

INSPECTION REPORT

**WILLIAM FARR (CE) COMPREHENSIVE
SCHOOL**

Welton, Lincoln

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120711

Headteacher: Mr P Strong

Reporting inspector: Paul Mitchell
002467

Dates of inspection: 16 May 2000 – 18 May 2000

Inspection number: 185988

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	11-18
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Nigel Simpson
Date of previous inspection:	15 October 1995

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This large 11-18 Church of England foundation school has 1189 boys and girls aged 11-18, of whom 157 are in the sixth form. The school is popular and takes pupils from a wide area, which extends well beyond its immediate catchment area. Pupils' attainments on entry cover the full ability range but, taken as a whole, the intake has above average attainment. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (4.4%) is well below the national average (18%). Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups and only 0.3% of pupils have English as an additional language. 12.5% of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs compared with 18.7% nationally and just over 1% of pupils have a statement, which is about half the national average. The school will become a specialist Technology School from September 2000.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

William Farr (CE) Comprehensive School is a very good school, with many excellent features. The school achieves high standards through high quality teaching within a culture that fosters learning and pupils' personal development. The conscientious and committed staff is supported well by a very effective management team in fulfilling the school's mission statement of 'Striving for Excellence'. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- High quality teaching leads to standards that are high in relation to national figures in tests and examinations at ages 14, 16 and 18 and match those of similar¹ schools.
- Pupils' very good, often excellent, behaviour and their positive attitudes to school and their work enhance their learning.
- Very good, often excellent, behaviour is promoted through effective systems that avoid confrontation.
- Very good care, support and guidance for pupils enable them to learn effectively.
- Provision for pupils with special needs enables them to make very good progress.
- The headteacher, senior management team and other managers provide leadership and management of the highest quality and are continually seeking to improve the school further.
- A very wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits enriches the pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- Although boys' attainments at GCSE are well above national averages, they are further below girls' results than the difference found nationally.
- The good practice of systematic monitoring and evaluation to assure quality, which is evident in some subject departments, is not consistent throughout the school.

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 inspected last in November 1995. Since that date the school has improved considerably. There has been a very significant improvement in the quality of teaching,

¹ 'Similar schools' are secondary schools with similar percentages of pupils entitled to free school meals

particularly in the proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching. GCSE examination results have risen at a faster rate than nationally. There has been a particularly rapid improvement in GCSE results in modern foreign languages.

The school has made satisfactory or good progress on all the key issues identified in the last report. Provision for, and use of, information technology (IT) has increased greatly. The school meets National Curriculum requirements in IT but some work is needed to ensure progression for individual pupils. Statutory requirements for collective worship are met. Higher-attaining pupils are given challenging tasks that allow them to make good progress. Assessment of pupils' work by teachers is consistent and coherent. However, whilst the practice of providing written feedback to pupils on how to improve their work is good in some subjects, it is not evident in others. Opportunities for spiritual development are provided successfully through religious education (RE), within the wider curriculum and during school assemblies.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
GCSE examinations	A	A	A	C
A-levels/AS-levels	A	A	A	

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

Results in national tests in English, mathematics and science for 14 year-olds have been consistently well above the national averages. Overall, these results show an upward trend that matches the national trend. However, in comparison with similar schools, the 1999 results show English to be above average, mathematics to be average and science well below average.

The school's GCSE results for both boys and girls have been consistently well above the national average. They match those of similar schools. These results have improved at a faster rate than the national trend. Girls' results are very high. In 1999, the percentage of girls achieving 5 A*-C grades exceeded the boys' results by 19% compared with a national difference of 10%. GCSE results in English, mathematics and science are well above national averages. Results in most other subjects are also above the national averages although, in 1999, the results in English literature, geography, German and physical education (PE) were broadly in line with the national averages. In art and design, business studies, drama, history and RE over 80% of pupils achieved GCSE higher grades (A*-C). The standard of many pupils' work in art and history is exceptionally high. Results at GCE Advanced Level have been consistently well above the national average over the past three years with the pass rate (grades A-E) in many subjects being 100%.

The standards of pupils' work seen during this inspection reflect the above average examination results and indicate that these standards are being maintained. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and achieve well in relation to their previous attainment.

