

INSPECTION REPORT

St Mary's (Day & Residential) School

LEA area: East Sussex

Reference Number: 114681

Headteacher: Mr David Bashford

Reporting inspector: Mrs Kathy Hooper

Dates of inspection: 29 November - 2 December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708337

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
Type of control:	Maintained
Age range of pupils:	11 to 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Horam Heathfield East Sussex TN21 0BT
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr John Clemence
Date of previous inspection:	9 – 13 October 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
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Susan Burgess, Lay		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Links with parents and the community
Ray Chandler	History Geography Religious education	Residential
Mary Cureton	English Art Equal opportunities	Curriculum and assessment
Mary Last	Science Information and communications technology Music Special educational needs	Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Efficiency
Tom Smith	Mathematics Physical education	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

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MAIN FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- In 60 per cent of lessons, the teaching was good, it was very good or excellent in 25 per cent of lessons.
- Pupils develop good attitudes to their work and their behaviour is good.
 - Relationships are very good and pupils' personal development is very good.
 - Provision for pupils' moral development underpins much of the work of the school.
 - Pupils' social development is reinforced very well in the school and the residential settings.
 - Pupils feel secure and valued because of the commitment of all adults and the good links between the teachers and the care staff.
 - Pupils are effectively helped to develop good social skills and behave appropriately
 - Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
 - The quality of residential care is very good and supports the pupils' progress well, for example, through homework and extra-curricular activities.
 - There are good links with parents and the local community.
 - The school is well led and managed.
 - The systems and procedures are efficient.
 - It gives good value for money.

WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- There are inadequate systems for regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching and the curriculum.
- I. Pupils' targets are insufficiently specific to be measured accurately.
 - II. The curriculum does not ensure that literacy and numeracy are reinforced sufficiently frequently.
 - III. There are gaps in continuity and coherence in the curriculum at Key Stage 4 and Post 16
 - IV. The length of the taught week is shorter than that recommended.
 - V. Baseline assessments do not allow pupils' progress to be securely measured.
 - VI. There is no clear programme for maintenance of the building.
 - VII. The school does not meet statutory requirements for teacher appraisal or in some details of its prospectus and annual report.
 - VIII. Attendance is unsatisfactory. A few pupils with long-standing problems of school refusal account for almost all the unauthorised absence.

This is a successful school and its strengths far outweigh its weaknesses.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The standard of teaching has improved and all subjects have a scheme of work, which reflects the National Curriculum and is used to guide teachers' planning. The leadership of subject co-ordinators has been developed. The curriculum has been mapped to ensure coverage in relation to the National Curriculum and to ensure continuity of pupils' experiences. An assessment policy has been developed which is comprehensive and generally informs teachers' planning. The school development planning has been improved and linked to available finance. Appraisal is not yet in place but there are meetings between the headteacher and individual members of staff. The head of care has instigated a system for the support and supervision of staff. Processes for monitoring and evaluating the school have been developed, but remain informal. The quality of the library has been improved. However, the school still does not have any formal, objective systems for monitoring the curriculum, teaching or pupils' progress. There are still some gaps in continuity in pupil's experiences at Key Stage 4 and Post 16 due to college links and work experience. Systems for the support and supervision of staff have not been made explicit. The school has a good capacity for future development.

· WHETHER PUPILS ARE MAKING ENOUGH PROGRESS

Progress in:	By 5	By 11	By 16	By 19	Key
Targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*			C	C	
English:					<i>very good</i> A
listening and speaking			C	C	<i>good</i> B
reading			C	C	<i>satisfactory</i> C
writing			C	C	<i>unsatisfactory</i> D
Mathematics			C	C	<i>poor</i> E
Science			B	B	
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)			B	B	

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

Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans. They make good progress in science, the resistant materials aspect of design and technology, history and geography at Key Stage 3, French, art, music and physical education. Pupils make satisfactory progress in English, mathematics, information and communications technology, history and geography at Key Stage 4 and religious education. Pupils make particularly good progress in Year 7 because they are well taught by the same teacher for most of their lessons. Pupils make good progress in attaining the behavioural and social targets set for them.

QUALITY OF TEACHING

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
11 - 16 years	Satisfactory	Science, resistant materials, art, music, physical education	
Post-16	Satisfactory		
English	Satisfactory	Speaking, listening and reading	

Mathematics	Satisfactory	Number	
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	Good		

Teaching overall is satisfactory. In sixty per cent of lessons it was good and in twenty five per cent of lessons it was very good or excellent. It was never less than satisfactory. Teaching is very good in Year 7. In lessons across the school, teaching was consistently good in science, French, resistant materials, art, music and physical education. In English, mathematics, information and communications technology it was satisfactory, but varied from very good to satisfactory depending on the teacher. In food, history, geography and religious education it was satisfactory but limited by staff absences and, in the case of history and geography at Key Stage 4, by lack of continuity caused by college links. The teaching of Post 16 students was satisfactory.

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

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good. The school operates as an orderly community. Swift and appropriate action is taken when there is inappropriate behaviour.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. A few pupils with long-standing problems of school refusal account for almost all the unauthorised absence.
Ethos*	Very good. There is a warm, supportive but lively atmosphere in which learning is valued.
Leadership and management	Good. The community is confident and cohesive and has made good progress since the previous inspection. Systems for monitoring and evaluating teaching, the curriculum and pupils' progress are insufficiently developed.
Curriculum	Satisfactory. There is a broad curriculum but there are gaps in terms of the pupils' targets for literacy and numeracy, coherence and continuity for Key Stage 4 pupils and Post 16 students and the length of the taught week is shorter than that recommended.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. It is central to the life of the school and is significant in raising the self-esteem of pupils as well as encouraging their personal development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory. Staffing is satisfactory although some teachers do not have initial qualifications in the subjects they teach. Accommodation is satisfactory. Improvements have been made but the fabric of the building is somewhat run-down and in need of maintenance. Learning resources are adequate.
Value for money	Good.

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

THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>IX. Their children enjoy the school.</p> <p>X. Children are encouraged to get involved in a wider range of activities than just their daily lessons.</p> <p>XI. They would find little difficulty in approaching the school with difficulties or problems.</p> <p>XII. It enables their children to achieve a good standard of work.</p> <p>XIII. The school encourages parents to play an active part in the school.</p> <p>XIV. It handles complaints from parents well.</p> <p>XV. They have a clear understanding of what is taught and keep them well informed about their child's progress.</p> <p>XVI. The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children.</p> <p>XVII. The school achieves high standards of good behaviour.</p> <p>XVIII. Parents are generally satisfied with the work done at home by their children.</p>	<p>XIX. One parent was unhappy about the work</p> <p>XX. One parent did not believe that the school</p>

Parents were overwhelmingly satisfied with the school. The inspection confirms their perceptions.

· **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

The governors and senior management team are already strongly committed to improving educational provision in the school. As part of this, they should work to:

- XXI. Ensure that pupils' literacy, numeracy and behavioural targets on their individual education plans are measurable and that they are explicitly addressed in lesson planning across the curriculum (paras 28, 32, 33, 34, 63, 95, 105);
- XXII. Modify the curriculum to:
 - ensure that pupils have daily experiences of literacy and numeracy to help them address their targets (paragraph 30);
 - ensure better continuity and coherence in Key Stage 4 and Post 16 (paras 33, 102, 121, 146);
 - extend the time available for lessons to that recommended (paras 30, 106);
- XXIII. Formally monitor the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that good practice is shared and standard of pupils' attainment continue to improve (paras 38, 52, 65, 66, 83, 127-131, 132-143, 120);
- XXIV. Review the standardised tests and systems for monitoring pupils' progress to ensure that there is clear evidence of the value the school has added to pupils' attainments from year to year (paras 30, 35, 40, 67, 107, 137, 141, 116);
- XXV. Work with the local education authority and the surveyors to establish a secure, long-term plan for the maintenance of the building in light of devolved funding (paras 75, 81);
- XXVI. Ensure that the school fully meets statutory requirements (paras 59, 78).

INTRODUCTION

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

1. St Mary's School is a mixed secondary school for 61 pupils with moderate learning difficulties and those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. All the pupils have a statement of special educational needs. It is a day and residential school for pupils aged 11 to 19 years of age. In line with other special schools, there are more boys than girls and, at the time of the inspection, there were 46 boys and 15 girls. It is maintained by East Sussex County Council. Pupils are drawn from all over the county and travel to the school by bus and taxi. Those pupils who are full-time boarders are picked up from home on Monday morning and returned on Friday afternoon.
2. A third of the pupils are entitled to free school meals and come from families that have low socio-economic circumstances. The majority of pupils use the residential facility either on a full-time or sleep-over basis depending on their needs. Most pupils go home at the weekends but those who could benefit from staying at school can do so on alternate weekends. There are five pupils who are over 16 and who stay in a hostel. The school has links with neighbouring colleges. No pupils are from ethnic minorities although five of the pupils are from traveller families.
3. The school aims to provide a family atmosphere through its organisation in order to stabilise pupils' emotional growth. The school seeks to encourage pupils to achieve their potential, particularly in the basic academic subjects, including their ability to communicate. It seeks to encourage pupils to become independent, responsible and useful members of society and to provide an extended curriculum that will allow pupils to make choices in their adult life.
4. The school's current priorities include continuing to develop the quality of teaching and learning, the introduction of target setting and the revision of initial assessments on pupils. It intends to develop a drugs education policy and provide restraint training for staff. With respect to childcare, priorities include upgrading the residential areas, bringing greater flexibility to childcare arrangements, and increasing pupils' access to weekend activities and further training for care staff in social care and information and communications technology.
- 4.

KEY INDICATORS

4.

4. Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	19.7
	National comparative	9
Unauthorised absence	School	10
	National comparative	11

4. Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	5
Permanent	1

4.

4. Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	24
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

4.

Attainment and progress

1. The school provides education for pupils who have emotional and behavioural and moderate learning difficulties. As a consequence, the majority of pupils have significant special educational needs. Many pupils have had disrupted patterns of education, some of which extend over a considerable period of time. Their attainment on entry to the school is well below the national expectations for their age.
2. As a consequence of their special educational needs, the attainments of many pupils are below age related norms. Comparisons will not normally be made with national expectations or averages, although this report will refer to what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about their progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews and individual education plans.
3. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in the targets set for them in their individual education plans. They make good progress in science, design and technology, especially resistant materials, history and geography at Key Stage 3, French, art, music and physical education. Pupils make satisfactory progress in English, mathematics, information and communications technology, history and geography at Key Stage 4 and religious education. Pupils make particularly good progress in Year 7 because they are well taught by the same teacher for most of their lessons. Pupils make good progress in attaining the behavioural and social targets set for them. Since the previous inspection, good standards have been maintained in design and technology, physical education and French, but not in information and communications technology. The variable standards reported in the previous report in geography, history, religious education and science have been improved.
4. In English, pupils' progress is satisfactory. Pupils make better progress in speaking, listening and reading than in writing. For example, by the end of Key Stage 4, pupils make short, formal speeches to the class on subjects such as racism. Older pupils write letters of application and compose curriculum vitae in preparation for life after school. However, the reading ability of Post 16 students does not fully support them during work experience. Pupils' progress across the school is limited by the variable quality of teaching.
5. In mathematics, pupils make satisfactory progress. They make good progress in Key Stage 3. For example, the majority of pupils confidently work out in their heads the change they would receive from one pound after making purchases. Their progress in Key Stage 4 is limited because, in Year 11, their work on ASDAN requires less challenge for the higher attaining pupils and consolidates much earlier learning. A further factor is the lack of time for the subject. Mathematics is not taught daily and, in Key Stage 4, some lesson time is taken to attend college.
6. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils develop their literacy in subjects across the curriculum. For example, through discussion in religious education and drama, they learn a good range of specialist vocabulary in design and technology, history, geography and science. Pupils' numeracy skills are developed through such subjects as design and technology, and geography. However, their progress is limited because specific literacy and numeracy targets for pupils are not made explicit in teachers' planning.

