

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **RUGBY HIGH SCHOOL**

Rugby

LEA area: Warwickshire

Unique reference number: 125769

Headteacher: Mrs Suzanne Hall

Reporting inspector: Michael Lovett  
3695

Dates of inspection: 25 – 27 September 2000

Inspection number: 223836

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Grammar
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Female
School address:	Longrood Road Rugby Warwickshire
Postcode:	CV22 7RE
Telephone number:	01788 810518
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Vanessa Marvell
Date of previous inspection:	17 October 1994

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Rugby High School is a grammar school for girls aged 11 to 18. Pupils come from Rugby and the surrounding area of Warwickshire and beyond. Girls gain their place by scoring in the top fifth of those taking the eleven plus test. Pupils' attainment when they start at the school is very high. Each year about 40 girls join the sixth form from other schools. Of the 722 on roll, nearly all are from a white ethnic background. Some 4% belong to other cultural groups, though these girls are fluent in English. The proportion of pupils identified with special needs is low, but is higher than normally found in selective schools. A small number have specific learning difficulties (dyslexia), emotional or behavioural difficulties or physical impairment.

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

This is a very good school. Pupils achieve appropriately high standards, which are rising year on year. Effective leadership is yielding further improvements. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are excellent, and the school maintains a safe, happy environment where pupils work hard and learn rapidly. It gives good value for money.

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

- Pupils reach very high standards in their work and in external examinations.
- It promotes excellent attitudes and behaviour amongst pupils.
- It provides an atmosphere that encourages and enables pupils to learn at a fast rate.
- Teaching is good, based on teachers' subject expertise and focus on examination success.
- Strong and able leadership is effective in continuing to improve the school.
- It provides a highly appropriate range of subjects, together with excellent extra-curricular activities and plenty of opportunities for personal development.

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

- The teaching does not always do enough to help pupils to be more independent, to explore ideas in their learning.
- At times, pupils do not have a clear idea of how to improve their work.
- Provision for pupils with special needs.

*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 1994. Since then it has made greater progress than might have been expected. Examination results have improved significantly. The proportion of GCSE grades A\* or A has increased from 38% to 61%, and the average GCSE points scored per pupil has improved from 55 to 61, which is equivalent to ten subjects at grade B. A-level passes have improved from 85% to 96%, and the average point score per student has increased from 16.5, which is equivalent to three A-levels at grades C, C and D, to 21, which equates to grades B, B and C. Many girls achieve well above these grades. Teaching has improved; the amount which is judged as good or very good has increased from 57% to 80%.

The school has addressed most of the issues raised at the last inspection effectively. The management structure is now effective, and the curriculum is well balanced. The most able pupils are now achieving the very high results of which they are capable. Planning for improvement is better organised, though a few subject areas' plans lack conviction. The school is using assessment data to highlight areas to focus on, but learning targets are rarely identified at the individual pupil level. There is still no daily collective worship.

## 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				Key
	all schools			Similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
GCSE examinations	A*	A*	A*	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
A-levels/AS-levels	C	B	A		

Results in the national tests for fourteen-year-olds are very high in all three of the subjects tested (English, mathematics and science), and are above the average for grammar schools. They are improving in line with the national trend. The number of pupils achieving high levels (levels 7 and 8) has increased in the last two years. Achievement compared with pupils' starting points is also high, because many girls here improve by two or three levels, against a national gain of one and a half levels.

GCSE results are very high, placing the school in the top 5% of schools nationally. Results are rising faster than the national trend. Results are in line with other schools having a similar high starting point at age 14, and are close to the average for grammar schools. This means that pupils' progress is sustained from age 14 to 16, building on the rapid advances made from 11 to 14. Pupils reach high grades consistently across nearly all subjects; results in geography are marginally below the school average. The school is achieving its targets for 100% of pupils to attain five or more grades A\*-C, with an average point score of 60 (equivalent to 10 passes at grade B).

GCE A-level results were well above average in 1999 and improved further in 2000. There has been a continuous upward trend over recent years. Provisional data from the Department for Education and Employment's pilot study into progress post-16 shows the students achieve higher grades than would be expected, given their prior performance at GCSE. Grades in French were low in 1999, but recovered in 2000. Those in geography are about one grade below the average across all subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Extremely positive. Pupils work hard, with enjoyment, commitment and satisfaction.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. A calm, respectful and purposeful atmosphere pervades the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships amongst pupils and with staff are excellent. Pupils are sensitive to others around them.
Attendance	The attendance rate is very high.

