

INSPECTION REPORT

PARRETHORN HIGH SCHOOL

Prestwich, Manchester

LEA area: Bury

Unique reference number: 105358

Headteacher: Mr A Francis

Reporting inspector: John Paddick
10308

Dates of inspection: 2 – 5 May 2000

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr W. Davison
Date of previous inspection:	15 March 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Parrenthorn High School is a small comprehensive community school with 669 boys and girls on roll. It serves Prestwich, part of Whitefield and the northern edge of Manchester. Average numbers of pupils qualify for free school meals. The school is becoming increasingly popular with parents as GCSE results have improved rapidly and are above the national average. Ten per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is above average for the country as a whole. However, few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is at the national average. Most of these pupils' needs relate to learning, although a small number have emotional and behavioural difficulties. On entry to the school in Year 7, pupils' levels of attainment are broadly average compared to the country as a whole.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Test results at the end of Key Stage 3 were above average for the country as a whole in 1999. Currently, pupils' work in lessons reflects this standard. GCSE results have improved sharply and were well above average in 1999. Impressively, all pupils gained five grades in the range A*-G. Pupils achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school because they progress at a good rate in response to the quality of education the school provides, in particular the teaching. The school is well led and managed and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress; they do well in GCSE examinations.
- Their attitudes and behaviour are good overall.
- Teaching is good overall.
- The school cares for its pupils very well.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision for pupils is very good.
- The governing body, headteacher and senior management team provide the school with good leadership.

What could be improved

- The quality of teaching in English, science and religious education. Some of the teaching in these subjects is good but in several lessons there are missed opportunities to develop pupils' skills at a good pace, and sometimes there are shortcomings. Hence, whilst pupils' progress is generally satisfactory, it is not as rapid as in other subjects.

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 March 1996. It has acted very purposefully in response to the findings of that inspection, maintaining the strengths identified then whilst also making very good improvements. It has a good level of commitment to improve further and the capacity to do so. Results in Key Stage 3 tests and GCSE have improved considerably. GCSE results have improved rapidly over the last three years and were well above average for the country as a whole in 1999.

The school's development planning has improved and is now of good quality. Plans are detailed and comprehensive, and managers and governors regularly monitor them to ensure that intended improvements are actually taking place. Development planning covers all aspects of the school's work, and has been particularly effective in tackling the key issues for action from the previous inspection. The quality of reports to parents on pupils' progress has improved. They now meet all requirements, and clearly identify strengths in pupils' work and indicate areas for improvement in all subjects. Pupils' records have been computerised, and staff have started to use them to track the achievements of individuals and year groups in moving towards the challenging Key Stage 3 and GCSE targets set by governors.

The school has maintained the very good quality of its provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. It has bought more computers to provide pupils with greater access to information technology, and library facilities have improved considerably. However, although fiction stock has improved, the overall level of library resources remains below that found nationally in schools of this size and does not adequately support the current curriculum.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 year olds based on GCSE examination results.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	B	B	A	A*

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

The school sets challenging targets for all pupils and subjects at GCSE. Results have improved sharply over the last three years. In 1999, based on the pupils' average point score, they were well above average compared with all schools nationally, and in the highest five per cent of schools taking their pupils from similar backgrounds. The proportion of pupils gaining five grades in the range A*-C rose to 57 per cent, which is above the national average. At the same time, the school has continued to ensure that all pupils in Year 11 achieve five grades in the range A*-G. This puts the school in the highest five per cent of schools nationally in this category. The school has successfully narrowed the gap between boys' and girls' GCSE results, although girls still do better, as they do nationally. Results in mathematics, art, French, geography and history were better than in other subjects. Those in history and German were particularly good. Pupils did relatively less well in English and science.

Results in the national tests for English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 3 have improved in accordance with the national trend. In 1999, results in English were well above average compared with all schools. They were above average in science and average in mathematics. Compared with schools taking their pupils from similar backgrounds, the results in 1999 were well above average overall.

