country and abroad.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: the quality of the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is being transformed for the better.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good: the emphasis on developing pupils' personal qualities has a positive influence and is passionately supported by governors. Pupils are well prepared for the experiences and responsibilities of adult life. Most have a strong moral and social awareness.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good: a successful team approach. The school goes to the limit to accommodate some challenging pupils. Senior house tutors, tutors and support assistants play key roles, well supported by senior management. A good choice of nutritious food is supplied at lunchtimes which pupils appreciate.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory: good vision for the future by senior management and a clear school development plan but not integrated sufficiently with some departmental planning. Insufficient checking of lessons to ensure that agreed policies are implemented. Parents appreciate the good newsletters.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good: governors are effective in supporting and providing a sense of direction. Their knowledge on financial matters is fully utilised in setting and monitoring school budgets.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good: good at whole-school level with strengths and weaknesses accurately identified but more mixed at departmental level.
The strategic use of resources	Good: a fairly average and more stable budget is used well. Good investment in ICT but the effects have not yet been felt. Class contact ratio is lower than average but is justified by arrangements to support pupils. The principles of best value are applied effectively, including whether the teaching of a subject can be best provided by shared arrangements involving other institutions.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem</li> <li>• The school helps their child(ren) to become mature and responsible</li> <li>• The good teaching</li> <li>• The school expecting pupils to work hard to achieve their best</li> <li>• The quality of physical education department and the equality of opportunity in sport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency and quantity of homework</li> <li>• Consistency and quality of marking</li> <li>• Behaviour of a minority</li> <li>• A greater emphasis on conversation in the teaching of modern languages</li> <li>• Provision for ICT</li> </ul>

Inspectors' judgements support the positive views of parents on what they like about the school and most of the views on what they would like to see improved. Some parents find frustrations when policies are not being implemented uniformly across the school particularly in marking and homework. The homework policy does not include a set timetable and homework can vary from minimal on some evenings to being overwhelming on others. Teachers work hard but marking does not focus enough on what pupils need to do to improve further and there are gaps in marking where regular teachers are absent for extended periods. The behaviour policy is now being implemented more uniformly and successfully but there are small numbers of pupils who, despite tireless efforts by the school, find it difficult, and impossible at times, to fit in with the expectations of normal school life. Inspectors judged teaching methods in modern languages at the inspection to be good with sufficient pupil involvement and use of the language taught. There are plans for improving the use of ICT but at the time of the inspection provision was unsatisfactory and parental concerns are justified.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**The GCSE pupil points score is above average compared with all schools and well above compared with similar schools.**

1. The average points score gives the broadest measure of pupils' overall attainment in a school.
2. The average points score has improved considerably. The school was below average in 1995 compared with all schools and above average in each of the years 1997 to 1999. In 1999 the overall average points score was 42.8 compared with the national figure of 38 points.
3. In 1999 and over the years 1997-9, there was no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls compared with boys and girls nationally. The gap between the results of boys and girls in comparison with boys and girls nationally has narrowed considerably. In 1995 boys were 3.9 points behind boys nationally and in 1999 4.9 points ahead of boys nationally. In 1995 girls were 3.8 points ahead of girls nationally and in 1999 5.3 points ahead of girls nationally. Both boys and girls have improved but boys in particular.
4. Since the last inspection there has been an upward trend in the average points score at the school which has been above the national trend.
5. The school's analysis of its results for summer 2000 shows an average points score of 44.2 (girls 46.1; boys 42.4). There are no national statistics available as yet to make comparisons against other 16-year-olds nationally for 2000 but the school's overall average points score for 2000 was higher than that achieved in 1999.
6. The school does even better when the average points score is compared against similar schools (defined by the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals). In 1999 Ludlow was well above the average for similar schools. This is also achieved despite the comparison with similar schools not taking into account the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the school, and the well above average proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need.

