

INSPECTION REPORT

**MAPLE HAYES INDEPENDENT SPECIAL
SCHOOL**

Lichfield, Staffordshire

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number:124488

Headteacher: Dr. Daryl J. Brown

Reporting inspector: Michael McDowell
1405

Dates of inspection: 25th – 28th June 2001

Inspection number: 184450

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special (Dyslexia)
School category:	Independent special
Age range of pupils:	8 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Maple Hayes Hall Abnalls Lane Lichfield Staffordshire
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Appropriate authority:	The proprietors – Dr. and Mrs. E. N. Brown
Date of previous inspection:	January 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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19692	Robert Folks	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
15606	Christine Humphreys	Team inspector	Art Design and technology	
15021	Norman Watling	Team inspector	Geography History Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
1249	Joseph Edge	Team inspector	Science Information and communications technology	
17530	Mary Cureton	Team inspector	English Equal opportunities	
10782	Henry Moreton	Team inspector	Mathematics Music	
17323	David Smith	Team inspector	Physical education Religious education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Maple Hayes is an independent special school approved by the DfEE for the education of pupils with dyslexia. There are 108 pupils, 100 boys and eight girls, aged between 9 and 16 years. Fifty pupils are boarders. Most are weekly boarders but 15 are termly. Three pupils are of Indian origin and three are of African heritage. All have English as their first language. Many pupils attend the school as a result of tribunal decisions requiring local authorities to place them there. Some parents, however, pay the full fees. All pupils have underachieved in their previous schools. The majority have statements of special educational needs because of their specific literacy difficulties. All have average to above average ability but have very limited literacy skills and a lack of confidence in their ability to learn

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Pupils achieve well, over time, in a broad range of subjects. They move forward steadily and become enthusiastic learners pleased with what they have accomplished. By age 16 their attainment is in line with the national average and some pupils' attainment is above average because teaching is good. Pupils' learning needs are well understood and met. Expectations of what pupils might achieve are high. Management is effective and the school is led with a clear sense of purpose. It gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well, make good gains in their literacy skills and have very good knowledge of their own learning.
- Attainment in art is good and achievement is very good at 16.
- Pupils are well taught and enabled to learn effectively.
- Behaviour within the classrooms and elsewhere is very good.
- Provision for spiritual and social development is good and that for moral development is very good.
- Pupils are given very good careers advice.

What could be improved

- Classrooms are too small and the lack of a sports hall restricts the physical education curriculum.
- Resources for learning in some subjects are limited and there are insufficient fiction books in the library; the method by which resources for subjects may be obtained is not clear to all staff.
- Within the boarding provision there is insufficient privacy for pupils both in the arrangements made for showering and for sleeping in one of the shared bedrooms.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1995. Improvement over the past six years has been satisfactory. The previous inspection left the school with five substantive issues to address. It has done this successfully. Other main issues related to improvement have also been addressed. As a result the curriculum is now broader and it fully meets pupils' needs. Assessment of pupils' attainment has improved in its consistency and accuracy and there is now a development plan for the school to guide its future. Teachers now have access to professional development and training, although greater access to continuing development opportunities in subjects is still required. There are sufficient appropriately qualified teachers to deliver the curriculum and pupils are involved in their own assessment. Standards achieved across subjects are now more consistent and planning within subjects is good. Pupils have opportunities to meet with staff to discuss matters of importance to them. The quality of teaching has improved. While some shortcomings remain, there have also been improvements in the residential arrangements and in the provision of teaching resources.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 11	by age 16	by age 19	Key very good A good B satisfactory C unsatisfactory D poor E
speaking and listening			B		
reading			B		
writing			B		
mathematics			B		
personal, social and health education			C		
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*			B		

* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

The school is independent and is therefore not required to set targets for pupil performance. Achievement overall, is good. By age 16, in mathematics, pupils achieve well and attain average standards. In English and science, where achievement is also good, a minority reach this standard by 16 and a number stay on for a further year to extend their performance. In art, achievement is very good and pupils attain standards that are above average. There is also good achievement in history and geography and pupils attain average standards. Achievement in design and technology is satisfactory at age 14 and average standards are attained, but by age 16 achievement is unsatisfactory and standards are below average because there is too little challenge in lessons. Pupils make good progress towards the objectives set for them in statements and at the reviews of these. Achievement in religious education, including elements of personal, social and health education, is satisfactory. By the time they leave school, which, for a minority, may be age 17, 92 per cent of pupils achieve five GCSE certificates at grades A-G and almost 40 per cent achieve five GCSE certificates at grades A-C.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have positive attitudes to work; they work hard in lessons and understand that they need to do so if they are to overcome their difficulties.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well both in the classroom and outside of lessons. They are pleased when their good work and behaviour are recognised through the school's reward system.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Pupils' relationships with one another and with the adults who teach or care for them are good. Pupils take on the roles of prefect, monitor or steward, but opportunities for pupils to take individual responsibility for their own personal development are limited.
Attendance	Good. Pupils attend well.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5	aged 5-11	aged 11-16	aged over 16
Lessons seen overall		Satisfactory	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 good; pupils' learning needs are well understood and met. Of 69 lessons observed teaching was satisfactory or better in 99 per cent. It was very good or excellent in 20 per cent; good in 45 per cent and satisfactory in 34 per cent. In only a single lesson was teaching unsatisfactory. This represents a significant improvement in teaching quality since the last inspection. In the best lessons teaching produces lively enthusiasm for learning. Expectations of what pupils might achieve are mostly high. Teachers are familiar with their pupils' learning needs and also with the requirements of the subjects that they teach. Attention is paid to the development of literacy in other subjects and lessons are pitched at the right level. Teachers convey their own enthusiasm to pupils and make learning fun. Very clear learning objectives are shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons and these are clearly evaluated at the end. Teachers' relationships with pupils are good and class management is, generally, sure.

As a result of these good features, pupils, particularly those in their last years of schooling, work very hard to get the best possible grades. Shortcomings that were noticed in a small minority of lessons included insufficient awareness on the part of the teacher that a few pupils occasionally used inappropriate language and put others off their work. In other lessons a restricted range of teaching strategies was being used; this was generally because of the cramped nature of the classrooms. Teaching in English is good in almost half of lessons and never less than satisfactory. In mathematics, teaching is also never less than satisfactory and it is good in four out of ten lessons. Teaching in science is predominantly good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and more than a quarter of lessons are very good or excellent. The development of literacy skills underpins all of the work of the school. The pupils are directly taught by a method unique to the school that is designed to strengthen their ability to recognise common components of meaning within words. These aspects of literacy are taught well, overall, and some very good teaching takes place. Teaching of literacy by more conventional means, including the teaching of handwriting and spelling, is done thoroughly and conscientiously. The teaching of numeracy is satisfactory. It was not possible to observe the teaching of personal, social and health education. On the evidence of outcomes, for example the pupils' social skills and awareness about such matters as healthy eating, teaching is satisfactory. Careers education, another element of personal, social and health education, is well planned in conjunction with the local county careers service. Teaching in design and technology, however, offers too little challenge for pupils aged 14 to 16.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The pupils are offered a broad range of learning opportunities. Attention is paid to the need to address the pupils' literacy difficulties directly and to make what is taught in all subjects accessible to them.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for spiritual and moral development is strong and is supported by the positive ethos of the school. Pupils have good opportunities to form social relationships and they respond well to these. Pupils learn from Western culture but have less opportunity to experience and learn from other cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The school is conscious of the needs of its pupils and has in place sound procedures for child protection. The academic and personal progress of pupils is well monitored and accurately assessed.

There is good provision for extra-curricular activities, including a range of sporting activities with other schools. The boarding provision supports pupils' emotional and developmental needs, and

good health care is provided. However, there is insufficient privacy for some pupils in one of the shared bedrooms and the showers. The pressure of numbers wishing to use it restricts access to the telephone. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting and those who wrote directly to the Registered Inspector predominantly support the school. A girls' forum meets to discuss their issues and to promote their interests, but these are not fully reflected in the range of fiction available or the aspects of design and technology studied.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The principal and headteacher are very clear about the purpose of the school and the steps that must be taken to attain it. The curriculum is well managed by those who have overall responsibility and responsibility within subjects. Management of boarding provision by staff with responsibility is good.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The principal is well informed about the performance of pupils and compares these outcomes with those of similar schools. Steps are taken to monitor teaching and learning using external consultants and to review all aspects of the school's organisation and provision.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Resources are used efficiently although they are insufficient in some areas. There are sufficient, qualified teachers to meet the needs of pupils and the curriculum. There are enough staff to ensure the safety of pupils in residence and to meet their needs. The school block is, however, too small to support the broad education now offered within it and this is unsatisfactory.

The school makes efficient use of its financial resources. It compares the outcomes it achieves with those achieved by similar schools and strives to improve its performance.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Because of the addition by the school, of unauthorised questions to the parent questionnaire, this method of testing parental opinion has not been used. The table below has been completed on the basis of opinion expressed at the parents' meeting and in letters addressed directly to the Registered Inspector.

The majority of parents believe that:	Some parents believe that:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children become more confident. • Their children's achievement in reading, writing and spelling increases very noticeably. • Pupils are polite and respectful. • Behaviour is good and difficulties are dealt with effectively. • There have been recent improvements in sports facilities. • The curriculum is now broader with music and religious education being taught by specialist teachers. • Sufficient relevant homework is given. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's rules about pupils' dress are sometimes inflexible. • Standards in mathematics and in design and technology lag behind those in other areas. • More activities for day pupils should be provided. • The school discourages parents from helping. • Information about attainment is not always clear. • The quality of food is not always good and there is sometimes insufficient provided. • Resident pupils find it difficult to communicate with home by telephone. • Prefects are sometimes too immature to use authority fairly.

