

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Swalcliffe Park School**  
Banbury

LEA area: Oxfordshire

Unique Reference Number: 123331

Inspection Number: 186676

Headteacher: Mr. R. Hooper

Reporting inspector: Ms. F. Gander  
21265

Dates of inspection: 6th – 9th December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708363

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:	Non maintained
Age range of pupils:	11 to 19
Gender of pupils:	Male
School address:	Swalcliffe Banbury Oxfordshire OX15 5EP
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. C. Hutton
Date of previous inspection:	January 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Ms. F. Gander, Rgl	Mathematics	Attainment and progress
	Special educational needs including Aspergers Syndrome	Teaching
		Leadership and management
Mr. J. Sorsby, Lay Inspector	Equality of opportunity	Attendance
		Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
		Partnership with parents and the community
Mrs. K. Cannon	History	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
	Modern foreign languages	
	Religious education	
	Non national curriculum subjects at Key Stage 4	
Mrs. M. Last	English	Curriculum and assessment
	Music	
	Sixth Form provision	
Mr. F. C. Martin	Science	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
	Design and technology	
	Information technology	
Mr. G. Watson	Art	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
	Geography	The efficiency of the school
	Physical education	
	Residential provision	

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- There is good teaching across the school, which enables pupils to make good progress.
- The provision for pupils with Asperger's Syndrome is very good and enables them to make good progress.
- The residential provision is a strength of the school and makes a significant contribution to the social and moral development of pupils, and to the provision for the very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- The provision for students at Post-16 is good.
- The careers and vocational guidance programme is very good and contributes to the schools' good links with the community, and ensures that pupils are well prepared for their next stage of training.
- The school encourages pupils to form very good relationships with adults and with one another, and this contributes well to the overall ethos of the school.
- In relation to the pupils' and students' difficulties, the behaviour is very good.
- The provision for moral and social development, both in the residential and educational settings, is very good.
- All the school's procedures for monitoring and promoting the well being, health and safety of the pupils and students are very good.
- The quality of the school's information to parents is very good.
- The financial control and school administration are very good.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Co-ordinators are not fully involved in the development, the monitoring, and evaluation of their subject areas in relation to standards achieved or the quality of teaching.
- II. The school does not measure the effectiveness of the whole curriculum against predetermined success criteria, which match whole school development planning.

**The very good features of this school are essential to the education and personal development of the pupils. The very few weaknesses are outweighed by the school's many strengths, and will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils and students at the school.**

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection, and especially in the quality of the teaching, which is now good. All the key issues of the last inspection have been addressed and in some subjects, such as science, information technology, and design and technology, standards have been raised, teaching has improved, and there is now good specialist accommodation. The policy and provision for the teaching of reading has been a target for the school and has been achieved. The curriculum has been very much improved and now includes a modern language, all areas of design and technology and music. However, there remains a weakness in music, and is due to the subject being taught by non-specialist teachers. It also lacks creativity and adequate resources. Information technology has improved but is still not used enough within other subjects. Assessment procedures have been introduced, along with individual educational plans, which are of a very good quality. Provision for social and moral development has improved, but cultural and multi-cultural awareness is still not provided for in curriculum planning, especially in art and music. The management and monitoring of the curriculum has been developed at a senior management level but does not sufficiently involve the curriculum co-ordinators who should be actively leading the management and development of their subjects. Monitoring and evaluating

developments and teaching are now in place and carried out by the senior management team. However it has yet to fully involve curriculum co-ordinators. There has been significant improvement in school development planning and this includes a strategic approach, with targets set and priorities identified, together with the recent appointment of a financial consultant. The structures of the governing body have been strengthened and there are now curriculum and care committees. Staff development and appraisal have been introduced, and there is now an increased number of learning support staff. The school's registration procedures are improved, as are the school's links with parents and the community. The school's capacity for improvement is very good.

• **Whether pupils are making enough progress**

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

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

While pupils' progress in English is overall satisfactory there are some unsatisfactory features, such as the inadequate amount of work older pupils are expected to complete. This impedes their progress and puts them at a disadvantage when completing work for external accreditation. In addition, some work set in English is not sufficiently differentiated to match the pupils' different abilities. Students at Post-16 make very good progress in personal and social education. Music continues to be an underdeveloped and insufficiently resourced area of the curriculum and consequently pupils' progress is poor.



## Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
11 - 16 years	Good	Physical education; geography, information technology;	Music
Post-16	Good	English, personal and social education	Art
English	Satisfactory		
Mathematics	Good		
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	Good		

During the week of the inspection teaching was good across the school. It was at least satisfactory in 94 per cent of lessons, good or better in 62 per cent, and very good in 24 per cent. Teaching is good at Post-16, and in the class for pupils with Asperger's Syndrome. In 6 per cent of lessons the teaching was unsatisfactory. This is not linked to any one teacher but due to unsatisfactory knowledge of the subject or the pupils, narrow and uncreative curriculum planning and some unsatisfactory management of behaviour.

*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	Pupils' behaviour, given the nature of their difficulties, is very good. Pupils understand what is required of them and, although many find it difficult, they will reflect on the consequences of their actions, respecting the privileges that accompany their improved behaviour.
Attendance	Attendance rates are good. Punctuality at the start and throughout the school day is also good.
Ethos*	Within the constraints of the pupils' difficulties the relationships they form with staff and each other are very good. These make a considerable contribution to the very good ethos of the school.
Leadership and management	Overall this is good. The managers of the school are very clear about school improvements, and direction of developments. They work together well to achieve these goals. However, the co-ordinators are not fully involved in developing their individual areas of the curriculum. Their roles in monitoring, analysing and evaluating the curriculum in relation to standards are underdeveloped.
Curriculum	The curriculum is overall satisfactory. It is good for students at Post-16, and is very good for pupils with Asperger's syndrome where it is relevant to their needs. It is satisfactory for pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4, but there is a lack of balance in some subjects. There is also a lack of emphasis on creativity and cultural development in the planning. Assessment procedures are good, and the information is used satisfactorily when planning pupils' targets. Provision for extra-curricular experiences and careers education is very good.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	This is overall good and within it the provision for moral and social development is very good. Pupils' development of cultural and multi-cultural awareness is less well developed but satisfactory.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Staffing and resources are satisfactory. Accommodation is good and very much improved from the last inspection. However, the school is still in need of indoor resources for physical education and a specialist room for the teaching of music.
Residential	The residential provision is a strength of the school. It offers a caring, stable and supportive environment, actively and successfully promotes positive behaviour amongst the pupils, and makes an extremely significant contribution to their moral and social development.
Value for money	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	What some parents are not happy about
<p>III. They find it easy to approach the school concerning problems or for information</p> <p>IV. They feel that they are very well informed about the progress their sons are making.</p> <p>V. They are very satisfied with the amount of extra- curricular activities, and experiences outside the classroom.</p> <p>VI. They are extremely happy with the values and attitudes that the school teaches and the effect it has on their sons.</p> <p>VII. They felt that standards of behaviour were high.</p>	<p>VIII. A few parents were unsure what</p> <p>IX. A few were not satisfied with the</p> <p>X. One parent did not think that behaviour, gh enough.</p> <p>XI. One set of parents was concerned with ulum at Key Stage 4 and in the class for</p>

The inspection team endorsed the positive comments of the parents, and did not find any evidence to substantiate the issues raised by a few parents. There are no instances of unequal access or opportunity at Key Stage 4.

## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

- ◆ The school needs to improve the quality of the curriculum by ensuring that curriculum co-ordinators understand their roles, and assume their responsibilities by:
  - monitoring, analysing and evaluating standards of achievement and attainment in their subjects;
  - identifying areas which need further development and preparing costed plans for these developments;
  - leading the developments and measuring the success of developments against agreed success criteria;
  - monitoring teaching and sharing successful teaching styles and strategies.
 (Paragraphs: 33, 66, 101,103,104, 113, 120, 142, 153, 161).
- ◆ The school needs to improve the monitoring and evaluating procedures in the school by measuring the effectiveness of the whole curriculum against predetermined success criteria, which match whole school development planning. (Paragraphs: 33, 66, 68).
- ◆ Improve the provision for, and the teaching of, music. (Paragraphs: 12, 26, 73, 165,166,167, 168,169, 170).

In addition, governors should include in their school development planning the following weaknesses:

- Creativity within English, art and music. (Paragraphs: 7, 25, 83,90,133, 134).
- Differentiation of work in English and religious education. (Paragraphs: 24,85).
- Over- reliance on worksheets. (Paragraphs: 22, 85).
- The expectations of amount of work produced by pupils in English. (Paragraph: 85).
- Self-evaluations by pupils of their own work – especially in art. (Paragraph: 16).
- The use of pupils' skills learnt in SRA decoding scheme and THRASS (Teaching of

Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills) in other lessons. (Paragraphs: 37, 89, 91).

- Use of information technology in other subjects.  
(Paragraphs: 7, 9, 10, 82, 94, 107, 118, 146).
- Provision and delivery of all aspects of mathematics, physical education, art and English.  
(Paragraphs: 29, 90, 102, 176).
- Development of cultural and multi-cultural development in curriculum areas.  
(Paragraphs: 40, 43, 44).
- Ensure that restraint procedures are sufficient when dealing with a particularly distressed pupil.  
(Paragraphs: 50).
- The representation of the education aspect of the school on the senior management team.  
(Paragraph: 65).
- Limited resources in French, religious education, history, music and physical education.  
(Paragraphs: 73, 74, 153, 163, 177).
- Long term framework for budget planning to ensure a balance between areas of expenditure and the impact of possible changes.  
(Paragraph: 77).
- The provision of a fume cupboard.  
(Paragraph: 114).

## • **INTRODUCTION**

### • **Characteristics of the school**

1. The school is a non-maintained residential secondary school situated in the small village of Swalcliffe, the nearest town being Banbury. The school provides specialist education facilities for boys who have severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is set in its own large grounds and governed by a board appointed by the trustees. There are 45 boys currently on roll and all are between the ages of 11 and 19. All have a statement of special educational needs. The school has specialist Post-16 provision, in which there are currently five young people. It also has a small special class for eight boys with Asperger's syndrome. Four per cent of the boys are from ethnic minority backgrounds.

2. The boys are admitted to the school from various authorities at any time during their school career, but are also withdrawn, either by the parents who wish day provision, or by authorities who wish to educate pupils within their own areas. The school therefore has a fluctuating population. The boys come to the school from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds but with severe emotional and behaviour disturbance. Many do not know how to control their anger, have a history of failure and therefore have low self-esteem. All are achieving well below the expected level when they are admitted to the school, with some having been out of full time education for long periods of time. The school does not have information concerning the number of pupils who are entitled to free school meals.

### **3. Aims of the school:**

The school aims to help its pupils and students acknowledge and cope with their specific difficulties, and assist them to fulfil their potential by:

- Providing a child centred, non-confrontational, caring and supportive integrated care and educational service.
- Providing a broad and balanced educational programme, including National Curriculum suitably differentiated, that addresses the needs and gaps in education, and that encourages and enables each pupil's further development.
- Providing opportunities for gaining a variety of external accreditation and encourage each pupil to reach his potential.
- Reintegrating pupils into mainstream education whenever possible.
- Providing, through individual educational planning, identification of pupils' educational

difficulties and strategies for remedying them.

- Providing a care programme that enables each pupil to develop self-help, independence and recreational skills, and that assists him in forming positive and appropriate relationships with peers and adults.
- Providing a behaviour framework within which each pupil is helped to take responsibility for his own behaviour and can learn to manage it more effectively.
- Maintaining a safe, positive and caring environment through an agreed set of rules and sanctions and through the rewarding of positive behaviour.
- Valuing all cultures, religions and abilities, and avoiding discrimination on any grounds.

#### 1. **Priorities for school development:**

- Increase pupils' performance in examinations and tests.
- Consider and implement further changes to the policy on behaviour.
- To improve the quality of teaching, particularly in information and communication technology, when it is taught by teachers other than the co-ordinator.
- To include pupils in self-assessment.
- To identify additional training for learning support assistants.
- To identify clear roles and responsibilities for curriculum co-ordinators.

#### 1. **Key indicators**

In the 1999 end of Key Stage 3 national assessment tests there were no pupils attaining the nationally expected levels.

During 1999, eight pupils in Key Stage 4, including two from Year 10 and four from Post-16, gained external accreditation at General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). The total percentage of pupils with A to G results was 87 per cent.

#### **Attendance**

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5.7
	National comparative data	8.0*
Unauthorised Absence	School	1.0
	National comparative data	2.0*

\* Average for all special schools.

#### **Exclusions**

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

	Number
Fixed period	20
Permanent	7

#### **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	24

Satisfactory or better	94
Less than satisfactory	6

## 5. PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

### 5. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

#### 5. Attainment and progress

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

3.In English, pupils at both key stages make satisfactory progress. On entry, due to their individual difficulties or long absences from school, the majority of pupils are underachieving and a significant number have difficulties with reading. This impacts upon the pupils' ability to understand written English in all other subjects. However, the majority of work they undertake is in line with their abilities and over time they show some gains in reading and writing. Pupils' records in reading show that their reading ages increase as they progress through the school. This is a much-improved situation from the last inspection, and is the result of the emphasis that has been given to reading and writing. By the end of Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils have made sufficient progress to gain GCSE in English. However, pupils' progress in the use of information technology within the subject is unsatisfactory. There is little evidence in their work samples of their ability to use it to draft and redraft work and, as in the last inspection, there were too few examples of creative work, both spoken and written.

4.The progress that pupils make in mathematics at both key stages, in relation to their differing abilities and difficulties, is overall good, and in 1999 a few at Post-16 and in Year 10 achieved external accreditation at GCSE level. In the end of Key Stage 3 national tests in 1999 many achieved levels which were high for their abilities. During the week of the inspection, the progress that pupils made in lessons was also good, but there were some lessons at Key Stage 4 where the progress being made was very good or excellent. Better progress is directly related to the quality and style of teaching, and these have an impact on the attitudes of the pupils to the lesson.

5.In science, the progress that pupils make over time in relation to their differing abilities and difficulties is overall satisfactory. This is an improvement from the last inspection when there were a significant number of pupils underachieving. In the end of Key Stage 3 national tests in 1999 a few pupils achieved levels which were high for their abilities. Most pupils, in both key stages, have a basic understanding of the topics they have studied recently, but the quality in their written work varies. Oral answers show they have the ability to recall good scientific knowledge and they use appropriate vocabulary, with help set up simple investigations and record the results, either in written form or through a table or graphs. However, there is little evidence of the use of information technology for recording, data collection or researching.

