

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Rosewood School**

Dudley

LEA area: Dudley

Unique Reference Number: 103882

Headteacher: Mrs. E. M. Williams.

Reporting inspector: Mr. K. L. Tottman  
T12007

Dates of inspection: 27.9.1999 – 30.9.1999.

Under OFSTED contract number: 708298

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

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## Information about the school

Type of school	Special: emotional and behavioural difficulties
Type of control	County
Age range of pupils	11 – 16 years
Gender of pupils	Boys
School address	Overfield Road Russells Hall Estate Dudley DY1 2NX
Telephone number:	01384 816800
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend P. Green
Date of the previous inspection:	July 1996

## Information about the inspection team

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Keith Tottman Registered Inspector	English Religious education Art Modern Foreign Language	Attainment and progress; Teaching; Leadership and management; Efficiency; Equal opportunities.
Daphne Johnston Lay Inspector		Attendance; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Partnership with parents and the community.
Mike McDowell Team Inspector	Science Physical education History Geography	Staffing, accommodation and resources; Curriculum and assessment; English as an additional language.
Eric Peagam Team Inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Information technology Music	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; Special educational needs.

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## **Main findings**

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

- progress is good in mathematics, science, design and technology, art and geography
- good specialist teaching is very well supported by other staff
  - teachers have a clear understanding of pupils' knowledge and understanding
  - pupils are very well-prepared for the next stage of their education
  - there are very good levels of resources in very good accommodation
  - there is a good ratio of well-qualified adults to pupils
  - administration and management are good

### **WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES**

- attendance is very poor
- levels of exclusion are very high
  - taught time is below recommended levels
  - there is no planned programme for all pupils in music at Key Stage 3
  - the appraisal of teachers has lapsed

**The weaknesses are outweighed by what the school does well but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents, guardians or carers of pupils at the school.**

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. National Curriculum requirements are now met, except for a music programme at Key Stage 3. There has been good improvement in the oversight of both the curriculum and the counselling provided. There has been very good improvement in pupils' progress in mathematics and science, and good improvement in French. Provision for spiritual, moral and cultural development is much better and governors now have a better oversight of what goes on in the school. Despite considerable efforts, attendance is now worse than at the time of the previous inspection. The availability of support staff is much improved; personal, social and health education was not well planned before and is little improved; leadership in the school is more unified and coherent now. The school is positioned to continue making good improvement.

### **WHETHER PUPILS ARE MAKING ENOUGH PROGRESS**

Progress in:	By 16
Targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C
English:	
listening and speaking	D
reading	C
writing	C
Mathematics	B
Science	B
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	C

Key	
A	B
C	
D	E

**Best progress takes place in:**

**design and technology:** particularly in making things;  
**physical education:** good pupil progress toward their own targets;  
**mathematics:** in the acquisition of the four rules of number;  
**science:** in collecting data and investigative work.

**Not enough progress takes place in:**

**listening and speaking:** particularly amongst younger pupils;  
**music:** because it is not taught;  
**religious education:** occasionally, when behaviour is not managed well.

**QUALITY OF TEACHING**

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
11 - 16 years	good	Science, design and technology, physical education and art.	Speaking and listening skills.
English	satisfactory		
Mathematics	good		
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	satisfactory		

Teaching is mostly good and is rarely unsatisfactory. Almost three quarters of the teaching is good or better, and nearly a quarter is very good. There are no significant differences between key stages in this pattern, although a greater proportion (about one third) of the teaching at Key Stage 4 is very good.

**OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

Aspect	Comment
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Behaviour	Satisfactory. Older pupils usually behave well; younger pupils behave badly at times.
Attendance	Very poor. There is a history on non-attendance amongst many pupils and high levels of exclusion contribute to absence rates.
Ethos*	Satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes to work are satisfactory and relationships throughout are good. There is a general commitment to raising standards.
Leadership and management	Good. School is led well; development and subject planning have improved; monitoring of teaching and curriculum is good.
Curriculum	Satisfactory with good features. Broad, relevant but lacks balance at both key stages. Assessment practice is good.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory; that for moral and social is good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	A good level of experienced staff of all sorts. Both the resources for learning and the accommodation are very good.
Value for money	Satisfactory.

\* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

## THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the school's response to complaints</li> <li>• the good levels of information provided</li> <li>• their involvement in annual reviews</li> <li>• the standards of work achieved</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• frequent exclusions</li> <li>• hard to contact staff on the telephone</li> <li>• too little homework</li> </ul>

The inspection confirms the parents' positive views of the school. The school is accessible by telephone during normal working hours but exclusions are too frequent and too little homework is set.

## Key issues for action

To further improve quality and standards, the governors and senior management should:

1. Improve levels of attendance by;
  - consulting with LEA on the planned admission of pupils who have previously been out of school for long periods,
  - seeking to secure more time from an education social worker,



- seeking earlier resolution from LEA about alternative provision for pupils who have been absent for a lengthy period and who show no indication of resuming attendance (paragraphs 16, 39);

- 1.Reduce levels of exclusion by ensuring that carefully planned admissions prevent the sudden creation of groups of pupils who are all new to the school at the same time (paragraphs 2, 14);

- 2.Put in place a planned programme of music for all pupils at Key Stage 3 (paragraphs 23, 103 );

- 3.Increase taught time in both key stages (paragraph 23 );

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Increase the range of extra-curricular activities (paragraph 26 ),
- Set homework more consistently and regularly (paragraph 22 ),
- Re-introduce the appraisal of teachers consistent with guidance at the earliest opportunity (paragraph 56 ),

# Introduction

## Characteristics of the school

1. Rosewood is a day school for boys aged 11-16 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The Recognised Accommodation Number is 44 (on one site) and the school has 34 full-time pupils on roll and one part-time pupil. All pupils have statements and one comes from a home where English is not the first spoken language; thirteen are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is below average for this type of school. Pupils attend from the whole of Dudley and from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds within which disadvantage features strongly.
  
2. There have been significant changes in the last few years in the nature of the learning difficulties experienced by the pupils placed at the school. About one half of the pupils admitted since January 1996 previously had statements specifying moderate learning difficulty, a great many have marked difficulty with reading and many have experienced lengthy periods out of school. At times, and as has occurred recently, large numbers of pupils with these difficulties are admitted to the school over a very short space of time which leads to significant problems of adjustment and behaviour in newly-formed classes.
  
3. The school's aims are:
  - “To enable students to have access to a broad, balanced curriculum, experience academic progression and achieve external accreditation.
  - To deliver an appropriately differentiated curriculum relevant to the needs of our students.
  - To draw up Individual Education Plans for each student.
  - To foster respect for self and others.
  - To value every member of our school community.
  - To encourage in students a recognition of their own self-worth and positive talents and to develop their belief in their potential for success.
  - To ensure that students' personal, spiritual, moral and cultural development is central to all our endeavour.
  - To recognise and reward personal effort and achievement.
  - To guide and encourage students to take responsibility for their own behaviour and the consequences of it.
  - To provide access to suitable outside agencies and support services, eg. Educational Psychology, Medical Services, Careers Services.
  - To regularly review students' progress and the relevance of placement at Rosewood.
  - To prepare students for life after school, be it in further education, training or employment.
  - To foster close working relationships with parents and carers.”