Inspectors support parents' views that pupils make good progress in literacy skills and that they become confident learners. They agree that pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good and that the curriculum is now broader and some outdoor sports facilities have been improved. No examples of

inflexibility in applying the school dress code came to light. Inspectors found that standards are good in mathematics but for older pupils standards in design and technology are lower than they should be. The school does not have formal procedures for working in partnership with parents. Inspectors noted food is plain, sufficient and nutritious but not always to the pupils' taste. They share the concern that there is only one telephone for boarders. The prefect system was found to work well.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils achieve well. They make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding and acquiring the literacy skills essential to learning. They may enter the school at any age from nine upwards, but in practice, most tend to do so at the beginning of the secondary phase of education when they are in their twelfth year. Prior to attending the school, most of the pupils have experienced great difficulty in making use of the educational opportunities they have been offered, because of their dyslexia. They come to Maple Hayes with a past history of slow progress, not only in literacy, but also in all those areas of learning that depend on being able to read, write and spell. Within a short time they begin to gain confidence in themselves and to realise that they can be successful learners. They attain standards that are broadly average by the time they are 16.
2. Pupils make good use of the unique approach to the development of literacy that the school provides. They work hard to apply and generalise what they learn in literacy lessons to all areas of the curriculum. As a result, pupils make noteworthy gains and sustain their learning momentum throughout their time at the school. Overall, achievement remains good and standards attained have improved since the last report.
3. In English achievement is good for pupils across the age range. By age 11 pupils have developed good attitudes to learning and they speak up clearly in class to answer questions or to read from the modified texts that the school produces. They listen carefully to their teachers and to one another. By constant practice and through the use of a morphological approach they improve their reading and their spelling and spell a range of common words with consistent accuracy. Their handwriting develops very well and they make very neat records of their work in a bold, joined style.
4. By the age of 14, pupils' reading ability has developed further. They confidently read aloud in lessons from published works, including poetry. They correctly interpret the nature of characters they encounter in stories, showing their good understanding of what they read. They draft and redraft their written work so that finished pieces are of a high standard.
5. Pupils aged 16 attain appropriate levels for their age. They speak fluently and take pleasure in informal debate. They show a good degree of awareness of the need to adapt the style of communication they use to the social situation they are in. They read a range of novels, including works by Hardy and Orwell with good understanding. They explore the works of Shakespeare in adapted form. They go on to take externally validated examinations with success. A high proportion achieve grades C to G in their GCSE English and those who stay on for a year, to compensate for time lost earlier in their education, improve on these scores.
6. In mathematics, progress is satisfactory until the age of 14 when it accelerates, so that the majority of pupils attain at or around the level expected for their age by the time they are 16. Achievement at 16 is good. By the age of 11 pupils work with numbers confidently and well. They are able successfully to undertake a range of

investigations and to solve problems. They develop good awareness of how numerical data can be graphically presented and they are confident in their work on measurement, area and the handling of money.

7. By the time they are 14, they are familiar with applications of mathematics such as the taking of bearings or the relationship between speed, time and distance.
8. By the age of 16, pupils have broadened their knowledge of mathematics. They are able to prove Pythagoras's Theorem and to present data and results graphically. Most pupils gain a grade in the GCSE, many at the pass levels of B or C. A minority of higher attaining pupils achieve a pass, Grade C or above, in statistics. In their fifteenth year, almost all gain a credit or distinction in the Certificate of Educational Achievement in mathematics.
9. Achievement in science is good. By the age of 11, pupils are well informed about the sensory organs of the human body and they know how these function. This knowledge is developed so that by the age of 14, higher attaining pupils give a clear and accurate account of how bifocal vision works. In the national tests in 2000, for pupils aged 11 and 14, the school's results were in line with the national average. Investigative approaches are well established and pupils record their work extremely neatly. Achievement in scientific enquiry is very good.
10. By the age of 16, higher attaining pupils reach a standard in science appropriate for their age. Almost half attain a grade between A and C, and those who stay on for an extra year also reach this standard. Achievement has improved since the last inspection.
11. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in personal, social and health education and they respond very well to careers education and the advice that is provided.
12. Achievement in art and history is good. By the age of 16, pupils exceed standards that are expected nationally in art, showing very good achievement, and many gain higher grades at GCSE. In history they attain at the expected level for their age and a high proportion are in line to gain passes at grades A to C in the GCSE examinations. Achievement is also good in geography, where pupils make good progress. They attain satisfactory standards in physical education and achievement is good.
13. In information and communications technology, by the age of 16, achievement is satisfactory but standards are below average. Achievement is also satisfactory in religious education. It was not possible to judge standards in music since no teaching was observed during the inspection, but from video evidence and discussion achievement is satisfactory.
14. In the unique morphological literacy provided by the school, pupils' achievement is good overall and very good for pupils aged 14 to 16.
15. Pupils make insufficient progress by the age of 16 in design and technology. What they are offered in their lessons between the ages of 14 and 16 provides too little challenge.

16. Overall, the school achieves good results. Its results are outstanding in comparison to similar schools nationally, that meet the needs of dyslexic pupils. By the time they leave school more than 90 per cent of its pupils have achieved examination success and over 40 per cent have achieved at least five GCSE passes at grades A to C.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Pupils like the school, have confidence in the staff and speak highly of it. Parents and carers clearly support this view. Pupils' behaviour is very good and this continues to be a strength since the last inspection. Personal development is satisfactory, which marks an improvement.
18. The residential pupils start the day in a positive manner and enjoy the relaxed session between getting up and breakfast. The day attenders are made welcome and quickly become part of the school community. Pupils are courteous and enjoy the culture of mutual respect in the school. They are very clear about what is expected and respond well to this consistent approach. They easily engage in conversation and are keen to discuss aspects of their own achievements and life in the school, often with a crisp sense of humour. Mealtimes are a particularly social occasion with a buzz of conversation and laughter. There is an interesting range of activities provided at lunchtimes and after school and most pupils enjoy these opportunities. The lunchtime information and communications technology club is particularly popular and those who attend it are totally absorbed in their tasks. Residence provides an extension of the pupils' activities and, during the inspection, they greatly enjoyed an evening in Lichfield Park. A recent trip to Alton Towers was very much appreciated by the pupils and their message is "more of the same please". The residential staff certainly have many good ideas which should be encouraged to extend effectively the opportunities currently offered.
19. Behaviour in lessons is good, often very good and sometimes excellent. The school rules are strict, expecting compliance, yet pupils have the confidence to talk freely with the staff and share in good humour. Most of the parents and carers agree with the school rules and feel that they help with behaviour problems. Pupils arrive in their lessons promptly, are alert and well motivated, displaying a high level of interest and enjoyment in their tasks.
20. There are rarely examples of unsatisfactory behaviour in class. On one occasion racist remarks were made. When this was brought to the attention of the headteacher, strong and effective action was taken. The school's approach has an emphasis on the positive management of behaviour and pupils are aware of the consequences of any misbehaviour. The principal stresses the importance of accurate pre-entry assessment of pupils' suitability for the school and because of this, exclusions are rare.
21. There are good relationships throughout the school. The staff effectively promote the need for respect and the pupils feel confident to relax and talk openly in their company. Older pupils work together and co-operate well, supporting each other's ideas. Pupils chat in a lively manner during lunch and talk positively about their friendships. Break times offer the opportunity for pupils to relax and manage their own time. They drift into groups and occupy their time constructively with minimal staff supervision. Pupils have the opportunity to live in age-related dormitory groups in a well-managed yet relaxed atmosphere. They show respect for the feelings and property of others.

22. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are good listeners yet eager to make their own contribution to the lesson. They respond well to opportunities provided for them to think and develop their own ideas. This was evident, for example, in a practical design and technology lesson, where pupils were proud of their work and gave an interesting account of their design and construction of a crane. The development of teamwork is a feature of physical education lessons. The merit system is well managed, very established in the school and is thoroughly understood by staff and pupils. Pupils are proud to wear their badges or receive certificates to reward their positive attitudes and efforts. Assembly on a Friday is the traditional opportunity for pupils to celebrate each other's achievements. Pupils take on a wide range of responsibilities in day-to-day aspects of school life. The prefect system is a tradition of the school, which promotes increased responsibility and maturity. Should prefects become too enthusiastic in their role, then staff are keen to ensure fair play. There are forums for pupils to express their opinions, including a forum for girls who are in a minority in the school. Bullying and harassment are rare and are effectively dealt with by staff. Pupils are involved in work experience when they are 16 and they receive very good careers support. Pupils in residence respond well to the increased opportunities to develop their independence skills, for instance visiting town on a Friday evening. However, more opportunities to exercise personal choice and decision making are required for those preparing to leave school, so that the significant move into life after school is smooth.
23. Attendance is good, is well above the national average for special schools and is improving over time. There is a low incidence of unauthorised absence.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

24. The quality of teaching is good overall. In more than 60 per cent of lessons it is good or better. In 20 per cent, it is very good or excellent. Except for a single lesson, teaching in the remainder of lessons was satisfactory, and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
25. Because of the overall high quality of teaching, pupils become more confident learners. They enjoy many of their lessons and can contribute their thoughts and ideas readily. They remember what they have been previously taught and make good use of this in their lessons. In some cases, where they are given the opportunity, they work together well and collaborate to complete the tasks they are given. They are often lively and enthusiastic.
26. The development of pupils' self-confidence is significant because on entry to the school most had little belief in their own ability to succeed because of the literacy difficulties that had prevented them from making full use of their earlier educational opportunities.
27. In most instances, teachers have good knowledge of their subjects. They understand the nature of their pupils' difficulties with literacy very well, and make full, conscientious, use of the methods the school has devised to enable pupils to overcome these and to gain access to the information they must have in order to learn. The development of pupils' numeracy skills is less prominent but is effectively undertaken as a feature of some lessons. Teachers plan their work well and, within the limitations imposed by the small classrooms, use a variety of methods. In most

lessons teachers have high expectations of what can be achieved and they manage pupils well.