Standards seen in lessons and samples of written work shows that attainment is generally above average by the end of Key Stage 3, and reflects the national test results in the core subjects. Pupils' achievement is, therefore, good because their levels of attainment on entry to the school were average. At the end of Key Stage 4, standards are broadly average. These standards of work represent good levels of achievement because the current Year 11 was below average on entry to the school. However, although high levels of attainment are evident in several subjects, such as mathematics, history, geography and resistant materials, the standards of writing of average and higher attaining pupils in English are not as high as they should be.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	A major strength. The great majority of pupils are prepared to work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Most pupils behave very responsibly and well in lessons, and around school at break and lunchtime. In a small minority of lessons, where the teaching is less effective but satisfactory, pupils are restless and the pace of their learning slows.
Personal development and relationships	Good overall. Pupils relate well to their peers and to the staff. They are generally considerate of others and take responsibility seriously.
Attendance	Above the national average. Unauthorised absence is half of the national average.

Pupils' attitudes are a major strength. They help to enhance the quality of learning by contributing to a positive atmosphere in lessons, especially when the teaching is good. Restlessness is more evident in a minority of lessons in Key Stage 4.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons except one. The unsatisfactory lesson was in science. In 68 per cent of lessons, teaching was good, and occasionally very good. Proportions of good lessons were approximately the same in both key stages. The teaching observed or evident through the quality of pupils' work samples was good overall in most subjects and similar in quality to that found at the last inspection. Some good teaching is to be found in all subjects but the overall quality of teaching in English, science and religious education, although satisfactory, is not as high as in other subjects. Few very good lessons were observed across the range of subjects but this was partly due to the fact that revision work for both Key Stage 3 tests and GCSE was being carried out in preparation for imminent examinations.

Teachers usually plan their lessons well so that they are interesting and include a variety of activities. Their subject knowledge is good, their explanations are usually clear and they normally manage their classes well. Relationships with pupils are good and as a consequence they are keen to learn. In most lessons they acquire knowledge, develop understanding and increase their skills at a good rate. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the good quality of teaching and help they receive from the teachers and classroom assistants.

In the less successful but satisfactory lessons, there is a limited range of activities and tasks. As a result, pupils are too dependent on their teachers as the main source of information and guidance, and are not given enough opportunities to read and think independently or discuss ideas with their peers. This results in increasing restlessness as the lesson proceeds, and slows the rate of pupils' learning. A reasonable amount of homework is set in both key stages; however, it is neither accurately recorded in homework diaries, nor does it always conform to the requirements of the published timetable. Some homework exercises are too trivial and take pupils only a short time to complete.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. It covers all National Curriculum requirements and also provides a second language and drama. The Year 7 literacy intervention programme is good. There is a good range of option choices at Key Stage 4.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Well organised and effective. Teaching and individual education plans are of good quality.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	These pupils are well integrated into the life of the school. Those who are not fully fluent in English are well supported by staff from the school and the LEA.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. This distinctive and effective characteristic of the school's curriculum has been maintained since the last inspection. Assemblies provide strong spiritual, moral and social messages for the pupils. These are developed further in other areas of the curriculum. Extra-curricular sporting and cultural activities are plentiful.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils very well in a safe and secure environment. The staff know pupils well as individuals and provide good academic and personal support.

The academic curriculum and the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are strong. The school provides well for pupils of all levels of attainment and from all backgrounds. Welfare programmes are strong and effective. All statutory requirements are met.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and senior staff complement each other well. They provide good leadership and manage change well. Consequently, the school has maintained its strengths and made very good progress since the last inspection.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. The governing body is well-informed and sets challenging targets. Governors visit the school regularly and know its strengths and weaknesses well. They maintain a good relationship with the staff.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Since the last inspection, the school has set challenging targets for pupils and subjects, especially in relation to GCSE. The careful monitoring of progress towards these targets and the evaluation of its performance has led directly to the raising of standards of attainment over the last three years
The strategic use of resources	Good. Staff are well-deployed and learning resources are used effectively.