## 4.Key indicators

### Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:

		%
Authorised Absence	School	26.2
	National comparative data	10
Unauthorised absence	School	18.6
	National comparative data	9

### Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	128
Permanent	0

### Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	22
Satisfactory or better	98
Less than satisfactory	2

# **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

## **Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school**

### **Attainment and progress**

5. The characteristics of the pupils at this school make it inappropriate to report their attainment in comparison with national expectations or averages. This report will therefore focus on the progress pupils make in relation to their prior attainment, taking into account information in their statements and annual reviews, as well as giving examples of what they know, understand and can do. Progress is satisfactory overall and is good in about one half of lessons. Unsatisfactory progress was found in only two lessons, both in Key Stage 3.
6. In English, pupils' progress is satisfactory overall but is often unsatisfactory in listening and speaking. Pupils sometimes listen for extended periods and explain themselves clearly, but too often they are not fully attentive and offer limited explanations. Speaking and listening are better overall at Key Stage 4. Reading records show steady improvement for many, which is related to the school's emphasis on reading for pleasure, to withdrawal sessions and to the good range of material offered. For the most part, pupils' write more and write more legibly over time, but with significant individual differences.
7. Progress in mathematics is good overall and pupils are learning, and increasingly applying, the four rules of number. In Key Stage 3, they improve at applying mathematics in work with circles, area and volume. During Key Stage 4, they have a growing understanding of basic geometry and algebra. Progress in science ranges from satisfactory to very good and is mostly good. During Key Stage 3, pupils improve at collecting data, presenting their findings and in their understanding of plant life and how energy can be stored and transferred. At Key Stage 4, investigative work, on the control systems of the human body for example, improves steadily.
8. In art, pupils increase their understanding and skill across a wide range of media and techniques; progress in painting, collage, pottery and printing is at least satisfactory and, particularly at Key Stage 4, often good. In design and technology, progress is good during both key stages; in some lessons, very good gains are made. Progress is sometimes greater in making than designing, but progress in graphics, applying ideas and finishing artefacts is good overall.
9. Pupils are developing a growing awareness of the issues of environmental pollution and energy savings at Key Stage 3 in geography; progress in learning about rainforests, population and ecology at Key Stage 4 is good. Progress in history is satisfactory over time. Pupils show a growing confidence and certainty over the order of events in history and, in Key Stage 3, present arguments when interpreting issues. Skills of enquiry and evaluation are slower in developing. In Year 10, progress in studying the First World War is satisfactory. In information technology, progress is satisfactory over time and is good at times in lessons in Key Stage 4. The development of basic skills, like word-processing and data handling, and their use in other lessons, is satisfactory. Pupils make good gains throughout both key stages in physical education. Skill acquisition in catching and passing in rugby, basketball and rounders is good, as is progress toward the targets pupils set for themselves.

10. In French, which is taught at Key Stage 3 only, pupils make good progress in listening and speaking in lessons about everyday life; pronunciation is improving steadily. Few lessons in religious education could be observed, but progress is mostly satisfactory. It is not possible to make judgements about progress in music because the school does not make provision for it to be taught regularly.
11. The progress being made by pupils now is greater than at the time of the last inspection; this is particularly the case in mathematics, science and French. In some lessons, progress is thwarted at times by the disturbed behaviour of a few; this is more common amongst pupils in Key Stage 3, and in classes which have been established very recently, where many pupils new to the school have been put together quickly. A major reason for the good progress being made in many areas is the combination of subject specialist teachers who are recognised by the pupils as knowing what they are talking about, who are working in appropriate accommodation, and who are supported by effective assistant staff.

### **11. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

12. Pupils who attend Rosewood school have usually had a history of poor behaviour and unsatisfactory attitudes to learning which have seriously impaired their learning. They exhibit low levels of self-esteem and have little confidence in their ability to be successful learners. While at the school, many come to acquire an improved self-image and this has a significantly beneficial impact on their attitudes and behaviour and contributes well to their personal development.
13. Behaviour in the school varies significantly but, as was previously found, is satisfactory overall in the light of the continuing special educational needs of the pupils. Younger pupils, and those newly admitted, frequently display unsatisfactory and even poor behaviour in lessons, but this is balanced by the fact that older pupils, especially those in Key Stage 4 usually behave well and show a good response to what is offered. As a result, pupils respond well in most lessons. They concentrate well, listen to and follow instructions, take care with their work and show respect for the materials and equipment. This is especially the case in lessons in practical subjects, such as art, science and design and technology, where they show good awareness of the need to behave safely. They increasingly relate successfully to the teacher and each other. For the most part, pupils are concerned about and value the points they can earn for work and behaviour and respond well. In about one-sixth of lessons, younger pupils especially, misbehave and refuse the tasks they are given and become abusive to staff and to each other. At these times, they lose sight of the points system, which therefore becomes ineffective.
14. Behaviour around the school is generally good, with pupils responding well to the high levels of supervision and support offered by staff. This is typically exemplified by the pre-school 'breakfast club' and the lunch period, when many pupils display highly socialised behaviour. The building, which was newly decorated at the time of the previous inspection, has been very well looked after, with few signs of wear and tear and none of damage. However, this has to be set against the very high level of exclusion, which reflects significant recorded levels of frequent very poor behaviour on the part of a small number of pupils, and some poor behaviour on the part of a majority. The practice of placing newly-arrived pupils, some of whom have been out of school for a year or more, into age-related classes, means that even settled groups are at risk of disruption, particularly when pupils are admitted as late in

their school career as Year 10.

15. For those pupils who remain at the school until the age of 16, personal development, often from a low baseline, is good. Older pupils demonstrate an awareness of the importance of courtesy in their dealings with each other and with visitors and, at times, go out of their way to be helpful. On visits out of school they behave well and relate successfully to other adults, even when, as in their session at Dudley College, they claim that they do not wish to be there. While they do not find it easy to collaborate, they show an increasing ability to work co-operatively and show empathy with the feelings and concerns of others. Increasing maturity steadily reduces the number of incidents of surreptitious inappropriate behaviour and pupils begin to take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour.

#### **15. Attendance**

16. The attendance rate is very poor. A significant number of pupils enter the school with a long history of non-attendance; some have not attended school for as long as two years. Last year the attendance of Year 11 pupils was particularly poor and there was much absence in all other years, both authorised and unauthorised. The high number of exclusions contributed to the low level of attendance, and the placement of pupils in large numbers over a short space of time contributes, in turn, to extreme behaviour difficulties and exclusion. Some pupils attend school well but, as the number on roll is small, the absence of some pupils affects the overall rate disproportionately. Attendance so far this term is much improved. Pupils arrive by taxi and are ready for the start of lessons. Many arrive in time for breakfast club and lessons begin punctually.

#### **16. Quality of education provided**

##### **16. Teaching**

17. Teaching is mostly good and is rarely unsatisfactory. Almost three quarters of the teaching is good or better, and nearly a quarter is very good. There are no significant differences between key stages in this pattern, although a greater proportion (about one third) of the teaching at Key Stage 4 is very good.

18. In English, teaching is mostly satisfactory and sometimes good. Subject knowledge is sufficient and praise is most often used to good effect. In Year 9, where the teaching is mostly good, questions are used astutely to encourage pupils to expand on their contributions. Classroom assistant staff make a good contribution to behaviour and learning in classes, and the teaching of pupils when withdrawn for individual sessions is good. In mathematics, where insufficient use of information technology is a temporary shortcoming, teaching is always at least satisfactory and is mostly good. Support staff are deployed well and assessment is used effectively in mathematics, but homework is insufficient, especially at Key Stage 4. Science teaching, which is mainly very good, is characterised by clear expectations, very good feed-back to pupils on how they are doing and a high level of subject knowledge.