28. Where teaching was less successful, the principal shortcoming was a failure to be fully aware of unhelpful behaviour by a few pupils that distracted others. Other shortcomings included tasks that were too narrow in their conception and which thus put a ceiling on learning, use of a limited range of strategies, (for which the accommodation is partly responsible), and, more rarely, failure to re-direct the attention of pupils, whose minds had wandered, back to the task.
29. In English, teaching is always satisfactory and it is frequently good. All teachers take their own forms for basic literacy sessions daily. The teachers understand the purpose of these lessons, which focus on reading, spelling, writing and word building, and they are vigorous in concentrating pupils' attention on the task. However, good use is made of mnemonic devices, competition and humour to ensure that what is a necessarily limited piece of learning does not become a bore.
30. In their literature work, pupils are helped to understand and interpret stories, plays and poems by skilful teaching. They show confidence, for example, in a lesson on Robert Frost's poem "The Fear", in identifying and reading aloud examples of poetic use of language such as "lurching shadows" or "glossy windows". This testifies to the skill of the teacher in building up their self-belief.
31. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory overall, and it is good in just under half of lessons. Pupils' motivation to succeed is high by the time they reach 14, and as a result of effective teaching, they are frequently entered early for GCSE examinations. Lessons in mathematics commence with succinct, clear explanations and incorporate a great deal of high quality individual support and close supervision. Relationships are positive and close attention is given to ensure that no pupil is left behind and that all achieve as much as they should.
32. Teaching in science is good; it is never less than satisfactory and it was very good in a third of lessons. Teachers are expert in their subject and also pay sufficient attention to developing pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy – the mastering of which is essential to successful learning. Expectations are high and practical sessions are well prepared and safely conducted. Pupils are strongly encouraged to become independent learners and to take responsibility for the organisation of their own work.
33. In other subjects, the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, overall, and it is often good. It is particularly strong in history, where all lessons are very good or excellent, and in art, where it is never less than good and half of the lessons are very good. There is a high proportion of very good and good teaching in geography but also a little that is unsatisfactory. Teaching in physical education is good. In "icon" lessons (see paragraph 79) teaching is good overall with some examples of very good teaching. In design and technology it is satisfactory. Insufficient teaching was seen in information and communications technology, religious education and music to form a judgement about quality.
34. Teachers assess their pupils accurately and with sufficient frequency to be able to act if there is a dip in their progress. Pupils are involved in assessing their own work and are keenly aware of the progress they are making. Work is managed well and

homework is set regularly and always checked by teachers. Time is used to the full in lessons.

35. A significant measure of the good effectiveness of the teaching is the degree to which it succeeds in engaging the pupils and involving them in their own learning. When, as a result of good achievement and learning effort, prizes and certificates are given, the pupils show real pride and are pleased to receive them.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

36. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good at all key stages. The curriculum is broad and balanced and suited to the special educational needs of all pupils. This is an improvement since the last inspection. It includes religious education, sex education and drugs awareness. The aims of the school are successfully reflected in the curriculum which promotes pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum, which includes all subjects of the National Curriculum, except modern foreign languages from which all pupils with statements of special educational needs are formally disapplied because of their specific learning difficulties. Courses lead to GCSE entries in most subjects. Certificate of Educational Achievement (CEA) courses are taken in parallel with GCSE in some subjects.
37. The school has developed good strategies for teaching literacy skills which enable all pupils to make good progress compared to the low levels of attainment on entry to the school. The strategies for teaching numeracy are sound
38. The provision made for extra-curricular activities is good. The school participates in a range of sporting activities with other schools. The St. John's Ambulance Brigade provides first aid training for all. Good use is made of the local swimming pool. Boarding pupils are encouraged to join the Army Cadets.
39. Personal, social, health and citizenship education is good. It is built into all subjects where specific areas for delivery have been identified. It is successful in enabling pupils to develop a knowledge and understanding of right from wrong and in promoting good relationships throughout the school.
40. Very good provision is made for careers education and guidance. This is a very significant improvement since the last inspection. The local careers adviser works very closely with the school. She attends all transitional reviews and has developed close liaison with pupils' home careers services. She attends parents' evenings for pupils aged 14 to 17. The school has developed an effective careers education programme including encouraging pupils in their fifteenth year to develop the notion of a working environment, for example outdoor jobs, to encourage pupils to think more widely about their futures. Good use is made of a range of information and communications technology resources for careers. Pupils attend careers conventions in Lichfield and at the local agricultural college.
41. The school makes satisfactory links with local educational establishments. For example, it is currently in the process of arranging a link course for September with the local further education college to provide for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ).

42. The school has appointed a curriculum manager since the last inspection. This is an improvement. However, there is no formal, clear system for identifying and prioritising resources for subjects. This has an adverse effect on curriculum development in some areas.
43. Overall, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Moral aspects, in particular, receive a constant focus in all parts of school life.
44. The school has a predominantly Christian ethos. Assemblies reflect this and provide opportunities to consider the values, beliefs and insights of religion. Pupils are also given opportunities to think about what their own experiences and those of others tell them about life. There is, within art for example, a strong emphasis on aesthetic values and the appreciation of beauty. The school provides a good opportunity for pupils to experience a sense of belonging to a community and within this, to develop knowledge of themselves.
45. Arrangements for supporting the pupils' moral development are very good. There is a traditional order to many aspects of school life, for example the compulsory wearing of school uniform, and this is accepted by the pupils and supported by the parents. Parents understand that the school's very individual approach develops high levels of courtesy and respect. Staff act as appropriate role models and when former pupils visit, their success reflects the effectiveness of the school's approach. The pupils are clearly taught the difference between right and wrong and put this learning to good effect. Pupils comment that "the atmosphere in school is better than in their previous school". The residential accommodation has a warm, family atmosphere; the pupils have the chance to mature in a relaxed yet supportive setting.
46. The social development of the pupils is good. The quality of relationships in school between pupils and with staff is good. Mealtimes are very social occasions where pupils take the opportunity to spend time with their friends. Break times successfully provide an opportunity for pupils to manage their own time, playing and conversing in a positive manner. Homework sessions are also pleasant and again provide the opportunity for pupils to socialise. Life in residence is very effective in extending the pupils' social skills. The residential forum is a well-considered arena, which gives the opportunities for the pupils to air their views and state their opinions. This is a good approach and a boost to pupils' all round personal development. Pupils have been involved in local organisations such as Army Cadets and the intention for pupils to be increasingly involved in such activities should be encouraged. Christmas productions involve as many pupils as possible and video records of these events do illustrate pupils' growing confidence when performing to an audience.
47. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. The artwork in the school is a particular strength with textiles and printing reflecting a very good range of cultures including Aboriginal and Islamic. The school's aim to display artwork from all of the pupils is an excellent way of boosting their self-esteem. Contact with local artists, visits to art galleries and activities such as the pottery club are all developing strengths within the school. The provision of similar developments in other areas of the curriculum is essential for cultural development to progress in the school. The school has a range of tried and tested literacy classics such as Robin Hood, which have been adapted by the school for their use. Appropriately, pupils study Shakespeare, for example "Macbeth", and have video recordings of relevant professional productions. They are encouraged to read

the work of worthwhile poets and write their own poetry. The library does not fully reflect the fact that we live in a multi-cultural society. The school focuses on enhancing relationships between urban and rural cultures, for example, one pupil was very proud to be awarded his tractor manoeuvring certificate in school. The importance of this award was explained to pupils who live in urban settings.

48. Provision for equal opportunities is satisfactory. The school has a policy for equality of opportunity, which is not formally monitored. The standard of informal monitoring is satisfactory.
49. Girls, who are in a minority, have regular meetings with a female member of staff to share views and occasionally, grievances. The school takes the welfare of girls, all of whom are day pupils, seriously, but is unable to meet their requests in every instance, for example for a separate common room. No special provision is made for the few pupils from ethnic minorities who attend the school but they are well integrated socially. Casual racist comments were heard during the week of the inspection.
50. The school's stock of books, particularly the simplified English classics upon which some of the teaching depends, does not include works which would appeal to girls or reflect the multi-cultural nature of our society. Girls have equal access to the curriculum but the work in design and technology does not include food and textile studies in which many girls are known to be interested.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

51. The school has satisfactory procedures overall for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of its pupils. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory and comply with statutory requirements including the completion of risk assessments. The Staffordshire County Council Social Services Inspection Services' report indicates that the welfare of pupils has improved.
52. All of the staff have been trained in first aid and the matron is a fully qualified nurse. There is a medical room adjacent to the main office for use during the day and also a fully equipped medical room for the use of the boarders outside school hours. The daytime first aid procedures work well. There are very good arrangements with local medical services and the doctor gives every pupil a full medical on arrival and has a surgery every Monday morning. The head of care and the matron joined the school about a year ago. A general office has been provided for them, together with the medical room and recently a prefects' common room has been set up. The somewhat basic facilities for boarders are beginning to improve. Information, and the care records of pupils who are boarders, are being improved.
53. Regular inspections of the buildings and grounds are carried out by the proprietors, and appropriate action is taken. The staff pass on information about defects which they have noticed. The school has acted on the local fire officer's recommendations. Portable electrical equipment is tested regularly. There is no gym equipment to check. Fire drills are regularly held and all legal requirements related to health and safety are met.