**Higher attainers achieve well at GCSE in the percentage of A\*/A grades awarded.**

7. National subject comparisons are not yet available for the results of 2000 but in 1999 the school achieved well in the higher GCSE A\*/A grades compared with all schools nationally.
8. Well above average results were achieved in 1999 in double science, art, geography, food technology, textiles, resistant materials and physical education. A\*/A grades in physical education have been consistently well above average over the past four years.
9. Above average results were achieved in 1999 in English, English literature, physics, history and geography. Although mathematics was just below average in the combined percentage of A\*/A grades in 1999, results at these grades were above average in each of the two preceding years. This is a good spread of subjects and illustrates the opportunities provided and the achievements of higher attainers. This was also seen in most subjects during the inspection.
10. In a Year 11 class of higher attainers in English lively and imaginative teaching enthused and stimulated pupils in a very perceptive and high standard of analysis of a

seventeenth century poem.

11. In another lesson in the same subject in Year 11 there was mature discussion about what makes for a high grade at GCSE and pupils were encouraged to experiment in their writing by very good analysis of techniques used by writers to convey emotions such as fear and humour. Analysis of past work showed high attainers achieving impressive standards in investigative work in science. Throughout technology subjects the layout and standard of portfolio work of the highest attainers are exceptional. The basis for high achievement in subjects in Year 11 is established earlier particularly in Years 9 and 10. Display work in textiles shows some outstanding work. In food technology in Year 10 the highest attainers showed remarkable skill levels in producing a variety of cold desserts for the first time. In a Year 9 lesson in mathematics pupils were stretched beyond the level expected for their age by challenging teaching which used an A-level question to illustrate the drawing of a cumulative frequency curve. This was a great boost to pupils' confidence and spurred their ambition.

**The department of physical education not only consistently achieves well above average results at GCSE but also is very successful in fostering a sport for all philosophy throughout the school.**

12. The department of physical education consistently achieves some of the best GCSE results in the school. Pupils who choose to study GCSE in physical education generally achieve more highly in that subject than their other subjects.
13. In addition to serving GCSE pupils well the department makes a positive impact throughout the whole school in its teaching of practical physical education classes and in the personal development of pupils. Pupils interviewed during the inspection from all year groups were generous in their praise of the department and particularly appreciated the sport for all philosophy generated. Parents too are similarly impressed as shown by comments in the pre-inspection meeting and in written comments to inspectors. Further proof of the department's success is illustrated by the national 'Sportsmark Gold' award which it holds.
14. During the inspection the overall quality of teaching was very good and the physical education department is a strong team. High but realistic expectations and very good class management were consistent threads running through lessons. Teachers' own skill levels enable them to make short but telling demonstrations of the correct technique for pupils to follow, for example in executing shots in badminton and in evading a defender and protecting the ball in basketball. Ongoing evaluation of pupils' achievements in lessons is a particular strong point and teachers also question their own performance to improve further even when their teaching is very good. The needs of all pupils are served well and there are sufficient opportunities in all lessons for pupils of varying skill levels to make good progress. The best example of this was in a Year 9 badminton lesson where pupils made excellent progress in using the full court and a greater variety of shots to put pressure on their opponent. Boys and girls are integrated well when taught together in the same lesson as seen in a Year 11 basketball lesson.
15. Longer-term aims are married well with short-term objectives. In a Year 7 netball lesson there was a good emphasis on the basics of the game so essential for pupils with limited prior experience combined with pupils' enjoyment of the lesson. In a GCSE theory lesson the importance of developing a thorough approach to learning was successfully emphasised to stretch those currently attaining well and those who are under-performing. This was reinforced by some hard hitting but justified comments in the marking of completed work which is helping to raise standards by spelling out what is expected at GCSE and what is not acceptable.
16. Sport makes a major impact in extra-curricular activities. There is a very good

response from pupils who clearly enjoy the competition, the opportunity to extend their skills and the social atmosphere generated. Approximately 60 per cent of pupils participate in these extra-curricular activities offered by the department. Extra-curricular activities work particularly well when a specialist physical education teacher works alongside the invaluable support of teachers from outside the department, for example in a lunchtime mixed-year badminton session and a rugby team squad session.

17. A high number of fixtures against other institutions is arranged. The inter-house system allows extensive numbers of pupils to take part in competitive matches. There is much encouragement to higher attainers to progress to local, regional and national competitions. Strong local links with clubs enable substantial numbers to extend their skills and continue competing once they have left school.
18. There is an impressive range of trips and tours including to South Africa and Italy. Receiving visiting touring parties also adds another social and cultural dimension to the life of the school.
19. The survey of views of pupils and parents and the analysis and use of such information by the department as part of a whole-school review represent good practice.

