

INSPECTION REPORT

KINGSWODE HOE SPECIAL SCHOOL

COLCHESTER

LEA area: Essex

Unique Reference Number 115453

Inspection Number: 185570

Headteacher: Mrs. E. Drake

Reporting inspector: Roderick Passant

RgI number 2728

Dates of inspection: October 4th – 8th October, 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: ~~xxxxxx~~708340

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	Community
Age range of pupils	5 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
School address	Sussex Road, Colchester Essex C03 3QJ
Telephone number:	01206 576408
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Maurice Turner
Date of the previous inspection:	10 th November 1995

Information about the inspection team

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Mrs. F. Luke		Attendance; Support, guidance and pupils' welfare; Links with the community.
Mr. J. Edge	Science; Information technology. Non-National Curriculum subjects in Key Stage 4.	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Links with college.
Mr. D. Walker	Mathematics; Religious education; Equal opportunities.	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
Mr. B. Emery	History; Geography; Design and technology; Special educational needs.	The curriculum and assessment.
Mr. D. Haigh	Art; Music; Physical education.	The efficiency of the school; Resources, accommodation and staffing; Inclusion.

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Main findings

Kingswode Hoe is a school that is making significant progress in developing a quality provision.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Overall, pupils make good progress in their learning.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour in and out of classrooms are very good.
- Relationships throughout the school, between pupils and between adults and pupils are very good.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Financial planning and control and school administration are very good.
- Learning support assistants are very effective and they provide good support in classrooms.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and, along with a very effective governing body, provides a clear educational direction for the development of the school.

WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- The curriculum is not well balanced. Some subjects have too much time to the detriment of other subjects. There are also inconsistencies in the amount of time given to the same subject between year groups within the same key stage.
- The curriculum for the senior school needs to be reviewed in order to ensure appropriate challenge and continuity between Year 10 and Year 11.
- Schemes of work are required in English to support teacher planning.
- The role of the curriculum co-ordinator as manager of the subject throughout the school requires development.
- The assessment procedures, only recently put in place, are not yet be adopted by all staff.
- The balance of specialist and non-specialist teaching requires review particularly during Key Stages 3 and 4.
- The provision for information technology is poor. The subject does not meet statutory requirements. Almost all staff lack confidence and expertise in the subject.

The strengths of the school significantly outweigh its weaknesses. Nevertheless these will form the basis of the governors' action plan which will be circulated to all parents.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

There have been significant improvements in the school since the last inspection, particularly in the last two terms.

- The quality of teaching shows significant improvement. The previous report noted that teaching was inconsistent and that there were significant shortcomings in one in five lessons. Teaching is now good.
- The previous report was extremely critical of the fact that the school was not giving pupils the experience of the National Curriculum. The school has addressed this issue to a very large part. Although there remain aspects to address, the school has made significant developments in introducing the National Curriculum and ensuring a more broad and balanced experience. The school day has been re-organised, schemes of work have been developed, a system of planning has been introduced and the curriculum has been reviewed.
- Assessments systems have been reviewed and the procedures, effective on paper, have yet to be bed down and become part of the teacher's working practice.

WHETHER PUPILS ARE MAKING ENOUGH PROGRESS

Progress in:	By 5	By 11	By 14	By 16	Key		
Targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B	B			
English:	B	C	B	C	<i>very good</i>		<i>A</i>
listening and speaking					<i>good</i>	<i>B</i>	
reading					<i>satisfactory</i>		<i>C</i>
writing					<i>unsatisfactory</i>		<i>I</i>
	B	C	B	C	<i>poor</i>	<i>E</i>	
Mathematics	B	C	B	B			
Science	B	C	B	B			
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	B	B	B	B			

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

QUALITY OF TEACHING

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
Up to 5 years			
5 - 11 years	good	Design and technology, physical education,	Information technology
11 - 16 years	good	Art, modern foreign languages, English, mathematics, science, history, geography, physical education	Information technology and where individual teachers lack knowledge or confidence in a subject
Post-16			
English	good		
Mathematics	good		
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	good		

In 95% of lessons teaching is satisfactory or better. Teaching is good or better in just under two-thirds of lessons. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. In the relatively few lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, it is directly related to lack of subject knowledge.

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	Behaviour throughout the school, in and out of classrooms is generally very good.
Attendance	Attendance is good. There are good systems in place for monitoring and promoting attendance.
Ethos*	The ethos of the school is very good.
Leadership and management	<p>The leadership of the school by the headteacher is very good. The governing body is very committed and supportive of the school. It is very well placed, along with the headteacher, to provide a clear educational direction for the school. At the time of the inspection, the senior management of the school was in the process of change. The head of upper school provides good curriculum support.</p> <p>The roles of curriculum co-ordinators, particularly with regard to adequate monitoring, evaluation and review, require development.</p>
Curriculum	<p>The school has made very significant improvements to the curriculum since the last inspection report.</p> <p>Nevertheless, there is still much for the school to do in this area. There are issues, which relate to the overall curriculum balance. Detailed schemes of work are required in English to support teachers in their planning. The school has introduced some accredited courses in Year 10 but there is a need to review the curriculum offered in Years 10 and 11 to ensure a continuity of experience and to ensure that pupils are appropriately challenged.</p>
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	<p>The school is staffed appropriately. There are issues relating to the balance of specialist and non-specialist teaching which needs resolution particularly in Key Stages 3 and 4.</p> <p>The school lacks some specialist accommodation, which limits pupils' experience such as in science, but in other specialist areas, the accommodation provision is good. Overall, accommodation is satisfactory.</p> <p>Overall, resources are sufficient and adequate.</p>
Value for money	Given the progress pupils make and the quality of the school ethos coupled with a clear sense of direction provided by the headteacher, the school provides good value for money.

* *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

- . The parents' response to the questionnaire was favourable to all questions. There were 28 responses.

What some parents are not happy about

- 2 parents' returns disagreed with the statements
- . 'that the school kept them well informed about their children's' progress;'
- school encouraged children to get involved in more than just daily lessons;'
- they were happy with the work the child is expected to do at home.'

The inspection findings support parents' positive impressions of the school. Obviously, the inspection team cannot comment on individual cases

Key issues for action

Building on the school's and members of staff's many strengths the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- . ensure pupils have an entitlement to a balanced curriculum by establishing a curriculum model which:
 - addresses the historical anomalies whereby some subjects such as physical education dominate pupils' curriculum entitlement; (paras 33, 60, 66, 140)
 - tackles the inconsistencies and formalises the amount of time given to the same subject between year groups in the same key stage; (33, 60, 66)
 - reviews the curriculum for Key Stage 4 to develop the range of accredited courses and ensures that courses progress from Year 10 to Year 11; (36)
 - improves the planning and organisation of the curriculum through the timetable to reduce the numbers of teachers teaching a subject to a particular class; (33)
- . significantly improve pupils' current poor experience of information technology throughout the school so that:
 - pupils of all ages make at least satisfactory progress in the subject and have access to the full range of National Curriculum information technology entitlement; (33, 92)
 - members of staff are given training and gain confidence to teach information technology and to use information technology to support learning in other subjects; (62, 94)
- . develop the role of the curriculum co-ordinator as manager of the subject, responsible for maintaining and developing standards in the subject throughout the school; (37)
 - by continuing to develop their subject specific and managerial skills particularly with regard to monitoring, evaluation and review; (37)
 - establishing a professional climate within the school, based on teamwork, whereby individuals are able to work with colleagues to provide challenge and support; (59)
- . review the balance of specialist and non-specialist teaching particularly at Key Stages 3 and 4 in order that:
 - teachers, teach to their particular strengths and interests; (30, 62, 134)
 - pupils experience the challenge of a secondary based curriculum taught, as far as is reasonable and possible by members of staff with expertise in the subject; (62)

- . develop schemes of work in English to support teachers in their planning. (33, 80)

Introduction

Characteristics of the school

1.Kingswode Hoe is a day special school for pupils from five to sixteen with moderate learning difficulties serving Colchester and the surrounding area. The school is mixed with 109 pupils. In addition to the 83 pupils with moderate learning difficulties a number of other pupils have statements for a range of complex needs including autism, speech and communication difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. There is one black African and two Caribbean and one Asian pupils. Last year approximately three-quarters of the pupils went onto further education. No pupil is disapplied from the National Curriculum. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is 23.8%.

2.The school has set a target relating to autism, 'to increase the attainment of pupils with autism by one level on the NFER target setting assessment scale 2 (P scale language and literacy) in 24 months.'

3.Inclusion of pupils in mainstream schools is a small but significant and growing part of the school's approach. The school is popular with parents and has an extremely friendly atmosphere. There is a supportive ethos.

4.It is inappropriate to judge the attainment of the majority of pupils for whom this school caters against national expectations or national average. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know and can do. Judgements about progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews.

Key indicators

5. Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:	Authorised	School	%
	Absence	National comparative data	3.8%
	Unauthorised	School	N/A
	absence	National comparative data	2.43%

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	2
	Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	25
	Satisfactory or better	95.6
	Less than satisfactory	4.4

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

Attainment and progress

1. The previous report noted that overall, standards in relation to pupils' abilities were appropriate and some pupils achieved standards that were high. There was some evidence of underachievement in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4.

2. Standards in physical education were judged high and generally appropriate in other subjects with the exception of information technology where there was significant underachievement. Standards in number, reading and speaking were appropriate- in writing they were under-developed. The previous report stated that pupils were given insufficient opportunity to acquire and develop skills in writing and information technology.

3. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection.