54. The recent Social Services Inspection Services' report on the school's residential accommodation concluded that there were "no major concerns regarding the welfare of boarding pupils". The report, however, drew attention to the boarders' concerns about the lack of privacy, especially in showers and the inadequacy of the existing single pay-'phone in the school. Present arrangements for showering are insufficiently private and are unsatisfactory. There is also too little privacy in the junior bedroom, where no partitions are provided between beds. The single pay-'phone frequently has long queues of boarding pupils waiting to use it, which limits its usefulness.
55. Child Protection training has been undertaken by all staff through the regional staff training college in Dudley and the designated person is the principal. A local minister of religion is the independent person allocated for pupils to contact outside the school. He regularly visits the school. He has undertaken a counselling role with pupils who have worries, a role for which he has been appropriately trained.
56. There is little contact with the local Social Services department about the welfare and protection of pupils. To ensure that information is received, the proprietor communicates with the department by fax. He expresses the wish to develop greater contact on a more personal level, so that where issues concerning the protection of pupils arise, response can be swift and appropriate.
57. Pupils' achievement and personal development is well monitored and accurately assessed. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There is a clear marking policy that is consistently applied across the school. Good use is made of constructive criticism and advice to encourage pupils to move on to their next stage of learning. Pupils are involved in assessment of their own work and are regularly asked what they feel about their progress. Testing for literacy is carried out regularly on a weekly and termly basis. Targets in pupils' individual education plans for literacy are very specific and easily measured. Targets for other areas of the curriculum are less clear. Individual education plans are regularly reviewed in relation to pupils' progress and the needs set out in their statements. Teachers make good use of assessment and recording to inform lesson planning and teaching. Good use is made of assessment to indicate National Curriculum levels.
58. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory. Registers are completed accurately and the assistant administrator monitors attendance and completes attendance records for the DfEE. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are clearly indicated in the school prospectus and school policies and are well understood by the pupils. They include a system of merits and de-merits which are identified and are publicly recognised at assemblies, and there are Saturday afternoon detentions for pupils. The procedures to eliminate oppressive behaviour and bullying, similarly, are very traditional but work effectively.
59. Pupils' records were examined during the inspection and it was seen from this that they are efficiently managed by the assistant administrator and her assistant and provide a good record of pupils' personal development at the school. They include records and certificates of non-academic achievements and together with the academic records and portfolios of work, provide a comprehensive record of overall achievement for the pupils during their time at the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

60. The school has satisfactory links with the parents overall and most are pleased with its standards and achievements. Parents' involvement is limited but they receive information that notifies them of events in the school. Parents' contribution to their children's learning is satisfactory and many express the wish to be more involved. A few of them are sometimes frustrated that the school does not make more use of the services they could offer.
61. Parents have selected the school for their children's particular requirements. They feel that it works and promotes good attitudes and values. A few feel that the rules are inflexible at times and should be less rigidly applied to boarders but that behaviour of their own child and of others at the school is very good. Most would like to have some information on aspects to be covered at the start of each term. They are satisfied with the amount of homework given.
62. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory. Parents expressed mixed views, some feeling that they should be kept better informed and that arrangements for parents' evenings had, in the past, been poor. Most, however, felt that they were kept aware of their children's progress. Reports on progress within subjects are clear and satisfactory but do not include a separate section for information and communications technology.
63. Questionnaires sent out by the school as part of the inspection process were amended before they were issued and they have not been taken into account in finding out the views of parents. For this, the main weight of evidence comes from the parents' comments at the pre-inspection meeting.
64. The school prospectus includes useful information for parents and information about dyslexia is made available. Annual reviews are of a good standard and there is a termly newsletter for parents and a range of letters supplements these.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

65. Leadership is good and the school is efficiently and effectively managed. It embodies the educational beliefs of its founder, who is the proprietor and principal, and who provides it with a clear educational direction. It has developed its practices to give effect to a unique approach to meet the needs of dyslexic pupils and to teach them to become functionally literate and able to benefit from a broad education. Decision making remains firmly in the domain of the principal and the headteacher, who shares his educational values, and who has worked to extend and develop the approach to achieving literacy that the school promotes.
66. Overall management of the curriculum has, however, been devolved to a senior teacher who has carried out this role very well, and this has extended and improved the provision that the school makes. Teachers, while not given the title of co-ordinator or head of department, exercise practical day-to-day authority within the subjects they teach and draw to the attention of the senior managers their resource needs.
67. Those who exercise responsibility within the school's boarding provision do so very well. They work thoughtfully and carefully to ensure that the needs of all their charges are met and that their welfare is given the highest priority.

68. The school has put in place an improvement plan that plots its future development. Necessarily it places emphasis on the need to expand and improve the teaching accommodation, and attention is drawn to this in this report. It does not, however, allude sufficiently to developments within subjects, including resources, or to staff training.
69. The proprietor has taken effective steps to monitor and review the school's performance. Pupils' individual progress within the curriculum, especially in literacy, is tightly monitored and is well known. Comparisons are made to other schools that make similar provision, and, while not required to do so, the school sets targets for attainment in GCSE examinations. To ensure that teaching, learning, the curriculum and the systems that support these are of high enough quality, the proprietor makes use of qualified external consultants who survey provision and make recommendations on which the school acts.
70. Control of finance is very tight and effectively ensures that the school's educational priorities are addressed. The budget that is set each year commits the vast majority of money taken in fees to the educational enterprise. To ensure that performance is good, teaching staff are awarded bonuses for successful accomplishment. These are, in some cases, consolidated into the salary, which prompts greater commitment and gives greater security. There has been good recent investment in computers and in equipment for design and technology and science.
71. Administration is effective and unobtrusive and the great amount of work that has to be done to maintain the building and its grounds is carried out well.
72. Fees are comparatively low and because good results are achieved, value for money is very good.
73. Staffing is sound and teachers are appropriately qualified in their subjects. Most are very experienced. Appropriate support is given to the newly qualified teacher on the staff. Teachers manage areas of the curriculum without additional payment for these responsibilities, even in key areas such as English and mathematics. Provision for the induction of staff to the school is sound but opportunities for in-service training, although greater than last reported, do not enable all the teachers to keep up to date with developing practices in their subjects. Teachers are, however, given a good grounding in the practice of morphological literacy. The support staff, including the care and residential staff, make a valuable contribution to the life and work of the school.
74. The school has inadequate accommodation. The proprietor is aware of the need to extend teaching areas. Plans to do this exist but have been frustrated by matters beyond the school's control. There is an appropriate range of facilities but, as was reported at the last inspection, the lack of specialist accommodation for physical education has an adverse effect on standards and the classrooms are too small to support the curriculum fully.
75. Some aspects of the boarding accommodation potentially do not meet the required standards laid down in the national consultation document on minimum standards for residential schools. In the bedroom for the youngest pupils there is no screening between beds to give some level of privacy and define a personal space for each pupil. This room should, therefore, have no more than five pupils. Showers for

younger pupils, while partially screened from view, are communal. These arrangements do not comply with the requirements of the Children Act (1989). Improvements have been made to the school grounds since the last report, and the school environment is pleasant and well used to support learning and play.

76. Learning resources are unsatisfactory overall, even though they have improved since the last inspection. The stock of good quality fiction is insufficient and the library, while it has a good range of factual texts, has too few that support the aspirations of girls and which reflect the multi-ethnic and multi-cultural nature of society.
77. The criteria and processes by which resources are allocated are not, however, entirely clear to all staff members. Making these matters more transparent is necessary if the best value is to be obtained from a dedicated, hard working teaching staff.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

78. In order to develop and improve the quality of provision that it makes for its pupils the proprietors of Maple Hayes should draw up a plan to resolve the following issues.

- Increase the size of classrooms so that they are large enough to accommodate comfortably the numbers of pupils presently in teaching groups and afford sufficient space for teachers to use the full, appropriate range of teaching strategies in their subjects. In addition provide suitable facilities for teaching gymnastics and dance within physical education.
(Paragraphs 28, 74, 97 & 143)
- Improve the range and number of resources to support teaching and learning by :
 - widening the range of children's fiction in the library;
 - allocating an appropriate budget for resources;
 - devising a clear and fair system for allocating resources to subjects;
 - devising a fair system that enables teachers to request resources related to agreed priorities.(Paragraphs 42, 77, 89, 111, 121, 127, 144 & 148)
- Ensure that the pupils' right to privacy is fully respected by reducing the number of beds in the junior bedrooms or providing screening for bed spaces. Ensure, also, that shower arrangements that fully satisfy the requirements of the Children Act (1989) for proper privacy are put in place,
(Paragraphs 54 & 75)

In addition to the issues above, in drawing up its action plan in response to the inspection, the school may also wish to give consideration to the following more minor issues which are referred to within the report.