19. Subject knowledge is a strength in art as well. Here the teaching is at least good, and is often very good, because planning is detailed, explanations are clear and there is a continuity

between what has been achieved and what is expected next. In design and technology, subject knowledge and support from non-teaching assistants are strong features; time is used well within short lessons and there is good regard for health and safety aspects; overall, teaching is always at least good and is very good at times. Subject knowledge and enthusiasm are distinctive features of good teaching in geography and French; pupils are challenged effectively at their levels of understanding in these subjects.

20. History is taught mostly at a satisfactory level and sometimes very well. Again, good subject awareness, close working with assistant staff and clear lesson objectives support pupils' progress; behaviour management techniques are not always effective with more difficult groups. Specialist, direct teaching of information technology is always good; in other subjects, the information technology component is taught at least satisfactorily. Staff are awaiting training on an LEA-wide initiative but subject knowledge and confidence are mostly good.
21. Good personal experience and subject knowledge, albeit from a non-specialist teacher, make teaching very good in physical education. The management of pupils and time, and effective contributions from assistant staff, are strong supportive features of good progress in lessons. The little teaching of religious education seen was good in that it showed detailed preparation and, at times, a preparedness to confront nuisance behaviour at an early stage in its development; very occasionally the management of behaviour is a weakness. It is not possible to make judgements of class teaching in music because it is not offered; individual instrumental tuition is good, however.
22. For the most part, teaching has improved since the last inspection. The weaknesses relate to insufficient, routine homework, particularly at Key Stage 4 to support externally-accredited courses, and the management of pupils on a few occasions. There is evidence that teachers manage pupils at least satisfactorily most of the time but there are currently groups of pupils who are new to the school who are unsettled and who are sometimes proving exceptionally difficult to manage. Otherwise, teaching has many strengths, amongst which subject competence, planning, and joint working with support staff are most noticeable. The use of day-to-day assessment and the expectations placed on pupils are good.

## **22. The curriculum and assessment**

23. Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory. At both key stages, it includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum that must be taught, as well as religious education and sex education. Much time is also given to personal, social and health education, which includes work on the dangers of drug abuse. At Key Stage 4, there is an emphasis on careers education, work experience opportunities, and preparation for the world of work. Overall, the curriculum is sufficiently broad and relevant, but it is out of balance in the proportions of time allocated to certain subjects. It has shortcomings in the total amount of time allocated to music at Key Stage 3, and in the amount of time allocated to teaching overall at both key stages.
24. There is no school curriculum statement or policy to guide planning of the curriculum as a whole. However, there is a detailed policy for each subject, and in National Curriculum subjects, except music, this is supported by an appropriate scheme of work. The school gives over a significant amount of available time to personal, social, and health education. Many of the planned experiences made available to pupils under this programme occur at lunch

time when dining is used for social learning. At this time there is little direct teaching but teachers are all present to implement, supervise and reinforce the agreed routines and procedures. While this element of the curriculum is highly relevant to the needs of the pupils, disproportionately more time is given over to it than to the teaching of mathematics or science.

25. Too little of the school week is given to the teaching of mathematics to ensure that the good progress beginning to be made by the youngest pupils, following the introduction of methods related to the numeracy strategy, is maintained. Some music is taught at Key Stage 3, but this is on an individual basis. Present arrangements do not meet the statutory requirements and insufficient time is allocated to the subject. To some extent, the lack of taught time in mathematics and music is related to the difficulties the school experiences in recruiting qualified teachers in these subjects.
26. All pupils have full access to all the subjects offered, although, where pupils are receiving counselling, there is a reduction in their access to the full curriculum. This arrangement, where it impinges on pupils' curriculum entitlement, is unsatisfactory. The curriculum is supported only marginally by extra-curricular activities, including sport, which is unsatisfactory. A significant strength of the curriculum at Key Stage 4 is the provision for careers education, work experience opportunities, and direct teaching in preparation for the world of work. Good links with local colleges give older pupils the opportunity to take 'taster' courses in vocational subjects including, for example, motor vehicle engineering.
27. The school makes satisfactory general provision for pupils who have additional learning difficulties, particularly in literacy. There is, however, insufficiently rigorous analysis of the specific nature of some of the literacy difficulties encountered. In a minority of cases, there is not enough specialist expertise to ensure that pupils who need it receive an extensive programme of instruction in reading, writing and spelling. Targets set in individual education plans are not always specific enough so that outcomes can be measured accurately against the benchmark they provide.
28. The school meets the requirement to ensure that pupils are assessed in English, mathematics, and science. Within each subject, except for music, the scheme of work enables mostly good processes for assessing pupils' progress. Overall, procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good, and good use is made of assessment to inform teachers' planning. The assessment processes make a significant contribution towards ensuring that there is continuity of learning and that pupils make satisfactory progression through the schemes of work that are planned for them, particularly at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, the pupils take courses leading to external accreditation in most subjects, and the structure of these courses again ensures that appropriate progression takes place.
29. The planning in each subject is overseen by senior staff, and the outcomes of learning are also monitored. Annual reviews of statements are undertaken and reviews of pupils in their fourteenth year lead to clear planning about their future education. These arrangements conform to statutory requirements.
30. Since the previous inspection, oversight of the curriculum has substantially improved. The job description of the deputy head makes clear that responsibility for this rests with him, and monitoring of planning and provision is now good. The deficiencies in subject areas, for example, the teaching of a modern foreign language, have been addressed, but there remains



a deficiency in that music is not sufficiently taught.

### **30. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

31. Provision in these areas was identified as a significant shortcoming in the previous report, which the school has worked hard to address. As a result, the improvement made has been good, and these are now an areas of success within the school with good overall provision.

32. Provision for spiritual development, which was weak, is now satisfactory, and is supported across many areas of the school's work. Assemblies are now positive, well-planned experiences where pupils are invited to reflect on a range of issues, including the belief systems and religious practices of a selection of faith communities. Acts of worship take place every day and are well supported by staff and although most pupils do not demonstrate a culture of worship, they provide a suitable opportunity for those who are able to make use of them. Planning for religious education also makes a satisfactory contribution. Staff try hard to promote a climate of reflection by personal example and by demonstrating their own enjoyment of, and commitment to, the place of music and art in enhancing the quality of pupils' awareness. However, there is still too little stimulation for pupils by way of interactive display and their own work, in art for example, is too little featured in the main parts of the school.

33. Support for moral development, which was found to be unsatisfactory in the previous report, is now good both in terms of teaching and the clear moral dimension to interactions that take place around the school. Staff work hard to ensure that the school community has a strong moral basis and individual tutoring supports this well. Pupils are encouraged to develop an effective set of criteria for determining right and wrong behaviour, and generally apply these well. They are given the opportunity to explore moral dilemmas, particularly through environmental issues examined in religious education and geography and through examination of literature in English. The points system is related to a clearly-stated set of expectations; prominent classroom and school rules have a clear moral basis.

34. Provision for social development, which was previously weak, is now consistently good. This is supported by the setting out of consistent expectations and the creation of opportunities for social learning. This is particularly evident in the structures for lunch-time and is very well supported by the way in which 'breakfast club' is conducted. Good, mutually supportive staff relations and a consistently high standard of staff behaviour promote a good atmosphere and an awareness of the need for consistent treatment of one another. Residential visits, such as that to Shell Island, provide a good basis for forming constructive relationships, but there are too few extra-curricular activities. The school is effective in promoting pupils' self-esteem through praise and positive encouragement for both academic and personal progress. Pupils speak well of the school and many make it clear that they value what it is doing for them. They relate increasingly well and confidently to one another, and to staff and visitors as they progress through the school.