The school has used a wide range of information on pupils' previous attainments to set challenging but realistic targets for the percentage of pupils achieving 5 A*-C GCSE grades (68% in 2000 and 76% in 2001). The school's targets also indicate the intention to sustain at 100% the proportion of pupils achieving at least one GCSE at A*-G.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They are attentive and responsive in lessons and are keen to do well. This has a positive impact on their attainment and the progress they are able to make.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Standards of behaviour are very high overall and often excellent. The school has few permanent exclusions but the number of fixed-term exclusions has increased and is high when compared with schools of a similar type and size.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and between staff and pupils are very good. The school has a strong sense of community to which the pupils respond positively. Pupils' personal development is enhanced by the many opportunities that are provided for them to exercise their growing sense of responsibility.
Attendance	Attendance is consistently well above the average for secondary schools.

The school's high expectations of pupils in terms of their behaviour and respect for others, the celebration of pupils' achievements and the positive and courteous relationships between staff and pupils have contributed to an orderly and purposeful atmosphere in the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is a strength of the school. It was good or better in 84% of lessons and very good or excellent in 46% of lessons. All teaching was at least satisfactory. Teachers treat pupils with respect and their expectations that pupils will achieve high standards are conveyed to the pupils through their supportive, caring but challenging approach. These features create a learning culture that helps pupils to make good progress. The use of questioning, which encourages pupils to think for themselves, is a particular strength of the teaching. The pace of work in lessons is usually brisk, although a slower pace and insufficient clarity in

identifying the learning objectives led to teaching in a few lessons for pupils aged 11-14 being satisfactory rather than good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	All pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, which is taught in a stimulating way. The requirements of the National Curriculum and RE are met. The range of A level subjects offered in the sixth form is very good. Pupils have access to excellent extra-curricular opportunities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. Individual needs are carefully identified. Pupils with special needs receive well-planned programmes of extra support, closely matched to their needs, that help them to make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. These pupils are well supported and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The Personal, Social and Moral Education (PSME) programme is very good. A strong careers programme makes effective use of industrial links. Collective worship, RE and other subjects contribute effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC). Social development and multicultural awareness are very strong.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has comprehensive guidance and support procedures and programmes in place, which ensure a high standard of care for pupils. High standards of behaviour, attendance and punctuality are successfully promoted. Appropriate and effective child protection procedures are in place. The school provides a safe and secure environment.

The curriculum is enhanced by good use of external resources and enrichment activities. Pupils regularly make a wide range of visits that help develop their understanding and complement classroom work. The care and support provided by the tutor, who stays with a group of pupils throughout their school life, is a very strong feature of the care and guidance programme.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and senior management have a clear vision for the development of the school and implement this through strong and decisive leadership. They give good support to all the teachers and maintain an orderly and successful school community. Heads of department manage their subject areas well. Heads of year maintain high standards of pupil care and behaviour.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors provide the school with strategic direction and play an important role in the construction of the school's long-term management plans. Although governors are well informed about the school's strengths they do not have sufficient contact with the school to be fully aware of its areas for development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school uses comparative performance data to evaluate standards. Although there is much good practice in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning, this is not yet sufficiently rigorous in all departments to assure consistent quality.
The strategic use of resources	The school manages its resources very well, to the benefit of all its pupils. Good use is made of the school's accommodation, staffing and teaching resources.

Leadership and management are key strengths of the school and major factors in the achievement and maintenance of high standards. The school applies the principles of best value by comparing its performance with similar schools and when ordering services, equipment and materials. Whilst the school consults with pupils and parents it does not systematically seek the views of the latter.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards are high, teaching is good and pupils make good progress. • Pupils are expected to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is approachable if parents have questions or problems. • Their children are helped to become mature and responsible. • The school has improved very significantly the IT facilities for pupils. • The school promotes the right values and has an excellent ethos. • The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and behaviour is good. • The school is not complacent. • Pupils' attendance is good. • Support for pupils, including induction, is good and pupils' personal and social development are strengths. • Support for pupils with special needs is good. • The school is led by a strong and effective management team. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are inconsistencies in the setting of homework. • A small minority feels that the school does not work sufficiently closely with parents and thinks that the school does not keep them sufficiently well informed about their children's progress. • Although the schools' response to letters from parents is usually very good, there are some lapses.