- Develop the library and the school book stock to reflect more fully the multi-cultural nature of our society and support more fully the aspirations of girls.
(Paragraph 50)
- Continue to invite the local Social Services department to enter into a full working relationship so that pupils' needs can be fully met.
(Paragraph 56)
- Develop further the school's relationships with parents, so that full advantage can be taken of well-meant offers to help in aspects of the school's life.
(Paragraph 60)
- Improve pupils' opportunities to communicate by telephone or email with their homes.
(Paragraphs 54)
- Improve standards in design and technology at age 16 by developing the curriculum.
(Paragraphs 112, 114 & 115)
- Improve assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do in information and communications technology.
(Paragraph 134)

ADDITIONAL SUBJECT

MORPHOLOGICAL LITERACY

79. The school adopts a unique approach to enable dyslexic pupils to become effective readers, spellers and writers. Part of this approach involves the systematic teaching of “units of meaning”, into which words may be divided. Each unit of meaning may be spelled conventionally by a combination of letters or represented by a simple image or “icon”. All pupils learn to recognise a wide range of icons and their skill in recognising them to read, spell and understand words is developed in weekly lessons.
80. Pupils learn icons well; in lessons observed, their ability to recognise, use and derive meaning from the icons was good. As they move through the school, aided by good use of information and communications technology, pupils’ accuracy in recalling the letter strings associated with icons grows impressively. As part of the school’s systematic approach to literacy, each group is given a number of spellings to learn. The icons taught relate to these. At the start of each year, a decision is made about the words and icons to be learned in this way. This decision is informed by the particular requirements of the subjects of the curriculum. Pupils are very keen to learn their weekly spellings and icons. Their personal best scores are celebrated in the classroom and in assemblies and rise markedly over time. Most pupils make a rapid improvement as they are taught to decipher words and to understand word families. Because this learning is closely tied to the linguistic requirements of the school curriculum, it enables pupils to read and understand subject specialist vocabulary, which aids learning. Learning is firmly reinforced by daily lessons in basic literacy and in English. As a result, almost all pupils read and understand the simple learning materials put before them in lessons. They read, with good understanding, carefully adapted texts. Pupils read sufficiently widely to support their learning. They use dictionaries, encyclopaedias and CD ROMs. Although there are a few avid readers, pupils’ private reading rarely extends beyond magazines which reflect their leisure interests.
81. Teaching in icon lessons is good; some very good lessons were observed. Pupils are enabled to link the visual form of the icon to things they already know. The best lessons become an exciting journey of the mind in which connections are made across a broad field of knowledge. Pupils have the chance, which they take well, to show their general knowledge and to develop it. The mental links explored act as prompts to memory. Ultimately these are helpful to pupils as they focus attention on words, how they are made up, how they are spelled, and how they are derived. There is skilful use of questioning in these lessons, good use of technology to aid imagery and a very positive learning atmosphere.
82. The school refers to icon lessons as “driver” lessons. They are positioned at the beginning of the week to give impetus to the work on words and their spellings that is to come. In basic literacy sessions and in lessons in other subjects, reference is made to the essential role of icons in enabling pupils to decode, give meaning to and spell unfamiliar words. There is also, by carefully structured means, a strong emphasis on enabling pupils to write very clearly in a cursive, joined-up style. Older pupils, who are adept at recalling a wide range of icons, suggest that they find them useful principally as a means of understanding the meaning of new words. The school’s approach to teaching dyslexic pupils to read, write and spell is very effective. Pupils make great gains in reading accuracy, fluency and spelling. They also write

very legibly in a good cursive style. All this means that across the curriculum the quality of presentation of their work is excellent and that their literacy skills support their learning in other subjects.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	69
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3%	17%	44%	35%	1%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y5 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	108
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y5 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	108
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	108

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.7
National comparative data	N/A

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	N/A

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 4

Key Stage 4 is extended for a further year (Year 12) in some cases.

Percentage of girls and boys achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A – C is 38%

Percentage of girls and boys achieving 5 or more GCSE grades A – G is 92%

Age range points score per pupil is 32

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	102
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y5 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.3
Average class size	9.9

Education support staff: Y5 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	1,154,841
Total expenditure	1,144,046
Expenditure per pupil	11,327
Balance brought forward from previous year	-
Balance carried forward to next year	10,801

Results of the survey of parents and carers

One hundred and nine questionnaires were sent out to parents and eighty-six were returned. However, because the school had added two questions to the standard OFSTED form, this invalidated the responses.

Parents' views of the school expressed at the pre-inspection meeting with the Registered Inspector are described in the summary section (Part A) of this report.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

83. Achievement is good in English at all key stages. When pupils enter the school, they are already significantly underachieving in reading, spelling and writing. They are capable of negligible amounts of work in comparison with their mainstream peers. In many cases, access to the curriculum at their previous school has been denied them because of this. By the time they are 11, although their National Curriculum levels are below average for their age, pupils speak up to be heard in lessons and listen to the teacher. With help, they read the very simple texts produced by the school with some degree of understanding. They answer simple factual questions on these texts using neat, cursive handwriting. They sometimes need help from the teacher to do this. Their ability to copy text frequently outstrips their ability to read what they have written, and the school is developing texts printed in cursive script to help pupils perceive the difference between print and handwriting. These are effective.
84. By the time they are 14, pupils have well-developed skills for speaking and listening to each other when they are in small groups. In a lesson that explored being cast away on a desert island, pupils had discussions in pairs or small groups, identifying hazards and advantages of island life. They successfully worked these ideas up into interesting and original board games, similar to snakes and ladders. They read the simple adaptations of classic English novels that have been prepared for them with good understanding. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils had no difficulty in reading a list of safety rules. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils read aloud and fully understood a simple play script about Robin Hood. In this lesson, they recognised that some characters were good and some bad. They realised that their lines must be said in different ways to emphasise this. Pupils write in a narrow range of styles, which includes diaries, both personal and fictional, letters, postcards, posters, play scripts and poems. They have little sense of writing for a specific audience. Redrafted work of higher achieving pupils is frequently substantially correct, but a high proportion of writing contains persistent errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. The presentation of written work, whether hand written or using a computer, is consistently excellent. Moreover, pupils' writing skills support their learning. They take notes, in history, for example, and write historical accounts. In the three science subjects, they write up their experiments lucidly and correctly. In geography, pupils confidently annotate diagrams of volcanoes. They re-tell Bible stories in their study of religious education and comment on them.
85. By the time they are 16, the work of higher attaining pupils begins to approach the national expectation. Pupils speak fluently in lessons and delight in the cut and thrust of informal debate. They listen carefully to the teacher and to each other. They understand they have to alter their style of speaking to reflect differing social situations. All pupils are given opportunities take part in school assemblies and dramatic productions. Some of them volunteer to read aloud in lessons, clearly and confidently. Pupils read a range of worthwhile texts in preparation for externally validated examinations, such as "Animal Farm" by George Orwell and "Wessex Tales" by Thomas Hardy. By the end of the key stage, all pupils have tackled simplified adaptations of Shakespeare with at least some measure of success. In their study of poetry, pupils read the "Ballad of Hillsborough" by Simon Rae with good understanding. They fully appreciate the sense of danger and menace in "The Fear" by Robert Frost, and some can say how this effect is achieved. Pupils' writing

extends from simple accounts and narrative to strikingly original poetry such as that based on Ted Hughes poem "Amulet", for example. Higher attainers produce coherent, stylish and well-organised writing, which is substantially correct. Lower attaining pupils are capable of setting down what they think, but much work contains major errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. This improves on redrafting. Presentation of pupils' writing continues to be consistently excellent.

86. By the time they are 15, all pupils have achieved at least a pass grade in an externally validated Certificate of Educational Achievement in English. By the age of 16, a high proportion of pupils has achieved grades C – G in the GCSE examination. At 17, pupils who remain in the school attain the national expectation. They achieve higher grades in GCSE English and, on occasion, good grades in English literature, showing good improvement in relation to their prior attainment.
87. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Pupils behave well in lessons. They rapidly settle to work, whether overtly interested in the lessons or not, and show themselves capable of extended periods of concentration. This was a significant factor in the good learning seen in the week of the inspection. Teachers conscientiously teach the lessons to help pupils' literacy, which are prepared for them by the school. In these lessons good use is made of support assistants who work with teachers as an effective team to deliver a high level of individual help and advice. Teachers have good specialist knowledge both the of the school's literacy method and of English. When classroom space allows, pupils are given good opportunities for pair and group work, although in many lessons pupils spend much time listening to the teacher and working individually. Lessons based on drama help pupils to develop confident speech. Lessons frequently give pupils opportunities to read aloud, and many of them appreciate this, as it allows them to take a more active part in proceedings. Relationships within the classrooms are pleasant and constructive. Pupils are eager to learn and it is expected and that they will do so. Self-motivation is thus a strong feature of their learning.
88. The specific teaching of literacy skills fits in well with the broader aspects of the subject and this enables pupils to learn as well as they can. The proportion of time allowed for the subject is very generous but more could profitably be devoted to examination preparation for pupils in their final years of schooling. Daily lessons in basic literacy reinforce pupils' developing capabilities. The use of workbooks developed by the school in these lessons empowers all teachers and fulfils the expectations of pupils. Key words and technical vocabulary receive systematic emphasis across the curriculum, and this supports learning across a range of subjects. Pupils do well in writing, because spelling and handwriting are specifically taught. However, there are insufficient bright, simple, age appropriate texts to encourage private reading for pleasure and information within the school. There are no specific areas for the younger pupils to go to read, as the classrooms are too small. To some extent, this limits progress in reading as pupils lack a broader experience of literature than the available adapted texts can provide but pupils are helped to master the "mechanics" of reading well. There are insufficient copies of books for those studying for external examinations to have a copy each for sustained private study. Lack of sufficient set texts is leading to some lack of progress in the literature sections of the externally validated examinations in Key Stage 4.