6.In information technology, progress in both key stages is good. Pupils are given clear expectations for the amount of work to be covered each lesson and are often enthusiastic to achieve these targets. The very good files maintained by all pupils showing the good quality work and steady progress they are making. A number of pupils have recently completed and passed two 'Open College' units in "Introduction to Information Technology". In 1999, a number of students have been successful in achieving certificates of achievement. All students are now working towards these targets and evidence in their very good records of work suggests that most will be successful. A number of students will also enter GCSE short course in information technology and again their current work suggests reasonable success. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding is less advanced than their skills. Pupils' ability to apply their skills in other learning situations is not exploited, and therefore progress in the transference of skills is not as good.

7. In religious education pupils, at both key stages, make satisfactory progress. Their folders and displayed work indicate that they have a basic knowledge and understanding of Buddhism, Judaism and Islamic beliefs and celebrations. In their current studies of Christianity, they recognise the relevance of Advent in the Christian calendar, making simple artefacts to represent God as the light of the world, which they use during assembly.

8. Pupils' progress is good in history, geography, physical education, and in personal, social and health education. It is satisfactory in art, and in design and technology. However, the progress pupils make in music is poor. Few pupils have acquired technical skills in playing instruments or have any reliable knowledge of rhythm, pitch or note values. Many are reluctant to attempt tasks and their progress is limited by this reluctance, by their unacceptable behaviour and by the lack of clear parameters for work and behaviour set by the teachers.

9. Students at Post-16 make good progress, and successfully attend a variety of courses at local colleges and work experience placements. They use their skills particularly well to present evidence in their portfolios of work for the National Vocational Qualification, including the use of information technology. This progress is well exemplified by the examples of extended writing produced by students who write freely about their thoughts concerning their placements. They make very good progress in personal and social development. The good or very good progress they make is the result of the appropriate and individual curriculum.

10. Pupils who have Asperger's syndrome make good progress. Their individual needs and requirements are well known and understood by teachers, learning support assistants and care staff. The high quality guidance, opportunities and experiences that they receive has a positive impact on the academic and personal progress made by the pupils. The residential provision, which offers a caring, stable and supportive environment, actively and successfully promotes positive behaviour. Many pupils make sufficient progress in academic areas, and in personal development, to allow them to be integrated into GCSE classes in the main school.

11. There are no significant differences in progress of pupils of different ethnicity or prior attainment.

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

12. Pupils' attitudes to learning throughout the school are good, as are the attitudes of students in the Post-16 group. The majority of pupils, many who have been excluded from their previous schools, like being at this school and arrive at their lessons promptly. They are willing to contribute their own ideas and opinions, and will listen to those of other people. Pupils are enthusiastic, and sometimes show a dogged determination to stay involved, for example, when playing a football match in less than favourable weather conditions. Pupils also concentrate well, often becoming absorbed in their work, and maintain these positive attitudes when participating in activities after school such as the 'Warhammer' club. They pay attention to detail in, for example, their art work, and look after it carefully. The interest of some pupils may fluctuate but they will, when prompted, return to the task in hand. Older pupils and students take increasing responsibility for their own learning, and some take advantage of the homework club, although such opportunities are limited and there is little critical self-evaluation.

13. Pupils' and students' behaviour, given the nature of their difficulties, is very good. School records show that a significant number of pupils have made good progress in addressing their difficulties and improving their behaviour. This confirms the views of parents and carers, and shows an improvement when compared with the findings of the last inspection. Pupils respond well when teachers make their expectations and intentions clear and, although individual pupils are sometimes truculent, many amend such behaviour in the face of a patient, firm, and consistent approach from staff. Pupils understand what is required of them and, although



many find it difficult, they will reflect on the consequences of their actions, respecting the privileges that accompany their improved behaviour. Some pupils have been excluded from school as a result of very poor behaviour including violence towards other people.

14. There are very positive relationships between staff and pupils, both in the school and the residential settings. They are warm yet respectful, and provide a very effective foundation for the every-day work of the school. Pupils will also co-operate and work together, particularly in the residential settings. Opportunities to do this in lessons are more restricted, but the way in which those pupils who have Asperger's Syndrome, or more complex needs, rub shoulders and mingle with others in a natural, every-day way, is a particularly positive feature. Pupils are polite and helpful to visitors, they treat their surroundings with respect, and there is very little vandalism. There are no issues regarding bullying or racial harassment.

15. Pupils' personal development is good, and they respond positively to the trust and expectations of staff. As a result, older pupils and students in particular, adopt an increasingly mature and responsible attitude to life in general. This in turn enables them to make the most of opportunities in the wider community, such as the school's work experience programme, or membership of a local athletics club. Individual pupils will demonstrate points to the class, as happened, for example, in one Year 11 mathematics lesson. Some pupils also offer to help when they see that there are jobs to be done; others spontaneously assist classmates with their work, as occurred in a Year 11 science lesson. Pupils also make allowances when playing against pupils of lesser ability and experience in, for example, games of badminton. They have a healthy regard for safety issues, and take other issues, such as drug education, seriously.

16. Within the constraints of pupils' behavioural difficulties, this is an orderly and harmonious community, in which pupils and adults demonstrate considerable respect for each other, their beliefs, values and feelings. There is complete racial harmony.

## **20. Attendance**

17. With authorised absence of 5.7 per cent and unauthorised absence of 1.0 per cent, pupils' attendance rates are above those expected of similar schools and are good. Punctuality at the start and throughout the school day is similarly good. Pupils' attendance rates continue to be good since the last inspection report and contribute well to their progress.

## **21. QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### **21. Teaching**

18. Teaching has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be overall satisfactory, but in a number of lessons in Key Stage 3 there was poor teaching. There has been a considerable improvement in the teaching of design and technology and science since the last inspection, and this is mainly the result of the employment of specialist teachers and improved behaviour management techniques. The marking of work has also improved since the last inspection but in some classes there is still an over-reliance on worksheets, which does not support pupils' progress in writing.

19. During the week of the inspection teaching was good across the school. It was at least satisfactory in 94 per cent of lessons, good or better in 62 per cent, and very good in 24 per cent. Teaching is satisfactory in English, art and music, and good in all other subjects including personal, social and health education.

20. In the very best lessons teachers take a firm and positive lead. They get lessons off to a brisk start, make explicit how they expect pupils to behave and ensure that pupils are listening

and prepared to start the lesson with positive attitudes. This has a positive impact on behaviour and the relationship between the pupils and the teacher, as the pupils interpret this as being purposeful, for example, in some mathematics lessons at Key Stage 4. Teachers enjoy good relationships with pupils and are able to use their humour to cajole them along and encourage them to keep trying. They give regular words of encouragement and support, praising both effort and achievement. In the very good lessons, teachers conclude with a good summary to recap the main points taught and to check progress.

21. During the week of the inspection there was some unsatisfactory teaching in English. This occurred in lessons taken by a supply teacher who was inexperienced in teaching pupils who have very special needs in terms of behaviour management, and in the strategies needed to motivate them. For example, in one lesson the work was not well matched to the abilities of the individual pupils, and pupils different levels of attainment in reading and comprehension had the same worksheets and text. This resulted in some pupils becoming bored and unco-operative. In one other lesson, the expectations by the teacher of the amount of work produced are too low and this allows some pupils not to make sufficient progress in their course work.

22. The teaching of music is overall unsatisfactory, and varies between classes and teachers. The teachers' knowledge of music, and their ability to use strategies that develop pupils' skills and understanding is limited, and often lacks direction and purpose. Expectations regarding the equality and amount of work and effort are not made clear. In one lesson pupils are allowed to disrupt lessons by continually banging instruments or choosing to sing rude songs rather than playing their recorders. This has a negative impact on the progress pupils make.