Overall, parents are very positive and value the work of the school. The parents' views of the many strengths of the school are supported by the findings of the inspection. Homework is nearly always set, although there are occasional lapses and the overlap of timescales for coursework, due to insufficient coordination, has placed pressure on some pupils. The lack of a parents' association is unusual for a school of this type and the school is right to have plans to re-establish this. Reports provide a clear statement of pupils' attainment and progress and meet statutory requirements. The school also holds parents' consultation evenings and parents' clinics. Most communications from parents are dealt with promptly but the school lacks clear target times for responses and there is no rigorous monitoring system. Although parents expressed some concern about the pressures placed on the school by its relatively rapid growth, the school has attracted considerable capital investment and has managed the expansion in numbers well. The increase has placed pressure on space; for example, on PE facilities, social areas and corridors. There are plans to expand the dining room, sixth form study areas and the library by September 2002.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

High quality teaching leads to standards that are high in relation to national figures in tests and examinations at ages 14, 16 and 18 and match those of similar schools.

1. All teaching seen during the inspection was at least satisfactory and often good or better. This is clearly a very significant factor in the high standards achieved by pupils. The standards throughout the school are above national averages and match other schools with similarly favourable socio-economic circumstances. The teaching has many strengths and very few weaknesses. Teaching of GCSE and A level classes is never less than good and is often very good or excellent.
2. Knowledgeable teachers provide pupils with clear explanations, including helpful examples, and a good range of appropriate learning experiences. Good questioning techniques, which often require pupils to explain their thinking or to give reasons for their answers, are very effective in helping the pupils to develop their skills of analysis and problem solving. For example, in a Year 9 science lesson the teacher encouraged pupils to think deeply about their work by questioning them on the reasons for the design of their investigation on heart rate and why they felt that their results would be reliable. This led to a high level discussion of the suitability of different ways of presenting and analysing the data.
3. Teachers plan very thoroughly and provide an extensive range of suitable lesson activities that meets the learning needs of pupils. However, the intended learning outcomes for pupils are often not stated clearly. In a few lessons, with 11-14 year-old pupils, this leads to a steady pace, as teachers do not move the lesson on quickly when the desired learning has been achieved. In some lessons, such as in science, teachers prepare instruction sheets or worksheets that are adapted to different reading ages and prior attainment within the class. These are particularly effective in helping pupils to make good progress in their learning.
4. A strong feature of all lessons is teachers' high expectations of what pupils will achieve and of their attitudes and behaviour. For example, in a Year 7 mathematics lesson pupils were given challenging work on algebraic expressions which, due to the variety of teaching methods and strategies used, they were able to understand with relative ease. Teachers' management of pupils is almost always calm. It is based on established good relationships and codes of behaviour. Lessons are orderly and purposeful. Good humour and enjoyment by the pupils are often evident. Some Year 8 French lessons are rich in humour, and encourage pupils to make jokes in the target language. Many pupils are strongly motivated by the opportunity to use IT in art for creating animations and other creative design purposes. Some lessons are very imaginative and occasionally inspirational. For example, sixth form students studying design and technology have been inspired by the notion of using anthropometric data (data about people) to create ergonomes (computer screen people), which they use to inform ergonomically sound computer aided designs for a range of objects. The involvement of pupils in assessing their own work in geography helps provide motivation by enabling pupils to appreciate the progress that they are making.

5. Teachers match the work well to pupils' prior attainments and provide challenging tasks that enable them to make good progress in their learning. There is an appropriate emphasis on the development of pupils' literacy skills, in particular their knowledge and understanding of specialist vocabulary. For example, in science, teachers explain scientific terms carefully and refer to lists of these words that are displayed in classrooms. This enables pupils to use scientific terms correctly in their discussions, explanations and written work. Teachers provide useful written prompts that help pupils structure their writing. Pupils are also given good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills through class discussion and by giving talks to their class. Teachers use challenging language and ensure that pupils' work includes extended writing opportunities. Pupils' numeracy skills are also extended and consolidated effectively in different contexts through a wide range of subjects.
6. Books are nearly always marked thoroughly at frequent intervals, usually with corrections and encouraging comments. Pupils understand the grades and marks that they are given and explain clearly how well they are achieving in their subjects. Some teachers use the very good practice of giving detailed feedback to pupils on what they need to do to improve their work generally or to overcome specific weaknesses. This practice, which is evident in art and some A level subjects, has a significant impact on pupils' learning but is not used sufficiently widely. In mathematics, the feedback given to pupils through record and target sheets helps pupils to identify areas in which they need to improve.
7. Teachers make good use of homework to support pupils' learning. Whilst some homework appropriately requires pupils to complete written work started in class, there are many good examples of homework that helps pupils to extend their understanding or to prepare for future work. Particularly good practice is evident in mathematics, where pupils are given their homework for the term in advance.

