

INSPECTION REPORT

CHOSEN HILL SCHOOL

Churchdown, Gloucester

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115763

Headteacher: Mr Alan Winwood

Reporting inspector: Ross Maden
(OFSTED No: 2793)

Dates of inspection: 12 - 14 December 2000

Inspection number: 223759

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:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11-18 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Brookfield Road Churchdown Gloucester Glos.
Postcode:	GL3 2PL
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Roy Christie
Date of previous inspection:	6 - 10 November 1995

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Chosen Hill School is a DFEE designated comprehensive technology college educating boys and girls in the age range of 11-18. There are 1342 pupils in the school including 237 students in the sixth form. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is 6 per cent, which is below the national average. Eight pupils have English as an additional language but none of these pupils is in the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils from ethnic minority families is below the national average reflecting the numbers living locally. The school is over-subscribed, with pupils coming from local primary schools in the Churchdown and surrounding areas. There are 207 pupils on the school's special educational needs register and 22 of these have statements of special educational needs. These figures represent percentages which are broadly in line with the national averages for the number of pupils on the special needs register but are below the national averages for the number of pupils with statements.

There are several selective schools within the area, but the school attracts the full range of ability. Pupils' attainment on entry is above the national average. The proportion of adults with higher education and the proportion of children in high social class households in the local wards is above the national average. The proportion of minority ethnic children and children living in overcrowded households is well below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Chosen Hill School is a very good school with many strengths and few weaknesses. The school achieves very high standards in most areas of its work. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good. Attendance is well above the national average. The quality of teaching is consistently very good. There are very good arrangements to support all pupils. The school is very well led and has clear strategies for raising achievement. The school has made good progress since its previous inspection. The school provides very good value for money and the sixth form is cost effective.

What the school does well

- The very high standards of attainment reached by pupils by the age of 14 and 16.
- The outstanding quality of relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff.
- The use of monitoring and evaluating data for pupils' progress to raise standards.
- The excellent positive attitudes that pupils have towards learning and the very good levels of behaviour.
- The consistent high quality of very good teaching throughout the school.
- The very good quality of leadership provided by the headteacher and his deputies which is well supported by the very good quality of senior and middle management.

What could be improved

- The quality of accommodation, in particular the indoor facilities for physical education.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in November 1995 good improvements have been made. In 1995 55 per cent of pupils gained five GCSE grades A*-C and this has increased to 67 per cent in 2000. Attendance has improved. The low levels of exclusion have been maintained. In tackling the key issues identified in the last inspection report the governors have made good progress. Weaknesses in the sixth form have been effectively resolved, with the exception of providing a daily act of collective worship. Other issues have been tackled and improvements have been made in the level of resources for departments and improving the cleanliness of some areas of the school. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when 90 per cent of lessons were judged to be satisfactory or better. This has improved to 99 per cent of lessons being judged satisfactory or better in 2000. The school is well equipped for further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	A
A-levels/AS-levels	A	A	B	

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

Pupils' results in national tests taken at age fourteen in the year 2000 were well above the national average in English, and above average in mathematics and science. Girls perform more highly than the boys in English, but boys' performance is well above average compared to boys nationally. In mathematics boys perform more highly than the girls. In science boys and girls achieve similar results overall but girls perform well above average compared to girls nationally. Compared to schools with pupils of a similar background pupils in this school achieve well above average results in English, and in mathematics and science they achieve results which are broadly in line with the average. The trend in the school's results in tests at age fourteen over the past four years is broadly in line with the national trend.

Pupils' results in most recent GCSE examinations are well above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining A* - C grades in English, mathematics and science is well above the national average. Girls outperform boys in English language, mathematics and science at GCSE level. Pupils' achievement in GCSE is well above average compared to schools with pupils of similar levels of prior attainment and compared to schools with pupils of a similar background. Pupils achieve well above the average in English and mathematics and broadly in line with the average in science when compared with similar schools. Pupils achieve particularly high results in art and design, and design and technology, English literature, child development, music, drama, religious studies and business studies. In 2000 results in geography, history, Spanish and French were comparatively lower than for other subjects. The trend in pupils' average points score at GCSE over the past three years is broadly in line with the national trend. The school's targets for attainment at GCSE are ambitious but realistic and they reflect the high expectations the school has of its pupils.