**The 'fast track' scheme enables higher attainers to sit their GCSE science examination in Year 10 providing added motivation and opportunities to pursue the separate sciences of physics, chemistry and biology in Year 11.**

20. The 'fast track' scheme which allows higher attaining pupils to start the double science syllabus in Year 9 is not for a small selective elite group but one which nevertheless succeeds well in double science. It provides great motivation for a comparatively large group of pupils. It enables a well above average percentage of the year group to study separate sciences in biology, chemistry and physics in Year 11. Nationally in 1999 four per cent of 15-year-olds were entered for each of the subjects of biology, chemistry and physics, whereas Ludlow entered 23 per cent of the year group in biology, 17 per cent in chemistry and 18 per cent in physics. Small numbers take advantage of the option to study astronomy at GCSE, which is an uncommon provision for 15-year-olds.
21. Pupils are well prepared right from the beginning of their GCSE course. In a Year 9 lesson all pupils had the chance to use sophisticated apparatus and sharpen their skills in measuring the amount of active ingredient in indigestion tablets. Analysis of completed work of pupils showed how they are able to build on their knowledge acquired in Year 9 and extend this further in Year 11, for example in their understanding of the complex working of the kidney. In physics too, pupils were able to tackle a challenging exercise very early in Year 11 in determining the centre of gravity of three-dimensional objects only because of their accelerated learning in Year 10.
22. The 'fast track' system is also a great extra motivating factor and challenge for teachers. The science department is well organised making very good use of material produced by examining boards as well as school devised materials. Pupils interviewed during the week of the inspection noted and appreciated this kind of organisation which helps them in their studies, including an important element of self-study.
23. The summer examinations of 2000 produced the highest GCSE results achieved so far in separate sciences. In biology 92 per cent succeeded at A\*-C grades, in chemistry 94 per cent and physics 86 per cent. The respective school success rates in these subjects in 1999 were 70 per cent, 82 per cent and 79 per cent.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**Monitoring through classroom visits and observations by senior and middle**

**management to continue to identify good practice, to eliminate weaknesses more rapidly and to ensure that school policies are implemented consistently, including in marking and homework.**

24. The school has clear overall priorities but recognises in its development plan that there are some inconsistencies in implementing policy uniformly across the school. Parents are concerned mostly about marking and homework and to a lesser extent behaviour.
25. Policies work best in the school where they are clearly and concisely stated, and understood and followed by all staff. The current behaviour policy is beginning to be effective as a result of a drive involving all staff with senior management in support. The 'on call' system whereby senior managers support classroom teachers where necessary is valued by staff. There are clear strengths in this system. There is a dialogue between managers and staff at all levels to move things on. Very good records are being built up which are beginning to show possible reasons for the poor behaviour of a minority. The main weakness is that such speculation is not being tested out and verified by classroom observations. Senior staff do not have first-hand knowledge of the exact reasons which sparked off particular incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils are not tracked throughout a school day to observe how they react from one lesson to another with different teachers. There is also insufficient flexibility in the system to allow any teacher who is having difficulties in controlling some very challenging pupils to observe lessons where the same pupils behave much better. There is some very good practice in the school which is not being used sufficiently.
26. There is a policy on homework but there is insufficient monitoring of lessons to check on how homework is being set, and its value for different groups of pupils. During the inspection homework was set satisfactorily but elementary mistakes are being made in some lessons where the setting of homework is too rushed and teachers' exact expectations are not being spelled out clearly enough. The same homework is usually set for all pupils and opportunities are being missed to set some pupils specific tasks to improve their weak literacy skills. The absence of a homework timetable causes peaks and troughs in the amount of work set and therefore makes it even more imperative that regular checks are made.
27. The revised policy on assessment and marking is too recent to judge its effectiveness. As with other aspects of the school there is some very good practice but pupils' weaknesses are not being systematically picked up through the checking of books. It is often not the lack of marking but quality of the comments which too often miss setting targets for improvement. There is insufficient emphasis in marking on explaining to pupils what they need to do to improve further. Lessons are not monitored carefully enough when there are absences of regular staff to ensure that interim arrangements are satisfactory and the required level of marking is kept up. Gaps in geography have occurred as a result of this.
28. In placing greater emphasis on monitoring teaching and learning in the classroom, senior managers are not starting from scratch. They already have a good knowledge of their staff. There is existing good policy in supporting relatively inexperienced teachers which the latter openly acknowledge. All teachers were prepared very well for the inspection by senior management and there is already a common understanding of what makes a lesson good. Experience from the inspection shows that the school has teachers who value a professional dialogue on what went well in a lesson and how it could be improved.