89. Since the last inspection, there has been a good measure of improvement. The quality of learning overall has improved and is now good. The poor learning in some lessons, as described in the last inspection, was not seen in this inspection. Subject co-ordination is now good. Formal and informal consultation between members of the team teaching English has been developed since the last inspection and is now fully effective. Assessment and monitoring of progress has been further improved since the last inspection and is now good. The use of information and communications technology support across the curriculum is now satisfactory and continues to develop. English teachers have full access to the in-service training provided by the school, but some perceived training needs with regard to recent literary initiatives in mainstream education have yet to be met.

MATHEMATICS

90. Overall, achievement is satisfactory. However, pupils' progress accelerates over time so that for pupils aged 14 to 16 achievement is good. In many cases attainment by the age of 16 is in line with national expectations and most pupils gain a pass grade in the GCSE. Many do so at the higher grades of B and C. A minority of pupils also reach at least a pass grade at GCSE statistics, and several attain grades above C. Many also attain either a credit or distinction in the Certificate of Achievement. There are no significant differences in achievement between girls and boys. Both standards and achievement have been maintained since the last inspection.
91. As a result of developments in teaching and better management, provision is steadily improving. There is effective use of testing to chart the good progress made by many pupils. The quality of teaching is more consistent than it was at the last inspection.
92. Pupils in all three key stages undertake an appropriate range of work on data handling, space, shape and measures. Their work on number is above average. They also tackle a sufficient range of problems involving investigations during the course of a year. Pupils make swifter progress as they get older because they show better application to their work and benefit from specialist teaching.
93. By age 11, pupils know how to find the mean of a group of numbers and that the mode is the number that occurs most often. They produce graphs from frequency charts and find the median. In their oral work they work out, without calculators, the lowest number of coins making £1.71p and the area of 300m x 200m. By age 14, they know that navigators on ships and aircraft use bearings, and that they are measured from north in a clockwise direction. They are able to find bearings in a range of practical situations. They understand the relationships between distance, speed and time and work out examples, showing their results graphically. They work out gradients accurately to two decimal places. By age 16, they prove the theorem of Pythagoras. They design an investigation to measure the different ways that pulse rates are affected to show that not everybody has the same rate.
94. The overall quality of teaching of mathematics throughout the school is sound and some good lessons were seen for pupils aged 14 to 16. In all classes pupils are managed effectively. Teachers create a purposeful atmosphere for learning. Lessons have clear objectives, which are explained to pupils so that they know what they have to do. Pupils benefit greatly from very close support. This means that they move on only when ready and so none get left behind. Where teachers' have high expectations, pupils' energies are harnessed so that their achievement is good and

they make good progress in the lesson. Teachers reinforce learning with regular marking, often with the pupil so that they explain to them what they need to do to improve. Standards of writing and drawing contribute significantly to the quality of pupils' written work, the presentation of which is excellent. Information and communications technology is used well in data handling. Teachers use mathematics in other subjects such as science, but teaching is not informed by the National Numeracy Strategy.

95. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good. Most of the older pupils are keen to learn. Individual Education Plans are appropriate. Where applicable they have clear numeracy targets and areas for development and the work set is well matched to their needs.
96. The small classrooms prevent the use of some innovative ways of working but teachers make the best of them. Resources are satisfactory and, as with the accommodation, the teachers adapt what is available to them. The one full time teacher of mathematics who teaches the older pupils and co-ordinates the subject, builds on the solid work lower down the school. In this way, all pupils leave the school having achieved the results of which they are capable.
97. There is evidence of sound numeracy skills improving pupils' performance in science and other subjects, including geography.

SCIENCE

98. Achievement in science is good. This is because the teachers are very effective lesson by lesson, and because they make sure the work offered year on year leads to progressively higher levels of attainment. By the time pupils leave school, standards are almost in line with national averages and the overall level of attainment is close to the national average for 16-year olds. For example, 46 per cent of pupils gained A* - C grades in last year's GCSE examinations. Attainment at this high level has been consistent in recent years. Very few pupils need to stay beyond age 16 to take their GCSE science. Leavers have the benefit of taking GCSE science in three separate subjects, that is biology, physics and chemistry.
99. Good achievement is a feature of the work in science by pupils of all ages. By age 11, for example, pupils know a lot about their sensory organs, such as the eye, and are beginning to understand how they function. Pupils aged 14 significantly improve their understanding of the sensory organs. For example, the high-attaining pupils understand many aspects of sight, such as how bi-focal vision works. Almost all pupils of this age can name the parts of the eye, most doing so confidently and accurately. National Curriculum Tests are taken at ages 11 and 14. The results of the 2000 tests for 11-year-olds are below the national average but a significant proportion reached level 4. Outcomes in the previous two years are impressive. By age 14 the range of attainment is very wide from below the national average to well above average. Overall achievement by both high- and low-attaining pupils is encouraged to be as good as it can be. Pupils take the Certificate of Educational Achievement at age 15. This is used as a stepping stone toward the much harder GCSE examinations, taken by leavers. Hardly any pupils fail the Certificate and the great majority attained Distinction, now called Level 3. The good achievement in science applies to each of the main elements of provision, broadly life processes, materials, physical processes and scientific enquiry. Achievement in scientific enquiry is very good. Even the youngest pupils investigate carefully, record well, and can offer a common-sense conclusion to explain their results. By age 16 pupils

use scientific ideas as the basis for their enquiries. All can predict what an enquiry may show and state a clear conclusion. Some design elements of their experiment, evaluate their evidence, and judge how secure their conclusions really are. This success relies on very good teaching to develop pupils' powers of thought, and to overcome weaknesses in literacy linked to the pupils' special educational needs. Overall by age 16 pupils can write a full report about an enquiry, using hard technical science expertly and accurately.

100. Provision and achievement in science have improved since the last inspection. Scientific enquiry is now very good. Teaching is now good. Resources are now better, and the laboratories are now attractive and well organised, rather than untidy.
101. Teaching is good overall, with no significant weaknesses. The key strengths are that teachers are expert about science, and that they plan well. They set ambitious targets for pupils, and achieve them well by making sure the methods used are varied and interesting to pupils. They also take good care to meet the special educational needs of the pupils by ensuring that the science tasks promote good practice in reading, writing and how to organise work. Similar effective attention is given to secure good achievement in numeracy. The management of behaviour is good because teachers adapt their strategies to make sure the amount and level of the science is never less than satisfactory even if pupils misbehave. Homework is set regularly, is useful, and is enforced. A further key strength is that teachers assess astutely so that they can make sure progress is pushed forward well. Teachers have ambitious expectations. Pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of science. The older pupils make substantial intellectual efforts in lessons. Even the youngest pupils work at a good productive pace, with interest, and with good concentration. Sometimes concentration slips but, even then, pupils respond satisfactorily to firm direction.
102. For example, in teaching a class of 9 to 13 year olds, a strong emphasis was placed on pupils paying full attention and obeying instructions. Because of this they worked very well. The teacher made sure they grasped difficult concepts and that they wrote about them meaningfully and correctly using a formal style. Their task was to check how different parts of their hand and arm could sense when touched by either one sharp point, or by two. Pupils collaborated well in pairs. The formal writing was a report with key matters to be filled in with the pupil's own thoughts. The very good features of teaching included very good planning in which science was linked to literacy, and firm control of progress so that inexperienced pupils could meet the ambitious targets in a single lesson. The pupils knew they were successful and enjoyed the rigour of the lesson.
103. Several other factors underpin the good outcomes in science. The curriculum is well balanced and planned to ensure that pupils continue to develop their knowledge and understanding. Assessments are accurate and regular, and are used well to track progress. The science work is taught in ways that promote the overall aims of the school very well, principally those which meet specific needs linked to dyslexia. The science teachers do a very fine job promoting the very impressive outcomes.

ART AND DESIGN

104. The standards pupils attain in art by the age of 16 are above average. Achievement is good for pupils across the age range and very good for those aged 14 to 16. The GCSE examination results are above average and have improved since 1999 when they were in line with the national average. This year has seen an increase in the number of candidates entered and, from the analysis of work, standards are being improved. The main reason for the improvement in standards is that pupils who gain grade C and above, in the unendorsed GCSE, are later given the opportunity to take the endorsed GCSE where standards are improved. This enables many pupils to gain higher grades. When pupils arrive at the school, standards in art are below average; confidence and self-esteem are low. Some pupils have never experienced the satisfaction of seeing their work displayed. All artwork is displayed at Maple Hayes to help raise pupils' self esteem. The art teacher gradually builds pupils' confidence, using a broad range of media, to produce a good range of quality work, on various scales, including three-dimensional work. By the age of 11, pupils' achievement is good.
105. In pottery pupils aged 14 investigate different styles of buildings when making their plaques. They look at works of other cultures, including Islam and the North American Indians, to inform their pattern making, and make good use of the 'throwing club' to increase their pottery skills.
106. Pupils aged 16 use observational drawing to record key features of the work of Susie Cooper at the Gladstone Museum and extend their work in the classroom. During the holidays, they use places of interest in their own localities as subject material for project work. All pupils keep a sketchbook that is frequently used for class and individual work. They use information communication technology for research and to try out their ideas for patterns.
107. Teaching and learning in art is very good, a significant improvement on the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. In one lesson the teaching was excellent and the printing and use of colour was high quality because the pupils had time to refine their techniques and improve their printing skills. The teacher is an expert, not just in her subject but in how pupils learn. She knows each pupil very well. Her sensitivity to their needs and the way she gradually builds confidence and raises pupils' self-esteem, by carefully adapting her teaching styles, is the key to pupils' learning and success in art. There was a very special moment when the teacher stood back from the examination group while an older boy successfully helped a younger girl with a low level of confidence to improve her lino cutting skills. Through careful planning, closely linked to assessment, class work is closely matched to ability. Skills are carefully and progressively taught so pupils understand the techniques they are using. Through careful monitoring of their progress, the teacher encourages pupils to refine and improve their work and to take more responsibility for making their own decisions. The teacher always has available and frequently uses, an excellent range of printed pictures and artefacts, compiled by her and used selectively, to refresh ideas and raise pupil's interest. No time is wasted because lessons are very well prepared with everything pupils need to hand. Pupils are encouraged to think and reflect as their work progresses so they extend their understanding of how it is developing and amend it appropriately.