Students' results at 'A level' are usually well above the national average. In 2000, results were above the national average. Over half the students taking GNVQ intermediate and advanced courses attain passes at merit or distinction levels.

Standards of the work seen are well above average across the school and this represents high standards of achievement for all pupils. Most pupils make good progress and maintain high standards because they are constantly challenged by their teachers. Pupils are expected to work hard, work independently and take responsibility for many parts of their learning. In English pupils are skilled in analysing texts. Their written work is well drafted and well structured. They write for a variety of audiences and purposes and they are skilled in selecting appropriate vocabulary. They use language very well to create moods and atmosphere. In mathematics pupils are confident in using number in a variety of contexts. Pupils' course work is a strength and pupils have good problem solving skills. Investigative skills in science are a strength and pupils exercise high levels of analysis. Pupils use technical vocabulary accurately and they are able to speak clearly to explain why things have happened.

In art pupils demonstrate creative flair and inspiration across a range of media. In geography the standard of fieldwork is a strength and in business studies pupils produce high quality assignments. In

modern foreign languages pupils' listening skills are well developed. In music pupils' skills in performing are strengths. Pupils use computer-aided design and manufacturing skills to very good effect in design and technology. Standards in extra-curricular rugby, netball, music and drama are especially high. In religious education pupils reflect on their own beliefs in relation to Christian and other belief systems and so learn more about themselves. In most subjects pupils effectively use their skills in information and communication technology to develop their learning.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good. Pupils are interested and attentive in their lessons. They show pride in their work and enjoy challenging work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good both in lessons and around the school. Behaviour is well managed by teachers and most pupils are calm and orderly in school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. Most are mature and confident and the quality of relationships in the school are outstanding.
Attendance	Attendance is well above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 11-14 years	Aged 14-16 years	Aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. One of the strengths of the school is the high proportion of teachers who are teaching very good quality lessons. During the inspection 12 per cent of lessons were judged to be excellent; 43 per cent were judged to be very good, 35 per cent were judged good; 9 per cent were judged satisfactory and only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and use assessment very effectively to plan their lessons in detail. Teachers provide clear presentations and are skilful in asking questions, which test pupils' understanding. Teachers use stimulating resources, which are well matched to the needs of pupils. Most lessons have well sequenced activities, which maintain pupils' interest and enable them to build effectively on previous learning. Pupils rise to the challenge teachers set them and, when given the opportunity, they take responsibility for their own learning and work productively. In many lessons pupils are accustomed to evaluating their own achievements and identifying ways to improve their performance. Pupils make rapid progress in developing skills and understanding when they are given the opportunity to work independently. In these lessons teachers monitor progress effectively and intervene sensitively to support and to fully challenge pupils. Teachers share the aims for the lesson with pupils. A brisk pace is maintained in all lessons. Teachers attract pupils' respect and trust and this is a major factor in increasing pupils' confidence and their desire to do well.

In the majority of lessons emphasis is put on developing pupils' writing and speaking skills. There is a good use of writing frames and key words, which are displayed in classrooms. As a result, pupils are articulate, well informed and write accurate and well-organised accounts. Numeracy skills are effectively taught in mathematics and reinforced when used in other subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, especially in the sixth form. A well-planned work related curriculum broadens the opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11. There is a very good provision for extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Where pupils are supported in lessons they make good progress. The learning support groups in Years 8, 9 and 10 are very effective in enabling pupils to improve their basic skills. Individual educational plans are detailed and give very good guidance to all teachers in how to support individual pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The values and attitudes promoted by the school through religious education and high quality assemblies are very good. The provision for pupils' moral and social development are particularly good. There are many opportunities for pupils to gain an appreciation of different cultures through art, literature, music and a wide range of visits and exchanges.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a caring school with a very effective pastoral system, which looks after its pupils well. Effective child protection procedures are in place. The school has responded to the health and safety issues identified in the course of the current inspection.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management provided by the headteacher, ably supported by his two deputy headteachers, is very good. Senior and middle management is mostly very good. The co-ordination of special educational needs, information and communication technology and literacy across the school are particular strengths.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors provide the school with very good leadership and they fulfil their responsibilities efficiently and effectively. However, they are failing to ensure that all pupils are receiving a daily act of collective worship. The planned budget set by the governors for the current financial year halves the budget deficit from the previous year.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The high quality School Improvement Plan reflects the detailed and accurate evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. In particular, there are very detailed assessments of pupils' progress, which are effectively used to identify future targets for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very effective use of its limited resources. By comparison with similar sized schools nationally the level of funding is poor. The quality of some of the accommodation is poor.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school has high expectations for children to work hard.• Children make good progress in the school.• The quality of teaching is good.• The school is well led and managed.• The school is helping children to become mature and responsible.• Behaviour in the school is good.• Children like coming to school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework children are set.