The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and senior management team are of good quality. Governors are very effective in monitoring the work of the school. Target setting is good and leads to high expectations of pupils in all subjects. Development planning is instrumental in moving the school forward. The principles of best value are applied well. The school gives good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are making good progress. • Teaching is good. • The school expects pupils to work hard. • The school is well led and managed. • It helps children to become mature and responsible. • It provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. • Parents feel comfortable in approaching the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of homework. • Information about pupils' progress. • Working more closely with parents.

The inspection team agrees fully with all of the parents' positive views. It has looked carefully into links with parents and information about their children's progress. It does not agree that these constitute a weakness as this area of the school's work is of good quality. However, the team does agree that the arrangements for homework need to be strengthened.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils make good progress, and do well in GCSE examinations.

1. Results in GCSE examinations and Key Stage 3 national tests have improved at the same rate as national trends since the last inspection. This is because pupils of all levels of attainment make good progress as they move through the school. Attainment in GCSE examinations has risen sharply over the last three years. In 1999, the pupils' average point score was well above average for all schools and in the highest five per cent of schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds.

2. Results in the national assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 3 were above average overall compared with all schools nationally in 1999, and were considerably improved compared with the previous year. English results were well above average for all schools nationally. Science results were above average and those for mathematics were average. Taken as a whole, these results were well above average for schools taking their pupils from similar backgrounds, and represent the pupils' good levels of progress over three years.

3. Last year's GCSE results were good in almost all respects, and represented good levels of achievement. The proportion of pupils achieving five results in the range A*-C was above average for the country as a whole. All pupils achieved five results in the range A*-G, which was way above the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving five A*-C grades has increased rapidly since 1997, from 40 to 57 per cent. At the same time, the school has continued to cater very well for the needs of the lower attaining pupils by ensuring that they all achieve a measure of success at GCSE.

4. The school has successfully narrowed the gap between boys' and girls' attainment at GCSE. Results for both sexes were well above the national average in 1999 and the difference in their attainment was less than the national difference. Results in French, art, geography, history and mathematics were better than for other subjects taken at the same time. Results in history and German were particularly good. English results were lower than they should have been, compared with the performance of the same pupils in the end of Key Stage 3 tests two years earlier. Too few pupils achieved A or B grades. Science results were also slightly lower than other subjects. The school successfully launched short courses in GCSE religious education and information technology in 1998. In 1999 the majority of pupils took the examinations in both subjects; well over half achieved at least grade C.

5. Standards observed in lessons and pupils' previously completed work show that achievement is good, and that pupils of all levels of attainment are making good progress. By the end of Key Stage 3, standards reflect last year's national assessment results, and are above average. Standards of attainment in Year 11 are average overall; this represents good progress made since the beginning of Year 7 because this cohort of pupils had below average attainment on entry to the school. Particularly high standards are evident through GCSE coursework, which boys and girls have produced in resistant materials. Higher order writing skills are evident in many pupils' work in history and geography but they are not always being sufficiently developed in English, where many higher attaining pupils are only operating at C grade standard. However, in Year 10, lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, have produced particularly good GCSE coursework in English. These assignments are structured well and demonstrate good development of ideas and considerable expertise in the use of information technology.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good overall.

6. Pupils' attitudes are a major strength. They contribute directly to the good pace of learning in the majority of lessons. In response to good teaching, pupils are settled and listen to the teacher and to oral answers given by their peers. They co-operate well and accept the teachers' guidance and advice. Often they contribute willingly to class discussions. Pupils generally respond quickly and sensibly to instructions, they try hard and concentrate and use their time well. They enjoy good rapport with their teachers and want to succeed. Hence, in the majority of lessons there is a good learning atmosphere, plenty of work is done, and pupils' progress is good.

7. In response to satisfactory teaching, pupils are largely co-operative but not always fully involved. A minority, although quiet, are rather passive and intermittent listeners because they do not find the activities as compelling as in the good lessons elsewhere. Sometimes, as the lesson proceeds, a minority of pupils become restless, waste time, and find it difficult to concentrate for long. In these lessons the teachers often do more work than the pupils, trying to keep them in check without providing them with enough interesting well-planned activities. However, most lessons are not of this type; they are usually of good quality and pupils respond to them with thoroughly positive attitudes to learning.