108. There has been a big improvement in the curriculum for art since the last inspection. It is now very well planned with a topic focus for each term and the National Curriculum and its proposals are carefully considered. The format is very good and includes painting, drawing, graphics, printing and pottery. Work with textiles is included in the lower years. The curriculum is well balanced to include the creative and the historical aspects of art, which encourage the pupils' cultural development. However, while pupils visit museums and galleries, the opportunities are still limited and there are no planned opportunities to work with other artists in school.
109. Pupils enjoy art. The majority is eager and uses time well. Some, who need careful monitoring to keep them working productively, respond well to praise and encouragement from the teacher and other pupils. Relationships are good. All pupils respect the resources and facilities and work well together sharing materials and ideas and clearing away. They value help and advice and are good listeners. Pupils are part of the assessment process and so they know how well they are attaining in lessons and what they could do to improve. Detailed records are kept and used by the teacher to plan pupils' work and to contribute to pupils' records of work in art. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. However, there is no monitoring of pupils' achievements in public examinations year on year.
110. Big improvements have been made in the accommodation, which had been criticised at the last inspection. There is a new kiln and a better range and quality of materials. This has broadened the range of skills that are taught and has resulted in the overall raising of standards achieved. However, there is no hot water in the art room.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

111. Achievement is satisfactory by age 11 and by age 14, but by age 16 it is unsatisfactory. Achievement by 11-year-old pupils and the standards they attain are satisfactory. They measure, mark and cut the wood into lengths and the card into shapes to join with some accuracy to make their working cranes. Some pupils can solve the problem of the string slipping when it is wound up and others learn by their example. There is little evidence of designing as the task is preset by the teacher with little room for innovation.
112. The standards achieved by pupils aged 14 are satisfactory but they are not maintained or developed in the next key stage. Pupils can use materials, tools and equipment to make products using wood, plastic and card. They make an electronic badge that involves a circuit including a switch. When asked about their work, they fully understand the stages they have gone through and use technical vocabulary to discuss their ideas. There is some evidence of simple drawings with annotation but not at the level expected for pupils of their ability.
113. The standards pupils achieve by the age of 16, in design and technology, are below average for their age. This is because pupils' achievements, as they progress through the school, are not maintained and built on to raise standards. At the last inspection, standards were satisfactory. Pupils experience a limited range of materials that includes circuits and pneumatics, but does not include food or textiles. Standards in designing are unsatisfactory. Opportunities for accreditation for 16-year-olds are limited to the Certificate of Achievement that was introduced this year. Pupils' achievements on the course so far are held down by a restricted range of tasks that does not challenge them and in which there is little designing. By the age of 16, pupils can make simple shapes to mould using the vacuum forming process.

They understand the sequence of processes involved but they do not have the knowledge and experience to modify their designs to get the best results when cutting with the coping saw. This is a repeat of a project done in the previous key stage.

114. Teaching is satisfactory, using a series of planned tasks. With the youngest pupils a good lesson was seen. The strengths are the relationships the teacher has with the pupils, the teaching of basic methods and the monitoring of the progress pupils are making in their projects in the lesson. As the pupils get older the teaching becomes less secure. As in the last report, the teaching lacks the right amount of challenge for the pupils because the teacher has limited expectations of what they can do and lessons lack pace. The teacher's planning does not take the work of older pupils to a high enough level. The interaction between designing and making is not sufficiently emphasised and the skills of design are not taught progressively. The present curriculum does not include food technology or textiles, which might have particular interest for girls.

GEOGRAPHY

115. No teaching of pupils under 11 was seen during the inspection. From analysis of work and records, pupils are attaining below average standards. For pupils aged 11 to 16, standards are average. Pupils' achievement is good in geography during their time at the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
116. By age 11, pupils of all abilities understand that homes are part of a settlement and that settlements vary in size. The highest attaining know why few people live in some areas and many people live in others.
117. By age 14, pupils of all abilities identify roads, rail, sea and air as modes of transport. They draw conclusions accurately from text sources, for example deciding on an appropriate route for a bypass. Good use is made of numeracy, for example in producing bar charts to illustrate timber exports and in using scales for measuring distances on maps. Highest attaining pupils know and explain the dangers of oil pollution to birds. They explain the need for double hulls on oil tankers. They know and understand the impact of the tourist industry on the National Parks.
118. By age 16, pupils of all abilities produce accurate charts from information given, for example river processes. They use technical language accurately and understand the words very well, for example erosion, meander and oxbow lakes.
119. The quality of teaching overall is good with some very good features particularly for pupils aged 14 to 16. This is an improvement on the last inspection. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen with pupils aged 11 to 14. Where teaching is good or better, teachers plan their lessons well choosing methods which develop pupils' short-term memories (particularly important for pupils who have specific learning difficulties). Learning objectives are clear and shared with pupils and this facilitates review of learning at the end of lessons. Tasks are well presented with good quality blackboard work. Teachers use pupils' answers to develop their geographical skills and knowledge, for example extending vocabulary and analytical skills. Teachers show an enthusiasm for their subject and make learning fun. This raises pupils' self-esteem and encourages them to participate in lessons with enjoyment, showing delight in completed work. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, classroom management skills are not consistently applied, for example two racist comments went unchallenged and there is inconsistency in controlling shouting out.

120. The subject is well co-ordinated with a clear scheme of work closely linked to the National Curriculum and the syllabi of exam boards. Pupils' work is regularly and accurately assessed and recorded. This is a good improvement from the last inspection. There is an overemphasis on the use of photocopied material and this hinders access for some pupils. There are insufficient modern textbooks for all pupils to have one.

HISTORY

121. Pupils' achievement is good across the age range. By age 11, they attain levels below the national averages, but by the age of 14, most are attaining levels that are close to or at these. By age 16, all attain standards that are at least average for their age, and the highest attaining pupils are in line for A-C grades at GCSE. This is an improvement since the last inspection.
122. By age 11, pupils of all abilities have improved their vocabulary in the subject. They know and understand the plight of poor children in Victorian times. They explain the conditions experienced by chimney sweeps and the high death rates. Highest attaining pupils explain the connection between poverty level wages and the privileges enjoyed by children from wealthy families. Also they explain the role of politicians in attempting to abolish cruel practices.
123. By age 14, pupils know of the conditions leading to the Black Death and the experiences of ordinary people in wartime. They relate ideas through time, for example comparing the treatment of slaves by the British in the West Indies to the treatment of Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto. Pupils of all abilities understand the difference between spiritual and armed resistance. Lowest attaining pupils know the Black Death was caused by rats carrying fleas. Higher attaining pupils recall the sequence of events and the route taken by the Black Death from Asia to England. They draw inferences from the killing of one SS guard during Kristelnacht to predict the effect of the deaths of 22 guards in Warsaw.
124. By age 16, pupils know and understand the causes of the Second World War and its effect on people on the home front. Pupils of all abilities recall facts about the evacuation of children. They use original resources to help them imagine the feelings of children from that era. They know that families were given a grant of £8.00 towards building an air raid shelter and were given gas masks. Higher attaining pupils know that families grew their own food to reduce the need for transporting food by the merchant navy. They know that the introduction of the Defence of the Realm Act was related to the possibility of increased use of air raids. They understand that models for this were provided by the Spanish Civil War and the attack by Nippon on Shanghai.
125. The quality of teaching seen was never less than very good, and was, on occasion, excellent. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils. They boost their self-confidence through very good use of questioning providing opportunities for pupils to make predictions and to draw upon previous learning. Lessons are well planned and resources used well. Teachers have a wide range of class management skills aimed at motivating and including all pupils. Information is given in a discursive way eliciting response from pupils who are well prepared for the topics. Tasks are very clear enabling pupils to look, reflect and respond within short time frames.