There is a very high level of satisfaction from parents towards the school. Inspectors agree with the parents' views on the strengths of the school. However, some parents feel that their children are set too much homework whilst a smaller number indicated that children had too little. The inspectors' judgement is that the amount of homework set is appropriate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The very high standards of attainment reached by pupils at the age of 14 and 16

1. Pupils' results in national tests taken at age fourteen in the year 2000 were well above the national average in English and science and above average in mathematics. Girls perform more highly than the boys in English but boys' performance is well above average compared to boys nationally. In mathematics boys perform more highly than the girls. In science boys and girls achieve similar results overall but girls perform well above average compared to girls' nationally. Compared to schools with pupils of a similar background, pupils in this school achieve well above average results in English, and in mathematics and science they achieve results, which are broadly in line with the average. The trend in the school's results in tests at age fourteen over the past four years is broadly in line with the national trend.
2. Pupils' results in most recent GCSE examinations are well above the national average. The proportion of pupils gaining A* - C grades in English, mathematics and science is well above the national average. Girls outperform boys in English language, mathematics and science at GCSE level. Pupils' achievement in GCSE is well above average compared to schools with pupils of similar levels of prior attainment and compared to schools with pupils of a similar background. Pupils achieve well above the average in English and mathematics and broadly in line with the average in science when compared with similar schools. Pupils achieve particularly high results in art and design and design and technology, English literature, child development, music, drama, religious education and business studies. In 1999 and 2000 results in geography, history, Spanish and French were comparatively lower than for other subjects. The trend in pupils' average points score at GCSE over the past three years is broadly in line with the national trend. The school's targets for attainment at GCSE are ambitious but realistic and they reflect the high expectations the school has of its pupils.
3. Pupils' results at 'A level' are usually well above the national average. In 2000 results were above the national average. Over half the students taking GNVQ intermediate and advanced courses attain passes at merit or distinction levels.
4. Standards of the work seen are well above average across the school and this represents high standards of achievement for all pupils. Most pupils make good progress and maintain high standards because they are constantly challenged by their teachers. Pupils are expected to work hard, work independently and take responsibility for many parts of their learning. In English pupils are skilled in analysing texts. Their written work is well drafted and well structured. They write for a variety of audiences and purposes and they are skilled in selecting appropriate vocabulary. They use language very well to create moods and atmosphere. The poetry produced by pupils in Year 9 was imaginative, evocative and well structured and language and imagery was used very effectively in a poem, which developed the theme of the opposites of men and women.
5. In mathematics pupils are confident in using number in a variety of contexts. Pupils' course work is a strength and pupils have good problem solving skills. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils were confident with handling number, calculating squares and square roots and they recognised the importance of accuracy and the ability to round up or down appropriately.
6. Investigative skills in science are a strength and pupils exercise high levels of analysis. Pupils use technical vocabulary accurately and they are able to speak clearly to explain why things have happened. For example, in a Year 9 science lesson, pupils provided good written explanations of why some substances move faster than others and made good links between the pattern of behaviour of all gases and their particles.
7. In art pupils demonstrate creative flair and inspiration across a range of media. Year 9 pupils

worked from sketched portraits and produced stencils reflecting the lines and main features of their original sketches successfully. In response to a stimulus, Year 11 pupils can trace an idea through a range of media to a finished piece of art and can demonstrate how they have been influenced by the work of a range of artists.