4. Overall, pupils made good or better progress in a half of the lessons observed. Progress that is less than satisfactory occurs in only one in twenty lessons. At Key Stage 1 pupils make good or better progress in over eight out of ten lessons and progress is never less than satisfactory. At Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress. Good or better progress takes place in two out of ten lessons. Unsatisfactory progress takes place in one out of ten lessons. At Key Stage 3 progress is good or better in over half of the lessons seen. It is very seldom less than satisfactory. Overall, progress at Key Stage 4 is good and never less than satisfactory. However whilst progress is good or better in seven out of ten lessons in Year 10, progress in Year 11 is satisfactory in three-quarters of the lessons. The principal reason is the introduction of demanding and challenging accredited courses in Year 10, which have yet to work through to the oldest pupils. The majority of Year 11 pupils achieve success in the Associated Examination Board (AEB) in Literacy and Numeracy.

5. Progress in English at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 3 is good. It is satisfactory in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. Year 2 pupils have a good knowledge about how a book 'works' and the role of author and illustrator and are beginning to express their appreciation of, for example 'The Five Green Monsters'. They know about the purpose of punctuation and can match letter sounds to the printed letter. Individuals are able to read sentences. Some can copy a sentence whilst others learn how to shape letters.

6. By Year 6 pupils show increased confidence in discussion and can explain ideas with greater clarity. They have a clear understanding that instructions have to be approached in a logical manner e.g. when programming a video recorder

7. At Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress. Pupils are able to communicate their ideas with greater confidence particularly in informal situations. They are attentive in their listening. Reading skills vary but in the main, they are able to read simple texts accurately and independently. Ideas are developed into a sequence of sentences. They understand the rules of writing but individuals require support.

8. Pupils at Key Stage 4 make sound progress. Speaking and listening skills by Year 11 are well developed and pupils are confident in informal situation such as when discussing aspects of school life with a visitor. They are less confident in more formal situations, such as responding to questions about topical events in a classroom. Reading skills show development and progression. Most are able to read accurately and demonstrate their understanding of the key features of a simple text and they are able to compare texts, for example different newspapers. Pupils' writing is organised, clear, and usually accurate.

9.Overall, the progress that pupils make in mathematics is good. Pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1, 3 and 4 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2.

10.In Key Stage 1 pupils are able to follow class procedures and systems. Higher attaining pupils can count to five and colour with care. They find numbers on a number line, recognise the highest number and count on by two and three. In Key Stage 2 pupils recognise equivalent coins, count on from five pence to ten pence, know days of the week and count and order numbers to 20. In Key Stage 3 pupils can count in 10s to 100 and recognise $>$ as greater than and $<$ as less than. They order numbers to 100 and recognise place value through practical activities. In Key Stage 4 pupils recognise quarter, half and full turns as 90, 180 and 360 degrees. They count in 100s beyond 1000 and can round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. They can add and subtract to 1000, including decomposition.

11.Progress in science is good. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 move on well to more formal science from their first experiences of learning about the world around them. For example, Year 1 pupils correctly described colours and textures of leaves, most recognising that they came from trees. Progress, overall, during Key Stage 2 is satisfactory because most pupils learn the key points targeted by their lessons, such as Year 6 understood enough about different types of materials to group samples sensibly. Progress during Key Stage 3 is good. Pupils of all abilities learn effectively and plenty of work is covered in each of the lessons. A Year 8 class studied the nutritional value of various foods. They used scientific terms correctly and with creditable fluency, and understood how to draw up balanced diets for a range of circumstances. Progress in Key Stage 4 is good overall. Year 10 pupils make very good progress toward the level of accreditation sought by the school.

12.Progress in information technology is poor. The main reason is that provision is too narrow. Progress in religious education is satisfactory.

13.In art pupils make very good progress in Key Stages 1 and 3. Pupils at Key Stages 2 and 4 make good progress. In design and technology, progress is good in eight out of ten lessons. Progress is slightly better in Key Stage 3 than in 1 and 2 and is at its best in Key Stage 4. From the evidence and a small sample of lessons in geography and history pupils in all key stages make at least satisfactory progress

14.Pupils at Key Stage 1 make good progress in music. Some Key Stage 3 pupils make very good progress. In modern foreign languages, there is good progress in lessons but because pupils tend to forget between lessons, progress over time is satisfactory. Pupils make very good progress in physical education in all key stages.

15.Inclusion of pupils in mainstream schools is a small but significant and growing part of the school's approach. Individual pupils are effectively supported and make good progress.

16.Pupils with additional special educational needs make good progress, in line with other pupils. Teachers' knowledge of their pupils and of their special educational needs is a strength of the school. Expectations of all pupils are generally high. This, coupled with the overall good quality of teaching, is the most significant reason why pupils make good progress in the school. The relatively few lessons where there is poor or unsatisfactory progress are usually associated with the poor provision in information technology or where teachers lack confidence or expertise in the particular subject that they are teaching.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

17.Attitudes to learning are very good. Very many of the pupils, of all ages, learn enthusiastically.

Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 mostly work steadily and persist well with tasks even when they find the work hard. Younger pupils include several who need significant help to keep on task, and a few who are prone to losing track of the topic of the lesson. However, the majority in Key Stages 1 and 2 work well, are interested in their work, and enjoy the lessons. Pupils of all ages have an impressive capacity to respond very well to the full range of subjects. For example, pupils in Year 9 learnt from their mistakes in design and technology, and were also good at role play in history. Year 8 sang with gusto, expressed feelings well in art and showed plenty of initiative in solving problems in science. In mathematics Year 10 completed hard work, whilst Year 1 showed interest and worked very carefully in a numeracy session. Some pupils with extra special educational needs, mostly behavioural and aspects of autism, maintain a good record of productive work.

18. Behaviour in and around the school is very good. Pupils are predominantly quiet, orderly, calm and attentive in lessons. They respond positively to the directions and interventions of teachers and support staff. The work rate is good and often very good, largely because of the enthusiasm and very good behaviour. Younger pupils include some who have momentary tantrums or who slip off-task, sometimes selfishly. Generally, this does not impede the learning of others. Records kept by the school show that a few pupils in Key Stage 3 have been rude and uncooperative but again this rarely hinders learning. Playtimes are pleasant, decent and enjoyable occasions with very few signs of questionable attitudes or behaviour. Movement around the school is polite and calm. Outsiders praise the school about how pupils behave away from school. Year 11 pupils behave in a mature, sensible way on the link course at the local College of Further Education. There is no evidence of graffiti or damage to equipment or property by pupils.

19. Inappropriate behaviour is rare. There have been incidents of swearing and rudeness from older pupils. In one class, specific boys have had a few fights, or have refused to co-operate with staff. Bullying is rare and physical bullying even rarer, and much of it is associated with one class. No incidents of racism have ever been recorded. Over the last nine months, there have been no permanent exclusions and three fixed-term exclusions, stemming from assaults and abuse. The school did not keep records about exclusion before that time. Exclusion procedures are now as required.

20. Pupils have a very good rapport with staff. For example, younger pupils have regular contact with many adults whom they trust and like. The school is a happy community guided by very good codes of courtesy and respect. Older pupils, by the end of Year 11, are self-aware and able to make formal relationships with outsiders such as employers or those involved in post-16 education and training. Pupils value the opportunities to take responsibility, available to all classes. Younger pupils have a weekly rota to be class leaders. Similarly, older pupils take responsibility for transferring class records and equipment between rooms. Selected pupils oversee bus queues. A 'Buddy' system pairs pupils so that an older pupil keeps an eye on a pupil about five years younger. The scheme is very new but already some youngsters are clearly delighted by the extra attention, and the personal development of some older pupils is enhanced by having to act on behalf of someone outside their own age bracket. Parents are broadly supportive of the values held by the school and of the standards of behaviour.

21. Overall, personal development is good. The Buddy system is helping, and the work of the new School Council is giving some pupils formal responsibilities to act on behalf of others, also each class elects their representative. Pupils respond well to the existing very good ethos about relationships and opportunity. The school has very good provision for spiritual, moral and social development. For example, there are extensive opportunities for experiences beyond the classroom, such as several residential experiences during a pupil's time at the school. These influences have a strong impact on pupils. Year 11 pupils respond well to the very effective influence of the class teacher who prepares them for post-16 opportunities and adult life. Personal, social and health education creates much useful knowledge and understanding about family and social life. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are more consistently strong than was noted in the previous inspection report.

Attendance

22.Attendance is good. Registration takes place promptly at the beginning of each session. Almost all pupils arrive punctually at the start of the day. During the day, lessons start and finish on time. Attendance and punctuality have positive effects on the pupils' attainment and progress.

Quality of education provided

Teaching

23.Overall, the quality of teaching is good. It is good or better in six out of ten lessons. It is very good or excellent in two out of ten lessons. Teaching is very seldom less than satisfactory. Good teaching is seen across all key stages and subjects with the exception of information technology.

24.At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is generally satisfactory. It is good or better in three out of ten lessons. It is unsatisfactory in one out of ten lessons. In Key Stage 3 teaching is good or better in two-thirds of lessons and seldom less than satisfactory. It is very good in a quarter of lessons. At Key Stage 4 teaching is good or better in two-thirds of lessons and is never less than satisfactory.