These aspects are a major strength. Staff, parents and pupils all expect high standards of behaviour, good relationships and a commitment to achievement. This cohesion of purpose underpins the life of the school and provides an ideal framework for continued success.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	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.*

In the lessons seen, teaching was at least satisfactory in 93%, at least good in 80%, and was judged to be very good or outstanding in 28%. It was unsatisfactory or poor in 7%, representing one lesson seen in each of mathematics, English and geography. Good teaching was also seen in each of these subjects.

The strengths are in the teachers' knowledge of their subjects, of the requirements of the examination systems and in the amount of work they expect pupils to complete, including homework. The best lessons included challenging activities, dialogue with the class that opened up lines of enquiry and drew together the points that had been learned. Relative weaknesses are in the limited initiative allowed to pupils to enable them to explore and challenge their own thinking, test out their ideas on others and critically examine what emerges. The school has this as a priority for development. In the weaker lessons, there was no clear plan for what the pupils should learn or how, and the activities had little purpose. These lessons, and some others, ended loosely, with no summing up of what had been achieved, or what it could lead to.

The school meets the learning needs of most pupils well, including the most able. The specific learning targets for pupils with special educational needs are not sufficiently well communicated to subject teachers, so staff remain unaware of how they could be adapting the lessons accordingly.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Highly appropriate for the students. Excellent extra-curricular opportunities make a big contribution to pupils' personal development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Learning or behavioural targets are too general and are not communicated effectively to parents or to a pupil's subject teachers.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	One pupil is learning English rapidly; all others in this group are fluent in English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Moral and social values are at the heart of the school's ethos, and provision for them is very good. Cultural awareness is mainly focused on British and European backgrounds. Spiritual development is provided in some assemblies and religious education.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The arrangements for ensuring the health, safety and protection of pupils are very good. Form tutors know their pupils well, and pupils always have someone to turn to if in need.

Strengths are in the appropriate curriculum for grammar school pupils, with three separate sciences and three languages, including Latin, available. Extensive extra-curricular activities include music, sports teams, dramatic and musical productions, debating, engineering club and charity work. These, together with the example set by adults, offer many rich opportunities for social and moral attitudes to develop. Subject teachers are not sufficiently informed of the support needs and learning targets for pupils with special needs. Form tutors often do not use the time they have with pupils to discuss their work, check homework, or lead discussions on issues of the day. Opportunities for spiritual development are only

occasionally observed outside assemblies and religious education lessons. The school does not meet the requirement to provide collective worship every day. Cultural development is largely within the European environment, through art, music, literature and history. Little attention is given to other cultural backgrounds.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and deputies provide strong and effective leadership and continue to seek to improve the school further. An appropriate management structure, with delegation to middle managers, has been introduced
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body works effectively with the senior managers to keep performance under review and to improve the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good progress has been made with planning the school's development and checking its performance and progress. However, implementation is not consistent across subjects
The strategic use of resources	Very good use is made of resources. The budget is well controlled, and has been used to improve the buildings and invest in very good computer systems.

Leadership is a strength of the school and is a key factor in the drive continuously to improve standards. The school is efficient in the way it deploys staff, and considers all purchases carefully to achieve the best possible value for the money spent. Governors do not meet their obligations with regard to reporting to parents about special needs, providing collective worship, and ensuring sufficient religious education in the sixth form.

## 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>• Pupils are expected to work hard.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Pupils make good progress.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A significant minority would like to see the school working more closely with parents.</li> <li>• Some parents would like to be better informed about how their child is getting on.</li> <li>• A small number of parents reported that girls joining the sixth form from other schools were made to feel under-valued by some staff.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with the positive comments. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, which encourage progress and promote very high standards. Behaviour is excellent and pupils conduct themselves maturely with little need of supervision. Inspectors could not substantiate the view that the school does not work closely with parents, because parents did not give specific details about the causes of their concerns; this issue is left for the school to explore further. The information provided to parents about pupils' progress is satisfactory. Many incoming sixth formers say they are made welcome, but there are sufficient adverse comments from parents for this to be a further issue for the school to investigate and address.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