8. In geography the standard of fieldwork is a strength. In Year 12, students were completing fieldwork assignments based on the River Chelt. The standard of presentation of work was high and students showed a very good understanding of their findings. Their analysis of data was very good and coursework contained examples of high quality graphs and mapwork.
9. Pupils studying history at GCSE level have good skills in identifying the important issues from a range of different historical sources. For example, pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the reasons for the Nazi-Soviet pact when studying the causes of the Second World War.
10. In business studies pupils produce high quality assignments and, in Year 10, demonstrated good research skills in determining the variety and appropriateness of different methods of communication.
11. In modern foreign languages pupils' listening skills are well developed. In a Year 10 German lesson, pupils made good progress in identifying and applying patterns in the language successfully. They listened carefully and were able to complete adjectival agreements with increasing confidence and competence.
12. In music pupils' skills in performing are strengths. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils developed their keyboard skills and the class performance was enhanced by the contribution of those other pupils who were learning to play different instruments such as violin, flute, clarinet, trombone and trumpet.
13. In design and technology pupils in Year 9 demonstrated they had worked individually to consider their own often complex designs for making clocks. Other pupils make very good use of computer-aided design and manufacturing skills in design and technology projects.
14. Standards in extra-curricular rugby and netball are especially high. In a GCSE lesson, Year 10 girls were able to analyse each other's performance in hockey to a good standard. Year 12 students demonstrated a good understanding of different types of 'feedback' as a part of learning, which helped their understanding of information processing systems in a lesson on the acquisition of skills.
15. In religious education pupils reflect on their own beliefs in relation to Christian and other belief systems and so learn more about themselves. Through undertaking a guided imagery exercise, Year 8 pupils appreciated the special nature of the world and the wonder associated with the creation. They can discuss the different beliefs that are held about the creation and they have formed their own views. Year 10 pupils considered moral issues in great depth. They discussed difficult issues surrounding euthanasia and some pupils modified their own views in the light of a case study.
16. In most subjects pupils effectively use their skills in information and communication technology to develop their learning. Pupils have good access to modern computer systems and are confident in using information and communication technology applications, including video-conferencing, across a wide range of subjects.

The outstanding quality of relationships between pupils and between pupils and

staff

17. At the time of the last inspection, relationships between pupils and staff were judged to be excellent. This strength of the school has been maintained during the current inspection. There is a very high level of respect that pupils have for their teachers and, in turn, it is evident that teachers have a high respect for their pupils.
18. There is a confidence and maturity in the relationships between pupils which is evident both in lessons and around school. For example, the narrowness of some corridors and staircases could be a recipe for potential problems as pupils move between lessons. The reality is that the movement between lessons is orderly. Pupils wait patiently, there is no pushing and shoving and pupils show high levels of respect for each other and visitors in the common courtesies of holding doors open for others to pass through. Similarly, in the dining room, which is a very small area to cope with so many pupils waiting for and eating lunch, pupils queue patiently with the minimum of supervision and eating in the dining hall is a civilised experience.
19. Within lessons pupils show adult and mature relationships when working together. They listen carefully to what others have to say. They discuss issues sensibly and arrive at often sophisticated conclusions. For example, in a science lesson boys and girls sat next to each other, talking maturely about earlier learning, coming to easy agreement about how to record experimental findings. In religious education lessons, pupils listened attentively to other pupils expressing their feelings; they valued the ideas and images that were being expressed and resulted in some outstanding personal development for those pupils.
20. Pupils have a high capacity for working independently and on these occasions it is noticeable how pupils respect each other's needs for quiet.