8. There is a good atmosphere in the school. Pupils' behaviour around the building and in lessons is generally good. There is every opportunity for them to learn, and socialise outside lessons, unhindered by the conduct of others. The staff act in a consistent manner in terms of their expectations of good behaviour. In extreme cases, exclusion is used as a last resort when the school correctly demonstrates that it will not accept conduct which threatens the safety or well-being of others. Even in these cases, much effort and staff time is spent in working constructively with the individuals concerned. Exclusions rose in 1999 compared with 1997 and 1998, but have fallen to quite low levels this year. Overall, pupils respond well because they value the quality of education provided and feel comfortable and safe whether they are in lessons, in corridors, in the dining room or outside.

Teaching is good overall.

9. The quality of teaching was judged to be good or better in just over two thirds of lessons observed during the inspection. All lessons except, one in science, were at least satisfactory. Few very good lessons were observed but this was partly the result of the type of work being done in class in the immediate preparation for the end of Key Stage 3 tests and GCSE. Good lessons were observed in all of the National Curriculum subjects and religious education. In the core subjects, the overall quality of teaching in mathematics was good, and in English and science it was satisfactory. Overall, the teaching observed in the rest of the curriculum was good, except for religious education where it was satisfactory. The work of the learning support assistants for pupils with special educational needs was consistently good. Teachers and learning support assistants plan lessons well together so that specific support is provided for pupils, effectively matching work to the priorities identified on the well-written individual education plans.

10. An ethos of high expectation informs teaching and learning throughout the school. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are good at both key stages. They are at the heart of the good levels of achievement in the school and its good academic standards. The teachers' high expectations are channelled into good measurable rates of pupils' progress through a variety of strategies. For instance, at the start of lessons, teachers often provide clear information about what the pupils are to learn, and how the hour will be used. Lessons are normally planned well into suitable activities for the age and

attainment levels of the classes to be taught. The structure of lessons is usually good so that a good pace of learning is maintained, sometimes increasing as the work proceeds. Questioning of pupils to consolidate and check learning is often of a good quality. It is incorporated well with other activities such as explanation, and helps to maintain pace. The management of pupils under these circumstances is good because they are interested in the work and enjoy it.

11. Teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach and the requirements of examinations are good. Many examples of thorough preparation of pupils for GCSE and Key Stage 3 tests were observed during the inspection. In English, the revision classes were provided with highly suitable material and good guidance on how to answer questions under examination conditions. In geography the situation was similar; all pupils had already been suitably guided to achieve good coursework grades, and in the lesson the teacher constantly pressed them towards better quality answers through extended written explanations and ideas. The lowest set in mathematics received good quality teaching which made potentially difficult GCSE concepts seem easy. This was achieved through the use of several well-chosen activities, which fully engaged all of the pupils for the whole lesson. History revision was also of good quality too; it demystified the whole examination procedure to the extent that pupils understood how to answer the questions to best effect, and provided them with a very clear understanding of how marks would be allocated.

12. Examples of very good teaching were seen in design and technology, music and geography. In a Year 8 design and technology lesson, the teacher set the scene for one point perspective drawing in a compelling manner, drawing the whole class towards the board and ensuring that all the pupils could see well. The explanation of the task was very clear, well sequenced and interesting, so that the pupils knew exactly what to do when they returned to do their own work. The quality of the teacher's work was evident through the precision and speed with which the pupils produced their diagrams, which were considerably above average quality for age. Pupils were given just the right amount of time to experience success before being given further clear direction on how to make improvements, on how left handed pupils might produce better quality drawings and on how the exercise related to the world of industry and commerce. Learning was rapid as the pupils acquired vastly enhanced drawing skills in an hour.