35. Provision for cultural development, previously unsatisfactory, is satisfactory. Pupils have experience of a range of cultural contexts in art, English and French; in other areas, such as music, dance and drama, this is more limited. Satisfactory use is made of visits and visitors, to enable pupils to relate to their own cultural tradition, including occasional theatre visits. These aspects are underpinned by the growing range of books in the library. The school has

some success in promoting multi-cultural understandings; these are well supported by aspects of humanities and art teaching, and a significant contribution is made by marking or celebrating religious and other festivals. However, there are still some shortcomings in this aspect of the school's work, and there is insufficient attention to the need to provide role models to celebrate the cultural traditions of pupils from minority ethnic groups.

**35. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

36. The support, guidance and welfare the school provides for its pupils are good. Staff work hard to ensure a structured and stable environment, in which pupils can grow in confidence and self-esteem. Staff know the home circumstances and individual needs of pupils well, and constantly monitor pupils' ability to cope with everyday life. Informal parts of the day are used effectively to promote pupils' personal development. The induction process is carefully arranged to help new pupils adjust as quickly as possible.

37. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic and personal progress are very good. Incidents and achievements are discussed thoroughly by all staff at their daily meeting. Detailed records are kept and strategies decided, which may include telephoning parents. Pupils' personal files contain these records, statements of special educational need and all contact with external agencies. Written reports and annual reviews form part of these files and reflect overall progress well. Learning support assistants give very effective support to pupils with their work toward individual learning objectives.

38. The staff work hard to promote good behaviour through a positive system of credits and rewards. Pupils set their own agreed targets daily and for the week, and take pride in their achievements. Senior members of staff keep a high profile and are an effective presence around school. Generally, parents think that behaviour is managed well. There are appropriate steps for dealing with misbehaviour that are clearly stated in the prospectus. Some parents feel that exclusion is used too readily as a strategy. The school keeps very comprehensive notes of incidents that lead to exclusion in pupils' personal files which indicate that most exclusions occur as a result of extremely aggressive behaviour, so pupils are removed on health and safety grounds. The school's policy is to show clearly to pupils the limits of unacceptable behaviour and to protect other members of the school community.

39. There are effective procedures for monitoring attendance. Registers are marked correctly and efficiently. The importance of good attendance is emphasised to parents and forms part of the home-school agreement. The school is concerned about the high level of absence and rigorously adopts all strategies normally available for improving attendance, including working in close partnership with the Education Social Worker. Nonetheless, the attendance rate is worse than at the last inspection and was very poor over the last year.

40. The policy for teaching personal, social and health education, including sex education and drugs awareness, and devised in consultation with the local authority adviser, is good. A new co-ordinator, appointed at the beginning of term, is currently planning a scheme of work based on the Dudley Young Persons' Charter and involving the use of professionals. This aspect was described in the previous report as being not well planned or co-ordinated; not enough progress has taken place since then.

41. The school counsellor provides a confidential service to pupils. Oversight of the counselling

provision was a key issue in the previous report and the deputy headteacher now monitors the service satisfactorily through regular formal meetings; there are no criteria in place to judge the effectiveness of counselling. There is good liaison with external services to support pupils, often through the counsellor.

42. The work-related curriculum, which starts in Year 9, prepares pupils well for the next stage in their lives. The school makes good use of three local colleges to introduce them to different trades. Work experience is well organised and pupils are usually successfully placed. The careers adviser, who makes a valued contribution, attends the 14+ Review and starts individual interviews in Year 10.

43. Child protection procedures are good, roles are clearly defined and staff have attended training. Health and safety procedures are thorough and well organised. Teachers have specified responsibilities with regard to risk assessment, and safety checks are carried out regularly. Arrangements for the administration of first aid and medication are strictly logged. Although health and safety considerations in design and technology are very good in practice, they are not included in the planning as required.

#### **43. Partnership with parents and the community**

44. The school enjoys a satisfactory partnership with parents and the community; this supports pupils' learning, achievement and personal development. In the pre-inspection questionnaire, parents showed good support for all aspects of the school's work. Although parents are not actively involved in the daily life of the school, they are kept fully informed through regular telephone or written contact, and are made aware quickly of any behavioural incidents. Tutors make home visits by appointment each term to report on progress. Parents report that the school is good at listening and dealing with any complaints they may have. Some, however, are unhappy about the school's provision for homework and the high number of exclusions.

45. The school meets legal requirements with regard to exclusions. Parents and pupils are informed of the period of exclusion and the reasons for it. When the exclusion is more than a few days, the school provides work for the pupil. Parents are requested to accompany their child back to school. All interested parties are consulted, including parents, when a request is made to the local authority to reconsider whether a pupil's needs are being met by the school. Correct procedures are followed for removing pupils from the school roll.

46. The quality of information provided for parents is good, noticeably in the prospectus which gives a good range of particulars about school organisation. Parents are invited to an induction meeting and after two weeks they are informed about how their child has settled in. Parents are pleased with the amount of information they receive, through newsletters for example, which contain reports on events and pupils' achievements. Written reports and Annual Reviews give a clear indication of pupils' progress and attainment, and detailed reports on personal and social behaviour. Parents appreciate the opportunity to contribute comments for the Annual Review and being fully involved in the process. At the summer consultation evening, parents can see their children's work and enjoy the social event organised by the school. Although transport is offered to encourage attendance, only about half of parents support these meetings.

47. Parents are invited to attend social occasions, for example the Christmas social afternoon with a musical performance and the annual fund-raising concert given by staff and pupils. They also support certificate and prize giving ceremonies, for instance for the art competition and the Dudley Charter awards. A small number of required items are not included in the governors' annual report to parents.
48. The school makes satisfactory use of the community as a resource for learning. Pupils visit the local library, art galleries and theatres. Visitors, the police and a theatre group for example, support the curriculum. Some older pupils have worked in care homes for the elderly as part of their work experience. Good use is made of places of interest to enhance the curriculum for all year groups; for example, pupils have visited Ludlow Castle, Lickey Hills, Worcester Cathedral, Ironbridge and different places of worship.

#### **48. The management and efficiency of the school**

##### **48. Leadership and management**

49. A good, clear educational direction is given to the school by the headteacher, supported by the governors. Since the previous inspection there has been considerable emphasis on governor involvement in issues of attendance, management, curriculum and addressing the key issues raised at that time. The Action Plan addressed closely the points raised and the current school development plan (1998-2000), having detailed criteria, timelines and resource implications, is an effective working document. Developments are identified following monitoring, or audit by subject co-ordinators, and the various needs identified are tackled in a coherent way.
50. Management has been successful in developing the role of a learning support co-ordinator, providing for pupils with learning difficulties and putting in place schemes of work in a number of subjects. The decision to engage subject specialist teachers, wherever possible, contributes noticeably to the quality of teaching and the progress being made by many pupils.
51. The governing body is very supportive and has been led by an experienced chairperson since the last inspection. An appropriate committee structure has been established, with the whole governing body involved in major financial decisions. A governor has been identified to have oversight of special educational needs provision. The established routines, the pattern of meetings and the administrative underpinning of teaching are promoting progress. Meetings of senior management are purposeful, led well and decisions are reached on a range of relevant issues.
52. Support and monitoring for teaching and curriculum development are good and have improved since the last inspection. The headteacher has observed all teachers on a termly basis and inspectors from the LEA have been involved in monitoring in classrooms. This has led to improvements in planning, and to changes in the deployment of additional help into classrooms for pupils with greater learning difficulties. The monitoring of the work of the school counsellor, which was raised by the last inspection report, has been addressed effectively through a pattern of meetings for which there are written records. Monitoring of new staff is good.