23. Teaching is good at Post-16. Here the strategies and styles are well matched to each student's individual needs and each one is well supported on his individual learning programme. The teacher's role is as an enabler, offering support and guidance as appropriate, but having clear expectations that students will work independently as far as they are able. The adult approach to their work results in good progress. The teacher knows the students well and handles them sensitively, at the same time setting relevant challenges in terms of quality and quantity of work

24. Teaching in the class for pupils with Asperger's Syndrome is overall good. Some pupils from this class integrate into the main classes within the school for GCSE or for specialist subjects, for example, for design and technology and music, and are therefore taught by teachers with a range of expertise and expectations. In the main they receive good quality teaching except for the teaching of music. Both teachers in the specialist class know the pupils very well and understand their difficulties completely. Work is very individualised, challenging to pupils and there are high expectations of presentation and achievement. Classroom arrangements carefully take account the needs of individual pupils, and the learning support assistant in this class is highly effective in supporting teaching and learning.

## **28. The curriculum and assessment**

25. The curriculum is overall satisfactory and good in mathematics, history, geography, and physical education. The school offers all subjects of the National Curriculum plus religious education, and a strong programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) which includes sex education and drugs education. The school has worked hard on curriculum development since the last inspection and has introduced French, design and technology, information technology, and music to the curriculum, which has resulted in a balanced, broader, and richer menu of learning opportunities. However, although all the aspects of subjects are planned for, they are not always sufficiently taught, for example, in art, physical education, and English.

26.Provision for pupils with Asperger's syndrome is very good and has been extended to include opportunities for accredited qualifications for higher attaining pupils. The curriculum for students over 16 remains good, and opportunities for accreditation, through part-time attendance at college, have increased. There is also good access to information and communication technology, which these students use well to compile National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) portfolios and other work. There is equal access to the curriculum for all pupils.

27.The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. There are very good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour and development through a well-structured behaviour management programme, which is effective in helping them to reflect on their responses and attitudes within the school day, at evenings and at weekends. The residential provision makes a strong contribution to enabling this personal development through a behaviour programme which includes the management of anger. It also offers a wide range of challenging activities in sports and recreation, for example, pupils play team games together, or, participate in visits or indoor activities

28.The school offers a limited range of accreditation opportunities at Key Stage 4 which includes GCSE in a range of subjects and the Certificate of Achievement in a few. It is currently planning to increase the number and range of these to provide effective certification opportunities for all pupils. For older students attending college, opportunities to study for NVQ certification is well linked to work experience placements. For example, one student is studying for a NVQ in retail and is undertaking work experience in a local men's outfitters, thus gaining both valuable practical experience, but also the essential evidence for his NVQ portfolio. Overall, the careers education and guidance in the school is very good, and pupils and students are well prepared to move onto the next stage of their lives. The school works very well with the local careers officer to ensure contact is maintained with pupils' home areas. Visits, interviews and planning meetings are then arranged for the school holidays.

29.All subjects have policies and schemes of work, which provide a clear focus for the content of lessons. Many of these have been recently developed and the longer term impact is not yet apparent. However, there are no longer term subject development plans to indicate how each subject will develop, and enrich pupils' learning experiences as a result of regular subject evaluation. The school has yet to develop a comprehensive system for evaluating the effectiveness of the whole curriculum in line with its strategic planning. Although targets are set and meetings with co-ordinators held regularly, there are no predetermined success criteria by which to measure the effectiveness of the whole curriculum and to match this against whole school development planning.

30.The school curriculum is strongly enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. These include residential visits both home and abroad, a very large number of games and other physical activities including climbing, scuba diving and athletics. Additionally, good use is made of local facilities, such as, libraries, galleries and exhibitions, and some pupils belong to a local drama group. Teachers take great care to ensure that the curriculum is fully accessible to all pupils. For example, in the case of one pupil the entire curriculum is modified to meet his particular needs. All parents are aware of their right to withdraw pupils from particular activities, such as, assembly.

31.Assessment is satisfactory overall, and takes full account of pupils' special educational and behavioural needs. It is good in mathematics, history, and physical education, and for pupils with Asperger's syndrome and students over 16. In these subjects there is a very good link both to the National Curriculum or accredited courses, and to pupils' individual educational plans, resulting in appropriate levels of a challenge particularly for higher attaining pupils. In physical education, pupils are assessed in line with national awards. There is no assessment for music.

32. Assessment in reading is particularly well recorded and analysed to identify whole school trends, but this model of practice has yet to be adopted in all subjects. Provision for the maintenance of statements through annual reviews and evaluation of individual education plans is sound. Despite regular target setting and review with pupils, teachers do not routinely remind pupils what they should be working towards in lessons, particularly in terms of academic skills. Behavioural targets are well addressed, both in lessons and in less formal situations, and pupils' progress acknowledged through an effective system of rewards and sanctions. Pupils regularly review their own practice through compiling interesting Records of Achievement.

**36. Literacy**

33. The school offers a wide range of opportunities to improve pupils' literacy skills. These include group or individual work on the 'THRASS' (Teaching of Handwriting, Reading and Spelling Skills) approach, plus regular work on reading through the decoding reading workshops. Literacy is a focus of the school's strategic planning and the comprehensive analysis of results, developed by the head of education, illustrates that these arrangements are already effective in raising the pupils' overall reading ages. However, despite this good practice, the school has not yet ensured that this work is put to regular and practical use in lessons and this limits its effectiveness. For example, when pupils cannot read or spell a word, adults frequently read or spell it for them, rather than encouraging them to apply the techniques they have learnt in their literacy sessions.

34. The school has made very significant improvements to its curricular provision since the last inspection. It has yet to institute secure procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of what is taught overall, and to clearly define future direction for the curriculum, which is linked to the school's overall developmental planning.

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

35. The overall provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and has improved since the previous inspection, but provision for spiritual and cultural awareness, although satisfactory, remains narrow.

36. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Religious education contributes to the development of spiritual awareness, as do some subject areas. The pupils are encouraged to reflect on those who are less fortunate than they are when, for example, they organise a charity event for Romanian orphans, or in considering the adoption of a child from developing countries such as India or Romania. There is some evidence in music of spiritual reflection, such as when listening to 'Away in a Manger', where pupils reflect upon their early schooling, comparing how they learned and sang this carol. However, opportunities for spiritual development are missed, particularly in art, drama and music. Spiritual insight is enhanced through the 24-hour curriculum, where pupils of different faiths share in the customs and daily life of orthodox Jews, such as when preparing meals or separating meat and milk utensils. Further opportunities for reflection are provided through the weekly act of collective worship. However, although there are occasional visits to Christian churches, the balance of multi-faith awareness is underdeveloped. Visiting speakers are rare, and there are no visits to non-Christian houses of worship.

37. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good, and has improved since the last inspection. It is underpinned by the school's high moral values and expectations, through which the pupils learn right from wrong. They begin to accept responsibility for their own actions, participating in setting their own behaviour targets and recognising the effect their conduct may have on others. Good behaviour is further encouraged through points and rewards systems, which are linked to in-school report cards and certification. In subject areas,

the pupils tackle moral issues, such as the rights and wrongs of slavery, bullying, drugs awareness programmes and racial intolerance, and this promotes good moral attitudes. They have access to a complaint box, where they may express themselves on a range of issues. Most pupils demonstrate genuine trust and respect towards staff, who act as very good role models.