13. The strengths in the majority of lessons lead to good rates of learning and progress. Consequently, pupils generally acquire knowledge and understanding and enhance their skills quickly. Examples include the improvement of drawing techniques in art, the systematic answering of questions in mathematics to ensure that work is complete, the increase in pupils' knowledge and vocabulary in special educational needs lessons, and the improvement in composition and keyboard skills in music. However, the setting of homework and the provision of planned opportunities for independent learning need to be strengthened. Currently they are used well in some subjects but their potential for raising attainment further is still to be fully realised. Although a reasonable amount of homework is set, it does not always conform to the requirements of the school's published timetable. In some subjects it can be rather trivial and take pupils little time to complete. In teaching generally, insufficient time is currently devoted to providing pupils with structured opportunities to carry out research work, especially through the use of the library.

The school cares for its pupils very well.

14. The pupils are fortunate to be educated in a school which has such a warm atmosphere, and where the staff show so much commitment to their welfare and academic development. Children are all well known as individuals, they feel secure at school, and enjoy excellent relationships with the adults who work there. In this respect, senior staff

lead by example. They are always visible and very approachable. Relationships between staff and pupils in the classrooms are good, as they are in and around the buildings at breaks and lunchtimes. Staff at Parrenthorn High School will 'go the extra mile' to help and guide children.

15. When pupils join the school at the beginning of Year 7, they are provided with a very well designed residential experience. It provides an enjoyable focus and beginning to their life at secondary school, and gives them the opportunity to work and develop good relationships with key staff and other pupils of the same age. Form tutors and pastoral managers further develop and strengthen these good relationships as the pupils move through the school. These good relationships enable pupils to be educated in a firm but friendly atmosphere.

16. Governors' policies for child protection and pupils' welfare are very detailed, and all statutory requirements are met. Form teachers teach their groups for a well-planned personal, health and social education programme, which includes elements of personal development, health, sex education, awareness of the misuse of drugs and careers guidance. Visiting speakers add further quality to the programme by bringing it into direct contact with the world outside the classroom. The role of the form tutor is currently being extended now that all pupils' progress records are centrally held on computer. Tutors have begun to use these records to monitor pupils' development more closely than previously in a properly planned attempt to raise standards of attainment still further. Arrangements for the support of pupils with special educational needs are good. The LEA staff, teachers and learning support assistants work as a cohesive team, and are successful in ensuring that pupils make good progress towards the targets in their well-written and effective individual education plans.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is very good.

17. The school has sustained this strong area since the last inspection. Following careful discussion, the spiritual life of the school has been further enhanced, especially through the quality and form of assemblies and acts of corporate worship. All of the assemblies seen during the course of the inspection were vibrant, uplifting and interesting. They not only met the requirements for corporate worship by providing pupils with time for prayer or reflection but also gave them opportunities to consider matters of conscience carefully. Increasingly, pupils are being given responsibility to participate in and prepare acts of worship, especially when the school celebrates religious festivals relating to the diversity of cultures represented in its population.

18. A strong successful moral message pervades the life of the school. Consequently, there is an almost total absence of bullying, serious misbehaviour and vandalism. Exclusions for unacceptable conduct have fallen this year to the relatively low levels of 1997 and 1998. Assemblies provide a very effective focus for this work, which is then often further developed in religious education, personal and social education and geography. These subjects provide pupils with well planned experiences in which they are able to consider the effects of bullying, drug and alcohol dependency, vandalism, discrimination and pollution. Good behaviour is constantly reinforced, and pupils are successfully introduced to themes such as empathy with others and society's codes of conduct.

19. Very good opportunities for pupils' social development have been carefully planned, especially in relation to taking responsibility. Staff provide pupils with good role models in terms of social development, treating them with respect and expecting mature responses in return. Consequently, pupils are confident and at ease when talking amongst themselves and to adults. The role of the School Council has been enhanced considerably since the last inspection. It discusses significant issues, such as girls being allowed to wear trousers,

and reports to the governing body. Further opportunities for the taking of responsibility involve older pupils in mentoring younger ones, prefect duties and community service.