7. Pupils make good progress in science. Older pupils are confident and competent when setting up experiments and drawing conclusions. They make good progress because they are actively involved in investigations and their literacy and numeracy skills are reinforced, for example, through recording results using a computer.
8. Pupils make good progress in the resistant materials element of design and technology. They design and make a range of worthwhile products such as lights and clocks using different materials and processes. They work independently and safely to produce different outcomes. Pupils' progress in food studies is not so good and is only satisfactory because of the over-directive teaching methods employed.
9. Pupils make good progress in French, art, music, and physical education. Higher attaining older pupils ask and answer simple questions with a good French accent, understand the significant features of artists such as Van Gogh and Matisse, and are beginning to learn how to play the euphonium and the trumpet. In physical education, pupils develop skilful techniques, detailed knowledge of games and a mature approach to sports.
10. Pupils make satisfactory progress in history and geography. Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress, but that of Key Stage 4 pupils, whilst still satisfactory, is limited by staff changes and time missed through college links within the context of limited teaching hours during the week. Pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education. Their progress is limited by staff changes. Pupils make satisfactory progress in information technology but their progress is limited by the cross-curricular method of delivering the subject. In the previous inspection report, pupils made good progress in information technology, but at that time they benefited from discrete lessons in the subject.
11. There is no difference in the rate of progress in any subject of girls or traveller pupils. There is no objective monitoring of the progress of individuals or of different groups of pupils over time.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

12. Pupils generally show good attitudes to learning. Pupils show interest in their work, sustain their concentration in lessons and ignore any instances of disruptive behaviour. Pupils take pride in the presentation of their work, particularly that involving the use of information and communications technology. Pupils' attitudes to work and to each other are positive. There is no difference between the attitudes of boys and girls.
13. Pupils are supportive of each other when working in groups or pairs. For example, Year 11 pupils enjoyed preparing for a Christmas concert. Year 9 pupils collaborated well to classify various rainforest products, and Year 7 pupils co-operated fully with each other to practice basketball skills. All year groups have learned good sporting behaviour and enjoy extra-curricular game activities as well as their physical education lessons. On occasions, the special educational needs of some pupils' limit their concentration and focus and this has a detrimental effect on their attainment and progress.
14. Behaviour around the school is mostly good. Pupils are polite to visitors and staff and they respect both the fabric and the resources of the school. Pupils understand the school's systems of rewards and sanctions and feel they are fair. Occasionally, they submit written complaints to the head teacher for consideration.
15. There is generally a relaxed sense of order during break - times, at mealtimes and in the evenings. There is some sexual harassment, which is dealt with promptly and effectively. The rate of exclusions is satisfactory. Fixed-term exclusions have halved to five since the last inspection. There was one

permanent exclusion last year.

16. There are many examples of good relationships both between pupils and between pupils and teachers, and support and care staff. In all respects, a very good example is provided by staff. Older pupils help younger ones at mealtimes.
17. Pupils make very good progress in their personal development, particularly in acquiring the development of self-discipline. Pupils know and understand what is required of them and respond well to the school's routines and rules. The school's behaviour monitoring system allows them access to certain privileges. As pupils move through the school, they take increasing responsibility. Pupils and students form very positive relationships with care staff within the residential setting. Pupils work well together when preparing and serving meals. They organise themselves in class, participate with increasing confidence in residential routines and senior pupils walk in groups or pairs to the village.
18. Both pupils and parents value the flexible residential arrangements and the other wide range of evening and weekend activities on offer. Pupils' personal development is further enhanced by residential journeys. The opportunities provided for them to become increasingly independent and responsible help them to prepare effectively for the next stage of their life.

22. **Attendance**

19. Attendance, at 80.3 per cent, is unsatisfactory. A few pupils with long-standing problems of school refusal account for almost all of the unauthorised absence.
20. Registration does not comply with statutory regulations as it only takes place in the morning. Pupils are punctual to school and to lessons throughout the day.

24. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

24. **Teaching**

21. Teaching overall is satisfactory. In sixty per cent of lessons it was good and in twenty-four per cent of lessons it was very good or excellent. Teaching is very good in Year 7. In lessons across the school, teaching was consistently good in science, French, the resistant materials element of design and technology, art, music and physical education. In English, mathematics, information and communications technology it was satisfactory, but varied from very good to satisfactory depending on the teacher. In the food aspect of design and technology, history, geography and religious education it was satisfactory but limited by staff absences and, in the case of history and geography at Key Stage 4, by lack of continuity caused by college links. The teaching of Post 16 students was satisfactory. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection when it was unsatisfactory in a third of all lessons. Although there is still some variation in the teaching of English, mathematics and information and communications technology, teaching in history, geography, religious education, science and Post 16 has been much improved.
22. Teaching is very good in Year 7 because they have the same teacher for most of their lessons. Very good lessons throughout the school contained a range of significant features. In science, pupils were involved with exciting experiments that captured their imagination and led to them making rapid progress. In English, very skilful questioning resulted in pupils generating a vast amount of imaginative material. In mathematics and French, the work was enjoyable but very carefully targeted

at the needs of individual pupils. Very clear teaching strategies and excellent relationships with pupils in music prompted them to make very good progress because the teacher had such high levels of technical skills. High levels of specialist knowledge, attention to detail during teaching and regular reinforcement of the main points of lessons were good features of lessons in physical education. In art, the resistant materials aspect of design and technology and religious education, the work set was very challenging and pupils were able to be successful. For example, in religious education, pupils discussed racism and displayed high levels of understanding. In design and technology lessons using resistant materials, the teacher's strategies for helping pupils to explore design problems enables all of them to work independently and achieve different outcomes, for example clocks. The particularly successful lessons were delivered by enthusiasts and had been planned in detail so that all pupils' needs were met. Where pupils made the best progress, teachers had managed to engage the pupils in activities, which absorbed and motivated them and they systematically recorded the learning that had taken place.

23. A characteristic of good lessons is that pupils are helped to be successful and gain benefit from lessons, despite their low self-esteem. Pupils are treated with respect and lessons encourage a collaborative approach to learning between teachers and pupils. The purposes of the learning are well described so that pupils understand why they are doing the work. The support staff and the care staff ensure that learning is taking place. Support staff have very good strategies for working with individuals, both in terms of their learning and their behaviour, and were often highly successful in maintaining pupils' involvement with the task. Pupils who behave inappropriately because of their learning difficulties are helped by care and support staff to regain control and return to the lesson quickly. There is a very close partnership between all staff, which creates a supportive framework within which pupils feel secure.
24. There are several reasons why some lessons were satisfactory rather than very good. The resources were not well chosen for the purposes intended in English and there was a lack of focus in the teaching. In mathematics, there was a lack of clear structure, slow pace and no opportunity to reinforce learning, for example, at the end of the lesson. In food technology lessons, there was a lack of opportunities provided for pupils to take some responsibility for their own learning which resulted in a slow pace and lack of challenge. The development of the core skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communications technology are not made explicit in teachers' planning. In occasional lessons, the progress of the whole class is limited because the inappropriate behaviour of individual pupils is not sufficiently well handled by teachers. In some lessons, teachers talk for too long and pupils' motivation wanes, whilst in a few other lessons, the over use of worksheets reduces pupils' ability to develop other skills than those of comprehension. One or more of these features resulted in a lack of challenge for a few higher attaining pupils. Not all pupils are set homework, but where this is done, the pupils' progress is improved. Opportunities are missed to involve pupils in evaluating their own learning.
25. Overall, the teaching methods and organisation engage all pupils. Teachers' style, language and questioning in the classroom includes all pupils equally. Teachers' expectations of all pupils are consistent. Teachers choose resources carefully to reflect the sensitivities of both boys and girls. They take care to reflect pupils' backgrounds positively, so as not to demotivate them through offensive images or stereotypes. Teachers are effective in challenging stereotypes. Boys take part in dance, for example, and some girls play football. The school has reviewed some of its teaching arrangements recently in the light of monitoring, and girls are now able to take part in games separately from boys. Girls are also allowed to take part in all boys' games, except rugby. These changes are held to be beneficial to girls' self-confidence and physical development.

29. **The curriculum and assessment**

26. The curriculum, both of the school and in the residential setting, provides pupils with rich, relevant and broadly based education. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements including provision for sex and drugs education. Provision is not always well balanced and this limits the development of pupils' intellectual skills. The time allocation for all subjects is low because the school's teaching hours fall short of national recommendations. The time allowed for mathematics is inadequate at Key Stages 3 and 4 and that for geography and history is particularly low in Key Stage 4. The time allowed for science is very low in both key stages. This lack of time adversely affects progress. The curriculum does not allow mathematics and English to be taught daily, so that newly acquired skills can be forgotten between lessons. Not all pupils make the greatest progress in numeracy and literacy of which they are capable. There are no separate lessons to teach information and communications technology skills, so that all pupils do not always learn to work independently using information and communications technology.
27. The curriculum promotes all pupils' personal development very well. The high-quality residential provision allows pupils to learn to live harmoniously with others and good opportunities for outings and residential trips, sometimes abroad, consolidate and extend their skills. The provision of personal and social education in the curriculum in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is not clearly linked to health education or to residential experiences. Physical development is well promoted. Besides formal lessons, care staff provide a high standard of informal educational advice on an individual basis and give group support as required on developing personal skills. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to improve their fitness. Post 16 students are given greater levels of responsibility including involvement in budgeting, housekeeping and decorating.
28. The curriculum in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. It is organised effectively as a mixture of class teaching, setting and subject specialist teaching. This is carefully monitored for content, and all pupils are seen to receive their entitlement to all the subjects of the National Curriculum. The monitoring of pupils' learning is, however, less secure. The literacy targets in pupils' individual education plans are insufficiently used in the planning of lessons.
29. The curriculum in Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. The externally validated ASDAN course provides a good framework for the older pupils to learn National Curriculum subjects. Provision has a strong and valuable social and vocational bias including work experience and college link courses. Planning for these is weak. They do not always fit in well with the school curriculum and are not clearly linked to pupils' targets. Literacy targets do not receive sufficient emphasis. Pupils are, however, well prepared for the next stage of training or employment.
30. Post 16, the curriculum specifically and successfully addresses students' personal development. The support, encouragement and curricular opportunities provided for the students results in a varied timetable which is appropriate to their interests and prepares them for the next stage of their lives after school. A major focus of the curriculum is long-term work experience for two days each week. However, the majority of students still experience difficulties with literacy and numeracy and the school has yet to identify specific targets for these subjects. Consequently, there are no clear steps for learning which are specifically addressed and monitored, both in the school and in the hostel. The value of work experience is limited, therefore, because it is not explicitly linked to lessons in school or to specific literacy and numeracy targets for students. The curriculum for Post 16 students is further limited because there are no college links for them.