53.Implementation of the school's aims is satisfactory because overall development planning is much improved. The governors meet the great majority of their legal responsibilities except with regard to providing a planned programme for music at Key Stage 3, and some very minor aspects of the Code of Practice and within the governors' report to parents. The schools' ethos is satisfactory; many pupils have good attitudes to learning and they try hard with plenty of encouragement from the staff to make progress. There is a general commitment to raising standards throughout. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and is positioned well to continue improving.

### 53. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

54.There are sufficient qualified and experienced teachers to meet most of the demands of the curriculum and provision is good. The pupil:teacher ratio is favourable; this includes a teacher who is undertaking qualification. There is a broad range of subject expertise and, in most areas of the curriculum, subject specialist teaching can be offered. This enhances the quality of teaching and, at Key Stage 4, provides pupils with opportunities to pursue externally accredited courses. There is a lack of subject expertise in music where the school has been unable to attract a specialist teacher on a part-time basis. There is also a need to increase the expertise in mathematics, where the single appropriately qualified teacher cannot alone fully meet the need to teach the subject across the age-range for a sufficient time.

55.There are, besides the head teacher, deputy head teacher and special educational needs co-ordinator, no teachers with an additional qualification in meeting special educational needs. However, there is a core of staff with significant experience in working with pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. For staff new to special education, an induction scheme is in place and these teachers have access to an experienced mentor. This helps to ensure that teaching is effective.

56.There are good arrangements for the professional development of staff. Teachers have a professional development interview each year with the headteacher and they discuss their training needs. The school includes these in its training development plan. School-wide training needs identified by audit, or in the light of changes in the curriculum or statutory requirements, are also included. There is an in-service training and education co-ordinator who ensures that staff receive information about available relevant training. The school used its full allowance for training in the 1998 - 1999 period. The appraisal of teachers is in abeyance.

57.There are four special needs support staff and two others who combine classroom support with technical support in science and design and technology. The provision of six support staff, working a total of 170 hours per week, for thirty-six pupils is above that found in most schools of this type. The support staff make a strong contribution to pupils' learning and in some cases, for example science, their excellent work promotes higher achievement and greater progress by the pupils. Support staff receive good training in key aspects of their role and are fully included in the processes used by the school to manage and improve pupils' behaviour.

58.Accommodation is of a very good standard and is very well maintained. It is respected by the pupils and it strongly promotes the effective delivery of the curriculum. Mostly good use is

made of corridors and circulation spaces for interesting and attractive displays of books, pictures, and artefacts, although pupils' art work features insufficiently. The library is being re-sited and its sufficient stock of books is being improved. Resources are of good quality and are available where and when needed. In specialist areas, such as science and design and technology, this helps to promote learning very effectively. There are sufficient books of all kinds and good resources for information technology.

#### **58. The efficiency of the school**

59. Financial planning, the efficiency with which staff and other resources are used, and the management and control of expenditure are all good. The headteacher and governors have established clear procedures, which enable them to maintain good control over the school's finances. Spending is overseen by a finance committee, which is, in fact, the whole governing body. The link between development planning and budget allocation is tight, the plan identifies the resources needed in good detail in most cases and there is a very small surplus carried forward at the moment (less than 1%). Overall, educational developments are supported by responsible financial planning, and comparatively generous spending on learning resources has resulted in very good provision of equipment and books in the school.
60. The school uses its very good accommodation efficiently and has improved it over time. Staff are engaged efficiently; support assistants are deployed in, and between, classes effectively; technician support in science constitutes good value for money. Good, and often very good, use is made of resources in classrooms. Financial controls and administration, which utilise a computerised information management system, are very good; inventories are maintained well and an effective response has been made to the eight minor matters raised in the most recent report from the auditor (March 1998). The amount of money available for each pupil is slightly above the median for similar schools. Good value is achieved in this school by using subject specialist teachers who are supported well by assistant staff in well-appointed accommodation; unsatisfactory value is related to the progress of those small groups of pupils who have been absent so much. Nonetheless, bearing in mind the satisfactory progress being made by many, and the good quality of the teaching overall, the school gives satisfactory value for the money it receives.

## 60. **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

### 60. **English, mathematics and science**

#### 60. **English**

61. The findings with regard to pupils' progress and response to lessons in English are largely similar to those reported at the last inspection. At that time, progress was variable and while satisfactory, and sometimes good, at Key Stage 4, some was rendered unsatisfactory by poor behaviour amongst younger pupils at Key Stage 3.

62. For the most part, progress in speaking and listening at Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory. Some pupils at some times listen for extended periods and explain themselves clearly, but too often pupils are not fully attentive, offer stilted explanations and are not confident in 'leading' a discussion. Much of this is related to difficulties they experience in concentration and behavioural control, particularly in recently-formed classes, which leads them to talk or call out at inappropriate times. Speaking and listening are better overall at Key Stage 4. There is satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress in Year 10 in discussion of autobiographies where pupils attend to the detail of what they hear and offer suggestions confidently, albeit without great detail. Progress is more variable in Year 11 where some pupils listen well enough, ask pertinent questions, make inferences and assign motives to characters in stories, but where others are functioning at a lower level.

63. Progress in reading, most often from a low base, is satisfactory overall. There is a very wide range of prior learning in reading and some younger pupils read much better than older ones. However, progress in acquiring an increasing sight vocabulary, or better skills at analysing words, or reading with greater understanding and better intonation is satisfactory throughout. Reading records show steady improvement for many pupils over the last two years in both the accuracy and understanding of what is read. This satisfactory progress is related to the emphasis on reading for pleasure, to withdrawal for individual reading sessions and to the good range of material offered, which across the age range includes Roald Dahl novels, acrostic poems and autobiographies. Some pupils are making good progress with their reading; for example in Year 9, where some read silently with good understanding and recall detailed facts from Sherlock Holmes stories.

64. For the most part, pupils write more and write more legibly over time but, again, with significant individual differences. Although very variable, many progress to cursive script which is mostly unlinked but is legible and has an increasing regard for letter size. Many older pupils, in Key Stage 4, manage two or three sentences; a few pupils throughout the age range write at greater length.

65. With the exception of Year 7, where the response to lessons at times can be destructive of teaching and learning, response is satisfactory and often better. In reading sessions, which many pupils say they enjoy, behaviour is usually good; pupils concentrate well and for satisfactory periods of time, express preferences sensibly, show good humour and are prepared to share their views and feelings with others in the class. The best response, often in Years 9 and 10, is where pupils manage the shift from discussion or reading to a writing task without complaint and get on working with a degree of independence, using dictionaries and seeking the views of others. The difficulties in Year 7, where negative responses can disrupt learning entirely, are related to this being a very recently-formed group of pupils new to the

school and each other.

66. Teaching in English is mostly satisfactory and sometimes good. Overall, relationships are relaxed but include a satisfactory level of challenge, subject knowledge is sufficient and praise is most often used to good effect; occasionally excessive praise is given for too limited effort. In Year 9, the teaching is mostly good; here questions are used astutely to encourage pupils to expand on their contributions, a good balance is struck between talking in class and getting on quietly, and music is used well. Some of the lessons seen were taught by two teachers working as a team. While much of the work was geared differently to suit the needs of particular pupils, the opportunity to split into groups, afforded by having two teachers in the room, was sometimes missed. Classroom assistant staff make a good contribution to behaviour and learning in classes, and the teaching of pupils when withdrawn for individual sessions is good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching, as was found in the last inspection, and there is rather less reliance on photocopied worksheets.
67. The English co-ordinator is new to the school, is enthusiastic and is reviewing and updating some of the documentation. The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced; there is good regard for the National Curriculum and the current satisfactory schemes of work are being improved; some features of the national literacy strategy have been introduced to good effect, and the close link to the special needs co-ordinator benefits the slower learners. The last report indicated the need to establish policies and practices to foster better habits of listening and speaking. This aspect continues to be a relative weakness for many pupils.