**Pupils reach very high standards in their work and in external examinations.**

#### **Key Stage 3**

- 1 Results in the national tests for fourteen-year-olds are very high in all three of the subjects tested (English, mathematics and science), and are above the average for grammar schools. They are improving in line with the national trend. The number of pupils achieving high levels (levels 7 and 8) has increased in the last two years. Pupils learn at a fast rate from age 11 to 14. This is demonstrated by pupils' high achievement compared with their starting points. Nearly all girls here improve over these three years by two or three levels, compared with a national gain of barely one and a half levels.
- 2 The standard of work seen in lessons is unusually high. It was well above average in half of lessons, and above average in nearly all the others. There is a high degree of consistency across subjects. In English, there is much fluent, accurate and polished writing in both short and sustained pieces of work. A science class in Year 9 was able to explain clearly the differences between conduction, convection and radiation, and applied this knowledge well, in dialogue with the teacher, to plan how to control the variables in a practical investigation into heat insulators. In English, pupils expressed themselves fluently at a high level when discussing the novel 'Dear Nobody'. They showed listening skill of a high order by building on one another's contributions, as they explored the notion of being 'locked out' from the warmth and confidence of relationships. In information technology, Year 9 pupils were able to use computers skilfully to write, edit and sequence instructions as they learned the early stages of HTML, the programming language used to create Internet Web pages.

#### **Key Stage 4**

- 3 GCSE results are very high, placing the school in the top 5% of schools nationally. Results are in line with other schools having a similar high starting point at age 14, and are close to the average for grammar schools. This means that pupils' progress is sustained from age 14 to 16, building on the rapid advances made from 11 to 14. Results are rising faster than the national trend. Pupils reach high grades consistently across nearly all subjects; results in geography are marginally below the school average. The school is achieving its targets for 100% of pupils to attain five or more grades A\*-C, with an average point score of 60 (equivalent to 10 passes at grade B).
- 4 These high standards were clearly apparent in lessons. The lowest attaining mathematics group in Year 11 was working at a well-above-average level. They were able to carry out systematically some convincing investigations into Pythagorean Triples, using accurate algebra to explore the sequences of results they were producing. A Year 11 science class was able to use the concept of Relative Molecular Mass to calculate the amount of a substance that would be formed following a chemical reaction. Pupils in an English class in Year 11 showed well above average attainment by describing clearly the genre of holiday brochures and travel guides. They used technical terms to explain the effectiveness of metaphor and were able to give a very insightful account of the key features of that style of writing.

## Sixth Form

- 5 GCE A-level results were well above average in 1999 and improved further in 2000. There has been a continuous upward trend over recent years. Provisional data from a pilot study into progress post-16 shows that the students achieve higher grades than would be expected, given their prior performance at GCSE. Grades in French were low in 1999, but recovered in 2000. Those in geography are about one grade below the average across all subjects; however, the standard of work in a Year 12 lesson was above average. The students were able to explore the historical, social and economic factors relating to areas of Europe with high population density. This followed a well-researched presentation given by a group of three girls using the computerised presentation system 'PowerPoint'. English files of Year 13 students included a very high standard of work, including detailed literary criticism and investigations into different genres, such as the history of prose fiction. Students' attainment in a history class in Year 13 was well above average; they were able to debate the circumstances of Italian fascism confidently, drawing on a wide range of historical facts. The highest attainers were responding philosophically and critically, being able to isolate the key arguments and justify their thinking with evidence. These examples are representative of the general high standards of work seen across all subjects.

### **The school promotes excellent attitudes and behaviour amongst pupils.**

- 6 Pupils continue to demonstrate the excellent attitudes and standards of behaviour that were reported at the last inspection. The high quality of relationships between teachers and pupils creates an environment in which pupils are highly motivated to learn and respond enthusiastically to challenging levels of work, especially in the sixth form, where purposeful involvement is a general feature of lessons. Outside the classroom, pupils fully support and even initiate some of the many extra-curricular activities available, such as "active drama", in which pupils contribute to the scripts. Recently they organised a school concert.
- 7 Behaviour in lessons, and around the school, is excellent. Pupils understand and respond positively to the school code and the trust placed in them to use facilities appropriately. Pupils are motivated to behave well and generally act from a sense of principle, with little need for supervision. Areas are kept clean and tidy and the atmosphere around the school is characterised by polite and friendly exchanges. No pupils have been excluded permanently in recent times. Temporary exclusions have been for isolated, one-off incidents, mainly related to high spirits.
- 8 Pupils develop very well during their time at the school and relationships are also very good. There is abundant evidence of co-operative working and shared expertise among pupils in all year groups. The high quality of relationships between teachers and pupils creates an environment in which pupils can make very good progress, both in their learning and their personal development.