31. Although the school meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum, there is not enough time for pupils to cover history and geography in appropriate depth in Key Stage 4 or to cover mathematics in sufficient depth in Year 11. The curriculum provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils except several of the highest ability pupils. Staff are aware of the cultural background of the traveller children who attend the school. The school does not monitor the progress of the traveller pupils, nor of boys and girls separately to ensure for itself that they are making appropriate progress.
32. Extra-curricular provision is very good both within the school curriculum and in its residential setting. The academic curriculum is supported by visits to galleries and museums. Pupils visited the Imperial War Museum immediately prior to the inspection and this helped pupils to make progress in their history lessons. Evening and weekend activities include swimming, arts and crafts, sports activities and games, walking, cycling, roller-skating, snooker, pool and badminton. Provision for competitive games is very good. There is a bi-annual camp and other opportunities for residential experience, some of them abroad.
33. Careers education is very good. Arrangements are made for the pupils to attend a careers day in Year 9 in which they receive information and are encouraged to make decisions about the future. Pupils receive further specialist careers advice in Year 10. All have careers interviews and action plans are developed for each pupil. These are carefully monitored and form a firm and helpful basis for transitional reviews. There are good opportunities in Key Stage 4 for all pupils to practise interviews, write curriculum vitae and develop the skills of working together. Work experience is a strong feature of the successful careers provision in both key stages and in post 16. Pupils' destinations after school are carefully monitored, so that the school knows that all the pupils who left the school last year are at work or in further training.
34. Since the last inspection, the school has been successful in mapping the total curricular experiences of individual pupils. Despite some deficiencies, planning for progression and continuity is now satisfactory overall. There are now schemes of work for all subjects. These provide sufficient detail to guide teachers' planning in history, geography, design and technology, French and science, but require further development in mathematics, English, information and communications technology and food technology. A start has been made on the monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum. Pupils encounter increasing challenge as they progress through the school, but the level of challenge for the highest attaining pupils is sometimes insufficient. There are still no formal procedures to identify and support those pupils for whom General Certificate of Secondary Education study may be appropriate. The governors are now more fully involved in curriculum matters. A start has been made on developing the roles of subject co-ordinators. However, the lack of emphasis on monitoring and evaluating and the lack of opportunities to work with mainstream colleagues limit their effectiveness.
35. Assessment is broadly satisfactory. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in all subjects, except information and communications technology. Marking is carefully undertaken and teachers talk to the pupils about their work and tell them how it can be improved. Pupils' work is levelled according to the requirements of the National Curriculum. Moderation of these levels is satisfactory. There is some use of self-evaluation. Teachers use assessment information effectively to help their curriculum planning in science, English, mathematics, history and geography but not in French and food technology. Individual education plans are in place. However, targets for literacy and numeracy are not specific enough to enable them to be effectively and usefully monitored, in the short term. In some subjects, teachers do not take these targets sufficiently into account when planning work. Pupils do not always know their academic targets, although they know their social and behavioural targets. ASDAN assessment is reliably administered at Key Stage 4.

36. The school keeps comprehensive and useful records of pupils, but the quality of baseline assessment does not yet allow them to monitor progress to show what value the school has added to pupils' attainment. Reports do not yet conform to national guidance, which requires them to reflect closely the level descriptions of the National Curriculum and give parents a clear picture of pupils' strengths and weaknesses in each subject.

37. Since the last inspection, there has been clear improvement. Individual education plans are now in place. A satisfactory level of attention is now given to assessment in Key Stage 3. A whole school assessment policy has been developed, but systematic recording of progress has still to be developed.

41. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

38. Overall, the school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is central to the life of the school and is significant in raising the self-esteem of pupils as well as encouraging their personal development.

39. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Within the curriculum as well as assemblies pupils are taught to recognise the spiritual dimension of their personality. Assemblies are the weakest link within the provision. Although they fulfil requirements as an act of collective worship, they are very functional events and do not require pupils to consider or reflect on their content. Religious education lessons require pupils to learn about religion rather than appreciate the benefits of their spiritual development. In other areas of the curriculum, such as English, pupils have considered the work of war poets and through these have gained an understanding of the thoughts and feelings of people at war. Science studies accentuate the sense of wonderment as substances change their form within experiments. At a personal level, however, pupils are consistently reminded of their feelings and consideration towards others. Teachers and other adults within the school value the contributions which pupils make and use these to raise their self-esteem. Within the residences, the spiritual nature of pupils' characters is carefully nurtured, resulting in a significant majority of pupils who respond with great consideration to others.

40. Moral provision is very good and underpins much of the work of the school. In both learning and play pupils are required to foster positive moral outlooks. In geography, for example, in their study of the rainforests of South America, pupils learned not only the facts of what is happening within the region but also considered the morality of large industrial conglomerates displacing the indigenous population. Within physical education, moral values are consistently fostered in regard to the keeping of rules. Older pupils particularly recognise that rules ensure games take place within an atmosphere of calm and order, provided everyone keeps to the rules. Within personal, social and moral education lessons, older pupils consider issues, such as abortion. It is a particular strength of the school that pupils understand the differences between right and wrong. Policies, such as that for behaviour management, are consistently applied to ensure that pupils fully understand why they should choose to do the right thing. In discussion, pupils indicate that they do this because they wish to rather than because of any consequence. This is especially so of older pupils.

41. The school is very good at providing effective opportunities for pupils' social development. Numerous occasions are used, both within the school and residences, to ensure that pupils are exposed to a range of social experiences that enable them to grow up as well balanced individuals. At a basic level, pupils collaborate on tasks within lessons. In the residences, pupils carry out jobs, which benefit the whole community such as setting tables for meals or delivering laundry. Activity weeks, held on an annual basis, provide very good opportunities for pupils to visit places, such as the Bluebell Railway, or take

part in sailing courses. Routine activities, such as the Monday evening football club, provide good opportunities for pupils to experience the advantages of working together as a team. During the week of inspection, all except four pupils took part in a thoroughly enjoyable evening provided by visiting table tennis coaches. The high level of enthusiasm and co-operation involved in this was remarkable. Within the curriculum, older pupils benefit from the practical nature of courses, where they are provided with skills they will need on leaving school.

42. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Through their studies, for example in geography, other civilisations are considered. Among the most notable of these studies are those relating to Greek as well as Kenyan culture. Year 7 pupils made good use of these in recognising the patterns within Kenyan art. Following the week of inspection, a day visit to France had been planned for Post 16 students, which would allow them to experience at first hand the different language and culture of the French people. Visits to museums, galleries and places of interest are an integral part of the curriculum. When studying the Second World War, pupils made a visit to the London War Museum, where they saw at first hand original artefacts about which they had previously read and studied.
43. Since the last inspection, improvements have been made so that the curriculum now includes a greater awareness of this aspect of pupils' development. Although assemblies fulfil statutory requirements, opportunities are missed to enhance pupils' understanding of the Christian dimension of their inheritance.

47. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

44. Provision for support, guidance and pupils' welfare is very good and the school's aims are met in policy and practice, as was the case at the time of the previous inspection. The very good progress pupils make in their personal development is a strength of the school's work. The school strongly promotes the welfare of traveller children. The positive and professional way in which staff recognise, support and respond to the medical, emotional and behavioural needs of all its pupils is a major strength. Because of this support, pupils feel highly valued. They know how to voice their opinions and are knowledgeable about whom they should speak to if they experience problems. The very good standards of care that pupils receive from all staff are fundamental to the work of the school and their resulting self-confidence is instrumental in developing their independence skills. The pupils' growing maturity and sense of responsibility is illustrated by their ability to hold down work experience placements some of which have led to employment upon leaving school. Currently one student is undertaking work experience at a nearby care home where she has recently taken responsibility for giving lunch to one elderly resident who cannot feed himself. She is rightfully proud of this responsibility and carries it out diligently.
45. Liaison between teaching and care staff is very good and staff work very well together providing good role models for both boys and girls. Together they organise a range of evening and weekend activities, which are enjoyable and encourage teamwork and co-operation between groups of pupils. The school is able to offer flexible access to the boarding facilities, which include exciting evening activities. Pupils are enthusiastic in their praise of residential provision and identify it as the best thing about the school. The residential facility provides a very supportive and caring environment. Each pupil has a key worker. Care staff have very good knowledge of individual pupil's needs. Pupils' dignity is preserved at all times. Pupils are encouraged to take a pride in their personal and shared facilities. Individual social plans are not specific enough or sufficiently reinforced through systems and procedures. Key workers' records lack detail, are not obviously monitored and do not relate clearly to targets for pupils.

46. Pupils identified their relationships with staff as well as the quality of the school food as strengths. Staff are generous with their time to help out with extra evening and weekend activities, even when they are not officially on duty. Homework is strongly encouraged in the boarding accommodation.
47. Since the last inspection, arrangements for developing pupils' independence and self-help skills have been extended. For example, pupils are now able to prepare their own breakfasts in the newly adapted kitchens areas. This arrangement is greatly valued by the pupils, as they are able and willing to develop their food technology and life skills. Residential accommodation for post 16 students is now available to both girls and boys. Pupils are encouraged to take a pride in their personal and shared facilities in the residential setting.
48. The school monitors pupils' behaviour and personal development very well. A detailed yet flexible computerised system records rewards gained by pupils. The system is understood by the pupils and they value the outcomes. They understand the fairness of detentions and other sanctions, even though many named them as their least favourite aspect of school life. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress is less well organised and educational targets on some individual educational plans are not sufficiently focused to be helpful in lessons or to inform adults, including care staff of pupils' progress in, for example, literacy. Pupils value the certificates they are awarded for achievement and effort and carefully include them in their Record of Achievement portfolios. Although bullying is not an issue in the school, pupils acknowledge that there is sometimes friction between them. However, there is an established system for complaints which pupils confirmed was effective by citing several examples of positive outcomes.
49. Attendance is well monitored at a whole-school level but registers are only completed once a day; this practice is unsatisfactory, as the school is not consistently able to identify which pupils are actually present after lunch. Child protection procedures are based upon a very good policy. They are understood by all staff and ongoing training is planned regularly. This represents good progress since the last inspection. Procedures for ensuring health and safety are good
50. The school is very successful in creating a harmonious environment for work and relaxation. It is valued by pupils, staff and parents. Pupils feel valued as young adults and are able to grow in confidence, self-esteem, self-discipline and ability as a result of the very good relationships and support they receive. Because there are more boys in the school than girls, boys dominate the playground for games, but good opportunities to join organised activities enable all pupils to enjoy the play area unhindered.
51. Careers guidance supports the pupils in considering an appropriate range of opportunities for both boys and girls. Gender issues are considered when preparing for pupils' work experience and following it up.