Pupils' very good, often excellent, behaviour and their positive attitudes to school and to their work enhance learning.

8. Pupils and students are very positive about the school and are highly appreciative of all the opportunities it provides. They participate well in lessons and respond to the high expectations set by their teachers. In group work or class discussions they listen carefully to each other and respect different viewpoints and opinions. For example, in a Year 9 history lesson there was a lively discussion about the rise of Hitler, during which pupils challenged other people's views in a mature and reasoned way. In a Year 9 English lesson pupils worked well in class, putting forward strong arguments for and against corporal punishment, and making useful notes as the lesson progressed. When working in groups pupils readily evaluate each other's oral contributions according to criteria provided by the teacher.
9. Sixth form pupils work well in tutorial style lessons in, for example, English and business studies where, respectively, they engaged in a challenging discussion of the set text, *Wuthering Heights*, and the issues surrounding a case-study firm which required additional funding.
10. Relationships amongst pupils, and between pupils and teachers, are very good. They are based on the evident mutual respect, which is a feature of the school. Pupils approach their activities in school with a high level of maturity and they are mindful of each other, both in and out of the classroom.

11. Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good and often excellent. They behave sensibly even where staircases and corridors become crowded. Pupils are courteous, polite and cooperative. They appreciate the school's classroom code and feel secure in the knowledge that incidents of poor behaviour will be dealt with firmly and promptly by the school. The high levels of attendance, punctuality and keenness to learn are key factors in the achievement of high standards.
12. Pupils have a strong sense of responsibility both for their learning and in relation to the school community. This is exercised confidently and maturely in the many opportunities provided by the school; for example, in the School Council meeting where pupils reviewed the achievements of the past year and discussed sensibly targets for the coming year. The peer counselling service for Year 7 pupils, which is provided by older pupils, is a useful support in helping new pupils settle into the school. The school provides numerous other opportunities through which pupils can develop independence, initiative and responsibility to each other and the wider community; for example, through the prefect system in Year 11 and the various work for charities which often involves large numbers of pupils.

Very good, often excellent, behaviour is promoted through effective systems that avoid confrontation.

13. The school has effective procedures for the promotion of good behaviour through the care and guidance programme. Emphasis is placed on a comprehensive behaviour management system, which includes praise and reward, and is appreciated by pupils. Pupils value the rewards for good behaviour and achievement, which include merit awards, commendations, excellent work reports and letters home. Achievements are celebrated during assemblies. The good relationships and expertise with which teachers manage pupils is backed by a clear and consistent understanding about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. This avoids confrontation. Behaviour around the school is very good, often excellent, and there is no evidence of vandalism or graffiti.
14. The school rightly has a low tolerance of poor behaviour and has a hierarchy of clear procedures for dealing with such incidents, which are applied consistently. There are clear lines of referral, through heads of department, tutors and heads of year for pupils whose behaviour within classrooms and around the school falls below the expected standard. Detentions and individual report systems are used appropriately. The number of permanent exclusions is average when measured against similar schools. Within the school's approach to managing pupils' behaviour, fixed, short-term exclusions from school have provided a strong and effective sanction for what the school considers to be unacceptable behaviour. Such behaviour is clearly defined and includes verbal abuse of staff, swearing, bullying and racial abuse. In these instances prompt action is taken, clear procedures are followed and legal obligations are fulfilled. However, whilst the use of short-term exclusions has had a positive effect on pupils' behaviour within school, the extensive use of this sanction has led to a significant increase in the number of short-term exclusions since the last inspection. Although most temporary exclusions are for one day and most pupils are excluded only once, the total number is high when compared with schools of a similar type and size. However, the school monitors exclusions closely and appreciates the implications, especially for the small number of pupils where this is used more than once.