20. The school has continued to offer a very wide range of cultural and sporting activities to its pupils. The time spent by staff on this area of the school's work is extensive and thoroughly appreciated by pupils and parents. It is of considerable value because it means that the school is not just successful with GCSE. It helps to provide pupils with a fully rounded education, offering experience, responsibility and personal development in many interesting and exciting activities, which can then be pursued further in the next stages of their lives. Opportunities including choir, concerts, plays, team sports of all kinds, field visits and foreign holidays are eagerly supported by the pupils. Photographic evidence around the school successfully advertises them, and bears witness to the large numbers benefiting from and thoroughly enjoying them.

The governing body, headteacher and senior management team provide the school with good leadership.

21. The good quality of the school's management is reflected in the way that the school has overcome the effects of the fire in 1995, greatly increased in popularity and size, and at the same time dramatically improved GCSE results. The headteacher, senior management team and governors work extremely well together to provide the school with good leadership and a very clear sense of purpose. Careful planning involving the whole staff has resulted in shared aims and objectives, and very good progress since the previous inspection. Governors' policies have been thoroughly revised and in many cases rewritten, and GCSE targets agreed with individual subject heads, are achievable but challenging.

22. Since the previous inspection, whilst GCSE results have been improving year on year, concerted efforts have been made to tackle the key issues identified for action at that time. School development planning is now good; it informs intended developments over a three-year cycle. Good quality monitoring of progress made towards targets in the development plan ensures that slippage does not occur. Provision for information technology has been greatly improved by the equipping of two new bases with networked PCs, and staff are in a position to monitor pupils' progress through recently compiled computer records. Reports to parents are now of good quality; they meet statutory requirements and clearly indicate pupils' strengths and weaknesses in each subject. By building a new classroom, the school has been able to free the library of regularly timetabled teaching so that it can be used as a resource to increase the opportunities for independent learning in all subjects. However, although the fiction stock has improved, the library's stock of books and resources is well below the level found nationally in schools of this size and does not adequately support the current curriculum. The school is aware of this shortcoming and has allocated funding to tackle it. Throughout all of these developments the management team and governors have not lost sight of the importance of the distinctive ethos of the school. It is still a place where children are safe, well cared for, and provided with a fully rounded education by adults who are clear about their expectation of good behaviour.

23. The school's positive ethos flows from clear and supportive management at a senior level. The headteacher and senior managers are always visible during lessons, breaks and at lunchtime, giving staff the reassurance that help, if needed, is not far away and will be willingly and effectively given. Opportunities for subject and pastoral leaders to develop their management roles are good. An example is the offer to heads of subject of time away from the classroom to monitor teaching. Increasingly, teaching is being monitored for quality but the school could sharpen and further formalise the process in order that any weaknesses in subject teaching may be identified and eliminated.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The quality of teaching in English, science and religious education. Some of the teaching in these subjects is good but in several lessons there are missed opportunities to develop pupils' skills at a good pace, and sometimes shortcomings. Hence whilst pupils' progress is generally satisfactory it is not as rapid as in other subjects.

24. The majority of lessons observed in all of the subjects of the curriculum were of good quality. However, in just under a third there were missed opportunities to develop pupils' skills at a good pace or shortcomings which reduced the quality of learning to satisfactory, and in one instance unsatisfactory. The majority of these lessons were in English, science and religious education.

25. In a revision lesson for GCSE science, some of the explanations were far too rushed, and the teacher did not ensure that the class really understood the work before moving on. Consequently the value of the session as preparation for the forthcoming examination was limited. In another GCSE science revision lesson, which was unsatisfactory, the learning atmosphere was poor towards the end because a minority of the pupils were very restless and not prepared to settle to work properly. Exercise books in the lowest science GCSE group had not been marked at all for a long time. This class contains several pupils with special educational needs who need very regular and detailed written feedback on their work if they are going to make the optimum amount of progress. Hence, in all three classes, although progress was satisfactory overall, it could have been much better.