**The school provides an atmosphere that encourages and enables pupils to learn at a fast rate.**

- 9 All concerned with the school, that is the leadership team, staff, pupils, parents and governors, have very high expectations that pupils will work hard and achieve high educational standards. This ethos is firmly established and is clearly evident in the school's every day life. It works because staff set a very good personal example, and the large majority of pupils bring with them well developed attitudes about the value of their education, and an enthusiasm for learning, backed up strongly by their families. The few girls who experience personal problems are given well-judged support. The civilised sense of well-being gives staff the time and energy to concentrate on teaching well, and on maintaining girls' motivation, with barely any distraction. It further provides an atmosphere where staff are very willing to give their time to extra-curricular activities, which does much to promote pupils' social development, sense of self esteem, confidence and leadership qualities. The outcome is that pupils, especially from age 11 to 14, make much more rapid progress than normally found. This sets them up very well to achieve high standards at GCSE and A-level, and to emerge as successful, confident and resourceful young adults.

**Teaching is good, based on teachers' subject expertise and focus on examination success.**

- 10 Teaching was at least satisfactory in 93% of lessons seen, at least good in 80%, and was judged to be very good or outstanding in 28%. It was unsatisfactory or poor in 7%, representing one lesson seen in each of mathematics, English and geography. Good teaching was also seen in each of these subjects.
- 11 There is much good teaching across the school by committed teachers who display very good knowledge of their subjects. There is a concentration on test and examination techniques. Marking is regular. There are good examples, for instance in Year 12 English and French, of marking which sets pupils targets for improvement but, as yet, this practice is not consistent across subjects and age groups. There is also careful planning of lessons. Where excellence was seen, as in Year 12 psychology, the lesson had pace, challenge and a range of activities. The expert handling of the principles of psychological research, the active involvement of the pupils and the excellent summary by the teacher at the end, brought students to a clear understanding of the learning that had been planned for the lesson.
- 12 A significant strength is that in almost every lesson, across all subjects, pupils make very good progress in their learning. They sustain high levels of interest and concentration. Their written work is presented meticulously and they take pride in all that they do. Teachers work hard to promote this high work ethic and the girls respond well to what is expected of them. Teachers set regular, appropriate homework that builds on the current topic. The pupils' determination to achieve is shown by the sustained and well-crafted responses they produce, showing they can work without dependence on adults. The very good quality of the learning in the school is a direct result of this sustained hard work.
- 13 The very best learning occurs in lessons which are highly interactive, where teachers plan opportunities for their pupils to respond to the subject matter in analytical and creative ways. Where pupils are given direct responsibility they thrive on the challenge, as in an excellent religious education lesson on abortion. The teacher planned the lesson meticulously so that the pupils took charge of the topic. Working in role, they displayed creativity, mature reflection and spiritual awareness. The girls

in this school are very able and they relish the opportunities given in such lessons, making leaps in their knowledge and understanding. In other lessons, this was occasionally stifled when the teacher overly controlled discussion.

### **Strong and able leadership is effective in continuing to improve the school.**

- 14 The headteacher and deputies provide a very clear and effective direction for the school. They are well supported by the governing body. The management structure created by the headteacher provides effective lines of delegation and accountability. There is an annual programme for senior managers to meet with individual middle managers to review progress and plan ahead. Well-organised links to senior management, from senior staff and middle management, are mostly effective in achieving consistency with the implementation of school policies and procedures.
- 15 The school has made good progress with the planning for improvement. The headteacher has a clear view of the direction of the school, and high aspirations for pupils' achievements. These aspirations are captured in the school's plans. Most departments have identified appropriate targets and improvement strategies, and understand the significance of the planning cycle. Heads of department take appropriate action to meet the whole-school priorities for improvement. However, some departments' development plans are insufficiently linked to school priorities and are rather superficial. In these cases the actions stated do not show how improvements will be made. For example, the plan for modern languages specifies improved examination results, but the action is merely to see that each pupil produces one piece of work using a computer during the year. In chemistry, the target is to help girls be effective learners and be responsible for their own learning. The action is to achieve this through weekly, short, self-marked tests. Whilst girls achieving low marks will be targeted, it is not clear what strategies will be used to help them become more effective learners.
- 16 Good progress has also been made in checking and evaluating the school's work. Strategies include lesson observation, review of homework and discussions with pupils. Senior and middle managers are actively involved in this process. End of year evaluations show that some heads of department, for example those in mathematics and English, are considering strengths and areas for development based on evidence gathered. In some departments, such as science and modern foreign languages, links between the current strengths and weaknesses and plans for improvement are not clearly established.
- 17 The governing body is very supportive of the school and works effectively with the senior management team. It has a clear view of the school's priorities, and the committee structure enables governors to become actively involved in these priorities. The governing body is not meeting its statutory requirements in three respects: there is no daily act of worship; insufficient religious education for sixth form students; and no report was made on special educational needs in the governors' annual report to parents in 1999.