38. Closely linked to the pupils' moral development is the school's very good provision for social development. There are strong links with the local community, and the pupils regularly share local sporting facilities or participate in local events, which promotes teamwork. Some pupils help out at a nearby Asian Community Centre or local home for the elderly, and work experience placements and links with local businesses strongly support the pupils' training for citizenship. The pupils participate in a range of off-site activities, such as, day visits and residential field trips, both at home and abroad, which enhance their academic learning as well as supporting their social development. Within the 24-hour curriculum, emphasis is placed on the acquisition of social life skills, and all pupils take turns to help with the preparation of meals or general household duties. Older pupils are given opportunities to cater for themselves under minimal supervision, which strongly promotes their knowledge of budgeting, shopping, cooking and overall independence.

39. Opportunities for the pupils' cultural development are satisfactory but limited. Residential visits to France, and links with developing countries give pupils an insight into the lives of other cultures, but there is little cultural input within the daily life of the school. Paintings by renowned artists are few and far between, and there is limited use of music as a tool for cultural enrichment. Although the pupils occasionally visit theatres and cinemas, and visit British cultural heritage sites, such as, the Abraham Darby museum at Coalbrookdale, or the historic ships in Portsmouth, there are few representations of other cultural traditions. There are no drama workshops or visiting writers to extend the pupils' cultural knowledge. The limitations in cultural provision are reflected in the inadequacies of the curriculum, particularly in religious education, art, English and music.

40. There are weaknesses in provision for pupils' multi-cultural understanding, but all cultures present among the schools members are respected. Similarities and differences are taught in a way that promotes respect, and school visits and visitors are appropriate for all.

#### **44. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

41. The school's procedures for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils are very good, and make a positive contribution to their progress.

42. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress are good and the use made of assessment data is satisfactory. Teachers know their pupils well, and day-to-day assessment is consistently applied. The school has implemented a whole-school systematic procedure for recording pupils' attainment and progress. Individual educational plans ensure that all pupils are given appropriate support throughout the day. Targets accurately reflect identified needs. The procedures for monitoring pupils' progress have improved since the time of the last inspection.

43. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are very good. All staff know their pupils well, and are aware of their individual needs and how best to support them. Pupils with particular special educational needs, such as those with autism are helped to meet their individual targets by the careful matching of activities and support to their needs, and their progress is regularly monitored and reviewed. Staff provide very good personal support to pupils, and act as very good role models. This has a particular impact on the behaviour and personal development of pupils.

44. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and discipline are very good, having improved significantly since the time of the last inspection report. The newly developed behaviour policy is clear and is built on the positive reinforcement of good behaviour. Most staff consistently implement it, thus further reinforcing their positive expectations of pupils. The records of pupils' behaviour are very carefully and thoroughly monitored by the headteacher. The system employed relies on all behaviour that is less than appropriate being recorded in the school diary. Some staff are less thorough at ensuring this takes place than others.

45. Pupils are aware of class and school rules, which are displayed throughout the school and which they themselves have helped to develop through discussion groups. The mission statement is also prominently displayed throughout the school. While being fully conversant with the school's procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour, most staff expect good behaviour, and appropriately reward positive attitudes with praise. The school has very good procedures in place to deal with issues of harassment and bullying which appropriately involve parents. Incidents of bullying are carefully recorded and dealt with promptly and sensitively. While pupils' behaviour difficulties frequently lead to outbursts, these are well contained and the school is a happy orderly community. The school observes the correct procedures for excluding pupils and only excludes when all else has failed.

46. Procedures for restraining pupils in the event of violent outbursts are well developed and understood and used by all staff. The school recognises that situations sometimes occur when the written procedures are insufficient to contain a particularly distressed or large pupil, and that they have to go beyond the procedures.

47. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are very good and this is reflected in the good attendance rate across the school. The school encourages pupils to arrive in the school building on time at the start of the day and the majority arrive promptly. There are very good procedures for telephoning home if a pupil fails to return to school after a home visit, and for dealing with any pupil who may wander off from either residential or school buildings. Authorised and unauthorised rates of absence are published in the school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents. Registration is taken promptly in every class at the start of each session. These are improvements since the last inspection.

48. Procedures for child protection and for promoting pupils' wellbeing, health and safety are significantly better than at the time of the last inspection. They are now very good and are strengths of the school. Very good child protection procedures are in place, and are administered sensitively and appropriately by the head of care, who is the named person responsible. The staff are well trained, and are both confident and competent in the necessary skills. There are very good procedures for dealing with pupils' medical conditions and minor accidents and sufficient first aid equipment is available. The accident book is kept up-to-date. All members of staff treat the well being and comfort of all pupils as a priority.

49. Procedures for promoting health and safety are very good. The head of maintenance and all staff have successfully promoted a culture of health and safety in all aspects of school life. The effectiveness of the school's health and safety procedures is to be seen in the measures taken to ensure pupils' safety across the campus and throughout the day. Regular health and safety audits and risk assessments take place and hazards are dealt with immediately. The school complies with all statutory requirements concerning health and safety. Fire drills are carried out at least every half term and fire and electrical equipment is tested regularly. The school is well maintained and cleaning is effectively organised.

### **53. Residential provision**

50. The residential provision is a strength of the school. It provides high quality guidance, opportunities and experiences that have a positive impact on the academic and personal progress made by the pupils. It offers a caring, stable and supportive environment, actively and successfully promotes positive behaviour amongst the pupils, and makes an extremely significant contribution to their moral and social development.

51. The provision is very efficiently organised to ensure that all staff, both residential and educational, are fully conversant with individual pupil's circumstances. There are comprehensive procedures for commenting on activities, recording behaviour and logging incidents; these appear cumbersome but prove to be highly effective in allowing staff to

monitor the behaviour and involvement of pupils. The procedures are based upon a sound framework of "levels" of pupils' behaviour, which in turn correlate with increased levels of responsibility and reduced levels of supervision as pupils make progress in addressing their behavioural difficulties. Information can be readily collated when necessary in order to inform staff, parents or the authorities about developing issues, and the colour coding system is an extremely useful tool that enables staff to discern trends over time at a glance. Pupils thoroughly understand these procedures, and respond positively to the incentives.

52.Care and teaching staff meet both formally and informally, with both written and verbal information passing frequently between them relating to pupils' behaviour. The morning and afternoon "hand-over" sessions, where staff and pupils meet to pass on information and discuss the day's events, reinforce the messages given by individual staff, and contain clear and honest appraisals of the pupils' performance. All staff work very effectively as a team; teachers support activities after school, such as the homework club, and care staff give their time and expertise in helping teachers deliver lessons, for example during games sessions. External professionals, such as counsellors from the local social services department, also make a valuable contribution.

53.There are a wide variety of sporting and leisure activities, both on site and in the wider community, all of which extend and promote the pupils' experiences, interests, self-esteem and self-confidence. Examples include such diverse activities as the homework club, Warhammer games, running the school's radio station and participating in local rugby and athletics clubs. Provision is further enhanced by a wide variety of visits to local leisure and cultural facilities, together with residential trips to areas further afield, such as Snowdonia.

54.There are appropriate numbers of care staff; not all are professionally qualified but they share a broad range of experience. Several are new to the school and receive good support from their team leaders, although the induction pack is recognised as being unwieldy, and is due for revision.