Partnership with parents and the community

52. Information for parents is good. There is frequent telephone contact and regular newsletters. Care staff maintain very good informal contacts with parents through the key workers. A full range of information is available during the annual review meeting and parents are fully involved. Annual reports in the summer term are clearly written and contain targets for the future. Although they do not always give a clear picture of the progress pupils have made in terms of their knowledge, skills and understanding, there is a consultation evening with teachers and care staff in the autumn term to discuss them. Approximately half of the parents attend the meeting. Some parents at the pre-inspection meeting said that they would welcome more frequent up-dates on their child's academic

progress, possibly through the home-school diary. Those parents who were present also said that they would like their children to have more homework.

53. Although transport problems limit parents' ability to become involved in the school life, parents support the school by attending events such as sports fixtures and the very successful summer fair. The proceeds from the fair are put into the school fund. Some parents help with reading at home and work closely with care staff on agreed strategies for managing challenging behaviour. The parents of traveller children are involved in a positive relationship with school. The school has established a useful partnership with the Travellers' Education Service and has accepted a shared approach to policy and practice in its use of support. Both the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents have a few omissions and do not fully meet statutory requirements. The prospectus and governors' annual report does not give details of the numbers of day pupils or attendance rates. The prospectus contains no summary of the school's policy for special educational needs. The governors' annual report gives no details of the staff training.
54. The school makes very good use of its location to support the curriculum and to provide leisure outings for residential pupils. Evening activities include walks to local shops, sports fixtures, swimming and trips to the cinema. At the weekends, pupils have enjoyed outing to, for example, Brands Hatch, Seven Sisters Country Park, London Zoo, the Thames Barrier and Gatwick Airport.
55. There are good links with neighbouring schools. Those pupils deemed able attend lessons and take external examinations at a local secondary school. At the time of the inspection, there were no such links. The headteacher is a mentor for local headteachers of special schools.
56. Educational trips are arranged to a wide range of destinations such as Dover Castle, Tangmere Aviation Museum and the Natural History Museum. Each year, there is a very successful Activity Week and there are residential trips to France, Youth hostelling in Derbyshire and camping on the Kent coast. These experiences are valuable in promoting pupils' personal and social development and for extending their awareness of the wider community. There are well-established links with Eastbourne and Lewes Colleges and with local businesses through work experience placements for older pupils.

60. **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

Leadership and management

57. There is good leadership of the school. The headteacher is very well respected within the school, by parents and within the local education authority. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher and head of care. Since the last inspection, good leadership and management have been maintained. All subjects now have a scheme of work that reflects the National Curriculum and an assessment scheme has been successfully introduced. Unsatisfactory teaching has been addressed and, during this inspection, there was no unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils make sound progress in their lessons and very good progress in their personal and social development. However, targets for literacy, numeracy and behaviour are insufficiently well defined to be accurately measured. Subject co-ordinators take responsibility for their subjects well, although the lack of monitoring leads to some variation in pupils' progress, for example in English, mathematics and information and communications technology. The governors are supportive, involved in whole-school planning and are developing effective strategies for holding the school to account. They fulfil their responsibilities through an appropriate range of committees.

58. Teaching and curriculum development are well supported. The senior management team has a clear general oversight of developments and pupils' progress and welfare because the communications within the school are very good. The introduction of curriculum meetings encourages a collaborative approach to curriculum planning. The appointment of a new head of the care staff has led to the development of systems for the support and supervision of the care staff. Care staff work closely with teaching staff for the benefit of pupils. The staff are mutually supportive and the well being of pupils is paramount. However, the lack of explicit evaluation of developments against clearly identified criteria limits pupils' progress. Management of the residential facility is fully integrated within the school's overall management structure with strong support from the governing body. The care staff are well led.
59. The school's aims, values and policies are well reflected throughout the school. The raising of pupils' performance, aspirations and self-esteem is central to the aims of the school. Pupils are treated with respect, their dignity is preserved and they make clear gains in their self-esteem. However, there is a lack of consistency in teaching some subjects which has not been addressed and this limits the pupils' ability to reach their potential. Although the school is aware of the needs of different pupils it does not monitor their performance in a systematic way.
60. Whole-school development planning is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. The plan identifies appropriate priorities. There is a clear programme of action and resources are targeted. All staff and governors are involved in the process of development planning. Departments have plans, but the lack of a clearly defined system for monitoring and evaluation limit their focus and the school's ability to measure its own progress. The need for more stringent monitoring and evaluation was highlighted in the previous report.
61. Governors are increasingly aware of the need to monitor value for money. For example, they visit to see for themselves the impact of decisions, maintain an overview of exclusions, truancy and complaints and look for efficiency in services such as water and heating. However, they have no overview of pupils' progress in learning.
62. The school affirms and supports cultural, religious and social diversity and successfully promotes good personal and community relations. The school has a very positive ethos. The school has made good gains since the last inspection and has a good capacity to improve.
63. The school does not comply with its statutory responsibilities in some details contained in its prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents or in the provision of appraisal for staff. The length of the school's taught week falls well below the government's recommendations.
67. **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**
64. The experience, expertise and qualifications which staff jointly hold enable full provision of both the academic and residential curriculum. Teachers, learning support assistants and care staff have clear understandings of the nature and role of their jobs and they carry out these effectively. In the main, teachers fulfil their main subject responsibilities from the point of considerable experience or qualification. Concerns in this regard only arise where teachers do not teach the subject of their initial qualification and are called upon to supplement areas such as mathematics and English. The school and residences are adequately staffed in terms of number. Although not holding a formal qualification in residential care, the Head of Care has considerable allied experience, which enables him to perform his duty fully and effectively. Specialist staff, such as educational psychologists or medical, are retained by the school to provide such services when required.

65. Job descriptions are in place for all staff and these are both reasonable and achievable. It is a requirement of a co-ordinator's job description that they monitor progress of pupils but not the standards of teaching within their subject. While this does not affect pupils' progress in most subjects where individual teachers are the sole providers, several teachers teach subjects such as English, mathematics and information and communications technology. These co-ordinators, therefore, are unaware of the means and methods of teaching within their subject and its consequent effect on progress.
66. The provision of staff within the residences is adequate in number, although periods of absence by any individual causes a knock-on effect in terms of the cover that can be provided. Care staff have satisfactory access to appropriate training, provided either by the school, the authority or national bodies, such as the Open University. There are close links between care and teaching staff that are further enhanced through the requirement of teachers to fulfil extraneous duties. In this way the output of care for pupils becomes seamless.
67. Learning support and administrative staff provide a good level of service to support the essential work of the school. Support assistants are effective in their roles supporting the learning of both individuals and groups. When they are fully included in the teachers' planning, their contribution to the development and progress of pupils is significant. Administrative staff provide a full and very effective support that enables the senior management to be kept well informed about issues, such as budget.
68. Beneficial work has been done to increase the coherence of arrangements for professional development and the planning of training that meets whole-school priorities. Current arrangements are satisfactory, although training opportunities for care and learning support staff require more in depth provision. Training of staff occupies a firm place within the school development plan. However, projected spending is insufficient to meet all of these needs.
69. Although a formal system of appraisal is not in operation, professional discussions are held with teaching staff. When judged against the improvements in overall teaching standards this is an effective strategy. Firm plans are in place to give care staff supervision interviews at which professional issues can be discussed and monitoring takes place. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of this approach.
70. The accommodation is generally satisfactory and supports the work of both teachers and care staff. Externally there are painted areas, such as soffits and fascias, which are in need of maintenance. A boarded-up window to the Year 7 classroom needs attention. When viewed from the exterior, the run down impression belies the warm and lively atmosphere that the staff have generated on the inside. Some classrooms are too small, creating cramped working conditions, especially for older pupils. Rooms, such as the science laboratory, as well as being a form room serve a dual purpose supporting not only science but also information technology. While none of this inhibits the curriculum taught by the school, it does affect the quality of what is offered, in that teaching methods are dictated by the space available. In contrast, the generous space available to Year 7 pupils enables them to work independently or in groups, as well as offering additional space for work related to information technology.
71. The residences enjoy a better level of comfort and space. As a result of the effort by many of the staff, assisted by older pupils, these are gradually being redecorated. The result is a bright and welcoming environment fully appreciated by pupils. The provision of new kitchen facilities enhances the opportunities for pupils to extend their personal living skills. Bed-spaces are clearly defined, even

within rooms accommodating up to four pupils. The degree to which a pupil decorates his or her own space varies according to their interests. In general, more girls than boys show an inclination to do this. All pupils are allocated a personal lockable locker for valuable or treasured items, although the lockers are not necessarily located in the residential area. While staff are willing to hold such items on behalf of pupils, it is unsatisfactory that pupils do not have full control over this arrangement.

72. Some areas for specialist activity have been improved since the last inspection. The science accommodation, described as poor, has been substantially up-graded and the school can now offer the full range of learning in this subject. However, there is no fume cupboard. Improvements have been made to the art room, enhancing the range of work that can now be offered. Furniture within the residences has been improved and there are plans to continue renewal and refurbishment.
73. There are two separate rooms accommodating library facilities, one for senior pupils and another for junior pupils. Together they fully provide the range of books that supports the demands of the curriculum. However, the larger of these is consistently locked, thus depriving pupils of the opportunity for private or independent study.
74. Resources in terms of quality and sufficiency were described within the last report as varied. Improvements have been made in the intervening time and the current situation is satisfactory overall. The school library stock fully supports the curriculum; however, the quality and range of books within the residences do not invite pupils to extend their reading ability during their leisure time.
75. All subjects have at least sufficient resources and there is enough emphasis within the school budget for replacement and replenishment. Generally, the quality of resources is satisfactory and they are used effectively by all staff to enhance or extend the curriculum. The range of information and communication technology is good, both within the school as well as the residences. Pupils have good access to resources within the community, such as swimming pools and sports clubs. Through these activities, pupils are encouraged in their personal and social development.
76. Since the last inspection, improvements have been made to accommodation, such as the art room and science laboratory. Other specialist areas such as design and technology and the soft play facility continue to be used effectively to the benefit of pupils' learning. Facilities for physical education have been further extended through provision of equipment such as a rowing machine and treadmill. Incorporating as they do a means of electronic recording, they are used very effectively to promote pupils' levels of fitness and competition. The school makes satisfactory use of the extensive grounds either for sport or environmental study. The unsatisfactory levels of maintenance over a sustained period mean that the school has several outstanding problems concerning the accommodation.

80. **The efficiency of the school**

1. The efficiency with which the school is run is very good. The headteacher and governing body have very effective financial procedures, which ensure that all moneys accruing to the school are used to support pupils' learning, progress and the residential provision. For example, provision within the residence has recently been enhanced to include facilities for pupils to prepare their own breakfasts thus providing opportunities for them to develop their social and life skills.
2. The strategic plan requires that subject development plans are clearly linked to it and that, in turn, spending reflects the priorities thereby identified. This places appropriate responsibility upon teachers to prioritise their spending and to ensure that their budget allocation supports teaching and learning. The effect of such spending on pupils' progress is not yet formally evaluated. However, the governors

pay informal visits to classes and both the governors and the headteacher regularly see that new equipment and resources are in use. These visits also enable governors to gain a clear picture of work in classrooms and to discuss with staff issues of current importance or concern.