25.In the main, teachers have very good knowledge of the subjects or aspects they have to teach. However, where teaching is unsatisfactory, as tends to be the case with information technology, it is directly related to lack of expertise or confidence. Teachers' knowledge of the pupils and their specific special educational needs is a strength of the school. Expectations are good in Key Stages 1, and 3 and generally good at Key Stage 4. The lack of challenging accredited courses means that expectations are not always high enough with the oldest pupils in Year 11. In the main planning is good. For example at Key Stage 2 National Literacy Strategies and approaches are incorporated in detailed and precise planning. However in English, particular with pupils of secondary age there is a lack of detailed schemes of work to support teacher planning. Where planning is detailed, lessons have clear objectives, which ensure that lessons proceed with rigour. In lessons where the quality of teaching is satisfactory the objectives are not as defined and sometimes the planning is focussed on a description of activities.

26.Methods, organisation and management of pupils are good across the school. Teachers are skilled at behaviour management- often anticipating potential problems with perception. Time is generally used well, often ensuring that a range of strategies and methods are employed in one lesson to ensure a variety of approaches. Pupils seldom have the opportunity to become bored by being on the same task over-long. Group work is encouraged and pupils are given challenging tasks, such as performing a role-play where their independence is fostered. Learning support assistants are used very effectively within classrooms and make a very significant contribution to pupils' learning.

27.Teachers have a very good grasp of pupils' knowledge concepts and skills, which at an informal, instinctive level often informs what they propose to do next. Assessment has been reviewed since the last inspection but has still to become part of all teachers' working methodology. Marking is usually supportive and sets targets. Homework is set regularly where it is appropriate. It is usually relevant and extends the learning opportunities of the classroom.

The curriculum and assessment

28.Although significant improvements have been made to the curriculum since the last inspection, it remains unsatisfactory. The provision for information technology is poor and does not meet statutory

requirements. In addition the balance in the curriculum experiences which pupils receive is not assured in that some subjects, for example, physical education is given too much time at the expense of other subjects. The time allocated to subjects within and between key stages also varies significantly. More detailed schemes of work are required in some subjects, for example, English. The planning and organisation of the curriculum is weak as reflected in the timetable. For example, time allocated to mathematics varies from three to six lessons between classes and three separate teachers teach mathematics to one particular class. Finally, in Key Stage 4 insufficient accredited courses are available with the oldest pupils to provide pupils with appropriate relevance and challenge.

29. However, since the last inspection and particularly in the last two terms attempts have been made to provide pupils with a better balance of a more appropriate curriculum experience. Pupils now receive their entitlement to the National Curriculum, apart from in information technology. Sex education, religious education and personal, health and social education programmes are in place. The curriculum places an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy and these are now well supported across most subjects. Schemes of work of good quality have been produced in many, though not all, subjects which have benefited subject planning. A sound careers education programme is in place in which pupils learn about other people's roles in the community, undertake work experience and have links with a local college.

30. Access to the curriculum for pupils of both genders and of different or additional special educational needs is satisfactory, although physically disabled pupils cannot easily access the upper level classrooms. The practice of single sex physical education /games lessons distorts and makes for difficulties in wider curriculum planning and organisation.

31. Arrangements to ensure that there is continuity and progression in pupils' learning are of variable quality and can be unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 4 a much closer link needs to be made between activities undertaken in Year 10 and Year 11 classes in order to ensure that activities are relevant, challenging and provide continuity of experience. In the best lessons in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, planning is good with targets identified for each pupil linked to their individual education plans thus providing a clear focus for assessing pupils' progress. However, this process is inconsistent between teachers. In the least successful lessons, all pupils undertake the same work regardless of individual targets and continuity and progression in learning is unsatisfactory as a result.

32. Arrangements for the effective monitoring of the curriculum across the school have only recently been established and as yet the subject leaders do not take full responsibility for the quality of teaching and learning in their subject across the school. However, a whole school curriculum co-ordinator is now in place whose responsibility will include remedying many of the weaknesses currently present in the planning, organisation and monitoring of the curriculum.

33. Assessment procedures have been significantly improved since the last inspection but are very new and are not yet fully integrated into the planning and teaching arrangements of all staff. The new procedures are of good quality, backed up by a comprehensive policy document which places strong emphasis on the need for assessment to focus on the National Curriculum, be consistent across the school and closely link planning and assessment. The newly introduced long- and medium-term plans, focused on schemes of work, provide opportunities for teachers to focus on specific aspects of a subject or topic and assess pupil performance. Along with targets drawn from pupils' individual education plans this process is beginning to provide a level of co-ordination and consistency in assessment, which was lacking at the time of the last inspection. However, the procedures are very new and not all teachers have as yet fully assimilated the arrangements into their day-to-day practice.

34. Arrangements for statutory assessments and reviews, including meetings and reports, are thorough and of good quality.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

35. Overall, the provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils has improved since the last inspection and is now very good and a strength of the school.

36. The provision for the spiritual development of pupils is enhanced since the last inspection and is now very good. Pupils' spiritual development is fostered through the curriculum, acts of collective worship and assemblies. In its daily life, the school meets its aim to develop a respect for others in all pupils. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to develop thoughtful responses, for example when thinking about the rites of passage, such as the Jewish Bar Mitzvah and the relevance of a similar ceremony for the pupils. Similarly, pupils were equally thoughtful and reflective when hearing the story of Martin Luther King and the origin of the civil rights movement in the southern United States of America. Other occasions for reflection occur spontaneously in art, drama and science, though opportunities for such moments are rarely planned into the lessons. Collective worship is securely in place with singing and prayer, sometimes composed and read by the pupils, though care should be exercised that the pressure of time does not allow the opportunity for reflection to be lost. Occasional visitors, including local clergy, make positive contributions to pupils' spiritual development by joining in assemblies. The short piece of music playing quietly as the pupils congregate and disperse encourages a suitable atmosphere. Pupils listen attentively and answer perceptively during the short story. Religious education encourages pupils to think about fundamental values and the teaching of religions other than Christianity helps to develop a respect for other people's faiths and beliefs. Achievements in all aspects of life, which reinforce the school's expectations of achievement and behaviour, are celebrated and enhance the pupils' self-esteem, as they value the awards they receive highly.

37. The provision for moral development is also very good. The atmosphere of the school, which stresses respect for self and others, provides a strong, effective focus for pupils' moral development. Values are fostered through the very good, caring and supportive relationships that exist in classrooms between all staff and pupils. Throughout the school teachers and classroom assistants have very high expectations of good behaviour and personal responsibility. The youngest pupils are developing a confident and positive attitude towards people and property. Older pupils have clear ideas of right and wrong. They understand the need for all to keep to the rules as they are made for the good of all. An atmosphere of trust is encouraged and is evident throughout the school, based upon the principles of fairness and mutual respect. All members of staff present excellent role models in their daily dealings with the pupils. An important element in the development of the pupils' moral and social awareness is the personal, health and social education curriculum through the school. Almost all parents responding to the parents' questionnaire praise the school for its effectiveness in communicating positive values and attitudes.

38. The provision for social development is very good as well. Teachers promote the importance of listening to others and emphasise respect for others' work and ideas. Consequently, pupils show enjoyment in another's success, often by applauding spontaneously. Pupils are polite and both pupils and staff can be observed waiting, without prompting, while others are using the stairs. The school offers good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, such as small monitorial duties within the class routine, with younger pupils supported by adults when necessary, so that the school is an orderly community, where pupils respond with respect towards each other, staff, buildings, furniture and equipment. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to make choices and take decisions: some are planned in lessons, but also on other occasions, such as during lunchtime. Pupils' social development is also strengthened by the many opportunities they have to work together collaboratively, either in

pairs or small groups. Playtimes and lunchtimes are very pleasant occasions with all pupils mixing happily together on their respective playgrounds. School Council meetings are recently instituted, but are swiftly growing into an effective means of developing pupils' sense of being a part of a community and promoting the ethos of the school. A very good range of out-of-school activities also supports the development of good social skills. Pupils participate in competitive sports and cultural activities that raise their self-esteem and confidence in social situations. An extension of these opportunities occurs for a few pupils who are integrated into mainstream schools for some lessons. The many residential visits also support very effectively the development of the social skills needed when living away from home within a small community. Further opportunities occur for older pupils, who may attend local colleges and undertake work experience.

39. The overall provision for cultural development has also been improved and is now good. In particular, western culture is promoted. Many visits are made to places of historical and cultural interest, such as museums, art galleries, arts festivals and France. Additionally, the school holds an arts festival of work by the Mid-Essex Special Schools. Examples of pictures by famous artists are on display in the school, and, though musical appreciation is not strong, performance is, with an enthusiastic singing in class and assemblies. In religious education, pupils learn about the major world religions other than Christianity. These aid the development of tolerance and respect for others' culture and views and there are some visitors to the school, such as the parents who assisted in the pupils' understanding of Hinduism. Further development needs to be given to this aspect generally throughout the school to equip pupils for life in a multi-cultural society and to meet the specific needs of the very small minority of ethnic groups in the school.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

40. Procedures for monitoring academic progress and personal development are good. Academic progress is monitored through assessment arrangements, which have been recently revised. Monitoring arrangements for personal development are carried out through annual reviews, individual education plans and the personal, health and social education programme. Pupils are informed, and given a copy of the targets in their individual education plans. The personal, social and health education programme is well set out and taught throughout the school.

41. The arrangements for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory. Class teachers make the headteacher aware of any problems and these are discussed in regular meetings with the education welfare officer. Attendance registers are appropriately maintained and taken both at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions.

42. The procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour are good and consistently used by staff. Children are generally aware of the behaviour expected in class and members of staff ensure that unsatisfactory behaviour is dealt with. Incidents are recorded in the Day Book, on incident cards or in the pupils' files, and regularly monitored by staff. Concerns are also discussed in staff meetings. Bullying is similarly monitored and taken seriously. Pupils spoken to were happy that bullying is rare, and that there are systems in place should they need help and advice. They confirmed that members of staff are always available and would sort out any problems.