**Departmental planning which does not always reinforce whole-school policy and which sometimes lacks clear strategies for raising standards further.**

29. Much success has been achieved by senior management in drawing up a clear whole-school development plan. It identifies correct priorities, has specified timescales and is

specific in terms of who is responsible for implementation and how progress shall be measured. In contrast, some departmental development plans do not have such detail and are not sharp enough in identifying priorities to improve teaching and learning further.

30. There is no consistent system for the presentation and the content of plans. In English for example there is too much description of past events. Departments, such as mathematics, modern foreign languages, physical education and aspects of science, benefit from using similar headings to the school plan for their own development plans which help them to focus on questions such as strengths and weaknesses and measures to address such weaknesses. All departments would benefit from following the same process. Senior management has made a considerable input into some of these plans in a supportive capacity.
31. Not all departmental plans are drawn up and submitted to senior management at the same time despite deadlines set. This is a weakness and devalues the process. Departmental plans do not yet reflect the much sharper edge given by senior management to open discussion in the school and to questioning more critically what the school is doing in order to build further on existing strengths.

**The integration of information and communication technology (ICT) into all subjects as is required by the National Curriculum.**

32. Currently pupils are not using ICT equipment and facilities enough to find, explore, analyse, exchange and present information and make informed judgements about when and where to use ICT as is required by the National Curriculum. The school is aware that it has not been doing enough in the use of ICT. This is recorded in the school development plan. A new network has been installed and plans to rectify the current unsatisfactory provision are in place. There has been much investment in computers and other hardware. Teething problems with the new network have delayed matters.
33. Whilst awaiting full use of much improved facilities, ICT is taught to Years 7 and 8 every other week in specialist classes but elsewhere in the school little is happening. This is despite the fact that the National Curriculum spells out very clearly the kind of opportunities which should be available for pupils in developing their ICT skills through the teaching of subjects across the curriculum. There are the occasional incursions into ICT in subjects but not as part of a planned school programme. There is a willingness of staff to extend their expertise in this field and some innovative use in lessons. During the inspection, Year 11 pupils in GCSE physical education were encouraged to use the Internet to access the personal websites of prominent athletes to check on the fine details, such as dietary planning. In history there is also some innovative use in accessing documentary evidence on the Internet of accounts by slaves of their experiences during the period of the slave trade. There are also examples of use in mathematics, science, design and technology and geography but in total that does not amount to enough.
34. One major obstacle at the moment in teaching ICT through subjects is the lack of expertise of some teachers. This is about to be tackled through special funding available for this purpose and a further training programme is planned.
35. Individual letters from parents express concern over the current deficiencies. Pupils too are frustrated but are enthusiastic for change. Proof of this can be seen at lunchtimes when large numbers of pupils use computers under supervision. Some of the frustrations of pupils stem from the fact that they have to take tests in ICT at the end of Year 9 when their competencies are recorded. They feel they do badly not through their own fault but through the lack of instruction which they have received in the school.

This is correct.

**A whole-school drive to improve standards of literacy for lower attaining pupils.**

36. The progress of lower attainers, particularly boys, is held back in some subjects, particularly in English, by weaknesses in literacy skills most noticeably in writing. The school is aware of this and has targeted it as one of its priorities in the school development plan. Currently the problem is not being tackled effectively enough as a whole-school issue, although a positive feature emerging from the current much improved provision for special educational needs is the increasing attention being given to those pupils who have literacy problems. This includes those in Years 10 and 11 who did not benefit from the same quality of support when in their earlier years at the school.
37. The school had a drive to improve the literacy skills of lower attainers from 1996-8. Various initiatives were used, some reflecting national projects. This was accompanied by the necessary testing to measure progress. This was not kept up and was therefore too short-lived to tackle the kind of problems which require long term solutions. Since that time initiatives have depended on individual subject or teacher responses and a whole-school momentum has been lost. Teachers are not being consistent enough in demanding well-presented work and impressing on pupils the importance of following simple rules of grammar and spelling which are reinforced through marking. Homework is not being used imaginatively enough to tailor tasks to individual needs to improve standards of written work of those who have literacy difficulties. The potential of using some tutorial time for this purpose has not been fully explored. ICT and packages specifically designed to improve literacy skills are not being utilised.
38. Whole-school and departmental plans do not dovetail to ensure that all staff are pursuing complementary objectives through their teaching of literacy in all subjects of the curriculum.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