## 67. Mathematics

68. Pupils' progress overall is good albeit from a low baseline. It is satisfactory or good in the great majority of lessons in spite of some shortcomings in pupils' response. It is occasionally unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3 when pupils react badly to their second mathematics lesson of the day and resist the work offered. Pupils are mastering the four rules of number and applying these to a range of situations. They classify objects and compare shapes and solids to find differences and similarities in volume and weight. Younger pupils, in Key Stage 3, make good progress in consolidating number facts, including multiplication bonds. They learn to handle inverse operations and work with directed and negative numbers. They are increasingly developing skills in using and applying mathematics in investigations into the relationship between parts of a circle and that between length of side and area or volume. They learn to use appropriate mathematical language. In Key Stage 4, pupils are on course for the GCSE foundation examination and are working steadily towards this objective. They are consolidating knowledge of complex operations and have a good grasp of basic geometry, including work on angles and bearings, and algebra. They use investigative skills to solve problems, discover the volume of complex shapes and understand rotational symmetry.
69. The response of pupils is generally satisfactory but is, at times unsatisfactory, particularly for younger pupils and those new to the school. In most lessons, pupils are engaged, interested and attentive and they concentrate well. They work well individually and show some ability to work together in pairs. They treat resources well, have a good regard for equipment and materials and take care over their presentation. They remember what they have learned and are able to apply this learning to new situations. However, in a small number of lessons, although material is appropriate and teaching is good, behaviour deteriorates, pupils drift off-



task, become disruptive and challenge the authority of the teacher.

70. Teaching in mathematics is almost always good and it is never unsatisfactory. Subject knowledge and skills are good and secure at the level at which pupils are attaining. Lessons are very well planned and managed, taking good account of individual needs and progress. The pace of lessons is good and pupils are well challenged by the work. Expectations of both work and behaviour are appropriately high and insisted upon. Methods and organisation are appropriate and a good range of oral, practical and written work is provided. Insufficient use is made of information technology as an integral part of pupils' work at present as a result of changes in the equipment but this is a temporary shortcoming. Support staff are well deployed within the classroom and contribute effectively to pupils' learning. Assessment structures, both oral/informal, and written/formal, are effective and well used to plan individual work in subsequent lessons.

71. The curriculum offered is broad and meets the National Curriculum requirements. There is a comprehensive policy that supports schemes of work, and good use is made of published materials to underpin continuity and progression. The policy provides for appropriate National Curriculum assessments to be made and reported to parents. The recent detailed evaluation of pupils' numeracy needs and the adaptation of the National Numeracy Strategy to meet them have been very effective in promoting good progress. The curriculum is strengthened by the use of systematic homework, but the amount prescribed by the whole-school policy is at present insufficient for the needs of pupils following GCSE courses. The subject is very well led and developments are effectively planned and monitored. Resources are appropriate and sufficient to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, they are well maintained, accessible and carefully managed to ensure their continued sufficiency.

## 71. Science

72. At both key stages, progress in science is good. Within lessons at Key Stage 3, progress ranges from very good to satisfactory. At Key Stage 3 pupils' learning is guided by clear targets. They show confidence in simple practical investigations and remember the names of key pieces of apparatus. They know how to light a Bunsen burner safely and how to control its flame. They are aware of and take note of health and safety precautions. They are able to read a thermometer and to measure precise quantities of liquids. They can record their findings and display data they have collected graphically with a good degree of accuracy. Older pupils display knowledge of living things and the conditions necessary to sustain life. They examine details of plant structure with a microscope, and identify stomata on the undersides of leaves. They come to understand the crucial importance of the sun in sustaining life and are accurate in their recall of processes such as photosynthesis. They have developed a knowledge of the forms in which energy is stored and they can demonstrate in simple practical ways energy transfers from chemical through electrical to kinetic. Throughout, pupils record their findings increasingly neatly and they take pride in the appearance of their work and its accuracy.

73. At Key Stage 4 pupils follow a course leading to external accreditation, in some cases at a level equivalent to the foundation level of the General Certificate of Secondary Education. Pupils make good or very good progress, in equal measure, in their lessons, where they use time well. In work on the automatic control systems of the human body, they conduct simple experiments and they record their work clearly. In an investigation into reactions with

moisture and air, they note that certain substances (gold) do not corrode while others (iron) corrode easily. They recall that calcium reacts violently with water.

74. At each key stage, pupils' response to lessons is mainly very good. It is never less than good. Pupils show great interest; they recall, and make use of, their past learning and take pride in their written work. They behave responsibly in relation to the many health and safety requirements of practical work.

75. Teaching is mostly very good. Pupils are given clear information about the purposes of lessons and about what they are expected to learn. During the course of work, they receive very good feedback about their own levels of performance. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is very good, and management and organisation are greatly enhanced by the contribution of the laboratory assistant who supports learning very well. Relationships between teacher and pupils are very good. This enables pupils to learn confidently and, for example, to take chances in proffering answers they believe to be right.

76. The curriculum at both key stages is good. It meets the needs of the pupils very well, and fully meets statutory requirements. Planning includes consideration of issues of equality of opportunity and the promotion of spiritual, social, cultural and moral development. Learning is greatly enhanced by the excellent facilities and resources available.

## 76. **Other subjects or courses**

### 76. **Art**

77. Progress in art in lessons and over time is always at least satisfactory and is often good. Year 7 make satisfactory progress while continuing their work on sunflowers, moving from using paint to a collage using tissue paper. Progress in transfer printing amongst Year 8 pupils is good as they learn about direct and transfer printing, about the processes more generally and the importance of applying ink judiciously. There is evidence of good progress in pupils' project work over time as they move from shading to painting. Progress in Year 10 lessons is good; pupils are experimenting with their own ideas, making observations about the work of other artists and are developing their presentation of shape, form and space.

78. Teaching is at least good and often very good because activities are prepared and explained well. Opportunities for pupils to work with each other are woven into the activities where it is feasible, the teacher and the classroom assistant combine well in the management of potentially difficult behaviour, and good encouragement is given to pupils to assess their own work.

79. Good quality specialist teaching in a well-resourced art room results in mostly good responses from pupils. There is some very attention-seeking and, therefore, disruptive behaviour from a newly-formed Year 7 group but the responses to the teaching are otherwise appropriate. Pupils respect the materials in the art room, apply themselves sensibly, want to do better and enjoy the subject. Many older pupils talk freely about what they want to achieve and show growing independence and more initiative. At Key Stage 4, they take considerable care when drawing or assembling materials.

80. The same good quality of teaching and progress reported at the last inspection is still evident. Schemes of work, which provide good coverage of the National Curriculum, have improved; assessment, which includes pupils' self-evaluation, is better and still improving. Resources are good but do not enable sufficient routine access to 'new' technologies, for example, a scanner or a digital camera. Art makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural and multi-cultural awareness; pupils' work needs to be more widely displayed throughout the school.

80. **Design and technology**

81. Pupils at both key stages make good progress in design and technology. In lessons, progress is sometimes very good, and it is never unsatisfactory. This is achieved despite some unsatisfactory behaviour on the part of younger pupils as a result of the skilled teaching and well-organised environment for teaching the subject.