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

55.The school's partnerships with parents and the community are good. The quality of information provided to parents has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection report, and is good. Parents appreciate the willingness of the headteacher and class teachers to talk to them informally at almost any time, and the effectiveness of the two formal consultation meetings each year. Each pupil has both a teacher and a care worker who maintains communications with the pupil's parents as frequently as they wish. Both the school brochure and the governors' annual report lack detail and fail to reflect the vibrant atmosphere of the school, or to provide all of the information parents may seek about the school. Parents do, however, receive weekly news updates. Academic reports are sent to parents three times a year and their quality is very good. They clearly describe what pupils know, understand and can do, and deal comprehensively with pupils' personal development.

56.Within the constraints of the distances many parents live from the school they play an active role in their children's learning both at home and at school. Parents participate in regular reviews of their children's progress, and are kept fully involved through formal and informal meetings, review meetings, written reports and verbal communications. A high proportion of parents attends school functions such as sports day and open days.

57.Pupils benefit from and contribute to the life of the community. Very good links exist with the local community and pupils engage in a range of activities away from the school. For example, pupils participate in horse riding, bowling, shopping, ice-skating and take part in local rugby, athletics and drama. To further their personal development pupils visit Portsmouth, Ironbridge, North Wales and the Museum of the Moving Image in London. Visitors to the



school teach sub-aqua skills, life saving and first aid. Police officers visit the school two or three times a year to discuss problems pupils are encountering and to reinforce the need to understand right and wrong actions in the context of society. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs that provides pupils with many opportunities to learn different skills and discover new interests, among them fishing, painting and activities with small futuristic models which have become an internationally played game of skill.

58.Older students participate in very effective work experience and study for differing periods of time at North Oxfordshire College. Both college participation and work experience are very well organised and managed by a teacher from the school. Students benefit very considerably from these activities which both teach them skills for life and further enhance their independence and their ability to function in a wider society.

59.Since the last inspection report, the quality of the partnership with parents has improved significantly, as have the school's links with the community.

### **63. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

#### **63. Leadership and management**

60.Overall the leadership and management of the school are good and have continued to improve since the last inspection. The school is very capable of improving further.

61.The headteacher and the strong governing body, have strengthened the management structure of the school, addressed all the key issues of the last report, and continued to pursue improvements to the curriculum, the care, support and guidance provision, and also the fabric of the building. The improvements, needed in the school following the last inspection, were considerable and only formed a fraction of the overall developments needed. There has been a clear direction for improvement and developments from the headteacher, senior managers and the governing body and this clear direction remains good. The governors responded to the recommendations of the last report and have established curriculum and care committees who meet regularly and report to full governing body and trustee meetings. Targets for school improvement are set, and the governors regularly review progress towards them. The senior management team has been strengthened, and now contains members from different disciplines within the school, such as, finance, administration and care. However, the composition of the senior management team is still in need of some fine adjustment as there is only one member to represent the educational areas of the school.

62.The school has implemented a system of supporting and monitoring teaching which is carried out by the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and an external consultant. Curriculum monitoring is carried out on a regular basis by the deputy headteacher who has overall responsibility as Head of Education. This is not entirely satisfactory, as curriculum co-ordinators do not have overall responsibility for developing their own areas of responsibility through a systematic review and analysis of the subject's needs in relation to standards and quality of the provision. For example, many co-ordinators are very aware of the areas needed for improvements but are not empowered by the current system to take ownership of those improvements. They have a lack of knowledge about the real role and purpose of co-ordinators in overall school development. In addition to this, none are involved in monitoring or evaluating the teaching of other colleagues in the school so that good techniques and strategies can be shared. The impact of this is that the curriculum for pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 is only satisfactory, which in this fast improving school could be better.

63.The implementation of the school's aims, values and policies is good. The governing body meets all statutory requirements that pertain to a non-maintained school. Since the school is non-maintained it does not have to meet the statutory requirement of appraisal, but it has

appropriately and effectively implemented staff reviews, in which training needs are well identified. The school's brochure, which replaces the requirement for a prospectus is short on information concerning the aims and the curriculum of the school and needs to provide a clearer picture of the educational provision. The school complies with the Sex Discrimination and Race Relations Acts and the ethos reflects equality of opportunity for all pupils.

64.The school's development planning, monitoring and evaluation are satisfactory The school development plan provides a good working document, with clear areas and tasks, which are appropriately costed and have a person responsible. However, the details of the school development plan do not sufficiently link with the overall targets for improvement set by the school. Evaluation relies too much on recognising when the task has been completed without measuring the final outcomes against success criteria and thus helping the school to evaluate whether the development has produced the required effect.

65.The schools' ethos is very good. A particular strength of the school is the high quality relationships that are established between staff and pupils, and the way in which the school fosters positive relationships between pupils. Due to the nature of the pupils' difficulties these relationships are not always noticeable at first, but result in pupils improving their attitudes towards work and outside pressures. This in turn has a positive impact on the quest for high achievement, which for some pupils is not always academic achievement, but which the majority of pupils recognise as being important in their lives.

#### **69. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

66.There are a satisfactory number of teachers with specialist qualifications or experience to meet the demands of the school curriculum. The situation is better than at the time of the last inspection, and a number of improvements have been made since the last inspection including the appointments of a science teacher and a co-ordinator to develop the teaching of information and communication technology throughout the school. However, the teaching of music is reduced by the lack of a specialist teacher. At the time of the inspection, the co-ordinator for English was also on long term absence and this important role was being covered by a number of teachers, which resulted in an adverse effect on the progress of a few pupils.

67.Arrangements for the professional development of staff are good, and have greatly improved since the last inspection. There is a good staff handbook but newly appointed teachers would sometimes benefit initially from direct support. Training in the management of difficult pupils is carried out before staff work with the pupils; a common policy is adopted and is correctly supervised by senior management. An appropriate appraisal scheme is in operation, goals for individual team members agreed and a good budget has been allocated to finance identified staff training needs. Training priorities often have whole school implications linked to the school development plan with good use made of outside consultants to conduct training for information and communication technology, Asperger's syndrome, and in English, the use of recently acquired literacy schemes.

68.The number of educational and care support staff is good, and adequate to meet the needs of the pupils and the curriculum. However, technician support in science and design and technology is still lacking. The care team is led by well-qualified and experienced staff who co-operate closely with the educational staff. Good continuity is achieved by effective and sympathetically managed hand over procedures before and after school. The special educational needs of the pupils with Asperger's syndrome are very well catered for by a team of experienced teachers and educational assistants.

69.The quality of accommodation is good, but there is no specific room for the teaching of music, and lessons take place in a mathematics room which has poor acoustics. The school

occupies a pleasant rural site that provides an attractive environment for learning. The teaching area has been much improved by the addition of a number of specialist rooms including science, design and technology and food technology. An ongoing programme of improvement to the residential accommodation has provided some cafe style dining rooms and attractive new bedroom areas, which give personal space and privacy to the pupils. Facilities for outdoor activities and leisure activities are also good. They include an all weather games area, pleasant lounge areas with television and a range of indoor games. The site is very well maintained with no evidence of graffiti or litter.