3. The school makes good use of its staff. There are sufficiently qualified and experienced teachers to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum. Support assistants play an efficient and effective role in supporting both teachers and pupils. They work co-operatively with teachers and enjoy good relationships with the pupils. They regularly work alongside pupils helping them with learning or behaviour problems. Care staff provide very good quality support for pupils and are keen to continue their training and develop their skills. The work of all adults in the school has a positive impact upon pupils' progress and their enjoyment of learning. The accommodation is well used although there is no specialist room for music and performing arts.
4. Financial controls and the administration of the school are excellent. The school has excellent, secure systems for monitoring the budget and all accounts are up to date. The financial secretary is very skilled in the use of the computer management system and produces regular statements for the headteacher and governors that enable them to check that their spending is on target. The school fund and petty cash accounts are well documented and separately audited. Auditors' recommendations have been satisfactorily addressed.
5. Given the satisfactory and often good teaching, the satisfactory progress made by the pupils over time and in lessons and their very good progress in personal development, the flexible and beneficial residential provision and the efficient use made of buildings and resources, the school provides good value for money.

86. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

86. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

1. Pupils' progress is satisfactory at both key stages and Post 16. In Year 7, it is good. Pupils' progress in speaking, listening and reading is better than that of writing. By the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils are able to tell each other their weekend news clearly and coherently but the speech of some is hesitant and unclear. Pupils listen carefully to what the others have to say. Pupils did particularly well in the Year 7 lesson when they listened carefully and successfully identified a series of recorded sounds including that of a rocket taking off. They described the rocket of their imagination in simple but vivid terms. All pupils listen carefully when stories are read to them. By the end of the key stage, pupils like to look at books. They make satisfactory progress in their reading schemes. A few higher achievers do well and progress to reading age-appropriate leisure fiction independently. However, pupils do not always understand fully what they read. Some are able to look up words in the dictionary and find information from CD-ROMs. One or two higher attaining pupils understand that a reference book has an index and use this effectively to find the information they need. Pupils can write very simple narrative by the end of the key stage, using full stops and capital letters correctly. The higher attaining pupils understand that paragraphs are a useful focus for the writer and helpful to the reader and are able to include them in their work. Pupils are helped to key in and re-draft their work using information and communications technology. Pupils' personal diaries are good.
2. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils listen carefully to the teacher and to each other. The majority collaborate effectively. For example, pupils discussed in some detail how to plan a Christmas party, although they needed some help to focus their work. In a lesson of English literature, pupils listened to a tape of "A Christmas Carol" and answered questions on the plot. One boy made the connection between Bob Cratchet's situation and Dickens' early life. Pupils make short formal speeches to the class on issues such as racism. They have good opportunities to practise work experience interviews, and thus communicate effectively in a setting other than the school. Pupils are interested in books and most read simple age-appropriate fiction. By the end of the key stage, pupils look up the spelling of words more effectively. They consult reference books and CD-ROMs confidently. Higher attaining pupils understand how the school library is arranged, and rapidly select the book they require. Pupils write letters of application and curriculum vitae to help them to find work or a college place after school. After much help and careful re-drafting, these are substantially correct. Pupils write diaries, and accounts of trips and visits. Some have written short biographies of famous people. Writing is more extended by the end of this key stage and pupils write dialogue correctly with help. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils made notes to help them plan a party. They wrote letters to arrange its location and coped well with menus and the requirements of labelling.
3. Post 16, students speak up to be heard in lessons, listen carefully, comment appropriately and ask and answer questions confidently. Students still find reading difficult and read very little for pleasure. During a classroom lesson, they read "Take One Home for the Kiddies" by Philip Larkin and were able to comment on what it had to say. Pupils' reading ability does not fully support them during their work experience placements. They write simply to describe their situation and experience. They fill in forms adequately, sometimes requiring help for this. They understand and use word processing but need help to ensure the accuracy of what they write.
4. Speaking and listening skills, however, improve through the key stages. There are opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in physical education as they work out tactics for games. In mathematics,

pupils are encouraged to describe geometric figures. In history, pupils use specific vocabulary to describe what happened in World War Two. In religious education, pupils have excellent opportunities for extended discussion on such subjects as racism, where they are able to identify racist attitudes. In English, pupils have collaborated to plan a Christmas party. In design and technology, history, geography and science, they learn to use specialist words correctly. Sometimes, however, pupils' oral skills are not sufficient to explain what they have seen, for example, in science, where they were unable to describe an experiment. Drama makes a strong contribution to pupils' speaking and listening skills.

5. Pupils' reading skills improve through the key stages. At Key Stages 3, 4 and Post 16, they read very simple texts for pleasure and information. They have opportunities in history to interpret source materials such as marriage and death certificates. In geography, pupils interpret graphs. In English they use an index confidently, and know where a book is shelved in the library. They obtain information from CD ROMs with increasing competence.
6. Pupils write in a range of styles and for real purposes. Work improves as they go through the school. With help, they re-draft their work so that it is substantially correct. Presentation improves when information and communications technology is used.
7. Extra-curricular drama, particularly the bi-annual performance, contributes effectively to pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils have good opportunities for discussion in religious education, personal, social and health education. Pupils' reading and writing skills are promoted across a range of subjects in which technical vocabulary receives good emphasis.
8. Responses by pupils to the lessons are good. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm in all aspects of their work except in the re-drafting of their written work to the required level of correctness. They are conscientious, however, persist doggedly and are ultimately successful in this task. Pupils sustain concentration well, especially when a lesson catches their interest and imagination. In a Year 11 lesson, for example, pupils showed good powers of concentration, they developed their capacity for personal study through their own research using reference books and CD ROMs. Behaviour is very good. Relationships are usually amiable. Where they are not, differences are rapidly resolved. Although pupils require supervision in order to collaborate effectively, they are always willing to do so.
9. Pupils are well taught. All lessons seen were satisfactory and a third of them were good or better. Teachers usually have a good level of knowledge. Although lessons are not planned to take account of the full variation of prior knowledge of the class, withdrawal lessons and extension work for the most able provide a good match of task to ability. Lessons also provide pupils with the high level of individual support necessary for them to make progress. Classes are well managed and there is no wasted time. In a few lessons, teachers used imaginative strategies. For example, each child prepared a box of articles to illustrate their lives in a lesson in Year 9, and were motivated by the contents of others' boxes to speak and write about their own. Questioning in the classroom is often of a very high standard. In a lesson in Year 7, a superb level of questioning elicited from the pupils a vast amount of imaginative material. In some of the less successful, but satisfactory, lessons, resources were poorly chosen. In others, basic skills were not specifically addressed.
10. Standards in reading are well supported by a good withdrawal programme in which diagnosis is good and progress is effectively measured. Resources for reading are good and fully enhance provision. Co-ordination is satisfactory, but the time allowed for it is too small to develop the subject through monitoring of teaching.

11. Since the last inspection, the book stock has been improved and reading is now well taught. Tasks and resources are better matched to pupils' ages and abilities. National Curriculum levels are more carefully moderated. English literature and media studies are now taught within the curriculum, and pupils are exposed to such writers as Sassoon, Dickens and Larkin. The handbook, however, does not contain sufficient curricular detail or advice to staff.
12. There is no systematic promotion of pupils' literacy across the curriculum. The school has no policy to ensure that teachers reinforce these skills using the same approach. Although pupils make satisfactory improvement as they go through the school, their lack of literacy skills at times hinders their access to the curriculum.

92. Mathematics

13. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils at Key Stage 3 make good progress. At Key Stage 4, pupils generally make satisfactory progress, but for older pupils within this key stage much of the work they do is a consolidation of previously learned skills. For them progress is unsatisfactory.
14. With the exception of Years 7 and 11, pupils are grouped according to their previous attainment. Year 7, new to the school, is taught by their class teacher. Year 11 is also taught as a class as they follow the requirements of the ASDAN course.
15. At Key Stage 3, the majority of pupils are competent in working out number bonds up to twenty, with some of the higher attaining pupils going beyond this number. These latter pupils count confidently up to 100. Pupils tell the time in both analogue and digital forms and use these within appropriate contexts. Younger pupils within the key stage are less confident in the use of number and rely heavily on building blocks to aid their computation skills. All, except lower attaining pupils, confidently use their mental skills to work out the change they should receive when making purchases of less than one pound.
16. At Key Stage 4, pupils use the skills they have previously learned in adding two digit numbers, in subtraction of three digit numbers and use appropriate units of measurement when working out the floor area according to given dimensions. The rate of progress at Key Stage 4 slows as pupils' effort is channelled to the use of mathematical skill within courses relating to ASDAN. Within this course, pupils indicate confidence in using catalogues to research value-for-money prices, as well as the calculation of interest payments of goods bought through this means. Although pupils are taught to use cheques, they are less certain about the interpretation of information contained in exemplar bank statements. Progress slows because much of the work involves consolidation of previously learned skills and work is based substantially on the Key Stage 3 programme of study. Within the key stage, progress remains satisfactory within Year 10. Progress is further affected for Year 11 pupils because of the requirement to attend a local college course for a total of sixteen weeks. In effect, this denies these pupils up to one third of available mathematics time while the college course is in progress.
17. Pupils' attitudes to lessons are very good at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at Key Stage 4. Although younger pupils at Key Stage 3 are somewhat slow to settle to their lessons, they are very eager to answer questions put by the teacher. They listen attentively, with the result that they fully understand the nature of the task expected of them. Consequently, the level of concentration they show is good. When given a specific task, these pupils invariably focus well on this objective. They work effectively within groups when led by the teacher or support assistant. As yet they have not mastered the skill of independent study. Older pupils within the key stage also indicate good attitudes to the subject. They

take a full part in general class discussion and respect the contributions made by others. Behaviour is good overall, with only minor incidences of distractive conduct.