43. There are induction procedures for children admitted to the school and prospective parents are always welcome to visit and look round the school.

44. The school provides a safe and caring environment. The last inspection found that staff members were not aware of the local education authority guidance on the use of physical restraint. Staff spoken to confirm that they are now aware of the correct procedures. These are rarely used and any incidents are documented. The last inspection also identified that pupils were not expected to log in and out of

school when they left and returned to the premises during the school day. This still remains the case, although class teachers are aware when a pupil leaves the class.

45.The headteacher is the designated officer for child protection and members of staff have now received appropriate guidance. A Health and Safety Policy is in place and risk assessment has been carried out. A local education authority health and safety audit has taken place recently. A number of staff members are trained in the administration of first-aid and steps are taken to advise all appropriate staff where pupils have particular medical needs. The pupils receive regular medical checks. Pupils are made aware of health and safety and child protection issues through the personal, health and social education programme.

Partnership with parents and the community

46.The information provided for parents by the school is good overall. Termly newsletters are sent out and the headteacher sends regular information letters to parents. Good use is made of the home/school diary, which is used as both a record of homework and as a well-used means of communication between school and home. The last inspection found that the school prospectus did not meet statutory requirements, and this remains the case.

47.Annual reports for parents are satisfactory and reports describe work covered in all subjects well. However few subjects give sufficient detail of what pupils can do, standards attained and areas in which progress can be made, or give an indication of future targets. However, parents state that they value the reports, which they feel are accurate and helpful.

48.The school receives good support from the Parents and Teacher Association, which raises funds for the school. In their responses to the questionnaire, the majority of those who responded confirmed that they were encouraged to become involved in the life of the school. The school uses a range of voluntary helpers effectively.

49.Links with the wider community are good. There is a good programme of work experience. Good use is made of local facilities, in particular in science there are good links with local secondary schools with the use of valuable resources, curriculum advice and integration. There are good visits regarding the environment and ecology, and the use of some specialist centres. In careers, there are good links with traders and employers. In history and geography a range of fieldwork is carried out which has a positive impact on learning. Pupils participate in challenging residential outward-bound activities at the Maes y Lade Outdoor Centre in mid-Wales.

50.A number of visitors come into the school on a regular basis, including the police and fire brigade. There are links with mainstream schools and this year the school is building links with other special schools. Overall, the work of the school is enriched by links with the wider community.

The management and efficiency of the school

Leadership and management

51.The headteacher provides very good leadership. She is clear about the changes that need to take place within the school. Significantly, many of the improvements noted since the last inspection have taken place in the relatively short period since her appointment. She works hard and successfully to ensure that the growing sense of common purpose is shared by all and enacted in the daily life of the

school. The headteacher sees the school as a community where individuals are valued and this is reflected in the very good relationships and the modelling of respect accorded to individuals.

52. At the time of the inspection the senior management of the school was in the process of change, a deputy headteacher was to be appointed and members of the senior management team have taken on additional roles in the interim period. The head of upper school is providing effective support in her role of whole-school curriculum co-ordinator. There has also been close and effective support to the headteacher by the local education authority linked adviser.

53. The governing body is very committed and supportive of the school. It has recently undergone a number of changes in its structure and personnel. The governing body has a range of expertise and is now very well placed, building on the effective partnership with the headteacher, to provide a clear educational direction for the school and to provide the necessary support and appropriate critical challenge to monitor and evaluate the school's progress in development.

54. Curriculum co-ordinators have been appointed who are responsible for ensuring the development of their subject. The professional climate, whereby individuals are able to work alongside other colleagues, to challenge or support the work going on and seeing themselves as part of a team bringing specific skills to the team, has yet to develop, particularly with regard to adequate monitoring, evaluation and review.

55. The school development plan is formulated through extensive discussions and sets an effective shared agenda for development, with immediate objectives and longer-term goals. The priorities are appropriate and action to address the issues is on target. The school's aims are being met in most respects but modification to the curriculum organisation is required so that pupils are receiving sufficient experiences in different subjects in order to fulfil their potential.

56. Improvements since the last inspection are good. The capacity for future developments is very good. The school's ethos, in particular, the climate for learning, pupils' attitudes to work, relationships throughout the school and the increasing focus on pupils' progress and the commitment to equal opportunities is very good.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

57. The staffing level is good overall and is in line with the Department of Education and Employment recommendations. The majority of the staff members are very experienced and many have given long service to the school. All the teachers have responsibility for areas of the curriculum and all are satisfactorily qualified and experienced to co-ordinate their subjects. A lack of balance for the time given to each subject skews the timetable and leads to inefficiencies in the use of specialist staff. Members of the teaching staff operate confidently and often very effectively when teaching their main subjects but, when teaching subjects in which they have limited experience and knowledge, their teaching is not always satisfactory. This is especially the case in subjects where there is a need for specific skills such as music and information technology. Support staff make a very good contribution to the school. They have confidence, support pupils very effectively and show great initiative. Staff appraisal is satisfactory but there is no formal induction policy or process, although informal arrangements are operating. Staff development is satisfactory. Job descriptions for all staff have been reviewed and re-written where necessary.

58. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. The school has good quality specialist rooms for design and technology, food technology, information technology and physical education. The absence of specialist rooms does impose limitations on science at Key Stages 3 and 4. Music is restricted to the range of instruments, which can be easily transported in the box available to each key stage. Many rooms are small, have limited storage or shelf space on which to accommodate large equipment such as

information technology equipment. Wall areas suitable for display are limited especially in the classroom in which much of the art is taught. There is no medical inspection room. Changing room facilities are satisfactory but the showers in the boys' area are not functioning. Toilets have been refurbished and are now of very good quality. The parking areas for arriving and departing pupils are unsatisfactory and the danger caused by pupils crossing the road to reach their transport remains as described in the previous inspection report.

59. The level of provision of resources is satisfactory. A large investment has been made in the school and class libraries. The school library contains fiction and non-fiction books with a wide range of reading and interest levels. Sets of readers are available for paired reading which involves pupils reading to each other and offering analysis of each other's performance. The library is centrally sited in an open area, which connects different wings of the school and through which pupils move from one room to another. This makes the library fully accessible but restricts its use as a study centre in which vulnerable information technology equipment can be placed. Resources available are good in science, information technology and very good in design and technology, food technology and physical education. Resources for teaching multi-faiths in religious education are unsatisfactory. More investment in resources for modern foreign languages is required to supplement the home-made resources and to give pupils the experience of authentic materials and to use the resources available for English more efficiently. Good use is made of the school grounds as a learning resource. Good use is also made of facilities in the locality and further afield such as the climbing wall at Essex University, a golf driving range, leisure centres, local and London museums and galleries.

The efficiency of the school

60. Overall, efficiency is satisfactory. Financial planning is very good. The Governing Body, through its Finance and Premises Committee, is fully involved and undertakes detailed analysis of the needs of the school. It then uses this to underpin its very effective financial planning. Financial planning is incorporated into the detailed and comprehensive school improvement plan, which covers a three-year cycle. The Governing Body receives copies of the monthly reconciliation reports provided to the school as part of the financial support package bought in from the local education authority. These are analysed and checked against the school improvement plan and developments achieved in school. The slightly larger than recommended surplus in the 1998/99 budget was planned for use with specific developments. Members of staff with management responsibilities are involved in financial planning and receive regular budget statements.

61. The use of teaching staff is unsatisfactory. There is a significant imbalance in the time allocated to the range of subjects across the curriculum. For example, pupils have a greater than usual amount of physical education and art. There is also imbalance in the amount of time given to different classes within the same subject. For example in Key Stage 3 mathematics class 6 have four lessons, class 7 have six and class 8 have five. Greater difficulties are caused in Key Stages 3 and 4 where it is more usual for teachers to be subject specialists. Imbalances cause difficulties in constructing the school timetable and these reduce the effectiveness of teachers and cause inefficiency. For example in mathematics where two teachers teach class 6, three teachers teach class 7 and two teachers teach class 8. Timetabling in the future should seek to reduce the number of teachers teaching a class a particular subject. It should also take into account teacher specialisms and expertise, particularly at Key Stages 3 and 4 to ensure a better balance of general and specialist teaching with secondary pupils. Subject co-ordinators are required currently to co-ordinate large numbers of teachers teaching their subject, some of whom teach it for only a few lessons per week. Overall, good use is made of support staff.

62. The use made of learning resources and accommodation is satisfactory. Classrooms have dual use as teaching bases and specialist rooms. This increases the amount of time they are occupied and

therefore their efficiency. The information technology room contains seven computers but this relatively large investment is used for 30 per cent of the time available. Other computers in classrooms are not fully utilised in teaching specialist subjects partly because not all teachers have the necessary level of expertise. Good use is made of the school grounds as a teaching resource. A wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits to museums and similar resources makes a significant contribution to the education of pupils.

63. There is a very good level of efficiency in financial control and school administration. The administrative staff has received training and is expert in the use of computerised systems for financial administration. All financial regulations are adhered to and mechanisms for checking the school's systems are an integral part of the support package provided by the local authority. The Essex County Council Treasurer's Department audited the school in April 1999 and the recommendations have been met or are in the process of being met. The school administration system is very efficient and the costs are at an appropriate level for a school of this type and size.