70.The overall adequacy of resources for learning is satisfactory with a good allocation of computers in the computer room and one to each classroom. There is a good range of software but overall co-ordination is needed to optimise use in all subject areas. However, in modern languages there are few age-appropriate textbooks, and the limited space available in the design and technology room is restrictive in developing resources to cover the full curriculum. The library and adjoining computer area are small, restricting the range of books available and number of pupils who can use the computers together. However, a satisfactory range of reference books and textbooks is held in the classrooms. The resources for leisure are good and include a range of sports equipment and clubs. The futuristic model making and war club attracts particularly enthusiastic membership, using painting and creative skills and taking pupils to meetings and events in the wider community. Resources are free of stereotypes and promote positive images.

71.The residential accommodation has been improved since the last inspection, and the school has responded promptly and appropriately to recommendations made by various statutory bodies. A methodical development programme in the main block has resulted in a warm, homely environment where pupils have reasonable personal space and privacy; other projects have resulted in major improvements, for example in the accommodation for pupils with Asperger's syndrome. There are appropriate facilities for when pupils are unwell, and pupils have ready access to telephones. The facilities and resources in the education block are well used to enhance the residential provision, and the grounds are also used to good effect.

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

72.Overall the efficiency of the school is good. The headteacher, governing body, and the board of trustees manage the school efficiently; they take their responsibilities under the terms of the charitable trust seriously and have established, over time, a prudent but pragmatic approach to financial planning. As a result, the value of the trust has grown. There are annual procedures that ensure expenditure is monitored effectively, and the gradual extension and refinement of the school development plan, together with the recent appointment of a financial consultant, demonstrate a positive response to the findings of the last inspection. Financial planning is satisfactory.

73.The school considers issues, such as the future levels of income generated by fees, takes a longer-term view, and plans effectively when it is clear about what needs to be done. However, there is still a weakness within longer term financial planning. Many aims, though entirely appropriate, are often expressed as vague intentions and lack the precision that would allow the school to be sure that funding available now is used in the best possible way. This lack of clarity also makes it difficult for the school to check whether it is on course to achieve its aims, and restricts its ability to adjust its objectives if and when necessary. The headteacher and governors have yet to establish a clear, long term framework for planning that ensures an appropriate balance is maintained between areas of expenditure and that the school is well prepared for the impact of possible changes.

74.The day-to-day administration is very good. The school has efficient procedures for

monitoring expenditure, and these are effective in identifying potential anomalies. The finance secretary is able to provide up-to-date, accurate information on request, the back-up of computer systems is carried out regularly and often and there are sensible security measures. The arrangements for the audit of school accounts are entirely appropriate, and the school is careful to ensure that the valuation of the estate is regularly updated and that its true worth is reflected in its insurance policies.

75. Staff are deployed well to ensure that there are sufficient numbers to deliver and support the various activities, and staff qualifications and interests are used to good effect. Little time in classrooms is wasted, and the ways in which opportunities in the evenings are used are both positive and productive. Teachers now have reasonable amounts of non-contact time, and this reflects a positive response to the findings of the last inspection.

76. The available resources are used well to support pupils' learning. The school also makes effective use of the accommodation, and has developed the site carefully and with some imagination in order to provide additional teaching and residential areas. It also makes very good use of resources and opportunities in the wider community to enrich pupils' experience and enhance their learning.

77. In the light of the levels of good teaching, the positive attitudes and very good behaviour of the pupils, and the good progress that they make, the school gives good value for money.

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

### **81. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

#### **81. English**

78. On entry the majority of pupils are underachieving and a significant number have difficulties with reading. Clearly this impacts upon the pupils' ability to understand written English in all other curriculum subjects. However, the majority of work they undertake is in line with their abilities and over time they show some gains in reading and writing. Pupils' attainments in reading are regularly measured through standardised testing and records show that their reading ages increase as a result of the emphasis given to reading and writing by the school. By the end of Key Stage 4 higher attaining pupils gain GCSE in English and, increasingly, pupils with Asperger's syndrome also work towards this qualification. However, pupils' progress in the use of information technology within the subject is unsatisfactory. There is little evidence in their work samples of their ability to use it to draft and redraft work.

79. Pupils at both key stages make satisfactory progress in English, but there are too few examples of creative work, both written and verbal. During the inspection, and mainly due to the absence of the English co-ordinator, there were no examples of role-play or drama taking place. There is therefore insufficient evidence to make judgements concerning progress in these areas.

80. In reading, pupils make satisfactory progress. This is due to the emphasis the school has placed on raising literacy standards, and particularly for those pupils with reading ages under ten years. Data shows that the school's initiatives have been instrumental in raising reading ages; pupils perceive the purpose of the reading groups. They generally work hard, as they understand the need to improve their literacy skills.

81. At Key Stage 3 pupils are working within a structured English scheme and consolidating their use and understanding of grammar. The majority make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets, such as, using correct punctuation or describing the theme of a book. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have made sufficient progress to be entered for external accreditation including GCSE. Whilst their progress is satisfactory overall, there are some unsatisfactory features. For example, the amount of work they complete is sometimes quite small. In one lesson, one pupil completed one paragraph, one four lines and another did nothing because the computer was not working and he was unwilling to complete the task by hand. The subsequent shortage of work puts pupils at a disadvantage in terms of deadlines for coursework and several are aware that they have much catching up to do. The fact that the teacher does not clearly indicate how much work she expects the pupils to complete is a major contributory factor to this difficulty and impedes progress. Those pupils, who are in the Asperger's class and able to integrate into GCSE classes, make the same progress as their peers.

82. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory at both key stages. They are frequently good at Key Stage 3 where pupils respond positively to structured work. Pupils often take a long time to settle at the start of lessons but with the understanding support of staff they generally try hard to concentrate. However, in some lessons there is friction between pupils and, when this erupts, the lesson is brought to a temporary halt until calm is restored. Where activities are exciting, such as in a quiz, pupils are truly motivated; they burst with enthusiasm as they strive to be first to solve the riddles. Occasionally this enthusiasm is overwhelming as they have difficulty controlling their excitement. Behaviour and response to English is best when there are clear boundaries and the work is well applied with expectations made clear to each individual pupil. Some pupils have difficulty coping with a freer atmosphere, are restless and disturb the work of others. By the end of Key Stage 4 most pupils understand the need to

control their behaviour and to tackle work on their own, and there are good examples of independent learning.

83. During the week of the inspection the lessons were taught by two temporary supply teachers as the permanent teacher was on long term absence. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and it is good in almost half of lessons but unsatisfactory in two lessons at Key Stage 4. In the very best lessons teachers take a firm and positive lead. They get lessons off to a brisk start, make explicit how they expect pupils to behave and what they are to do. Teachers enjoy good relationships with pupils and are able to use their humour to cajole them along and encourage them to keep trying. Teachers know their pupils well and focus them towards targets on their individual educational plans. Where pupils are working individually on written exercises, teachers share their input around the pupils, giving regular words of encouragement and support, praising both effort and achievement.

84. Where teaching is unsatisfactory lessons do not have a defined start. Pupils arrive talking and they are not listening when the teacher introduces the lesson. The focus of the lesson is then lost and although the teacher tries to engender good relationships with the pupils she does little actual teaching, the pupils take little notice of her help and advice. In these cases behaviour soon deteriorates and little work is completed. The teachers' subject knowledge is secure but some lack the necessary strategies to ensure that pupils make progress. Where behaviour management is slack pupils do not concentrate. Too often tasks are set for the whole class and work not planned to meet the individual needs of each pupil. This is particularly disadvantageous to pupils with literacy difficulties and results in pupils' targets not being addressed.