The very good use of monitoring and evaluating data on pupils' progress to raise standards

21. Since the last inspection the school has implemented a detailed computerised system to monitor pupils' progress on four occasions during the year. The outcome of the monitoring summary is sent to parents, which in part explains why so many parents believe they are kept well informed of their child's progress. Of more significance is the use made of this monitoring data by senior pastoral staff and tutors in discussing individually with pupils and students the progress they are making. Pupils are clearly motivated by the monitoring forms to identify with their tutors ways in which they can improve their work. Sixth form students were observed discussing in a very mature way with their tutor whether the assessments were accurate and what they needed to discuss with their subject teachers where there was a surprise or disagreement with the assessment that had been made.
22. The system used in the school is particularly effective in providing an 'early warning' system for identifying pupils who are underachieving. All teachers have detailed information on the results of prior testing so that appropriate expectations can be set for all of their teaching groups. The system is very strong on identifying factors for why sufficient progress is not being made, such as whether behaviour is a cause for concern. Judgements are made on whether motivation and attitude to work is poor; whether homework is a cause for concern; whether work is affected by absence or pupils' poor organisation skills, and whether pupils are fully participating in lessons.
23. Less well developed is the identification of strategies to raise standards. For example, if a pupil is assessed at being on course to gain a Grade C at GCSE in a specific subject, what does he or she have to do to gain a Grade B? The system that has been devised for curriculum monitoring is capable of further development to provide clearer strategies for improvement.

The excellent positive attitudes that pupils have towards learning and the very

good levels of behaviour

24. There is an overwhelming view amongst parents that the school expects children to work hard in the school. This view is shared by the inspectors. It is evident when talking to pupils that they enjoy coming to school. Pupils are attentive and interested in their lessons. They concentrate well on practical tasks in science and design and technology lessons, willingly sharing equipment. In mathematics they respond positively to the challenging tasks set by teachers for work to be completed by the end of the lesson. In a science lesson, there was a buzz of excitement from pupils when they successfully extracted copper from rock samples. In a geography lesson a pupil had volunteered to bring in a model he had previously made to demonstrate the effects of a volcano erupting. It was a stunning simulation, which was appreciated by his classmates and recognised by his teacher.
25. In their written work, pupils take a pride in their work and enjoyed celebrating their successes with inspectors. Presentation of work is important to most pupils and many effectively use information and communication technology to enhance the quality of presentation of work. Pupils are articulate, engaging in lively debates in English lessons. The quality of discussion was impressive on searching topics in religious education lessons. Pupils are inquisitive and, often, persistent in asking questions when they do not understand their work or need further clarification.
26. In assemblies they are reflective in responding to the themes and ideas conveyed by teachers. They are enthusiastic in recognising the achievements of others, both in lessons and in assemblies. It is evident that most pupils believe they are attending a very good school and have pride in being important members of the school community.

The consistent high quality of very good teaching throughout the school

27. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. One of the strengths of the school is the high proportion of teachers who are teaching very good quality lessons. During the inspection 11.6 per cent of lessons were judged to be excellent; 43.2 percent were judged to be very good, 34.7 per cent were judged good; 9.5 per cent were judged satisfactory and only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed. In most subject areas, examples of very good or excellent teaching were seen. There was a high proportion of very good or excellent teaching seen in music, religious education, information and communications technology; English, science and design and technology.
28. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and use assessment very effectively to plan their lessons in detail. Teachers provide clear presentations and are skilful in asking questions, which test pupils' understanding. For example, in a Year 13 physics lesson a very clear, well illustrated presentation enabled students to make excellent progress in understanding the theory of single slit diffraction patterns. In a Year 7 music lesson, skilful questioning by the teacher enabled pupils to see how they could improve a whole class performance using a variety of instruments. Teachers use stimulating resources, which are well matched to the needs of pupils. Most lessons have well sequenced activities, which maintain pupils' interest and enable them to build effectively on previous learning. In a Year 10 personal and social education lesson, pupils explored the proceedings in a Crown Court case and social and moral issues raised in the British judicial system, through re-enactment and role-play. In a religious education lesson, pupils' interest and enthusiasm was maintained in a lesson about the Jewish exile through an excellent range of challenging activities, including role-play.
29. Pupils rise to the challenge teachers set them and, when given the opportunity, they take responsibility for their own learning and work productively. For example, in a Year 7 English lesson pupils made rapid progress in identifying and understanding ways used by writers to create atmosphere and, in Year 10, pupils successfully identified literary devices used by advertising because they were given the opportunity to explore texts in pairs and then to present their ideas to the rest of the class in a discussion, skilfully directed by the teacher. In Year 12 and 13, students led informed debates, confidently exchanging their ideas about the major