64. In view of the good standard of teaching and good progress made by pupils, the very good attitudes and behaviour of pupils and very good relationships with staff together with the good leadership and management, the school now provides good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education

English

65. Overall, pupils make at least satisfactory progress in English and very often progress is good or better.

At Key Stage 1 pupils make at least good progress and sometimes very good progress. Listening skills are generally good and they are developing their confidence in discussion, for example talking about a specific television programme they have watched. Year 2 pupils

66. have a good knowledge about how a book 'works' and the role of author and illustrator and are beginning to express their appreciation of, for example 'The Five Green Monsters'. They know about the purpose of punctuation and can match letter sounds to the printed letter. Individuals are able to read sentences. Some can copy a sentence whilst others learn how to shape letters.

67. At Key Stage 2 pupils make at least sound and often good progress. By Year 6 pupils show increased confidence in discussion and can explain ideas with greater clarity. They have a clear understanding that instructions have to be approached in a logical manner e.g. when programming a video recorder. The text chosen enhances their reading skills. They can express their views about ideas contained in a piece of writing. Reading ability varies with individuals but is generally sufficient to follow basic instructions and simple texts. Some are able to write in simple sentences.

68. At Key Stage 3 pupils make good progress. Pupils are able to communicate their ideas with greater confidence particularly in informal situations. They are attentive in their listening. Reading skills vary but in the main, they are able to read simple texts accurately and independently. Ideas are developed into a sequence of sentences. They understand the rules of writing but individuals require support.

69. Pupils at Key Stage 4 make sound progress. Speaking and listening skills by Year 11 are well developed and pupils are confident in informal situations such as when discussing aspects of school life with a visitor. They are less confident in more formal situations, such as responding to questions about topical events in a classroom. Reading skills show development and progression. Most are able to read accurately and demonstrate their understanding of the key features of a simple text and they are able to compare texts, for example different newspapers. Pupils' writing is organised, clear and usually accurate.

70. The school held a poetry assembly to mark poetry day. There was clear and evident progression in the writing. For example, a Year 6 pupil wrote:

'A crisp cut
A taste of nature.'
describing an apple.

A Year 11 pupil read out her poem :
'I would watch the waves
Smashing into each other
And I would listen to them and the wind

I would watch the clouds
Floating by
Then I would pick
Up the wind

And sail back home.’

71. Language skills are supported well across the curriculum with a good emphasis on spoken language.

72. Overall, pupils’ attitudes to English are good and never less than satisfactory. They are always at least good at Key Stages 1 and 3. Pupils engage with the activity willingly, respond well to question and answer sessions and listen attentively. Behaviour is always good and pupils are co-operative with each other and are able to concentrate and stay on the tasks. Generally, they are responsive, keen enthusiastic and involved. Relationships are always positive. These very positive attributes are more clearly demonstrated when there is a clear class dynamic- perhaps all pupils focussing on a common activity, albeit in groups carrying out different work. Pupils’ attitudes tended to be satisfactory during individualised work, which was often presented as on-going tasks to be done.

73. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. It is never less than satisfactory and sometimes very good. It is at least good at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 3. It is often good at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 4 the higher expectations implicit in the Year 10 course are reflected in good teaching.

74. Where lessons are good they are prepared well with direct reference to individual education plans. The work on the National Literacy Strategy is clearly reflected in the detail of the planning and is having a positive impact on progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. In the best lessons, teachers have thought through the lesson carefully so that they have a clear idea of what they want to achieve by the end of the lesson. Consequently, lessons have a good pace. In these lessons, expectations are high and therefore pupils are presented with appropriately demanding work. Resources are well prepared. All teachers know the pupils very well and relationships throughout the school are very good and supportive of learning. In these good lessons, the style of the teacher is motivating, supportive and encouraging and the teacher seeks to involve all pupils. Pupil management throughout the school is good. Very good use is made of learning support assistants throughout the school. Questioning is usually effective and many teachers are good listeners giving pupils the time to think and respond. All teachers are very experienced and have sufficient subject knowledge. Teaching tends to be less effective when the teacher spends the majority of time responding to specific individual queries of a pupil and giving help one to one on demand. This reactive approach leads to the pace of the lesson being determined by pupils’ work rate.

75. The school lacks detailed schemes of work for English, particularly but not exclusively at Key Stages 3 and 4. Progression and the range of work, though defined in broad terms, do not have sufficient detail to support teacher planning. At the moment work is teacher dependent. The objectives and expectations for English are not clear enough. Greater clarity is required concerning the objectives and expectations for English for each year group. The curriculum offered meets statutory requirements for English. The co-ordinator for the subject has only recently been appointed and at the time of the inspection was in the process of settling into the school and has not, as yet, had the opportunity of reviewing the teaching of the subject particularly in the upper school.

Mathematics

76. Overall, the progress that pupils make in mathematics is good. Pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1, 3 and 4 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2.

77. In Key Stage 1 pupils are able to follow class procedures and systems. Higher attaining pupils can count to five and colour with care. They find numbers on a number line, recognise the highest number and count on by two and three. In Key Stage 2 pupils recognise equivalent coins, count on from five pence to ten pence, know days of the week and count and order numbers to 20.

78. In Key Stage 3 pupils can count in 10s to 100 and recognise $>$ as greater than and $<$ as less than. They order numbers to 100 and recognise place value through practical activities. They rearrange three integers to make the highest number. Higher attaining pupils can order numbers to 1000. In Key Stage 4 pupils recognise quarter, half and full turns as 90, 180 and 360 degrees. They count in 100s beyond 1000 and can round numbers to the nearest 10 and 100. They can add and subtract to 1000, including decomposition. They make financial decisions in relation to budgeting to furnish a flat. Pupils achieve passes in the Associated Examining Board Basic Skills in Numeracy examinations.

79. There is effective use of mathematics across the school in subjects such as science, food technology, textiles and history. In the classes for younger pupils, registration time is also used as an opportunity for using counting, learning the days of the week and the order of the day's lessons and concept of time. Most classes have made a good start with using the general lesson outline planning associated with the National Numeracy Strategy and this is already making an impact on the pupils' performance. No use of computer software was in evidence in the pupils' work, but this aspect is in development following the re-organisation of information technology provision.

80. All pupils respond well and nearly always, their attitude to learning is good. In Key Stage 3 attitudes are often very good. In most lessons pupils settle well, display a willingness to learn and readily show their books to visitors. Pupils concentrate well and generally persevere for long periods, including in the youngest classes, where good work habits of concentration, attention and presentation are promoted. They collaborate well when working in pairs or groups. Older pupils are well motivated and show a developing ability to work independently for reasonable periods. Relationships between pupils and adults are always very good. Pupils respect their teachers, their classrooms and resources and enjoy receiving praise for their efforts.

81. Overall, the teaching of mathematics is good. It is always at least satisfactory and often good. In Key Stage 3 much of the teaching is very good. In Key Stage 2 it is satisfactory. All four attainment targets are covered, and there is an appropriate emphasis on using and applying in real life situations. Teachers know the subject and have a good knowledge of each individual pupil in their class. Teachers are generally well prepared, have a confident presentation and appropriately high expectations of work and behaviour. Individual lessons are usually clearly planned with clear objectives in line with the National Numeracy Strategy. They offer a variety of opportunities for the pupils to acquire mathematical understanding through a range of teaching approaches and selective use of resources. Work is generally demanding and well matched to the ability of the pupils. Time is also usefully spent in reviewing relevant previous lessons, reinforcing and consolidating each earlier gain in knowledge so that it may be used as a foundation for future learning. Lessons start briskly and maintain a good pace, with resources readily available when needed by a pupil. Teachers complete the pupil record tables regularly and assessment of pupils' progress is made in relation to these. Sometimes lessons have a more general, theme-based approach and the focus is upon using and applying the knowledge and skills pupils have acquired in the other lessons. All teachers use praise well to encourage pupils and promote learning. Learning support assistants play an important role in all classes and are very effectively enhancing pupils' progress. Homework is sometimes set, but this is not yet an established practice in all classes for older pupils.

82. The co-ordinator for mathematics offers good leadership. She is now well supported by the headteacher and is beginning to monitor the mathematics curriculum, though the monitoring of teaching is not yet developed. An appropriate scheme of work is now in place and pupils' progress is assessed and recorded effectively both generally and in relation to their individual education plans. Very effective use of the learning support assistants is made in this aspect in some classes. There is not yet an appropriate range of external accreditation available to the pupils, though this is being addressed and pupils now in Year 10 will have the opportunity to sit for a Certificate of Achievement in mathematics in 2001. Classrooms are generally satisfactory and the resources available are good.

for the delivery of a full and appropriate mathematics curriculum.

Science

83.Overall, progress in science is good. The test and teacher assessment records held by the school show a good pattern of improved attainment from one key stage to the next, over the two years prior to the inspection. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 move on well to more formal science from their first experiences of learning about the world around them. For example, Year 1 pupils correctly described colours and textures of leaves, most recognising that they came from trees. Progress, overall, during Key Stage 2 is satisfactory because most pupils learn the key points targeted by their lessons. For example, Year 6 understood enough about different types of materials to group samples sensibly. However, in Key Stage 2, low-attaining pupils do not always get enough help to learn as they should and high-attaining pupils find too much of the work too easy. Progress during Key Stage 3 is good. Pupils of all abilities learn effectively and plenty of work is covered in each of the lessons. A Year 8 class studied the nutritional value of various foods. They used scientific terms correctly and with creditable fluency, and understood how to draw up balanced diets for a range of circumstances. High-attaining pupils had plenty of extra, harder work to cover, low-attaining pupils overcame initial errors in their work, and pupils with poor confidence and inadequate communication skills overcame these additional special educational needs. Progress in Key Stage 4 is good overall. Year 10 make very good progress toward the level of accreditation sought by the school. Year 11 make unsatisfactory progress because they study too little science, and the approach - though interesting and relevant - avoids the challenge of accreditation. The previous balance of coverage of science before the inspection was distorted with too much work on life processes, and too little on scientific investigation, materials and physical processes. The school has taken suitable steps to resolve this weakness.