18. At Key Stage 4, attitudes to lessons are more variable. Within the structure provided by the attainment groups, pupils indicate a satisfactory approach to lessons. During the course of the inspection, Year 11 pupils were taught by a supply teacher, in the absence of their usual tutor. Within this class, pupils showed a disaffected attitude. When confronted with increasingly difficult work, they were more inclined to give up, chatter about unrelated issues and seek the support of staff more frequently.
19. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching within Year 7 is very good. That for the attainment groups as well as Year 11 is satisfactory. It is a common practice for teachers to summarise the content of previous lessons in order to remind pupils of what was learned as well as to establish the context of the new lesson. Behaviour management skills of teachers are good and these enable lessons to proceed with a sense of calmness and purpose. Better lessons are those where pace is emphasised, which keeps pupils' concentration fully on the task and brings a sense of urgency to their learning. Where general assistants are deployed effectively they offer substantial support to individual pupils and to the overall management of the groups. The quality of work they provide is instrumental in the positive progress of many pupils. Where work is matched effectively to pupils' needs, the impact on learning is more significant. For example, Year 7 lower attaining pupils were required to work out the name of shapes according to descriptions on paper. The higher attaining group had substantially the same task, except that other members of their group provided oral descriptions. Less effective teaching occurred where both timing and pace of lessons were not considered in lesson planning. In such lessons, tasks became open-ended and lacked any sense of urgency or purpose. Tasks that were not complete would be finished the following day. Further weaknesses occurred where teachers did not consider alternative learning methods. For example, in a lesson about estimating time, each pupil was required to estimate a period of one minute. Rather than do this as a paired or small-group task, each member of the class was timed individually. This naturally took far longer, resulting in a lesson which ran out of time and did not fully engage pupils in their learning. The patience of pupils, however, was remarkable as they waited for their turn. Higher attaining pupils, particularly, were poorly served by this approach. The most significant weakness, common throughout much of the teaching, was that lessons lacked a clearly defined structure with minimal use of plenaries or opportunity for assessment.
20. Pupils follow a curriculum that is generally broad, though evidence from pupils' previous work indicates that the use of information and communications technology within the subject is not fully represented. Pupils do not have sufficient experience of using programs to handle data. Time given to the subject is insufficient and, therefore, is unsatisfactory. Pupils have three lessons of one hour each week and where this time is not used effectively learning and progress are adversely effected. In Year 11, pupils attend college courses for one day each week, significantly, on one of the three days they are timetabled for the subject. Satisfactory records of pupils' attainments are maintained, though not all of these are used effectively to plan further learning. The strength of these, however, is that they are common through the attainment groups thereby enabling some monitoring of entitlement to the full curriculum. Accreditation opportunities, especially for Key Stage 4 pupils, are too narrow. Higher attaining pupils are therefore denied an opportunity to sit for qualifications higher than the one currently offered and there is evidence from both previous work and current lessons that these pupils are not being sufficiently challenged.
21. The monitoring of individual pupils' progress is insecure. The co-ordinator is not required to monitor standards of teaching in the subject so standards overall are not known. The professional judgement

of the co-ordinator, relating to overall standards, lacks a substantive evidence base. Currently, the monitoring done within the subject is reactive and does not substantially improve the progress or attainment of pupils.

22. Resources for the subject are satisfactory and generally used effectively within teaching. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology. Mathematical skills are well used within other subjects, such as design and technology and geography. In design and technology, for example, one pupil calculated the segments necessary for the design of a clock. They also routinely weigh ingredients within food technology lessons. In geography, Year 9 pupils interpreted graphs relating to air pressure and Year 7 pupils completed a survey of different types of shops.
23. Since the last inspection, improvement has been made in the overall quality of teaching, to the extent that no teaching was unsatisfactory. Resources are now more appropriate to secondary-age pupils.

103. **Science**

24. Across both key stages, pupils make good progress. Key Stage 3 pupils deepen their knowledge about the physical features of the earth through studying volcanoes. They conduct experiments to discover whether the flow of lava can be affected by changes in temperature and environment. Higher attaining pupils predict the results of these experiments by relating them to facts they have read in their science textbooks. Lower attaining pupils are highly dependent upon adult help to make relevant connections between theory and practice but, with gentle support and encouragement and the good use of questioning, they demonstrate their understanding.
25. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have made good progress in setting up experiments and analysing the results. They quickly understood that energy in food is measurable through an experiment involving burning food. They make clear gains when carrying out practical work and record their results first on paper and then using a computer. Such activities help pupils to make progress with their literacy and numeracy skills.
26. All pupils enjoy science. They behave well and listen carefully to instructions. They understand safety rules such as standing to conduct experiments. They show a genuine interest in using materials such as jelly to represent lava flow. Despite being sorely tempted, none ate the jelly, as they understand that other materials may affect food in a science laboratory. All pupils take care with apparatus, they are developing their independence skills by setting up and carrying out their own experiments which they do safely and in the correct sequence. They work together co-operatively and share equipment cheerfully.
27. Teaching is good and represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is well planned with a variety of exciting activities. Pupils are encouraged to be independent by organising their own practical work and recording it in a variety of ways, such as by charts, graphs, extended writing or diagrams. The teacher pays good attention to literacy through emphasising target vocabulary such as 'igneous' and 'viscous'. He uses well-focused questions to extend knowledge and understanding, expecting different answers from pupils with different levels of attainment. He plans to meet the needs of individuals within his clearly planned lessons and extends this support by carefully focusing his, and the general assistant's, help to those in need during lessons. The science teacher ensures that all practical work is carried out safely and this careful attitude is reflected in the pupils' approach, for example, they all know how to light the Bunsen burners in the safe position.
28. The curriculum and assessment are good and both have been developed since the last inspection. The

schemes of work are well matched to the content of the National Curriculum and enable pupils at Key Stage 4 to make relevant progress toward the Certificate of Educational Achievement in science. Assessment is regular and recorded on a computer program.

29. The school has made significant improvements in all aspects of science since the last inspection. The specialist co-ordinator has developed the subject well. Accommodation is well used to aid practical work and resources are satisfactory. The efficient use of, and support given by, the general assistant is a strength of the subject. The curriculum is enhanced by visits to local places of interest such as the Engineerium. Visits have also been made to places further afield such as the science museum. Science makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they deepen their understanding and wonder of the physical and scientific features of the planet and how man affects them.

109. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

109. Religious Education

30. Progress is satisfactory at both key stages. Key Stage 3 pupils' progress in developing their knowledge and understanding is better than their progress in developing their skills of reflection and response. Younger pupils gain knowledge and understanding of stories from the Bible. They tell the story of Noah's Ark and write about their own rainbow wish. They illustrate and describe the biblical version of creation. They tell the story of Moses being found as a baby and they illustrate the ten plagues in Egypt. They illustrate the story of Jonah and the whale. They write about the life of Jesus including the events leading up to the crucifixion. They make comparisons between their own mealtimes and the Last Supper. They give their own opinions about what is right and wrong when considering racism. As pupils move through the key stage, they make satisfactory gains in knowledge about different faiths. In their study of Judaism, they sample kosher food and write about the work of a rabbi and keeping the Sabbath. In their study of Islam they illustrate and label the interior and exterior of a mosque, and design a prayer mat. By the end of the key stage, pupils display an understanding of different approaches to Christian worship including the catholic and Methodist churches and the work of the Salvation Army. They acquire knowledge of marriage ceremonies in different faiths and give their personal responses to the idea of a marriage partner.
31. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' progress is satisfactory although staffing changes have limited their progress over time. They gain a satisfactory understanding of abortion from legal and moral points of view and give their personal responses to different case studies. They reflect on what it is to be human and identify a variety of features including minds to think, feelings and emotions, and personality. In their study of festivals, they participate in a game associated with the Jewish festival of Hanukkah and gain an understanding of the underlying themes associated with the festival. In preparation for a Christmas concert, pupils participate in a brainstorm activity to identify religious and materialistic themes associated with Christmas and write their own songs linking the themes.
32. Pupils' responses are good at both key stages. Younger pupils listen carefully to their teacher and behave well during class discussion. With the support of a very clear structure for discussion, they sustain concentration and participate well in discussing difficult ideas. Concentration is also good when working on individual tasks. In composing lyrics for a Christmas song, older pupils work with concentration and enthusiasm and collaborate well together.
33. Teaching is satisfactory at both key stages, with some good and very good teaching. The most effective teaching is characterised by very effective classroom management. As a consequence, pupils

know exactly what is expected of them. Activities and tasks provide a high level of challenge. Discussion is particularly challenging when supported by pictures and other resources which help pupils to respond to increasingly difficult ideas. Strategies that involve pupils in activities associated with different faiths are very effective because they help pupils to understand symbolic significance. Teaching is less effective when worksheets are used because they rely on pupils using their sometimes limited comprehension skills at the expense of developing their skills of reflection and response.

34. Co-ordination of the subject is good. There has been effective teamwork to produce a policy and schemes of work based upon the local agreed syllabus. The use of a published scheme at Key Stage 3 gives good support to staff. Issues raised at the last inspection have been addressed. Standards achieved by pupils and the quality of teaching have both improved to a consistently satisfactory level. Schemes of work are now in place, supported by a good range of resources, including a published scheme, artefacts and a variety of textbooks and topic books.

114. **Information technology**

35. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in both key stages. As the school does not teach information and communication technology as a timetabled lesson for each class, pupils' progress has been judged by their use of information and communications technology in other subjects, samples of their work in personal files, as part of school displays and from the support sessions some received during the inspection.
36. All teachers carry responsibility for integrating information and communications technology into their teaching. This approach is effective in developing pupils' awareness of the value of the subject to help them learn and in this regard pupils make good progress. For example, they understand the use of the computer in geography to interpret graphical variations in air pressure. Similarly, they gain a good understanding of data handling in mathematics. Pupils also use computers effectively to create colourful pictures, to draft and redraft texts in English and to enhance the quality of work in their Youth Award Portfolios. For some pupils with literacy difficulties, the use of a 'clicker' programme helps them to make satisfactory progress in composing sentences and expressing their thoughts more methodically.
37. However, the pupils' progress in terms of independent, confident and competent skills is limited by the fact that they do not receive direct teaching in the subject. As a result, most pupils are highly dependent upon adult support. The majority of pupils are very slow in their operation of the equipment. At Key Stage 4, many are still searching for keys or have to stop and think before being able to delete or edit text. Similarly, when analysing data, pupils are slow in entering and manipulating the figures and they often need adult reassurance before moving to the next step.
38. The very wide range of display materials and samples of pupils' work demonstrate the very good use made of computers by the school. However, judgements about pupils' progress are difficult to make because these samples are not annotated with information detailing the amount of support the pupils have received.
39. Pupils enjoy working with computers. They try very hard to enter text or data correctly and made good use of technology to enhance invitations to their millennium party. All pupils treat equipment with care and several times pupils were observed helping each other spontaneously. Pupils respond well to adult support. Relationships between pupils are good but too few pupils are truly independent their use of information and communications technology. Pupils' enthusiasm for using computers is a major contributor to their satisfactory progress as they are determined to do well and take a pride in

their finished work.