15. Appropriate procedures for child protection and the health and safety of pupils are in place and are explained to new staff as a part of their induction. The school's approach to child protection is well understood by staff. It is discussed in year team meetings, is included in sessions for support staff and is detailed in the school's care and guidance booklet. Pupils feel able to approach teachers and other adults in the school, such as the school nurse, to discuss their problems or concerns.

Very good care, support and guidance for pupils enable them to learn effectively.

16. The school's comprehensive care and guidance programme has been developed over a number of years and is successful in ensuring that all pupils are well known, cared for and provided with opportunities to help them become mature, responsible and successful adults. Form tutors are key staff within this programme and the support they receive from heads of year and from the associate deputy headteacher, with responsibility for guidance, is very effective. The systems and procedures are well understood by pupils and staff and work well. Tutors' and subject teachers' excellent knowledge of pupils enables the school to be highly effective in the care it provides.

17. The role of the form tutor is considerably strengthened through an innovative seven-year tutor rotation and an associated training programme. This means that tutors now stay with their group throughout their school life and this is significant in providing continuity of care and support for pupils as they advance through the school. On the very rare occasions when the relationship between tutor and pupil has been strained this has been resolved, either through discussion or, as a last resort, by the pupil changing tutor group. The training programme helps to develop the different skills that tutors will need to be effective in their role. The introduction of personal interviews for each pupil each year provides the opportunity for tutors to identify and address perceived strengths and weaknesses and set agreed targets for improvement. Tutors are becoming more involved in target setting for academic achievement and the school has plans to extend this beyond Year 7 and Year 10 in the coming year.

Provision for pupils with special needs enables them to make good progress.

18. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. There are good procedures for identifying special needs, including efficient liaison with feeder schools, referral by teachers or parents and an effective programme of screening tests. Individual education plans are well formulated, and have been significantly improved since the previous inspection. They include notes of pupils' strengths as well as areas of concern, clear targets for progress and valuable guidance on the support required from other teachers and from parents. As a result support is very closely matched to the needs of individual pupils.

19. Special educational needs staff are skilled and experienced. They know their pupils well and use a good range of teaching strategies to help pupils overcome their difficulties and to make good progress. For instance, in a Year 7 withdrawal group, where word attack strategies are used to improve spelling and reading, a spelling list designed for the individual pupil is constructed and tested. From the results of this testing a new list is formed, assuring very methodical, step-by-step progress, which is evident in pupils' subsequent writing. Pupils make good use of IT to access the 'electronic library'. They choose reading material that can be read to the teacher,

allowing them to work at improving their knowledge and understanding of words and sentence structures that cause them difficulty. The well managed and coordinated special educational needs support is effectively overseen by a sub-committee of the governing body.

20. The school is strongly committed to meeting the needs of pupils with disabilities. Recent work has ensured that all areas of the school are accessible to wheelchair users. Visually impaired pupils are well supported. The school's commitment is reinforced and extended to other pupils by having annual 'Disability Awareness Days' which are successful in extending the understanding and empathy towards classmates with disabilities. Pupils who need to work hard to meet behavioural targets are given excellent individual counselling support.

The headteacher, senior management team and other managers provide leadership and management of the highest quality and are continually seeking to improve the school further.

21. William Farr School is a purposeful and successful community because of the impact of consistently good management at all levels. The governors take their responsibilities seriously and provide a clear strategic direction to the school. Their committee structure helps them to focus on key aspects of school management such as the curriculum and finance, which they oversee well. At present, not all governors have sufficient contact with the school during the working day. The headteacher has a strong personal presence around the school and has high expectations of the whole of the school community. He is particularly determined to ensure that all pupils learn in an environment that is free from oppressive behaviour or discrimination and that pupils with a wide range of special needs are properly supported and integrated fully into the school community. The headteacher and senior management team work with heads of department and heads of year to provide high quality professional leadership. They maintain high standards of achievement for all pupils regardless of gender or ability.
22. Good management is also evident at the level of curriculum planning and timetabling. The school's resources and accommodation are used well. Teachers and learning support assistants are well qualified and well organised; they promote and achieve high academic and social standards. Teachers manage their classes very well. They make good use of comparative performance data and set their pupils challenging yet achievable targets. The management of lessons is good and teachers ensure that pupils make good progress in their learning. Although lessons are taught well, the quality of teaching is not formally monitored in all departments and systems for the appraisal of all staff have fallen into disuse but the school is planning for the introduction of performance review.
23. Relationships and behaviour are managed well, allowing lessons to proceed at a good pace without disruption.
24. Financial planning is excellent, reflecting the educational priorities of the school. Good stewardship has enabled the school to provide a modern, well-equipped and pleasant environment for its pupils. It is able to afford a good number of very effective ancillary staff to support teachers with routine administration. The school is adjusting to a reduction in its budget as a result of legislation that ended grant-maintained status; it will have to continue to monitor spending carefully if it is to remain within budget in the next few years.