84.The response of pupils to science is good in the secondary part of the school but more variable in Key Stages 1 and 2. The youngest pupils include some who need considerable help from staff to maintain concentration and a secure focus on the teacher and the resources, and others who can work steadily. Overall, the behaviour and attitudes of pupils in Key Stage 1 are satisfactory or at least amenable to the directions and help from staff. In Key Stage 2 some pupils do not concentrate well on their work and behave erratically. Others, who are very interested in science, behave sensibly on their own initiative. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 learn well. Many have very good attitudes, are keen about science and willing to complete work with care. Most have the determination to cope with tasks, which they find hard, often showing impressive initiative and independence. Pupils with weaknesses in response, such as behavioural problems or aspects of autism, respond well to science. The co-operation amongst pupils is very good and they show good levels of respect and courtesy to staff. For example, Year 10 had much information about life processes for selected animals. Most independently decided key points, avoiding irrelevancies. Some, such as those with literacy or other weaknesses, showed great determination to complete the work on their own.

85.Teaching overall is good, with lessons ranging from very good to unsatisfactory. The weaknesses are in the teaching in Key Stage 2. Teachers have adequate expertise about science but are not using it to plan work adapted to the needs of either low- or high-attaining pupils. Their expectations and lesson planning are middle of the road. A general strength of the teaching to all ages is the expert knowledge about the pupils' capacity to learn and that members of staff assess well the day-to-day progress of pupils. Overall, resources are interesting and varied. The use of learning support assistants is very good and sometimes excellent. The few lapses in the quality of teaching are where pupils are left confused about what is required of them, and behaviour is allowed to slip. In a considerable majority of lessons, pupils' behaviour and attitudes are managed well, and the pace of work is maintained effectively. The most effective teaching is in Key Stage 3 and Year 10 where

planning is very thorough, assessment systems are secure, useful homework is set, and a very good environment for learning is created, meeting the needs of all pupils.

86.Science is led very well. The major changes put in place very recently have already created important improvements. Sufficient time is now allocated to science and, mostly, the planned curriculum is well balanced. Year 11 provision does not meet the requirements for Key Stage 4 science. This is because not enough time is used for science, no accreditation is offered and the balance of topics is weak. Currently Year 10 has a good curriculum. The school proposes to carry this into Year 11 next year. The new schemes of work for Key Stages 1-3 and Year 10 specify in good detail what is to be taught and how to assess it, and the overall distribution of work ensures good continuity and progression. There are effective links to the planning for the early years approaches for younger pupils. Pupils benefit from the decision to use specialist teaching for Key Stage 3 and Year 10. As yet, the school has not made clear when monitoring of the changes will happen, nor the processes by which any weaknesses will be resolved. The science base is a general classroom. This is inadequate for science up to Key Stage 4. The use made of this room overcomes many of its limitations. The good stock of resources, including information technology, is used well. Since the last inspection, standards have improved, and underachievement is overcome for Key Stage 3 and Year 10. The school is well on the way to securing full coverage of the National Curriculum programmes of study. Leadership is now very good with full and effective use made of the resources available.

Information Technology

87.Overall, progress in information technology is poor. The main reason is that provision is too narrow. Pupils lack understanding of how to exploit information technology for specific purposes because too much time is spent in lessons training them to undertake specific small-scale tasks. For example, a Year 7 class typed in the word "Grendel" and was directed to try out different fonts and to vary the layout of the word on the page before printing the image. The printout was to be the basis for a title page for their work on the Beowulf poem. Also pupils do not learn the full range of information technology that it is required. The weaknesses apply to pupils in Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4. Year 11 have just started a course, which is expected to be broader. Most pupils can enter text and alter its appearance in controlled ways. They can explore the contents of a CD ROM. Some pupils have directed the movements of a robot, or printed images provided by the software. Progress for low-attaining pupils is insecure, sometimes adequate though narrow, and sometimes poor because they become confused. High-attaining pupils make poor progress because they are not helped to think enough about the strengths and weaknesses of information technology tools, even for the limited range of tools, which they use.

88.The response of pupils to information technology is satisfactory. They behave well being mostly quiet, calm and orderly, and readily amenable to the requests of staff. Equipment is treated well, and pupils are willing and helpful. With younger classes, such as those in Key Stage 2 a very few pupils either lack self-control or have additional special needs including dysfunctional behaviour. These pupils occasionally impede the learning of others. Pupils, especially those in Key Stage 3, co-operate and help each other to an impressive extent. The overall weakness in the pupils' response is that they do not have opportunities to gain independence, and they lack the keenness and excitement, which is usual in well taught information technology lessons.

89.Teaching is unsatisfactory because there is too little impact on learning and progress. Plans are poor, lacking detail about what level of attainment is targeted, and not making clear the different approaches to be used with pupils of different prior attainment. Almost all teachers lack confidence about using the equipment and lack knowledge about National Curriculum information technology. There are good features to the teaching. Teachers organise aspects of the work well, though overall it is too narrow. Tasks are clear to pupils, the pace of work is driven forward well, and learning support

assistants are deployed to very good effect. Pupils are motivated and controlled effectively. Teachers lack systematic assessment about information technology but are very alert and aware of how well pupils perform in lessons.

90.The school is at a very early stage in re-organising its approach to information and communication technologies. At present, the use of these technologies to support other subjects is weak, except for science. The school has suitable schemes of work and assessment procedures but the co-ordinator has not shared these sufficiently nor yet shown teachers how to use them. Members of staff have not been trained effectively enough to allow them to cope. There are weaknesses in the plan for the re-organisation of the subject. For example, many teachers are asked to teach much more information technology than they ever did before, yet the process of support and monitoring is not planned. The equipment in use is adequate though the number of computers per pupil is low relative to the average in special schools. The school has established suitable links to the National Grid for Learning initiative. The computer room is small and very crowded when a full class use it - as a result some classes share their access time and then pupils have too little time using information technology. Statutory elements of National Curriculum information technology are omitted in the teaching for many and significantly reduced for the rest; specifically, handling information, control work and modelling. Since the last inspection the school has invested sensibly in computer hardware and updated its software. There has been far too little improvement, as yet, in broadening pupils' experiences of the subject. The school has set up timetabled teaching of the subject rather than relying on a cross-curricular approach. The underlying professional development, schemes of work, systems for assessment, and ways of managing provision are unsatisfactory.

Religious Education

91.Overall, progress in religious education is satisfactory. At Key Stage 1 pupils know the Christian creation story. They understand that prayer is 'talking to God' and 'Amen' means the prayer is finished. At Key Stage 2 they experience sharing and serving others and understand the difference between good and bad behaviour. Pupils can understand and discuss why friends and some days, such as birthdays, are 'special' and know that a fingerprint is 'special' to one person.

92.At Key Stage 3 pupils recall facts about Buddha and 'the middle way'. They understand the meaning of the story of The Buddha and King Paknadi the Fat and relate it simply to examples in modern life. Pupils compare the Jewish festival Sukkot with a Christian Harvest Festival and recall the story of Ruth, with its key themes of loyalty and kindness. At Key Stage 4 pupils discuss Bar Mitzvah and its significance, as well as other ceremonies and know that Hebrew is another name for Jew. They show understanding of the responsibility of obedience to The Ten Commandments and discuss the right age for 'adult' responsibilities.

93.Pupils' response is always at least satisfactory and in the youngest classes is very good. In these classes pupils listen to teachers very attentively, are extremely interested and become fully involved in the lesson. They are keen to answer questions. In older classes, concentration is generally sustained well. Pupils listen to each other's answers politely, showing good skills in speaking and listening and most contribute thoughtfully in discussion times. When concentration lapses or interest declines a quiet word or look from the teacher is usually all that is required for a pupil to return to the work in hand. Written work is usually presented carefully.

94.Teaching is always at least satisfactory. Occasionally it is good. Teachers have a secure grasp of the subject. Planning is effective, with the main points of the lesson clearly expressed by most teachers. Generally, teachers have demanding expectations of behaviour and pupils are usually able to meet them. Teachers manage behaviour well and maintain a good relationship with pupils, allowing them to express their opinions and treating their views with respect. Time is not wasted when pupils

move between activities, such as forming small groups for discussion or regrouping for the plenary, and these last few minutes of the lesson are used productively to review the content of the lesson, orally assessing the pupils' understanding and recall of the salient facts. In most lessons, there is a realistic balance between oral, written and reviewed work. However, there are missed opportunities to develop independent writing skills in older pupils by the excessive use of worksheets.

95. Standards of progress, response and teaching have been maintained since the last inspection. Sound leadership is developing the subject well. The 1995 inspection reported that insufficient attention was given to other religions. The policy and scheme of work has been amended to provide relevance and secure progressive development between all key stages and meets the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus, although the amount of time devoted to the subject each week is at the low end of the average range. Procedures for monitoring the curriculum and teaching are not yet effective. Nor is there an assessment system that will ensure effective monitoring of pupils' progress in the subject, though this forms part of the co-ordinator's development targets. Accommodation for several classes is small, good use is made of available space for the display of resources and artefacts of religious significance. There is a good selection of reading and video resources and arrangements are already in hand to improve those areas of weakness in artefacts.