**The school provides a highly appropriate range of subjects, together with excellent extra-curricular activities and plenty of opportunities for personal development.**

- 18 The school provides a high quality curriculum that appropriately meets the needs of its pupils by offering subjects suitable to their aspirations. Three languages are provided, French and German from Year 7 and Latin from Year 8 onwards. In Years 10 and 11, pupils may study three separate sciences. This enables pupils to achieve a high number of GCSE awards in Year 11. Students in Years 12 and 13 can choose from an extensive range of A-level subjects which are taught both within the school and at the local boys' grammar school. However, the wide range within the core subjects and languages results in a low amount of time for art and drama in Years 7 to 9. Drama is covered to an extent in English lessons, but is not provided as a GCSE subject in Years 10 and 11. There are many opportunities within various A-level subjects, particularly general studies, to explore religious, moral and ethical issues. However, there is insufficient religious education in the sixth form to meet statutory requirements. Assemblies are held twice a week for all pupils, but the requirement for a daily act of worship is not met.
- 19 A good programme of personal, social and health education has been developed for all year groups. Learning is extended very well through planned links with the community. Speakers come to the school to raise awareness about issues such as the world of work, equal opportunities, health and citizenship. There are many links with local community projects. During the time of the inspection a speaker from the Royal Navy prompted Year 12 students to discuss the issues of women in armed combat. Recently some students have been involved in a project with visually impaired students from a local special school. Preparation for the next phase in life is good, with work experience available both in Year 11 and in the sixth form, and careers education available from Year 9 onwards.
- 20 The extensive range of extra-curricular activities is a very significant aspect of school life, and there is a very high participation rate. Sport, music and the arts are promoted very well, and pupils frequently participate in local and national competitions and events. Independence and self-awareness are developed through activities such as the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and Young Enterprise.
- 21 There is good provision for pupils' personal development. Moral and social values lie at the heart of the school's ethos and daily life, and are promoted very well. Pupils are frequently encouraged to discuss ideas of right and wrong. For example, Year 12 students discuss with confidence the ethical and moral issues surrounding psychological research, and Year 11 pupils can discuss the issues surrounding abortion with sensitivity and understanding, supported by a detailed knowledge base. Reflection and debate are encouraged in many curricular areas, and the school council allows pupils to develop the skills of informed debate and social responsibility. Social skills are developed very well within the context of the school and local community. Pupils are encouraged to care for and support a variety of causes through fund-raising and voluntary work. During the time of the inspection, pupils made a presentation to the Leukaemia Research Fund. However, pupils' awareness of some contemporary issues within society is somewhat restricted, especially with regard to issues concerning racism, of which there is a low level of awareness within the school. Whilst there are observable moments of spiritual reflection, both in lessons and in assemblies, these are not planned or provided consistently.
- 22 The opportunities for cultural development are satisfactory. European arts are promoted very well in lessons, assemblies and extra-curricular activities, including visits to theatres and museums. In contrast, too little attention is given to the

promotion of both the way of life in other countries and the arts and cultural heritage of other ethnic groups, particularly those represented by some pupils within the school. This contributes to a restricted awareness within the school of cultural traditions beyond the European arena.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

### **The teaching does not always do enough to help pupils to be more independent, to explore ideas in their learning.**