25. The school produces very detailed development plans that set out clearly how it intends to continue to improve. Although initiatives are carefully costed and improvements managed well, the school does not always formally evaluate the impact of new developments.

A very wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits enriches pupils' learning.

26. The curriculum is enhanced by good use of external resources and enrichment activities. Pupils regularly make visits to art galleries and the theatre. Year 9 pupils visit the places of worship of a variety of faiths, to support work in RE and their multicultural understanding. The school participates in 'World Challenge' and pupils have participated in a successful trip to Pakistan. Pupils studying geography undertake field trips that help develop their understanding and complement classroom work. The PSME programme utilises good industrial links, which lead to representatives of local companies visiting the school to talk to pupils and visits by the pupils to the companies. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a mock Magistrate's Trial, and there is an annual North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) exercise for sixth formers. Pupils visit Beth Shalom, the Holocaust centre in Nottingham, which prompted one pupil to write, "In conclusion, I can speak for all those Year 10 pupils on our trip, when I describe this as an exceptional visit that touched everyone. We will carry the memories and images of it for the rest of our lives."

27. The school organises an excellent range of extra-curricular activities calculated to satisfy personal interests, broaden horizons and develop personal and social qualities. There is an extensive lunchtime and after-school programme, which is complemented by longer-term activities and events. All years are well represented. There are opportunities to engage in mixed or single sex activities, such as girls' football coaching or boys' tennis, as well as those arranged for single year groups and mixed year groups. The school encourages excellence in sport and creative and performing arts through a well-organised house system.

28. Clubs and events help to promote pupils' social and cultural development. A high number of pupils are undertaking the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Pupils have an opportunity to represent their peers on the School Council. Pupils work on behalf of Amnesty International and play an active role in its efforts to secure the release of political prisoners.

29. Cultural activities include a range of day trips and longer-term foreign exchanges with pupils in France, Germany and the United States. In addition, there is an annual trip to Russia by sixth formers who take part in an international science competition. While in Russia students stay with Russian families. Pupils assume a heavy responsibility in raising funds for these undertakings, which are calculated to develop independence, team-work and self-esteem.

30. Pupils take part in dramatic and musical productions; this year the musical Oklahoma is being performed. In addition to the opportunity for singing and acting provided by school productions, there is a dance club, choir, string quartet and house music rehearsals.

31. Sporting opportunities include rounders, five-a-side competitions, football, hockey, athletics, netball, cricket, tennis, table tennis, gymnastics, rugby, badminton and step

aerobics. In addition to these lunchtime and after-school sessions, there is a full programme of competitive sport which takes place on Saturday mornings and after school. Pupils from the school have participated in sport at local, national and international level.

32. For those who enjoy problem solving in the broadest sense, there is an intranet working group, a school newspaper and opportunities to take part in the Lincoln Schools' Maths Challenge and Sheffield Hallam Pop Maths. For those who enjoy being challenged quietly there is a bridge club.
33. Many activities support pupils' studies. There is an art master class, French library, design and technology products master class, extra-music GCSE group, Young Enterprise, Standard Assessment Tasks and Tests (SAT) extension classes, design and technology club, maths club, science club and a coursework surgery in science.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Although boys' attainments at GCSE are well above national averages, they are further below the girls' results than the difference found nationally

34. In 1999 the percentage of boys achieving higher grades (A*-C) was well above the national average for boys but their results were 19% below those of girls compared with a national difference of 10%. The school is very aware of this and has, over the past few years, taken a number of steps to address the issue. For example, special assemblies for boys have been organised, several teachers have attended national training courses and boys' achievement has been the focus of some whole school training days. The school has also introduced mentoring of pupils who are on the C/D grade borderline at GCSE, many of whom are boys. Whilst these actions are appropriate, they have not yet had a sufficient impact on boys' attainments.
35. Scrutiny of pupils' books indicated that girls often take more care with the presentation of their work and research long-term tasks more thoroughly than boys do. Teachers are often not sufficiently vigilant in recognising when boys' rate of work and attention to task are not as high as they might be. Boys' work is sometimes less thorough than girls' work.