Other subjects or courses

Art

96. Pupils make very good progress in Key Stage 1. They learn how to use a range of materials and produce pictures using many techniques. Patterns are made using bubbles of different colours. The qualities of a range of colours are explored when paint is dribbled across the paper. Pupils have made prints using patterns cut into potatoes and paint spread on their hands. Pupils at Key Stage 2 make good progress. They develop their ability to undertake activities that are more complex and successfully use new techniques. Printing skills are enhanced through the use of lino-prints. Their understanding of how colours of differing intensities can create mood and make interesting patterns is further increased. Pupils develop understanding of the work of, and can produce work in the style of, recognised artists. Pupils make very good progress at Key Stage 3. They understand that there is a need to plan their work carefully and to identify the most appropriate materials to use to achieve the best results. Their understanding of primary colours is well established and they know how to achieve exact shades through careful mixing. Pupils make very good progress at Key Stage 4. Pupils develop previously learned techniques further and increase their understanding of the work of recognised artists.

97. Pupils respond very positively in art lessons. At all key stages nearly all behave very well, listen carefully to instructions and maintain their concentration throughout the lesson. They think carefully about the work they are producing and discuss with other pupils, as well as the staff, how best to undertake it. Pupils sensitively offer comment on the work of other pupils and try to help each other. This is a direct result of the ethos created in art lessons by both teachers and support assistants who are very warm and supportive. This influences the pupils and leads to high standards of behaviour, frequent displays of caring between pupils and a general determination to achieve the highest standards.

98. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and often very good. Teachers in all key stages are well prepared and have a thorough knowledge of art and how best to teach it. Their planning is very good, the equipment is organised very effectively and targets set in pupils' individual education plans are addressed in art lessons. For example, the teacher in one lesson specifically reminded a pupil of how to hold his brush and later checked his technique. Teachers have high expectations and pupils often achieve them because they are supported effectively. Tasks are clearly explained, teachers and assistants motivate and enthuse pupils and the level of challenge is appropriate. Teachers and support

assistants are highly skilled in dealing with distressed pupils. One boy in Key Stage 1 reacted in an extreme way to the presence of a crayon of a particular colour. The assistant demonstrated excellent child management skills and the teacher maintained the pace and momentum of the lesson.

99. Arrangements for the co-ordination of art throughout the school have only very recently been re-organised. The co-ordinator now has responsibility for development of the subject in all key stages and this is proving to be an effective strategy. Planning systems are now common to all key stages and a system of assessment is almost ready for implementation. Accommodation is unsatisfactory because the art room doubles as a classroom, there is space for only one computer, storage space is barely adequate, the size of the display area within the room is poor and space and facilities for three-dimensional work are very limited. The accommodation is imposing limitations upon the range of media, which can be taught in art. There is a significant imbalance in the amount of time allocated to art in different key stages. Pupils in Key Stage 3 have three and a half times more art than pupils in Key Stage 1.

Design and Technology

100. Pupils make good progress in lessons in design and technology, including food technology and textiles. Progress is good in eight out of ten lessons. Progress is at its best in Key Stage 4.

101. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 use a range of materials, including textiles, to make things and develop their understanding of how things are made and how they work. They join and combine materials, generate ideas and explore ways that improvements can be made to their models, for example in a Year 5 class making models of a fairground. In Key Stage 1 pupils use simple construction kits and modelling material. A group of Year 6 pupils designed and made a wheeled vehicle, testing it for strength and rolling abilities.

102. In food technology lessons pupils begin to show an understanding of hygiene and develop skills such as chopping, slicing and cutlery use. They begin to appreciate the importance of ratios and ingredients and accurate weighing and measuring.

103. In Key Stage 3 pupils consolidate their knowledge and skills from earlier work. They start to work with a wider range of materials including resistant materials, which require new techniques and extend their manipulation skills. A group of Year 9 pupils were designing and making a wooden egg cup which required not only sound making techniques but also an appreciation of finish, giving good cross-curricular links with art. Pupils are making clear progress in their ability to solve problems, test their ideas and make a good quality finished article. Good curriculum work occurs, for example in textiles where pupils are using their knowledge of heraldry in making appliqué coats of arms.

104. In food technology pupils develop a wider range of skills in preparing goods. They consider different methods of preparation as well as questions about diet and nutrition. In the preparation of foods, they use hand mixers and other electrical appliances appropriately and safely. They learn about different types of meals, for example, one group made filled jacket potatoes and they are able to prepare a meal under certain conditions, for example, using only a microwave cooker.

105. In Key Stage 4 pupils further refine and consolidate the skills, knowledge and understanding from their previous work. They undertake design projects, which require significant manipulative skills. In the designing and making of a weather vane, they employ a wide range of skills working with metal and demonstrate an understanding of problem-solving and testing. In food technology, previous skills and knowledge are further extended and pupils are able to cook complete meals to high standards, for example lasagne, having first given consideration to content of the meal including nutrition and costs.

106. Pupils' attitudes to learning in all design and technology lessons are good or very good. They always engage positively in the activity, show perseverance and accept quite hard challenges in terms

of solving problems or difficult manipulative processes. For example, a group of Year 10 pupils are using brazing techniques and using the metal lathe in their work on the weather vane. They show enjoyment and enthusiasm for the subject and a good work ethic is present in design and technology lessons. Behaviour and discipline are good and pupils work well together and readily help each other.

107.The quality of teaching across the school in design and technology is never less than satisfactory and is good or very good in over three-quarters of lessons. It is at its best in Key Stage 4, where a subject specialist teaches it very well. All teachers have a good understanding of the subject, their planning is good and reflects the needs of the National Curriculum appropriately. The planning of lessons and activities in Key Stage 4 lessons carried out by the subject specialist is of excellent quality. Teachers use resources and learning support assistants well, have good relationships with pupils and are always positive, supportive and friendly towards pupils. There is a very positive ethos in all design and technology lessons.

108.The learning support assistant who supports most design and technology lessons in the resistant materials workshop is of outstanding quality, her interest and skills in the subject both support teaching and positively impact on pupils' attainments and progress.

109.The subject currently has no co-ordinator but the policy, recording systems set in place by the previous post holder are of sound quality and being used appropriately until a new appointment is made.

110.Resources and accommodation for design and technology are very good consisting of a very well equipped resistant materials workshop and a dedicated food technology room with a small annexe for textiles work.

Geography

111.Few lessons of geography were observed during the inspection. Evidence is drawn from lessons seen, documentation, teachers' planning, scrutiny of pupils' work, displays around the school and discussion with pupils, the subject co-ordinator and other staff.

112.From the evidence pupils in all key stages make at least satisfactory progress. Geography skills and awareness with the youngest pupils is developed through cross-curricular topics in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 3 and 4 termly topics address the areas of study in the National Curriculum and provide pupils with practical opportunities to make observations, do practical map work and study areas of interest both locally and further afield. For example, a Year 5 class is making observations of the weather on a daily basis and producing a weather chart whilst a Year 6 class is using a globe to identify specific countries and discuss relative distances from the United Kingdom. Older pupils are comparing climates in different parts of the world and another group is developing map reading skills by learning and practising use of symbols.

113.Across all key stages pupils' attitudes are at least satisfactory in geography lessons and in the lessons seen they are often good. Pupils show interest in the subject and usually enjoy the tasks set. They ask questions and readily answer when questioned. Behaviour is good and there is a good work ethic in geography lessons.

114.Teaching in geography ranges from satisfactory to very good in equal measures. Overall, it is good. In the very good teaching lessons have good pace, activities are interesting and challenging, planning is very good and the teacher has good subject knowledge and expertise. In less successful teaching tasks set for pupils are repetitive and lack challenge.

115.The subject is well led by the co-ordinator and planning is co-ordinated across the school. Monitoring of the subject is not yet in place but is part of a whole school development. Good use is made of field visits to develop and consolidate geographical skills. Resources for the teaching of geography are good and the specialist room has good displays covering a range of geographical topics.

History

116.A small sample of history lessons was seen. Evidence is drawn from lessons seen, documentation, teachers' planning, scrutiny of pupils' work, displays around the school and discussion with pupils, the subject co-ordinator and other staff.

117.Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in history throughout the school. In Key Stage 2 they are developing an understanding of how people used to live and comparing and contrasting the difference between past and present. Artefacts and role play are used effectively to aid pupils' learning as demonstrated in a lesson on washing clothes in Victorian times. Pupils could identify old utensils and equipment. They could make some comparisons with present day washing activities. No lessons in Key Stage 1 were observed.

118.In Key Stage 3 pupils are becoming more secure in their understanding of the passage of time. They are beginning to recognise features of different ages and cultures. They talk about topics they are studying with some understanding and in role play a Year 9 class showed good understanding of the Norman Conquest; pupils played the parts of the barons and the king with insight and enthusiasm. Another class showed understanding of the life of the Tudors describing the differences between how the poor and the privileged lived whilst in Year 7 pupils were able to describe the effect of the Roman invasion of Britain.

119.In Key Stage 4 pupils continue with their study of history by studying modules which draw on their previous learning. Year 10 pupils are studying the town of Colchester investigating its role as a garrison town through the ages. They show understanding of how the town's role has changed and the ways it has stayed the same since Roman times.

120.Pupils have good attitudes to their work in history. They enjoy learning. They show interest in what they are doing and concentrate well particularly in listening. They are less confident in completing written work.

121.The teaching of history is good in all key stages. Lessons are well planned and classroom organisation is generally effective. Opportunities to develop literacy skills are sometimes identified in planning. Tasks and activities match the individual needs and abilities of pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge, although stronger in some cases than others, is generally good. Relationships are good with teachers managing pupils' behaviour calmly and well. A good choice of artefacts, resources and fieldwork is used to support teaching and maintain pupils' interest in the subject.