82. Key Stage 3 pupils develop good skills in making standard items such as wood puzzles, nesting boxes and football rattles, as a result of which they improve their ability to measure, mark and cut a variety of materials and join them in various ways. They develop a basic understanding of graphics and discover how mechanisms work, for example on a visit to Alton Towers, and apply these principles to their own projects. Progress in making is better than in designing throughout the key stage, but pupils increasingly develop the ability to work to a brief that they have contributed to, comparing the results with their intentions and revising their work in the light of evaluation.

83. Key Stage 4 pupils make good progress following an accredited course, either the NEAB GCSE in resistant materials, or the Certificate of Achievement. They use a range of ideas from the 'Project Bank', and refine their skills in making and, in particular, finishing artefacts using a variety of finishes. As they progress through the key stage, their designing skills improve well, they understand the order of processes and interpret a flow chart describing control processes. When following GCSE courses, they undertake research into other people's design ideas and improve and adapt them to their own particular problem statement.

84. The response pupils make in lesson ranges from very good to unsatisfactory. Older pupils engage sensibly and with enthusiasm in oral discussion and preparation for tasks; they make good suggestions for design solutions. When engaged in making tasks they behave in a mature, safe, responsible manner, showing increasing independence when working individually and treating their own and each other's work with respect. They show good care for the design facilities and the equipment in them and take pride in their work. On occasion, younger pupils detach from what is going on and behave provocatively towards others who lack the self-control to avoid responding, and aggressive verbal exchanges occur. At times, pupils walk out of the lesson rather than accept the discipline of the situation. However, overall response is good, and the experience in the subject contributes well to pupils' social learning.

85. Teaching is never less than good, and at times is very good. This is based on secure specialist subject knowledge and experience matched to a good understanding of the learning characteristics of the pupils. The lessons are very short, but time is well used so that pupils have a sense of achieving something in the lesson. Pupils are very well managed and the

system for dividing classes into two activity groups works very well, largely as a result of the high quality input from the support assistant. New skills are carefully taught and there is very good emphasis on health and safety, although risk assessments are not recorded in the planning for specific activities or projects. Careful use of assessment within lessons and feedback to pupils ensures that they do not lose momentum as a result of making errors, and the good rapport established contributes well to the ethos in the subject.

86.Planning for the subject is good with an on-going subject development plan in place. The programme is well managed and the core work in resistant materials, structures, mechanisms, graphics and control technology is supported by subject-linked rotas for use of the food technology room. Good assessment arrangements are in place both for Key Stage 3, where it relates to projects, and in Key Stage 4, where pupils are following accredited courses. The subject is well resourced with separate facilities for resistant materials, painting and finishing and graphics, as well as a well-equipped food technology room.

## 86. **Geography**

87.Across the key stages, pupils make good progress. By the end of Key Stage 4, they are in line to gain external accreditation of their work with the Certificate of Educational Achievement.

Within Key Stage 3, pupils following units of work related appropriately to the programmes of study of the National Curriculum move forward well. They steadily accumulate knowledge and rehearse the major issues involved in, for example, the problems of environmental pollution. They give answers to questions that make clear they have growing understanding. They suggest environmentally friendly solutions to the question of energy conservation. Use of geographical skills and competencies are developing well.

88.Pupils in Year 8 can use an Atlas effectively and relate the information contained on maps to their areas of enquiry. They recognise, for example, on maps of the world or continents, areas of sparse or dense population coverage. They are learning to present their findings graphically as well as in writing.

89.In their years in Key Stage 4, pupils follow a unit-based course. Their knowledge of the aspects of geography they study grows at a good rate. In work done on rainforest ecology they show increasing understanding of the inter-relatedness of population, economic activity, and pressures on ecology.

90.Pupils at each key stage respond well to their lessons. They are pleased with their work and share it with visitors to their classroom. They are ready to answer questions and they refer to previous learning in solving problems thrown up by current lessons. In Key Stage 3, they enjoy the warm-up activities that refine their geographical skills and vocabulary.

91.Teaching is of good quality and is never less than satisfactory. Subject knowledge is good and there is great enthusiasm for geography and a belief in its relevance. Opportunities are sought to undertake field-based study on a small scale at Key Stage 3. This involves journeys and residential experiences at Key Stage 4. Use of resources and classroom management skills are effective and promote learning well.

## 91. **History**

92. Pupils in Key Stage 3 and in Key Stage 4, where history is only taught at Year 10, make satisfactory progress over time. During Key Stage 3, they study themes drawn from the programmes of study for the National Curriculum. During their lessons they make sound progress towards the learning objectives identified. By Year 9, most can give a reason for a historical event and say something about its consequences. They have knowledge of things that happened to people in the past and are reasonably confident about aspects of chronology. They know, for example, that the Roman Empire preceded the Mediaeval and the emergence of the United Kingdom. They are, however, still developing their enquiry skills, and are inclined to accept as fact what is presented to them. They have not made a great deal of progress in examining, evaluating and interpreting sources. In a good lesson about slavery and the triangular trade, pupils learn through a board game something of the personalities and life chances of the people involved in the slave trade in the eighteenth century. They learn about the views of proponents and opponents alike. They can, as a result, write letters, in role, about views held at the time. During Year 10, pupils start a course that will lead to accreditation in Year 11. They are just beginning their course work on the First World War and they are making satisfactory progress.

93. Pupils' response to history lessons is generally satisfactory. While there is a good response to interesting work, such as in the lesson on slavery in Key Stage 3, there are also some unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour when pupils withdraw their co-operation and challenge the authority of the teacher. These shows of unsatisfactory behaviour appear to have little connection to what is being taught, and even the pupils whose behaviour is most disruptive often remember the facts of the lessons.

94. Teaching is generally of a satisfactory quality, and it is sometimes good. There is very good knowledge of the subject and clear lesson objectives are specified. Pupils are given feedback about their level of performance and work is marked. A range of management techniques is used by the teacher, but being new to the school, these do not always have the desired effect of keeping pupils at work. There is good collaboration with the special support assistant, who provides a strong element of stability within the classroom.

94. **Information technology**

95. Pupils make satisfactory overall progress in information technology and in lessons, particularly in Key Stage 4, progress is good at times. Pupils in both key stages develop basic skills in computing, and in using the computer to communicate, receive and research information. They learn to access the Dudley Grid for Learning and use it to communicate with people in other schools. They use their learning successfully to support research and presentation in other subjects, such as design and technology, history and science. Key Stage 3 pupils learn word-processing techniques and to use graphics programmes and incorporate the results in documents and posters. They handle data, including spreadsheets, and acquire the rudiments of desk-top publishing. In Key Stage 4, pupils make satisfactory progress in following the programme for the NEAB Certificate of Achievement.

96. Pupils generally respond well in lessons where information technology is used. They show interest in what they are doing, are stimulated by the challenge of learning new skills and, in many cases, show good concentration and perseverance. They listen well to instructions and try hard to carry them out well, and older pupils especially show an appropriately mature attitude to their work. They treat the equipment with care, and show pride in what they

achieve. On occasion, some younger pupils do not respond well and even decline to participate in the lesson.