40. Teaching is satisfactory overall. In the two lessons where direct help was given to individual pupils, the teacher was clearly very skilled and secure in his subject knowledge and strategies to enable progress. However, although information and communications technology formed part of other lessons, teaching was not specifically targeted towards the acquisition of specific skills. In these lessons, teachers' knowledge and skills were satisfactory but, because information and communications technology was not the major focus, there were insufficient opportunities to develop individual pupils' skills. Learning was mostly incidental and tuition given on an ad hoc basis. Whilst this generally results in relevant outcomes, such as graphs, pictures, charts and basic computer aided designs, there is no specific focus on developing skills, knowledge and understanding in a structured way. Nevertheless, teachers and classroom assistants use the computers regularly and give good quality help and advice. They provide clear explanations and present relevant challenges to pupils in terms of recording their work through a range of different applications.
41. The scheme of work reflects National Curriculum requirements. Guidance is included on what teachers should cover in each year group. Long-term planning is linked to short-term plans through systematic reference to the use of information and communications technology. However, there is insufficient time for pupils to cover this work effectively or for teachers to ensure that all areas of learning and skills are adequately taught. For example, in a lesson at Key Stage 4, one pupil only typed four lines of an address, another typed a list of ten items but did not spell check them whilst a third only managed to produce one sign for 'Exit' in the time available.
42. Whilst assessment procedures have been introduced, there is no clear system which specifically identifies the skills pupils have achieved and what they need to learn next. This limits the progress that pupils make to satisfactory rather than good. Higher attaining pupils do not currently have access to accredited qualifications at Key Stage 4. Despite these weaknesses, there is clearly a whole-school commitment to, and interest in, the use and value of information and communications technology and the environment is considerably enhanced by the very good, computer generated work seen in all areas of the school.
43. The co-ordinator is a very skilled and experienced teacher of information and communications technology and provides good support to colleagues and pupils. His task to co-ordinate the subject, provide staff training and to keep equipment in good working order is onerous. However, a general assistant is currently undertaking specialist training to enhance her skills in order to take more responsibility for supporting pupils and other staff. Training for all staff has been effective in equipping them with a basic level of skill. However, the lack of monitoring results in variable provision and no clear picture of what the pupils know, understand and can do.
44. The school has a good range of computers and other technology such as digital cameras that are used appropriately to reinforce pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils' knowledge of the world and other cultures is extended through the use of CD ROMs and other reference materials. These activities support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
45. Since the last inspection, the school has ceased to teach information and communications technology as a discrete subject and the school is now faced with the challenge of re-establishing the 'very good' standards of achievement and 'high degree of independence' which were found previously.

125. Art

46. Progress in the subject is good across both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils work in a wide variety of media. They use computer graphics very well to create and enhance their work. Pupils produce vivid and typical designs in the African idiom, which they are able to use in the construction of decorative shields. They create shapes on a given theme from the observation of shapes within shapes. In one Year 9 lesson, pupils were able to reliably identify the foreground, middle ground and background of a picture as an aid to making three-dimensional pictures themselves. A sensuous and effective use of powder paint characterises the best pictures. Well-kept sketchbooks are a strong feature of pupils' work.
47. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils extend their use of media into collage. They paint vivid stylisations based on natural forms. In one Year 10 lesson, they were able to work to a stringent design brief in producing a tablecentre for their Christmas dinner. In a Year 11 lesson, pupils made stencils of motifs derived from Van Gogh and Matisse. They were able to transfer these designs to the cupboard doors in the new art room, using a good level of technical skill.
48. Pupils enjoy the lessons. Response to all of them was always satisfactory. It was often and good or very good in lessons. There is a pleasant buzz of activity as pupils collaborate to undertake some of the work. Behaviour is very good. Use of information and communications technology promotes pupils' independent learning skills.
49. All the teaching is satisfactory. The teaching in all but one lesson was good or very good. The teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject. Lessons are carefully planned, and give the pupils good opportunities to choose what they will do and to work collaboratively if it is appropriate. The classes are managed very well, so that there is little disruption and all have the opportunity to succeed. Real tasks, particularly in Key Stage 4, improve motivation.
50. Since the last inspection, standards have held firm. The use of sketchbooks continues to be encouraged and has improved. Teaching is now consistently good. Assessment is satisfactory. A new art room has improved access to resources and allows the subject to display work more effectively, and good examples of pupils' art are to be seen throughout the school. Co-ordination of the subject is very good, although little time is allowed for these duties.

Design Technology

51. Pupils make good progress across both key stages. In resistant materials, pupils make very good progress. They work competently and safely with a good range of equipment and are learning how to handle a range of different materials particularly wood, plastic and food. In resistant materials, pupils learn about how to join and shape materials and combine them accurately to achieve very successful outcomes. They make good use of information and communications technology. In resistant materials, higher attaining pupils work independently on projects to produce individually designed products such as lamps and clocks. Lower attaining pupils need support, but all produce good quality products. In food lessons, pupils make satisfactory progress. They are less able to work independently, but learn to work co-operatively in groups. Lower attaining pupils make better progress than higher attaining pupils do in food lessons because they are well supported whilst the work set for higher attaining pupils is not sufficiently challenging. In resistant materials, pupils learn a good range of specialist terminology and develop their mathematical skills by manipulating shapes and applying measurements to their designs. In food lessons, pupils are less confident about designing new products.
52. Pupils are enthusiastic about working with both food and resistant materials. They enjoy the practical

nature of the work. Pupils' response to lessons is particularly good in resistant materials where they concentrate very well. For example, one Key Stage 3 pupil persevered for over ten minutes without asking for help when getting the coping saw into the right position to saw a shape from the middle of a piece of hardboard. Another older pupil spent a considerable length of time on the design of his clock to ensure that the different sections were accurate. Higher attaining pupils work safely with power drills, pillar drills and other large equipment. Pupils are confident when working with resistant materials and work through problems as they arise because the questioning by teaching and support staff is well focused and supportive. They take responsibility for their work and clear up well at the end of lessons. Pupils are well motivated in food lessons. Their behaviour is less good in lessons that are directed too closely by staff. Occasionally, they become frustrated because they are not able to take responsibility for their own work.

53. Teaching is never less than satisfactory. In resistant materials, teaching is of a high quality. Explanations are clear and reinforced well until pupils are confident about their work. Lessons are planned so that skills are developed progressively and introduced when needed to do the task. The teacher assesses pupils on specific objectives throughout the lesson. The teacher has excellent oversight of pupils in terms of their progress and their safety. Skilful questioning helps pupils to work out problems for themselves. Pupils are expected to work independently and they are well supported in this by the organisation of resources including word lists. Assistants are very well informed and add considerable value to pupils' learning. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' progress through regular cross-curricular projects.
54. During the time of the inspection, the teacher for food technology was absent and lessons were taken by supply teachers. The planning shows a lack of detail concerning the skills, knowledge and understanding to be developed and less emphasis on designing than on making. The lack of detail in planning resulted in a lack of challenge and a slow pace to some lessons. There was no evidence that pupils' progress is assessed. The Year 7 scheme of work makes a valuable contribution to pupils' social and cultural awareness, for example by working in groups to develop collaborative skills and tasting fruits, which are available in Africa.
55. The management of the resistant materials element of the subject is very good. However, although resistant materials lessons are well linked to other subjects, such as religious education, literacy and numeracy, there is no whole-school approach to design and technology. This was an issue raised in the previous report and limits pupils' progress. The quality of learning in resistant materials lessons has remained high.

135. **Geography**

56. Progress is satisfactory overall. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils make good progress. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' progress is satisfactory. Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress in developing their understanding of places and themes and in developing their investigation and enquiry skills. However, their mapwork skills are less well developed. In their study of Africa, younger pupils identify crops grown on a Kenyan farm. They match particular crops to different climates and explain why the aeroplane is a suitable means of transport for perishable products. Some pupils locate particular food products on a plan of a supermarket using a basic grid reference. Pupils draw plans of the location of shops as part of their study of the local village and record the number of different buildings seen. They explain and illustrate the erosion of cliffs following a study of a local coastal area. They illustrate wind direction and speed and devise their own map symbols. Pupils develop a good understanding of the rainforest. They use appropriate terminology including canopy, forest floor and leaching. They explain and illustrate the daily weather cycle and the food web. They

describe and classify the different products of the rainforest. They also classify human activity into benefits and problems. Older pupils plan a river study, identify equipment needed to measure depth and speed, carry out the investigation and record measurements. Pupils use information technology in their study of weather and interpret graphical information to identify days when air pressure is high and low. They identify features of the local area from aerial photographs. They place in order the stages of a river and describe and illustrate the water cycle.

57. The progress of Key Stage 4 pupils is limited by staffing changes and by time missed through college attendance. In lessons, pupils make satisfactory progress including developing mapwork skills and their knowledge and understanding of the features that give places their character. They use maps to identify places and features in the United Kingdom and Ireland, including principal cities, mountains and surrounding sea areas. They define continent and locate the continents on a world map. They compare and contrast different climates with descriptions of the Antarctic climate and the climate of the United Kingdom. They identify a variety of features that give deserts their character. They use appropriate terminology including arid and nomad. They interpret poetry about the desert and explain the idea of water as the 'currency of life'. They study animal life in the desert and explain why family groups need each other for survival. They draw plans of the classroom and of individual furniture items. They develop their understanding of grid references with some pupils using first four and then six figure references.
58. Pupils' responses are good at both key stages. They display a high level of interest in studying pictures during class discussion. They show good concentration during whole class work involving video or the overhead projector. Younger pupils are enthusiastic in class discussion when recalling previous work. They work quietly and with concentration on individual tasks including those that involve sorting and classifying.
59. Teaching is satisfactory overall and good at Key Stage 3. The most effective teaching is characterised by well-chosen resources to stimulate interest including the use of video, information technology and the overhead projector. Well-managed and structured class discussion is another positive feature when it enables pupils to recall previous work and link it with new knowledge and understanding. It is particularly effective when all pupils are involved. Knowledge of topics is secure and enables pupils to be sufficiently challenged during discussion work. Teaching is less effective when class discussion is too long and insufficient time is given for pupils to complete activities. Lessons, which offer all pupils a single activity following discussion, do not always offer sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils.
60. Co-ordination is effective. Schemes of work meet National Curriculum requirements. Methods of assessment are clearly linked to National Curriculum levels. The time spent at college in Year 11 has an adverse effect on progression and continuity in the subject. There is a positive ethos with an emphasis on developing a broad range of skills and knowledge. Issues from the last inspection have been addressed. Standards of achievement are better and there has been a significant improvement in teaching. Schemes of work are now in place.

140.

History

61. Progress is satisfactory overall. By the end of Key Stage 3, it is good but this good progress is not sustained through Key Stage 4. Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the characteristics of past societies and in their skills of enquiry and communication. Concepts of chronology and of cause and consequence are less well developed. In their study of ancient Greece, younger pupils compared the Olympic games of ancient times with

those of today. They describe different foods eaten by ancient Greeks and they match articles for sale in a Greek market with the people who made them. They describe a day in the life of a Greek child. In their work on the Victorians, they compare and contrast the homes of rich and poor families and they write about and illustrate different features of the society including schools and transport. In their study of World War Two, pupils use appropriate terminology in discussion including 'blitz' and 'air raid'. They respond to pictures of life in wartime Britain and speculate about peoples' thoughts and feelings at the time. Pupils write with quill pens as part of their study of the lives of monks in medieval times. They describe the lifestyle of peasants including methods of preparing food and typical menus. They make models of peasants' homes. They act out the death of Thomas Becket. In other work, they give reasons for William's invasion of England and illustrate the many uses of the buffalo for the American Indian.