126. The subject is well co-ordinated and there is a scheme of work in place closely linked to the National Curriculum and exam syllabi. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Further development in the subject is hindered by lack of resources such as textbooks.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

127. Achievement is satisfactory across the age range. However, pupils attain standards that are below the average for their age. Literacy difficulties have limited pupils' opportunities in information and communications technology but by age 11 they have had sufficient experience to begin to make positive progress. By age 14, pupils can enter and save information, and know commands to use to control devices. However, they do not understand the commands securely enough to create specific outcomes unaided. By age 16 the extent of understanding is better. For example, pupils used the computer effectively to generate patterns. These became the basis for decorative motifs for pottery work in art. In the light of the standards attained in the other core subjects, however, the school could expect to reach higher levels of attainment in information and communications technology.
128. There have been substantial improvements over the previous year. Even so limitations remain. Teaching strategies do not consistently target top level attainment, reflecting the higher expectations, and curriculum balance and assessment systems require more attention. There are some improvements since the previous inspection. The school now has very good physical resources. A sensible start has been made to incorporate the National Curriculum into the provision.
129. Teaching and learning are both satisfactory, for all ages. Learners benefit especially well from the good skills and expertise of the teaching. Any enquiry from a pupil is answered cogently and clearly by the teacher. Pupils like this and it prompts further curiosity. Overall teaching and learning are lively, intriguing and productive. The teacher is alert, lesson by lesson, to the extent of progress of pupils. Pupils are given a good flow of useful feedback and support. The weakness in the teaching is that plans and expectations are not ambitious enough. Too little attention is given to making sure pupils learn to evaluate what they could do using information and communications technology in various contexts, including learning to assess the impact of information and communications technology in society. This weakness sets a ceiling on pupils' progress towards full understanding. It also limits their opportunities to assess their own learning.
130. Pupils regularly use school-created computer programmes as a tool to promote literacy. Learning in these lessons is good because of the strong pace of learning and the very good progress in the fluent use of icons. Icons are key elements in the school's overall literacy strategy. A further benefit from these literacy lessons is that pupils gain overall confidence with information and communications technology. For example, pupils keyboard skills are reliable and consistent. The contribution to pupils' information and communications technology capability from other subjects is inconsistent. Some good work is contributed in Key Stage 4, for example, coursework and displays for science and English, but the contributions from history and geography are unsatisfactory.

131. Other factors have a bearing on achievement. The school has invested well over the previous year. The hardware is modern, plentiful and deployed well so that pupils have good access. The main information and communications technology room has enough computers for each pupil to have one. Each classroom, including specialist rooms, has suitable equipment and software. There is very good access by pupils for extra-curricular work. More investment is planned for staff training. The school knows some staff lack confidence about information and communications technology. The decision not to seek technician support for information and communications technology means that the headteacher gives too much of his time to setting up and consolidating every improvement.
132. The subject is well led. The changes made to curriculum provision are beneficial. A rolling programme of units of work is being developed to give secure coverage of the National Curriculum. The first units are of good quality because they give pupils a good start in work on graphics, spreadsheets, elements of control, and some word processing. More is needed to introduce data handling and to enhance work on word processing and control. For example, the school has not fully resolved how to balance the use of word processing against the priority for hand-written work embedded in its overall strategy about literacy. The school is connected to the Internet and pupils are familiar with the uses of electronic mail.
133. The school monitors outcomes from the units of work. It is good that pupils assess their view of the progress made. However, the school does not yet have systems to assess pupils' progress in terms of National Curriculum levels. Thus the planning for the next phase of a pupil's learning is not based on a clear measure of how well a pupil has achieved so far. Also the school lacks evidence by which to monitor if overall standards of achievement are good enough.

MUSIC

134. During the inspection it was not possible to observe any lessons. Through discussions with staff, the examination of documents and video evidence it is clear that the music curriculum is broad and balanced. While standards could not be judged, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress in gaining musical knowledge and skills during their time at the school. They sing, perform and compose. Some pupils have tuition in playing musical instruments.
135. The range and quality of resources is good and has been improved to include keyboards. The curriculum has also improved so that a small number of older pupils are able to follow a GCSE course.
136. Standards were reported to be satisfactory at the last inspection and sound progress has been made in maintaining the profile of music. Responsibility for subject leadership has been allocated and standards are closely monitored by the management team.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

137. Standards attained in physical education are in line with the average for pupils' ages and this reflects good achievement and good overall progress over time. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and consistently good for pupils aged 11 to 14. Some pupils initially have little success or confidence in physical education but they respond well to the enthusiasm and dedication of the teacher. Athletics and

running are a particular strength, but there is also a wide range of other activities. These include football, cricket, basketball, swimming and archery. The pupils enjoy their lessons and the improvements they make.

138. Because the overall quality of teaching and learning is good, this promotes good achievement. However, when classes of different ages are combined and there is a large number of pupils of very mixed ability the quality of teaching and learning dips. All teaching and learning for single classes of pupils aged 11 to 14 is, however, good. No physical education lessons were taught to pupils aged 14 to 16 during the inspection. The teacher has good subject knowledge, high expectations and pupils rise to the challenges.
139. By the age of 11, pupils still find many aspects of physical education very demanding. In the one lesson seen with two groups of younger pupils, it was clear that they found teamwork difficult. Despite the organised teaching, the pupils were easily distracted. Appropriately the pupils are divided into four groups to develop their cricket skills. The teacher moved between the groups providing well informed coaching, but there continued to be discord between some pupils. Many pupils have yet to develop accurate throwing and catching skills, but the teacher clearly has ambition for them to progress. Pupils are successfully encouraged to describe ways of improving their skills. In well-constructed pupil profiles, good records indicate that some pupils are able to jump from the box with a straddle. They also show an increase in their level of fitness over six months and it is good personal development for them to be involved in their own evaluation. Some pupils make sufficient progress to represent the school at football.
140. By the age of 14, pupils have learned many new skills and are far more confident in their abilities. Teaching is good, as pupils understand the importance of warming up and cooling down routines. The teaching is brisk and provides challenge backed up by a good range of activities. This variety maintains a high level of interest and motivation from the pupils. Teaching effectively encourages pupils to make good progress in their ability to exchange a baton with speed and accuracy. The pupils are given clear instructions, which is a strength of the teaching. Pupils are fully aware of the teacher's expectations and this is checked by the teacher. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to contribute their own ideas. They have a growing confidence to suggest useful ideas to improve their performance, for example in techniques for throwing and catching a ball. Many of the pupils still find the activities a challenge but enthusiastic teaching, combined with good relationship, ensures that good progress is made. Girls are well integrated into the lessons. Pupils are able to work well as a team and encourage each other to develop their jumping skills. Teaching has a good balance between encouraging pupils' personal performance and promoting team work. Records, photographic evidence and discussions show that pupils make good progress by the age of 16. They have benefited from regular swimming with appropriate coaching and awards organised in the evening. All pupils are encouraged to take part in their inter house sports day at an appropriate level and, by the time pupils are 16, school records reflect good progress. The school has a strong tradition when competing in Midland and national independent schools' sports. The older pupils achieve particularly well in cross-country and athletics. There is also good achievement in other areas that require a good level of co-ordination, such as archery and skiing.
141. The management of the subject is effective. There is a basic subject policy with, in particular, appropriate reference to health and safety features that are a strength of

the teaching, for example in the use of the javelin. The pupil fitness profile for pupils aged 11 to 14 is well compiled and a good means of recording ongoing achievement. The opportunities for pupils to be involved in self-evaluation are particularly good. There are plans to extend this profile to older pupils. There is a subject development plan. For this to be more useful, more clarity about costings of developments and the criteria by which the success of planning may be judged should be included.

142. The school has a small hall, which is unsuitable for indoor games. The provision of a sports hall is identified as a priority by the school as this would significantly enhance the opportunities in physical education both in the daytime and extended curriculum. The improved outdoor facilities have received substantial investment. There is a well-drained football pitch, 5-a-side and all weather cricket strip. There is weekly use of a neighbouring swimming pool. Facilities for archery and horse riding help to provide a good selection of activities.
143. The subject is taught and managed by a teacher qualified in physical education. The timetabling of two younger groups for physical education requires further consideration, as they demand considerable time and attention. Resources are lacking to develop some areas of physical education, particularly gymnastics and field events in athletics.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

144. Pupils develop a very good awareness of Christianity and some knowledge of other world religions. The majority of this learning takes place as a result of the school's ethos, guided by centrally held Christian beliefs. Religious education is taught on a Saturday morning and consequently no lessons were seen during the inspection. No judgement can be made about the quality of teaching in this subject. Religious education was not included in the schedule for the last inspection and neither, therefore, can a judgement be made about the progress of this subject over time. Where judgements can be made they are based on pupils' work, video evidence, assemblies and discussions.
145. A video of religious education teaching in the school shows the teacher effectively extending the pupils' knowledge in Judaism. Pupils are clearly interested in the topic, asking and answering questions with confidence. Teaching demonstrates good subject knowledge which helps to promote the pupils' progress. There is little evidence of pupils' written work, some of which is unfinished, but a high priority is placed on the speaking and listening aspects of this subject.
146. Pupils aged up to 11 are given opportunities to consider aspects of faith and belief. For example, they use their imaginations to create their own versions of a "miracle". The outcomes show limited understanding of the place of the miraculous in Christianity or other world religions. The quality of work improves by the age of 14, however, and pupils produce some thoughtful work based on their own self-evaluation of their particular strengths. No work was made available from pupils aged fourteen to 16. The pupils' work is marked, but overall it reflects a lack of challenge in the subject. Daily acts of collective worship attended by all the pupils and staff provide a wealth of opportunities to extend effectively the pupil's knowledge and understanding of Christianity. There is also reference to other world religions, for example, Judaism in the 'parable of the prodigal son'. Pupils who are resident in the school on Sunday all attend a local church. They participate in a family service, which again boosts the religious education in the school. Confirmation classes are

given a high priority by the principal and he sees confirmation as an important part of the pupils' spiritual development.

147. The religious education department has good information provided in a detailed handbook for church schools located in the Lichfield Dioceses. The subject development plan prioritises the need to raise achievement in the subject. There is a well-considered commitment for pupils to study at least three of the world's major religions. The planned introduction of religious education at GCSE level is designed to raise the profile of the subject in the school. In the planning it is also recognised that the school needs to increase the provision of religious artefacts and books.