97. Where teaching is undertaken by the specialist teacher and relates to the acquisition of skills, it is always good. Where teachers are supporting work in other subjects, the information technology component of teaching is always at least satisfactory and, at times, good. Subject knowledge and skills are generally good, but the recent arrival of the new LEA-wide system means that, while awaiting core training, teachers are limited in the use they make of it. Across the school, teachers support the subject by demonstrating their own commitment to the use of computers to aid their preparation. In lessons, learning is well supported by support assistants who have worked hard to establish a level of skill that ensures that pupils have confidence in their knowledge.
98. Planning for the subject is good, with appropriate use of accreditation to guide learning at Key Stage 4 and a coherent introductory structure at Key Stage 3. In addition to the regular dedicated sessions in the computer suite, there is appropriate planning to support use in other subjects. The effectiveness of this varies and is currently impaired by the requirement for all teachers to become familiar with the possibilities and limitations of the new system. At present, it is well used in history, design and technology and science, but insufficiently in other subjects, including English, where it is not used to good effect in supporting pupils' limited writing and speaking and listening skills. Assessment is effective and appropriately related to National Curriculum attainment targets. Resources in terms of equipment are very good with a sufficient number of networked PCs as well as stand-alone units. However, there is insufficient appropriate software available through the LEA network for the particular needs of these pupils, so that the hardware is not able to be used to maximum effect. The computer suite provides excellent accommodation which is accessible to all teachers on a booking system, and the subject is well and enthusiastically managed by the co-ordinator.

### **Modern foreign language (French)**

99. French is taught for one lesson per week to classes in Key Stage 3. Too little was seen to report fully but, from what was seen and scrutiny of pupils' books, both progress and teaching are judged to be good.
100. In Year 7, progress in lessons is good in remembering numbers, colours and answers to everyday questions in French. Through consistent correction and encouragement, pronunciation is improving steadily. In Year 8, this work is extended; pupils are making good progress in using the language when identifying body parts and joining in singing in French. Pupils here are becoming more attentive when asked to listen carefully to the language.
101. Progress is good because the teacher's planning addresses the objectives of the lesson, subject knowledge and pronunciation are good, the pupils are challenged at their particular levels of understanding and a good range of approaches is used enthusiastically. Planning ensures that activities are developed and changed in a timely way throughout lessons; this holds the pupils' interest.
102. French is managed competently and planning is good. The scheme of work addresses National Curriculum requirements for Key Stage 3 and is very appropriately modified to

emphasise speaking and listening. Opportunities are taken to make links with other subjects; for example, with geography and mathematics. The subject makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills, to their confidence when answering in class and to their cultural perspectives.

102. **Music**

103. The school does not make provision for music to be taught as a regularly timetabled subject and therefore does not comply with the requirements of the National Curriculum for Key Stage 3. During the course of the year, most pupils are offered some sessions of individual tuition where they either learn a particular instrument or follow an adapted course in musical skills and understanding. The pupils value these sessions, they try hard in them and benefit from good teaching. However, it is not possible to make judgements about their overall progress.

103. **Physical education**

104. Through each key stage pupils make good progress in physical education lessons. In Key Stage 3, pupils develop personal fitness, strength, and stamina. They develop the skills for playing invasive games such as rugby and basketball. They refine passing and ball catching skills and they learn to play as team members. During Key Stage 4, they work hard in lessons to improve and maintain fitness. Levels of fitness vary widely but all are willing to extend their personal levels. They enjoy aerobic warm-up activities. In some cases, these challenge their stamina and co-ordination. They refine their playing skills in games such as rugby and softball or rounders. In their practice sessions for ball handling skills, starting from a low base in some cases, they make good improvements.

105. Pupils at both key stages respond well to their lessons. At Key Stage 4, response is particularly good and pupils enjoy the element of challenge which is posed by some activities. They set themselves individual challenges and try to meet them. For example, in a rugby-based ball passing game, they name the forfeit they will attempt if they miss a pass. The forfeits are extra activities such as star jumps, squat jumps, or extra effort, but they meet the requirement willingly.

106. Teaching is very good. While not a specialist, the teacher has a deep personal knowledge of competitive sport at the highest level, and much experience in training techniques. Subject knowledge of this area of the curriculum is good. Very good use is made of the resources available. For example, a special assistant is asked to lead the class in an aerobics session and does so confidently and well. Management of the pupils and full use of time available are very good. Attention is paid to the health and safety of pupils with effective use of warm-ups and cool-downs. This is discussed with pupils, so that its importance is understood.

107. The school hall serves as a gymnasium and there are adequate resources and equipment for inside work. Opportunities for competitive sport are limited, although games and outdoor and adventurous activities are undertaken across the school year. The curriculum offered is consistent with the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils' attitudes to physical education and the quality of teaching offered have improved since the previous inspection.

## **107. Religious education**

108. Too few lessons were seen to report on the full range of pupils' progress or the teaching they receive. Both the progress and the teaching observed were mostly satisfactory, but were occasionally made unsatisfactory by the pupils' response. In a Year 8 lesson about the Jewish New Year, pupils learned many of the facts presented and most grasped the symbolism underpinning the events. Teaching was good in that it drew on good subject knowledge, very detailed preparation, a preparedness to confront difficult behaviour and good use of classroom assistant staff.
109. Religious education is taught weekly to each class and a scheme of work is emerging which has regard for the locally Agreed Syllabus and good coverage of a range of faiths.



## 109. PART C: INSPECTION DATA

### 109. Summary of inspection evidence

110. The inspection was carried out by a team of 4 inspectors over 4 days. During the period of the inspection, 50 lessons or part lessons were observed, conducted in the school and elsewhere.

Inspectors attended registration periods in all year groups.

The arrival and departure of pupils on provided transport was observed.

Pupils' work was examined in each class.

A comprehensive range of school documentation including the school development plan, teachers' records, all curriculum planning documents, the records kept on pupils, their individual education plans, sample reports sent to parents and the school registers were inspected.

Inspectors listened to pupils reading in all classes where this was appropriate. Pupils were examined in their mathematical knowledge.

Discussions were held with the headteacher, all teachers, two governors, and administrative staff.

Discussions were also held with classroom support staff, a careers adviser, an education social worker, a social worker of SSD and the school's local police liaison officer.

A staff debriefing and a meeting of senior staff were observed.

Pupils of the school were also observed off-site at a local College of Further Education on a link course.

The accommodation and resources of the school were examined for sufficiency and suitability.

A parents' meeting held prior to the inspection was attended by 13 parents and carers, representing 12 pupils, at which they expressed their views about the work of the school.

The responses to the 22 questionnaires completed by parents were taken into account during the inspection.

The budget figures and the most recent audit report were examined.

### 111. Data and indicators

#### PUPIL DATA

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN		Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y7 - Y11	34.3	34		13

#### TEACHERS AND CLASSES

##### Qualified teachers (Y7 - Y11)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)

8.8

Number of pupils per qualified teacher

3.9

##### Education support staff (Y7 - Y11)

Total number of education support staff

6

Total aggregate hours worked each week

170.5

## FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:

1998/1999
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	£
Total income	431,699
Total expenditure	432,605
Expenditure per pupils (40 pupils)	10,815
Balance brought forward from previous year	3,990
Balance carried forward to next year	3,084

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

28
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Number of questionnaires returned:

22
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Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	41	45	5		
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	41	45		5	5
The school handles complaints from parents well	41	41	5	5	5
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	32	54	9	5	
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	50	45		5	
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	36	54	9		
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	36	41	14	5	
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	32	41	23	5	
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	32	50	14	5	
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	45	41	5	5	
My child(ren) like(s) school	32	50		5	9

The rows do not tally to 100 because the figures are 'rounded' and not all parents ticked every item on the questionnaire.

### Other issues raised by parents

At the meeting with the Registered Inspector prior to the inspection there was a general feeling expressed that pupils were excluded too frequently and easily and that it was difficult

to contact staff directly on the telephone, rather than the answerphone, during the day.