The good practice of systematic monitoring and evaluation to assure quality, which is evident in some subject departments, is not consistent throughout the school.

36. There is a good range of monitoring and evaluation procedures in use in the school but these are not used consistently across subject departments. In some departments, such as science, the head of department regularly observes lessons and provides developmental feedback to teachers. In some departments teachers' planning and pupils' work is also evaluated to assure quality. This very good practice, however, is not applied consistently and systematically across all departments.
37. Governors are very committed to supporting the school but, often for good reasons, they do not visit the school very often during the working day. This reduces the potential benefits of the recently established system whereby governors are linked to subject departments in order to help them learn more about the school's strengths and weaknesses.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

38. In order to sustain the high standards and build upon the good work that has already been done the school should:

continue its efforts and take further steps to improve boys' attainment at GCSE by:

- ensuring that all staff are aware of the issues relating to boys' attainment at GCSE and increasingly apply these in their teaching;
- continuing the work on developing the range of teaching and learning strategies to address boys' learning preferences;
- using assessment data to analyse boys' attainment on intake, to monitor progress and analyse learning needs as they move through the school;
- developing mentoring further;
- extending the practice that exists in some departments of setting short-term targets within longer pieces of work, such as coursework;
- monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the actions taken.

build on the progress made in monitoring and evaluation to ensure continued improvement by

- developing a clear understanding across the school of the ways in which monitoring and evaluation can be used to inform planning for improvement;
- clarifying the expectations of the role of heads of subject departments and year teams in monitoring and evaluating the work of their team;
- implementing consistently a monitoring and evaluation programme across the school;
- applying more widely the good practice that already exists within some departments.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	70
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
16	30	38	16	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1032	157
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	49	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	16	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	141	1

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	30

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	1.1

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	93	103	196

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	78	75	65
	Girls	96	86	75
	Total	174	161	140
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	90 (78)	83 (76)	73 (83)
	National	63 (57)	62 (60)	55 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	52 (46)	55 (56)	30 (48)
	National	28 (23)	38 (37)	23 (29)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	76	73	83
	Girls	94	90	89
	Total	170	163	172
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	87 (86)	83 (72)	88 (77)
	National	64 (60)	64 (64)	60 (61)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	32 (46)	56 (46)	55 (49)
	National	31 (28)	37 (37)	28 (29)

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	106	103	209

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	59	101	104
	Girls	77	100	102
	Total	136	201	206
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	66 (67)	98 (96)	100 (100)
	National	46.6 (44.6)	90.9 (89.8)	95.8 (n/a)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	46.6 (45.5)
	National	38 (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	37 86.5
	National	n/a 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	26	43	69

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	20.6	24.0	22.7 (22)	n/a	0	0
National	17.7	18.1	17.9(17.3)	2.7	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	n/a

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	3
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	1
Indian	2
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	1165
Any other minority ethnic group	17

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	58	3
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	68.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	616

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y13

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76.4
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y13

Key Stage 3	27.2
Key Stage 4	22.6
Sixth Form	13.8

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	2979900
Total expenditure	3003453
Expenditure per pupil	2526
Balance brought forward from previous year	33407
Balance carried forward to next year	9854

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1189
Number of questionnaires returned	255

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	50	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	44	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	58	4	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	52	17	3	2
The teaching is good.	34	58	3	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	45	18	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	42	6	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	35	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	31	47	16	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	54	40	1	2	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	53	2	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	51	9	1	9

Other issues raised by parents

Written comments were included with 31 of the questionnaire returns. The majority of these expressed strong support for the school, especially about the way in which the school had enabled their children to make rapid progress. The comments at the parents' meeting were overwhelmingly positive. A very small number of parents expressed concerns about a lack of communication from the school and a slow response to letters.