62. At Key Stage 4, progress over time is limited by staffing changes and by time missed through college attendance. In lessons, pupils make satisfactory progress including describing changes over time, developing an understanding of chronology, interpreting sources of evidence and making links and connections. They describe changes in communication over time and identify the characteristics of modern methods. They identify the changing roles of men and women in family life. They produce time lines of their own lives and write about their first memories. They define the concept of historical evidence and draw diagrams to illustrate the various sources of available evidence. They obtain information from historical sources including marriage certificates, remembrance cards and family photographs. They identify the effects of war on people over time including trauma and the link between women working in wartime and achieving the vote.
63. Pupils' responses are good at both key stages. They work carefully on individual tasks. They persevere when work is difficult, such as writing with a quill pen. They clearly enjoy the subject and display interest and enthusiasm in both class and off-site activities. There is a high standard of display work in the subject showing the care taken by pupils in completing very attractive work. A good working atmosphere is typical in lessons.
64. Teaching is satisfactory overall and good at Key Stage 3. The most effective teaching is characterised by the use of a variety of resources to stimulate interest during discussion and by activities for individual tasks that offer challenge and progression. Staff are enthusiastic about individual topics and acquire a secure knowledge of them. The emphasis on enquiry and investigation is effective in developing skills and knowledge and there are high expectations of pupils. The use of visits is very effective and makes a valuable contribution to the study of topics. Good planning establishes a firm link between visits and classroom activities. Teaching is less effective where strategies and tasks do not take full account of the range of ability.
65. Co-ordination of the subject is effective. Schemes of work meet National Curriculum requirements except that there is not an appropriate sequence of study units at Key Stage 3 in terms of chronology. Methods of assessment are clearly linked to National Curriculum levels. The time spent at college in Year 11 has an adverse effect on progression and continuity in the subject. There is a very positive ethos of enquiry and investigation including a variety of visits. Issues from the last inspection have been addressed. Standards of achievement and teaching have improved and work is more challenging. Schemes of work are now in place, supported by a good range of resources.
145. **Modern foreign languages: French**
66. Pupils make good progress across the key stages. They make particularly good progress in speaking, listening and responding in French. Higher attaining Key Stage 3 pupils know the names for the days

of the week and form simple sentences, for example, when describing the colours they like best. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils ask questions and have a good vocabulary. Higher attaining pupils are developing a good accent. Lower attaining pupils need the support of flashcards. Pupils are developing a good understanding of France in terms of its geography and the way of life that makes a good contribution to their cultural understanding. Pupils make less good progress in reading and writing.

67. Pupils enjoy their lessons and take great pride in being able to speak in French. They concentrate throughout lessons well because of the good range of activities that are planned. Pupils collaborate well and they respect the feelings of others, for example, when playing games. The progress of all pupils is limited on occasions when individual pupils have difficulty controlling their behaviour.
68. Teaching is good. There is a very good range of activities that make the learning enjoyable. The frequent change of activities and smooth transition from one activity to the next generates a good pace. Although many of the activities involve the whole class, there is a very good range of resources such as flashcard, pictures and everyday objects that allow all pupils to make good progress. The lessons are conducted in French and this encourages pupils to speak in French. Presentations are lively and good-humoured. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to speak to each other in the target language.
69. The subject is well managed. The scheme of work is appropriate and there is a good range of resources. However, there is no clear system for assessing what pupils know, understand and are able to do. Standards have been well maintained since the previous inspection.

149.

149. **Music**

70. Two music lessons and one session of instrumental tuition were seen during the inspection. Other evidence was gathered from the scrutiny of pupils' work, teacher's planning, records and video recordings of recent drama projects.
71. Pupils make good progress overall. The youngest pupils are deepening their understanding of rhythm and pulse although some remain confused about the difference. Pupils sing in tune and remember words to known songs. They are beginning to understand the difference between short and long notes. In Key Stage 4, pupils use tuned instruments well to play an accompaniment in pentatonic mode. They play accurately in terms of time and notes and one pupil was able to count the remainder in at the start so that they all began together. Pupils' progress in instrument tuition is excellent. Pupils learn the euphonium or the trumpet and are already produce good quality sounds albeit over a small number of notes. Arrangements have just been made for these pupils to practise the instruments within the residences and this should speed up progress.
72. All pupils enjoy music and respond positively to the range of activities offered. Occasionally, pupils' emotional difficulties impede their behaviour as their excitement takes over and they need time to regain their self-control. However, they return to the lesson or group and participate fully. The motivation and determination to succeed in instrumental tuition is outstanding. Despite the obvious challenge of playing a brass instrument, pupils strive to succeed and persevere until they and the tutor are satisfied.
73. Teaching is good overall and outstanding in instrumental tuition. Lessons are planned around recently developed schemes of work and provide opportunities for listening, singing, playing and learning about the technical aspects of music. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and provide good role

models with their singing or playing; this is particularly so in instrumental tuition where the teacher is a skilled trumpet player himself. Relationships are a great strength and, as teachers know their pupils well, they are able to challenge them on an individual basis to do their best.

74. The curriculum is good but assessment procedures are not yet fully developed. The music curriculum is enhanced by the bi-annual drama project that provides pupils with the opportunity to perform in front of an audience and experience true performing arts. This exciting project is supported by professional artists, including a dance workshop. The most recent production, 'Emotions', illustrated high standards of performance with opportunities for pupils to reflect upon pressures within relationships and friendships and the possible consequences of harassment. Music lessons and the drama project make very positive contributions to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Music is not routinely used in assembly to encourage reflection and calm.

154. **Physical Education**

75. Pupils make good progress in physical education throughout the school. At Key Stage 3, younger pupils throw and catch accurately in a game of basketball. By the end of this key stage, they have developed these skills well and fully incorporate them into full games. All pupils are familiar with the layout of a basketball court and take up the correct position, for example, when a free throw is being taken. Older pupils within the key stage successfully complete set shots and show an awareness of tactics, such as the zone defence. These older pupils also use a variation in passing styles, such as a bounce or chest pass.
76. When Key Stage 4 pupils play football, they strike the ball with some accuracy over distances of up to 20m. They trap and pass the ball proficiently and show an awareness of tactics, such as moving into space in order to receive a pass. Higher attaining pupils have a better knowledge of the rules of the game. For example, they are aware that a goalkeeper, when facing a penalty, can now move along his line before the ball is struck. They are knowledgeable about the marking of the pitch, explaining the purpose of the arc on the edge of the penalty area. In practices they show good skill in moving with the ball and an ability to strike it accurately into a restricted target area.
77. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good, resulting in effective learning. They enjoy their lessons and take part with a full spirit of sportsmanship and concern for others. When required to leave the basketball court because they are substituted, they do this with good grace. They listen very effectively to the teacher and consequently fulfil his expectations and instructions. Games are approached with great seriousness, and when for example, they are introduced to a new skill such as zone-defence, they are very keen to put this into practice. While younger pupils experience some frustration because of lesser skills, they do not allow this to boil over into frustration or petulance. Within the context of their special need, this is a considerable achievement. For example, pupils use the time-out phase in basketball to discuss tactics and substitutions. Older pupils have a correspondingly mature attitude to the subject. They engage in effective warm-up routines without prompting from the teacher. During games, such as football, they demonstrate high levels of sportsmanship.
78. The quality of teaching is good throughout the subject. The teachers' subject knowledge is very secure and this enables detailed coaching points to be offered, which are instrumental in raising standards and progress. The purpose and objective of lessons is well explained to pupils so that they are fully involved in their own learning. Conversely, at the end of lessons, good summaries are included which draw together all that has been learned. These summaries are also used effectively to set the requirements for the next lesson or, in some cases, to set a homework task for pupils to investigate.

Lesson planning is very effective resulting in sessions that have a good balance between instruction, practice and game situation. This was particularly the case in football sessions, where pupils were encouraged to focus on the objectives as one practice followed quickly on another. The good pace of lessons accentuates this aspect, resulting in very effective learning. The teacher has made good progress in involving pupils in their own evaluation but this is an area that could benefit from further development.

79. Planning for the subject is good and ensures a full entitlement for all pupils. The particular needs of individual pupils are well considered. Girls are a significant minority within lessons but their needs are effectively met within the curriculum, either through positive inclusion in activities alongside the boys or through individual lessons given by female teachers. When included with the boys, it is evident that their levels of ability are rarely superseded. Assessment of pupils' progress and attainment is good. Detailed records are maintained and it is possible for the co-ordinator to identify progress, or the lack of it, in any individual pupil. Pupils are assessed individually and awarded certificates, such as those for athletics or rowing.
80. Accommodation, as well as resources, fully supports the subject. Externally, the spacious grounds are well used for games, such as cricket and football. There is a gymnasium which, although small, is effectively used for vigorous indoor games such as basketball, small-sided football or whole-school table tennis coaching. There is also good use of local facilities that supplement the few deficiencies of the on-site provision. These include residential outdoor education centres and the swimming pool of a local school.
81. The subject was favourably reported at the last inspection and the current evidence indicates that the high standards have been maintained. The most significant strength remains the contributions made by the teaching and co-ordination of the subject which ensure that every pupil remains the sustained focus for individual improvement.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence

82. Before the inspection, a wide range of school documentations was examined. During the inspection, 66 lessons were observed over 47.6 hours. In addition, all members of the senior management team, all subject co-ordinators, chairman of governors, head of care and care staff, support assistants, site staff and members of outside agencies were interviewed over a total of 17.25 hours.
83. Discussions were held with a representative sample of pupils for one hour and pupils were heard reading for an hour and a half. An extensive sample of pupils' past and current work was examined across all years and across all subjects (15.2 hours).
84. A range of other school documents was examined including registers, working files of teaching and care staff. In addition, inspectors made observations of over 9 hours:
 - residential life before and after school;
 - arrivals of day pupils, breaks, lunch times and after-school routines;
 - assemblies and registration periods;
 - a play rehearsal;
 - visits to local colleges and work experience placements;
 - a senior management team meeting.
1. Four parents attended a meeting with the registered and lay inspectors and 19 responses to parental questionnaires were received.

1. DATA AND INDICATORS

171. PUPIL DATA

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR 7 – YR 13	61	61	61	20

171. TEACHERS AND CLASSES

Qualified teachers (YR 7 – YR 13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)
Number of pupils per qualified teacher

10
6:1

Education support staff (YR 7 – YR 13)

Total number of education support staff
Total aggregate hours worked each week

5
140

FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year:	1998/99
	£
Total income	878269
Total expenditure	888034
Expenditure per pupils	145578
Balance brought forward from previous year	47249
Balance carried forward to next year	37484

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

61

Number of questionnaires returned:

19

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school.	26	74	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren).	47	53	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well.	21	74	5	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught.	31	63	6	0	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress.	37	58	5	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work.	42	58	0	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons.	74	26	0	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home.	17	61	17	5	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren).	37	58	5	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour.	26	68	0	6	0
My child(ren) like(s) school.	79	21	0	0	0

171. Other issues raised by parents

At the parents' meeting, the parents were very appreciative of the school. They could give many examples of how their children had gained, particularly socially, since being at the school. They appreciated the individual support given to their children and spoke glowingly of the gains made in developing their self-esteem. Some parents would appreciate more information about their child's progress. They were not sure how they could help their children at home.