26. Four satisfactory English lessons were observed. Pupils were making no more than adequate progress. In a Year 9 lesson, the teacher did more work than the pupils in an effort to keep them in check in understanding a well-chosen prose passage. Overall, the lesson was not of a high enough quality to keep the class fully interested and engaged, and there was insufficient emphasis on the development of writing. A careful scrutiny of pupils' previously completed work from other classes in both key stages showed that writing is generally insufficiently developed, especially for average and high attaining pupils. It is competent, but there are too many spelling errors, and technical accuracy, fluency and range of vocabulary all need to be improved.

27. Another lesson with Year 10 did not provide pupils with enough thinking time. The teacher again did too much of the work. Overall the lesson, although satisfactory, lacked real rigour. In many English lessons there is a tendency to instruct and practise skills with insufficient oral work, rather than giving pupils time to work things out for themselves by means of well-structured activities. Teachers are encouraging and supportive but, to improve the quality of their work, they need to consider carefully how instruction and pupil activities should be balanced. The current tendency to almost always ask oral questions to the class as a whole and invite volunteers to answer means that many pupils do not feel obliged to participate.

28. Religious education lessons are competently taught and pupils make satisfactory progress. However, as in English, the teacher tends to direct oral questions to the class as a whole, which means that the majority of pupils are not really engaged in discussion, and can avoid it. Control of the pupils is adequate but there are instances of restlessness which need to be tackled if all of the pupils are to make best use of their time.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

29. Building on the many strengths in teaching, the governors, headteacher and staff should further improve its quality, particularly in English, science and religious education. This will involve:

- Monitoring the quality of teaching in English, science and religious education carefully.
- Looking at lessons to determine why, in a minority of cases, pupils are restless or quiet but not fully involved.
- Improving the structure, content and delivery of these lessons to ensure that pupils are interested and use their time fully.
- Providing effective programmes to develop the higher attaining pupils' writing to a standard commensurate with GCSE grades A and B.
- Planning for independent learning in a full range of subjects.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	37
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8	59	30	3	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	Y 7 – Y 11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	669	N/a
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	99	N/a

Special educational needs	Y 7 – Y 11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	15	N/a
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	122	N/a

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	63

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	8.5
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	83	54	137

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	53	62	55
	Girls	43	36	30
	Total	96	98	85
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	71 (61)	72 (64)	62 (57)
	National	63 (65)	62 (60)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	38 (30)	40 (34)	26 (22)
	National	28 (35)	38 (36)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	54	57	64
	Girls	37	36	41
	Total	91	93	105
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	67 (76)	68 (57)	77 (70)
	National	64 (62)	64 (64)	60 (62)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	39 (41)	38 (31)	28 (31)
	National	31 (31)	37 (37)	28 (31)

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	69	53	122

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	41	69	69
	Girls	29	53	53
	Total	70	122	122
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	57 (47)	100 (98)	100 (99)
	National	46 (45)	91 (90)	96 (95)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	46 (41)
	National	38 (37)

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	N/a
	National	N/a

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	2
Indian	3
Pakistani	37
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	2
White	609
Any other minority ethnic group	12

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	4	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	24	7
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 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	37.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	267

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76.1%
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	24.8
Key Stage 4	22.8

Financial information

Financial year	1998 – 1999
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	£
Total income	1,392,724
Total expenditure	1,407,983
Expenditure per pupil	2153
Balance brought forward from previous year	111,399
Balance carried forward to next year	96,140

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	669
Number of questionnaires returned	141

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	46.2	41.8	8.5	2.8	0.7
My child is making good progress in school.	45.7	45.7	3.6	0.7	4.3
Behaviour in the school is good.	29.1	53.2	7.8	2.8	7.1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31.2	44.8	19.8	3.5	0.7
The teaching is good.	37.4	56.1	3.6	0	2.9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32.6	47.1	16.7	2.9	0.7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54.7	41.1	3.5	0.7	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64.1	32.4	1.4	1.4	0.7
The school works closely with parents.	26.6	56.7	12.9	0.7	3.1
The school is well led and managed.	34.0	53.2	6.4	0	6.4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38.1	53.2	6.5	0	2.2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37.9	42.1	8.6	0	11.4