39. In order to improve standards the senior management and governors should:

**(a) Increase monitoring through classroom visits and observations by senior and middle management to continue to identify good practice, to eliminate weaknesses more rapidly and to ensure that school policies are implemented consistently including in marking and homework by:**

- senior management giving priority to planning an ongoing programme of classroom observations;
- using a common format for observing and reporting which is understood by staff;
- using the process to generate a greater degree of discussion with staff on teaching and learning in the classroom;
- involving departmental and other managers in the ongoing programme after common standards are established and suitable training given.

**(b) Improve departmental planning which does not always reinforce whole-school policy and which sometimes lacks clear strategies for raising standards further by:**

- having a common format for the drawing up of plans;
- a common date for submissions adhered to by all middle managers;
- departmental plans always reflecting whole-school priorities as well as specific subject priorities.

**(c) Ensure the integration of information and communication technology (ICT) into all subjects as is required by the National Curriculum by:**

- accelerating the planned programme for the introduction of ICT in all subjects;
- giving urgent priority to the further training of staff in the use of ICT;
- considering the temporary extension of specialist ICT classes, currently in use with Years 7 and 8, as an interim measure when subject areas are adjusting to the requirements being placed on them;
- utilising all staff in the school who have expertise in ICT, both teaching and support staff.

**(d) Introduce a whole-school drive to improve standards of literacy for lower attaining pupils by:**

- building on the current improved provision for pupils with special educational needs;
- building on the work of primary schools in their use of the literacy hour;
- reviving initiatives, such as paired reading, and testing pupils' progress and using some tutorial time for this purpose;
- making more imaginative use of homework with selected and different tasks for particular pupils;
- exploring the potential of packages in ICT designed to improve literacy skills;
- a concerted effort by all departments with a lead person identified in the school;
- integrating library and learning resources fully into this whole-school drive;
- progress being monitored directly by managers through classroom visits.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	49
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	26.5	26.5	37	4	0	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

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	834
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	96

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	59
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	228

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.6
National comparative data	7.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.6
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	91	85	176

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	42	49	33
	Girls	63	51	34
	Total	105	100	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	60 [63]	57 [56]	38 [54]
	National	62 [65]	62 [60]	55 [56]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	28 [37]	30 [34]	12 [23]
	National	28 [35]	38 [36]	23 [27]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	39	52	45
	Girls	55	52	44
	Total	94	104	89
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	54 [59]	60 [56]	51 [61]
	National	64 [61]	64 [64]	60 [61]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	31 [30]	31 [34]	19 [37]
	National	31 [30]	37 [37]	28 [30]

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

### 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	90	70	160

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	38	79	88
	Girls	35	65	68
	Total	73	144	156
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	46 [51]	90 [93]	98 [98]
	National	46.6 [44.6]	90.9 [90]	95.8 [95]

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	43 [41]
	National	38 [36.8]

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	1
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	3
White	823
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	102	2
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)	46
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.3

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	357

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	73.3
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11**

Key Stage 2	
Key Stage 3	26.1
Key Stage 4	23.4

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	2,212,138
Total expenditure	2,217,140
Expenditure per pupil	2,659
Balance brought forward from previous year	44,415
Balance carried forward to next year	39,413

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

834

Number of questionnaires returned

222

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	35	54	9	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	33	48	11	0	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	13	59	15	5	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	50	19	5	7
The teaching is good.	20	59	8	1	13
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	25	45	21	2	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	45	50	3	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	51	38	5	1	5
The school works closely with parents.	24	47	22	2	5
The school is well led and managed.	17	50	16	6	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	25	58	6	0	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	44	9	5	12

### Other issues raised by parents

The quality of marking; the lack of emphasis on conversation in modern languages; the provision for ICT.