122.The subject is well managed by the co-ordinator who is an enthusiastic historian. Curriculum planning across the key stages is satisfactory, procedures support subject continuity and progression. Assessment and recording of pupils knowledge, skills and understanding in history are not always detailed enough to measure progress.

123.There are few opportunities for the monitoring of the subject across the school. Resources are of good quality, well organised and freely available.

Modern Foreign Languages

124. A small sample of lessons in modern foreign languages was observed. Overall, progress in Key Stages 3 and 4 is satisfactory. In lessons, pupils often make good progress. However, the allocation of one lesson per week means that inevitably pupils lack the opportunities for reinforcement of the work and recall suffers. Pupils in Year 7 are aware of the range of simple greetings and how to introduce themselves. By Year 9 they are able to describe where they live in simple terms. Significant school events, such as the trip to Boulogne in Year 9, provide a context and focus for the work. The school is considering the introduction of an accredited Certificate of Achievement in French for the oldest pupils.

125. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very positive, particularly with the younger ones. It is never less than satisfactory. Pupils enjoy the subject and the sense of success they gain from it. Pupils are interested and engaged by the activities and behave well in lessons. Relationships are good and pupils work together well. The subject helps develop awareness of another culture and contributes significantly to pupils' cultural development, particularly when it challenges stereotypes.

126. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and is often very good. The lessons are prepared well and have clear objectives. Time is used well and the lesson includes a variety of activities. Teaching is very positive, reinforcing pupils' sense of success and uses active approaches. Lessons provide opportunities for developing skills in all aspects of language learning with appropriate emphasis on speaking and listening. The teacher has considerable expertise and knowledge and hence confidence. She also uses imaginative games and home-made resources to develop pupils' skills. Very good use is made of learning support assistants. There is a detailed scheme of work and good implicit progression in the course.

127. The subject is led by the co-ordinator very well and the co-ordinator has clear ideas for the development of the subject. There is the need for further authentic resources to supplement the home-made ingenious games. The room is too cramped with some groups to allow for more active role-play.

Music

128. Pupils at Key Stage 1 make good progress in music. They know the names of four different instruments and can name them as they are taken from their box. They are able to clap out rhythms in response to taped sounds of rainfall. They can interpret these using the instruments and in their own way through stamping, clapping or making very quiet sounds. They have a very clear understanding of 'loud' and 'quiet' and can use instruments to demonstrate different levels of sound. No Key Stage 2 lessons were observed. Some Key Stage 3 pupils make very good progress. They make their individual contribution to the maintenance of a complex rhythm involving the whole class. To this rhythm of clicking fingers they can add short sung phrases and then build this up until two groups in the class are singing different parts of a song simultaneously, instruments are being played and then all of the pupils finish at the same time. No Key Stage 4 lessons were observed.

129. The response of pupils is often good and sometimes excellent when teachers are confident in their teaching of music. It is unsatisfactory when teachers, who do not have the necessary experience or understanding, teach pupils. In four out of the five lessons observed pupils sustain concentration and try to achieve high standards throughout. They listen carefully to teachers, respond to the best of their abilities and behave very well. In the more successful Key Stage 3 lessons, pupils show a remarkable lack of inhibition; all of the class join in the singing and instrument playing with great enthusiasm, skill and joy. Where teachers with limited experience of music teach other Key Stage 3 pupils the response is unsatisfactory.

130. Teaching overall is good but there is a range from excellent to unsatisfactory. The more effective teaching is characterised by very good planning, very good management of pupils and very effective structuring of the lesson. Support staff make a significant contribution by reinforcing the teacher's instructions, further explaining what is required, motivating pupils and helping them to maintain their concentration. In lessons that are more effective the recorded lessons, which make up the music scheme, are used as a general framework but teachers are not over-reliant upon them. In the less successful lessons teachers place too much reliance on the recorded material because they do not have the necessary level of knowledge, experience and confidence in teaching music. Strategies for assessing the progress of pupils and therefore the use of the results in planning curriculum development are under-developed and currently unsatisfactory.

131. Co-ordination of music is satisfactory particularly in Key Stages 1 and 2. The level of provision of resources is satisfactory for the present schemes of work and teaching activities. No use of ICT was observed and keyboard and electronic instruments are not in use.

Physical education

132. Pupils make very good progress in physical education in all key stages. In Key Stage 1 they develop their co-ordination, self-discipline and their ability to understand the rules of games and the sequences of activities required to play them. At the end of Key Stage 1 they can roll a ball through a slalom of markers, play a simple form of volleyball and achieve the learning targets in chasing games. Swimming ability is developed and at the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils reach the target of being able to complete 25 metres. They extend the basic skills acquired in earlier key stages and at the end of Key Stage 3 are playing a range of team games requiring specific skills and knowledge of complex rules. Boys and girls play hockey. They make accurate passes, stop the ball cleanly and observe the rules. Girls in netball and boys in football develop understanding of tactics and specific movements are used in free play.

133. Pupils' response at all key stages is consistently very good. Their concentration is maintained throughout the lessons and they clearly thoroughly enjoy the range of activities. This particularly applies to pupils who have physical disabilities and those who are not natural athletes. Pupils exercise great self-discipline. Key Stage 1 pupils who become very excited and are very involved in their activity immediately respond to requests to stop and listen to further explanations or move on to a different activity. Pupils support each other and have very mature attitudes to those who are physically less able. One Key Stage 4 girl spontaneously helped a physically disabled pupil remove her tracksuit top. Many pupils engage in competitive team activities, which generate keen rivalry, but they take time to help less able team members to complete tasks at their own speed.

134. Teaching of physical education is consistently very good. It is well differentiated. Pupils at all levels of ability work to their maximum potential are enabled to make very good progress and the staff ensures they thoroughly enjoy their lessons. The range of activities taught through the year meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and provides a broad range of opportunities for pupils. Teaching is highly organised, motivates and enthuses the pupils, incorporates high expectations and very effectively develops their physical and social skills. Lessons are very well structured, clear instructions are given and equipment is very well managed. Teachers and support staff have secure knowledge of physical education and punctiliously meet health and safety requirements. Staff relationships with pupils are very warm, effective but also challenging. Pupils are always expected to give their maximum effort and do so. The planning of physical education lessons does not currently include strategies to ensure that all opportunities for linking with and supporting the rest of the subjects in the curriculum are fully exploited.

135. Leadership and management of physical education is satisfactory overall. Leadership of specific

physical education and outdoor activities is very good. However, leadership in terms of seeing the part physical education plays as part of a broad curriculum experience and its contribution to the curriculum development of the whole school, ensuring that the subject plays a full part but does not restrict the overall curriculum entitlement, is unsatisfactory. Support staff are enabled to use their full potential and their work is of a high standard. The school plays a central role in a network of special schools and successfully takes part in many sports tournaments. The range of trophies in the school is impressive but more importantly, a relatively high number of pupils are members of teams which represent the school. This success has a cost, in that in preparing for this participation it is felt to require boys and girls to be taught in single sex groups. Further to this, it is felt that girls benefit from single sex teaching groups. However, teaching in single sex groups not only causes imbalance in the amount of time allocated to physical education in the school as a whole but also between the key stages and impacts on the rest of the school curriculum. All key stages have a relatively large amount of time allocated to physical education but Key Stage 1 has nearly twice as much as Key Stage 4.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence

141. A team of six inspectors inspected the school during the course of one week:

- 92 lessons or parts of lessons were observed covering all subjects;
- observations were made of assemblies, registrations, playtimes and lunchtimes;
- the school's budget, attendance records and pupils' records were examined in detail;
- discussions were held with many pupils, including formal discussions with older pupils;
- discussions were held with teaching and non-teaching staff;
- the entire work of a sample of pupils from every class was inspected in detail, representing a cross-section of ability.

Prior to the inspection week:

- a meeting was held for all parents;
- a questionnaire was sent to all parents and the responses analysed;
- school documentation, including the individual education plans of a sample of pupils in each class, was examined.

Data and indicators

§ 142. 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 - Y11	109	109	109	23.8%

TEACHERS AND CLASSES

Qualified teachers (YR - Y11)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	13.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.07

Education support staff (YR - Y11)

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked each week	339.3

Average class size: 10.9

‡

Average teaching group size	KS1	7.5
	KS2	11.5
	KS3	15.6
	KS4	13.5

FINANCIAL DATA

Financial year: 1998/99

Total income	£702,285.00
Total expenditure	£726,704.00
Expenditure per pupils	£6,264.69
Balance brought forward from previous year	£41,480.00
Balance carried forward to next year	£17,061.00

§ **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out: 109
 Number of questionnaires returned: 28*

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

- Not all parents completed the full questionnaire. In response to Questions 3 and 4 there were only 22 responses.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1) I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	39.3	53.6	3.6	3.6	0
2) I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	53.6	42.9	0	3.6	0
3) The school handles complaints from parents well	36.4	50.0	9.1	4.5	0
4) The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	29.6	63.0	3.7	3.7	0
5) The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	46.4	42.9	3.6	7.1	0
6) The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	42.9	53.6	3.6	0	0
7) The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	46.4	42.9	3.6	7.1	0
8) I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	32.1	50.0	10.7	3.6	3.6
9) The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	42.9	53.6	3.6	0	0
10) The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	46.4	46.4	7.1	0	0
11) My child(ren) like(s) school	67.9	32.1	0	0	0