- 23 A relative weakness in the teaching is the limited initiative allowed to pupils to enable them to explore and challenge their own thinking, test out their ideas on others and critically examine what emerges. The school has this as a priority for development.
- 24 One example was observed in a geography lesson. Pupils were off task because the teacher asked only basic questions which required short answers, and stated the answers before the pupils could reply. The teacher did not check pupils' understanding. Work was marked with grades, but with no comments on how to improve. During the summary, the teacher dominated the session. Pupils gave accurate factual answers, but were not challenged to explain their reasoning, so their thinking and learning were not at a sufficiently high level.
- 25 In an English lesson, Year 9 pupils were asked only to note down objects in the scene and the story-line from a video based on the book they were studying. No attempt was made to provide a more appropriately challenging activity. The lesson degenerated into voting for the name of one of the characters. Consequently, these able pupils learned very little from the lesson.
- 26 In the lessons seen, there was too little evidence of the teaching of the more advanced skills required to promote the learning of such able pupils. In a Year 13 sociology lesson, the teacher failed to extend a debate on the changing patterns of family life to match the levels of thinking evident in the room. In an English lesson, Year 9 pupils were unable to develop their ideas on the purposes of the use of the flashback technique in a film, because of the closed nature of the questioning techniques. In a Year 11 geography lesson, the questioning was largely to extract simple recall. In Year 11 information technology and Year 9 mathematics, the written work seen was inappropriately 'narrative' in structure and the use of a more appropriate style was not addressed. In a Year 9 French lesson, over-reliance on textbook exercises prevented more individualised work being set to consolidate revision of the perfect tense. The staff have identified these aspects and have them as a priority for improvement in the current year.

### **At times, pupils do not have a clear idea of how to improve their work.**

- 27 Although marking is regular, there were too many examples seen where teachers attended to the secretarial correction of errors, rather than dealing with the more complex skills of structure, sentencing and style. For example, work by Year 9 pupils of the highest ability was given appropriate praise, but pupils were given no advice on how to develop their efforts to become more mature, sophisticated writers. Teachers are inconsistent in their setting of clear, individual targets to help all pupils understand exactly what it is they need to do to improve. Some pupils' books included target sheets, issued a year ago, but nearly all of those seen had no targets written on them. The school does provide guidance on the eventual examination level or grade for

which pupils should be aiming, but this is rarely translated into specific areas to work on to reach this level of achievement.

### **Provision for pupils with special needs.**

- 28 Five per cent of pupils are on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) register. Three per cent are on stages 3-5 of the register, and the school is fully justified in celebrating their high level of attainment. Students with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia), for example, achieve very well in English Language GCSE in Year 11. Nevertheless, arrangements for supporting these pupils require further improvement. The inconsistent quality of detail in the special needs register means that insufficient advice is available to subject teachers when planning easier access to learning for these pupils. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for pupils with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia) have recently been introduced for most pupils requiring them. IEPs for pupils with emotional difficulties have not been produced. The targets in IEPs describe pupils' needs, rather than providing clear and measurable steps to assist them in making progress in specific aspects of literacy.
- 29 Pupils with emotional difficulties benefit from individual support from the Education Welfare Service, paid for from special needs funding, so that they feel more confident to cope with the pace of intensive learning required of them. Short, lunchtime sessions for pupils with specific learning difficulties enable them to develop organisational and study skills. However, few guidelines or strategies are provided for staff across other subjects to plan for differing needs and learning styles. Direct teaching to overcome specific literacy difficulties, or to change behaviours, is an area for development.
- 30 Whilst there are some reviews of IEPs, a programme of regular reviews which involves parents and pupils and follows the SEN Code of Practice requirements has yet to be established. The statutory Annual Review Progress Reports fail to record progress towards targets set, partly because the targets are not clear in the IEPs. Neither do the Reports state how the additional SEN funding will be used. Where possible the school makes appropriate arrangements to support pupils with specific learning difficulties in public examinations. These arrangements are accessible for the large majority of students for whom they are appropriate, because assessment and diagnostic procedures have identified their needs. However, there are a few other pupils that would benefit. Procedures for monitoring the quality of the SEN provision are inadequate, especially with regard to the efficient use of time set aside for supporting these pupils. The statutory requirements for governors to report annually on the provision for pupils with special needs, and to monitor the effective use of special needs funding, are not met.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

As a high achieving school, the areas for improvement are relatively minor in scale. Nevertheless, to improve the school further the governors, senior management and staff should give attention to the following:

1. Provide more teaching that encourages pupils to be more independent in their learning, to be prepared to investigate, explore and evaluate ideas and issues, by:
  - expanding the range of activities in, and approaches to, lessons;
  - increasing the amount of challenging question and answer dialogue; and
  - encouraging pupils to take more responsibility for ‘finding out’, considering relevant factors and issues, rather than being given ‘right answers’.