themes in 'Othello' and 'The Remains of the Day'. In science and mathematics, investigations and experiments engage pupils' interest and challenge them to explain their findings; for example, Year 7 pupils gained a high sense of achievement when they conducted an experiment to extract copper from malachite and were required to think out and analyse the chemical changes that had taken place. In a Year 9 mathematics lesson, pupils were confident in explaining and demonstrating their ideas following a practical investigation into the properties of right-angled triangles. In a Year 10 electronics lesson, pupils were expected to evaluate their work and use their knowledge and initiative to refine their products and in physical education teachers provide very good commentaries on sequences in gymnastics which enable pupils to identify the features of a high quality performance.

30. The major difference between those lessons inspectors judged to be good and those judged satisfactory lay in the range of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. In lessons judged to be satisfactory there was too much teacher direction. This was evident in some mathematics, modern foreign language and history lessons when opportunities were missed for pupils to work independently. This issue has a particular importance for those pupils who stay on in the school into the sixth form. Most students cope well with the demands for independent learning on sixth form courses. However, it could be the case that some pupils who have been subjected to over teacher control and direction at Key Stage 4 experience difficulties in coping with the demands of 'A level ' and GNVQ courses.
31. In many lessons pupils are accustomed to evaluating their own achievements and identifying ways to improve their performance. Pupils make rapid progress in developing skills and understanding when they are given the opportunity to work independently; their views are valued and as a result pupils are articulate and increase in confidence as they move through the school. In these lessons, teachers monitor progress effectively and intervene sensitively to support and to fully challenge pupils. Teachers share the aims for the lesson with pupils and maintain a brisk pace in lessons. Teachers attract pupils' respect and trust and this is a major factor in increasing pupils' confidence and their desire to do well.
32. In the majority of lessons, emphasis is put on developing pupils' writing and speaking skills. There is a good use of writing frames and key words, which are displayed in classrooms. As a result pupils are articulate, well informed and write accurate and well-organised accounts. Numeracy skills are effectively taught in mathematics and reinforced when used in other subjects but the development of a numeracy policy across the curriculum is less well developed than that for literacy. This is recognised in the School Improvement Plan and is a priority for development in the current school year.

The very good quality of leadership provided by the headteacher and his deputies, which is well supported by the very good quality of senior and middle management.

33. The school benefits from the high quality of experienced leadership provided by the headteacher and his deputies. In particular, the quality of evaluating and monitoring the work of the school is of a very high standard. The school improvement plan accurately reflects the strengths and weaknesses of the school and provides a sharp focus for raising standards even higher. Priorities for raising standards as identified in the school improvement plan are shared and understood by all staff and governors.
34. In promoting higher standards the headteacher is well supported by very good quality senior and middle management. Curriculum and pastoral managers are effective in evaluating and monitoring their areas of responsibility. The quality of department planning and documentation are of a high standard and classroom teachers are in the main well supported by their managers. There is a particular strength in the management of those areas of work which affect all teachers and cut across the specific department responsibilities. The first of these areas is in co-ordinating the literacy strategies across the school. All teachers are consistent in applying the literacy policy. They have been provided with professional development opportunities to improve reading and

writing skills for all pupils. In all classrooms the importance of literacy is on display and there is a skilful use of 'writing frames'. 'Key words' are on display in all rooms and are brought to pupils' notice when appropriate in lessons. The importance of literacy also extends to the 'powerpoint' display on the monitor in the reception area, which identified each day a different word which is commonly incorrectly spelt.

35. The use of information and communication technology to support learning is evident across all subjects. Many pupils have access to computers at home, which they effectively use in the presentation of homework, coursework and assignments. Pupils without access to computers at home have opportunities in school to use the school computers at lunchtimes and after school. All departments and most teachers are making maximum efforts to use information and communication technology to improve the quality of learning. Staff development opportunities have been taken to raise classroom teachers' levels of confidence and competence in using new technologies. The strategy is so successful that the demand to use computers often outstrips supply, despite the fact that the school is very well resourced. The ratio of pupils to computers is 4.5: 1, which is much more generous than the national average of 7:1.
36. The provision and management of special educational needs is a strength of the school. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Where pupils are supported in lessons they make good progress. The learning support groups in Years 8, 9 and 10 are very effective in enabling pupils to improve their basic skills. The morning tutorials when Year 8 and 9 pupils work on computer programmes to help improve their reading and spelling are very effective and result in good progress.
37. Individual educational plans are detailed and give very good guidance to all teachers in how to support individual pupils. Pupils with hearing impairment are fully involved in all learning activities and make equally good progress as other pupils.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Improve the quality of accommodation, in particular the indoor facilities for physical education.