*(Paragraphs 23-26)*
  
2. Improve the practice of pupils setting specific learning targets, under their teachers’ guidance, by:
  - being consistent in giving pupils specific advice on how to improve their work, through comments on marked work and through discussion in class; and
  - devising and using an efficient and effective way of recording targets, enabling parents to be aware of the targets, and reviewing from time to time to check progress and plan the next stage of learning.

*(Paragraph 27)*
  
3. Improve the arrangements for pupils with special educational needs, by:
  - writing individual education plans that include both clear steps to aid pupils’ learning and measurable targets against which to assess progress;
  - providing guidance to subject teachers on how to adjust their teaching to help special needs pupils to access learning and achieve their targets;
  - monitoring the quality of provision for special needs; and
  - meeting statutory requirements for annual reviews and reporting to parents on progress with the special needs arrangements.

*(Paragraphs 28-30)*

Governors may wish to take account of the following more minor issues when making their Action Plan:

- Parents’ perceptions that the school does not work closely enough with them;
  - Parents’ comments that incoming sixth form students do not always feel welcome or valued;
  - Broadening the ethnic base of pupils’ cultural development;
  - Examination results in geography; and
  - Statutory requirements for collective worship and, in the sixth form, religious education.
- (Paragraphs 3, 5, 17, 22 and Parents’ Survey commentary)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4%	24%	52%	13%	2%	4%	0%

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons. Percentages may not add up to 100 because they are rounded to the nearest whole number.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	462	260
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	15	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	34	5

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15

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

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	7.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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	0	89	89

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	88	88	89
	Total	88	88	89
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	99 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	92 (99)	100 (100)	96 (98)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	0	0	0
	Girls	89	89	89
	Total	89	89	89
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	64 (61)	64 (62)	60 (61)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	91 (92)	100 (98)	94 (83)
	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	0	90	90

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	0	0	0
	Girls	89	89	89
	Total	89	89	89
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	99 (97)	99 (100)	99 (100)
	National	46.6 (44.6)	90.9 (89.8)	95.8 (95.2)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	61 (59)
	National	38.0 (36.8)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	n/a
	National		n/a

### 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
	1999	0	98	98

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	n/a	19.3	19.3 (18.4)	n/a	10.0	10.0 (0)
National	17.7	18.1	17.9 (7.6)	2.7	2.8	2.8 (2.8)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number in their final year of studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	0	n/a
	National		

International Baccalaureate		Number	% success rate
Number entered for the International Baccalaureate Diploma and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all they studied	School	0	n/a
	National		82.5

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	2
Indian	17
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	3
White	660
Any other minority ethnic group	5

*This table totals 692, and refers to the pupils on roll in July 2000. The current roll is 722.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	41.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.3

*FTE means full-time equivalent  
Calculated on 722 pupils on roll.*

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	178

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	75.2
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#### **Average teaching group size: Y[ ] – Y[ ]**

Key Stage 3	27.7
Key Stage 4	22.0

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

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

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	1,786,993
Total expenditure	1,940,466
Expenditure per pupil	2801
Balance brought forward from previous year	205,853
Balance carried forward to next year	52380

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	722
Number of questionnaires returned	325

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	43	7	3	3
My child is making good progress in school.	47	42	2	1	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	51	2	0	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	54	13	1	8
The teaching is good.	38	48	3	1	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	48	14	6	9
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	35	44	11	4	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	22	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	17	45	19	7	13
The school is well led and managed.	33	44	6	1	15
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	39	6	2	11
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	38	13	5	16

### Other issues raised by parents

Inspectors agree with the positive responses. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, which encourage progress and promote very high standards. Behaviour is excellent and pupils conduct themselves maturely with little need of supervision. Inspectors could not substantiate the view of some parents that the school does not work closely with them, because parents did not give specific details about the causes of their concerns; this issue is left for the school to explore further. The information provided to parents about pupils' progress is satisfactory. A small number of parents reported that girls joining the sixth form from other schools were made to feel under-valued by some staff. Many incoming sixth formers say they are made welcome, but there are sufficient adverse comments from parents for this to be a further issue for the school to investigate.