38. There is no spare or underused accommodation within the school. Maximum efficiency is made of all available accommodation. There is a lack of specialist accommodation, so that several lessons have to be taught in non-specialist rooms; for example, science has to be taught in the dining hall. This limits the range of teaching strategies available to teachers and has a negative impact on raising standards. Many classrooms are small so, for example, when a class of 30 Year 10 pupils are present the room is cramped. It is difficult for teachers to move around the classroom to check on pupils' progress and the lack of space restricts the opportunities for group work. The dining area is too small for the number of pupils who stay for school meals.
39. Many corridors and staircases are narrow which are potential hazards at the change of lessons. It is only due to the positive behaviour of pupils and effective supervision, which prevents potential health and safety issues from occurring. Governors and teachers work hard to minimise the deficiencies of the accommodation. Most teachers make their classrooms attractive with effective use of displays but there are a few rooms where display is less effective in promoting learning and where little effort has been made to provide attractive teaching areas. It is a testament to the teachers and pupils in the school that standards are as high as they are when confronted with such difficult working conditions.
40. The resources available for indoor physical education inhibit high standards. There are two small gyms, which are dirty and limited in space. Standards are high in physical education because teachers work hard to minimise the negative impact of the poor accommodation.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

41. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education the headteacher, and governors should :

Improve the quality of accommodation; in particular the indoor facilities for physical education by:

- Working with the appropriate education agencies to raise the quality of accommodation so that classes are not taught in non-specialist accommodation and;
- Improving the quality of indoor facilities for physical education to improve the teaching opportunities available to teachers.

(Paragraphs 38-40)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	96
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
11.6	43.2	34.7	9.5	1.1	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

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1105	237
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	80	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	22	
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	207	14

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	8

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.4

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
	2000	118	106	224

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	99	92	92
	Girls	97	73	74
	Total	196	165	166
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	88 (85)	74 (73)	74 (70)
	National	63 (63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	49 (52)	49 (49)	39 (29)
	National	28 (28)	42 (38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	78	86	89
	Girls	78	74	73
	Total	156	160	162
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	70 (82)	71 (78)	72 (67)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	29 (46)	49 (48)	49 (35)
	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

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	93	105	198

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	54	89	92
	Girls	78	102	103
	Total	132	191	195
Percentage of pupils achieving The standard specified	School	67 (67)	97 (98)	98 (99)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score	School	46.4 (46.2)

per pupil	National	38.4 (38)
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Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of the sixth form

Number of students aged 16, 17 and 18 on roll in January of the latest reporting year who were entered for GCE A-level or AS-level examinations	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	71	54	125

Average A/AS points score per candidate	For candidates entered for 2 or more A-levels or equivalent			For candidates entered for fewer than 2 A-levels or equivalent		
	Male	Female	All	Male	Female	All
School	19.7	18.5	19.1 (23)	3.0	2.5	2.8 (2.1)
National	19.2	19.8	19.5 (17.9)	2.6	2.9	2.7 (2.8)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	9	88.9
	National		73.2

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	7
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	1323
Any other minority ethnic group	5

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	1	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	22	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	73.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	42.7

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	81.7
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	26.4
Key Stage 4	21.6

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	3076653
Total expenditure	3085887
Expenditure per pupil	2420
Balance brought forward from previous year	-48407
Balance carried forward to next year	-57641

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1342
Number of questionnaires returned	564

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	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	45	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	54	4	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	57	11	2	1
The teaching is good.	43	53	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	40	4	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	38	5	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	29	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	39	47	8	1	5
The school is well led and managed.	52	42	2	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	47	2	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	50	7	1	9