85. The school has placed a sensible emphasis on raising literacy standards particularly for pupils with reading ages under ten years. They address this through ability-focused literacy groups using materials specifically produced for this purpose. There is a business like approach to this initiative. Rules and procedures are well reinforced and pupils make clear progress. However, within lessons teachers sometimes miss opportunities to reinforce the syntactical skills that these pupils are learning and to ensure that they are reinforced in all areas of curriculum. Too often pupils are told what the words are in texts rather than being encouraged to read or spell them by using the technical skills they have been taught through 'THRASS' or the SRA decoding scheme.

86. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced, and enables appropriate progression to accredited qualifications at the end of Key Stage 4. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows an effective range of activities. For example, writing is used for narrative and descriptive stories, and analytically for expressing opinion and arguments. Some poetry work was also seen in pupils' folders. However, during the inspection there were very few examples of creative work in English. No role-play, debate or drama was observed although the school was planning its Christmas pantomime the following week. Visits to theatres are made, but, as at the last inspection, there were too few examples of extended writing and creative work, both spoken and written.

87. Assessment is overall satisfactory but not all staff consistently apply the assessment. Records vary in quality and length. Some are helpful in recording exactly what pupils have learnt and how they have applied their learning. Less effective assessment simply records what has been taught. Reading records also vary in usefulness, some merely recording the pages that have been read. However, the good work begun on collating reading test results is a strength and will help the school identify the progress of all pupils. Assessments in THRASS and SRA are not effectively used to inform teaching in other lessons and the pupils do not learn to apply these skills.

88. During the inspection the co-ordinator was absent, but evidence was gathered from discussions with other staff and scrutiny of pupils' work and records. Staff who teach English meet regularly to discuss schemes of work and curriculum coverage, but there is no subject development plan or specific criteria by which to judge, in the longer term, the effectiveness of the curriculum.

89. Despite some weaknesses, there has been significant improvement since the last inspection. It has been improved by introducing a more secure approach to reading and writing and by clear attention to pupils' skills in drafting and re drafting work. This has been facilitated by the increase in information technology and its appropriate use as a tool in English lessons. The school has introduced a marking policy and most teachers add supportive helpful commentary to pupils' work. The library is better equipped and good use is made of it during the school day. The school recognises the need to keep developments in this core subject at the forefront of its strategic planning.

### **93. Mathematics**

90. Given that most pupils have had a very interrupted educational career, they are achieving well in mathematics. The progress that they make over time in relation to their differing abilities and difficulties is overall good, and in 1999, a few students at Post-16 and pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieved external accreditation at GCSE level. During the week of the inspection, the progress that pupils made in lessons was also good, and there were some lessons at Key Stage 4 where the progress being made was very good or excellent. Better progress is directly related to the quality and style of teaching, and these have an impact on the attitudes of the pupils to the lesson. Pupils' progress in the use of information technology within the subject is unsatisfactory. There is little evidence in their work samples of their ability to use it to solve problems, or manipulate data. This was identified in the last inspection and has not improved significantly.

91. At Key Stage 3, pupils' progress is good. Higher attaining pupils at this key stage can interpret data, construct a line graph from the information and can predict how it might change with different sets of data. They are beginning to calculate the area of regular and irregular shapes, work with square roots and calculate angles of elevation. Pupils have a good grasp of the four operations and apply these to two and three digit problems and work confidently with multiplication tables using a calculator to check their answers. Lower attaining pupils organise their work, check the answers by using a calculator and by applying different methods, for example, by estimating or finding the nearest numbers. In number and algebra they multiply using two and three digit numbers, describe number patterns, and recognise negative numbers. They solve simple mathematical problems using all four operations and are still at the level of learning multiplication tables. They work with everyday measures, weights, and money and time, and can calculate volume or area by counting squares. In mental mathematics sessions, they understand the meaning a simple mathematical vocabulary, such as, "treble", "double" and "quarter". Some younger and lower attaining pupils are just at the stage of identifying fractions in a diagram form.

92. At Key Stage 4, pupils' progress is good and during the inspection it was very good overall in lessons. By the end of the key stage higher attaining pupils calculate area and volume using formula, and solve simple algebraic equations. They use fractions, decimals and percentages, and understand how they relate to one another. They work confidently, to two places with decimals, and multiply and divide mentally. They solve problems without using a calculator, but are able to use all its functions to check their work. Lower attaining pupils at this key stage divide and multiply by 100, and work out three digit problems using the four operations. They are able to apply this knowledge to problems involving money, weight and size, for example, calculating the size of specific rooms, and the time taken to complete a journey. Pupils work with shapes, calculating the different sizes of angles. Those pupils, who

are in the Asperger's class and able to integrate into GCSE classes, make the same progress as their peers.

93.The attitudes of pupils to lessons, and their behaviour are overall good. In three-quarters of lessons seen during the week of the inspection pupils' response was very good. Pupils enter classrooms for the lessons prepared to engage in the activities, and settle very quickly. This is especially so in the lessons where teachers start by giving clear guidelines about the work and what is expected of each pupil. In most classes pupils listen and concentrate well, and remain on task for the majority of the session. Some younger pupils in Key Stage 3, or those who have only just been admitted to the school, occasionally find this difficult, and lose concentration and motivation. However, generally teachers have developed individual strategies for dealing with these situations and pupils resume working quickly and with the minimum of fuss. In Year 11, there are examples of very positive attitudes. Here, pupils readily work out problems, answer questions, volunteer to work out mathematical problems on the board, and show that they are eager to improve their knowledge so that they may do better in their end of year examinations. There were no examples of pupils refusing to carry on working or walking out of class, and no examples of deliberate vandalism of resources or other pupils' work.

94.Relationships between pupils and the teachers are very good. In general pupils respond to all teachers, although some pupils show a greater respect for certain teachers, especially when they are sure of what is required of them. Pupils' relationships with each other in lessons are good, and there were no instances of aggression, verbal or otherwise, during the lessons seen. Of particular note, at Key Stage 4, pupils were confident that their efforts and answers to questions were not going to be ridiculed by other members on the class. Personal development of the pupils is satisfactory, with older pupils showing that they can study independently, and taking responsibility for evaluating their behaviour, but do not in some lessons readily evaluate their own work.

95.Teaching is overall good, and is very good at Key Stage 4, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. In the best lessons, teachers start the sessions with purpose and pupils are aware of the work they will be covering. Teachers ensure that pupils are listening and prepared to start the lesson with positive attitudes. This has a positive impact on behaviour and the relationship between the pupils and the teacher, as the pupils interpret this as being purposeful. In these lessons, the activities are varied, and begin with whole class activities and then proceed into individual work. All teachers have appropriate expectations of behaviour and participation, but expectations of achievement do vary between teachers. However in some lessons, the pace at which the pupils are working through a very structured scheme dictates the achievement, and although not unsatisfactory, these lessons tend to lack rigor.

96.The management of behaviour varies between teachers and where it is strongest and has the most impact, is in the lessons where teachers plan activities which are challenging, are varied and extend the pupils' capabilities. Here pupils are very focused on the tasks, ask for help, take criticism positively and have a high self-esteem. In these lessons, behaviour does not have to be controlled. However, in some lessons, pupils work individually for the entire lesson and do not get any opportunity to work with other members of the class, and this was noted in the last inspection. In these lessons there is a feeling that teachers are controlling the behaviour by organising pupils to work alone and are afraid that the behaviour could deteriorate if pupils work in groups. However, this undermines pupils' personal and social development. The marking of work is generally good, and the best examples have constructive comments and grades, this is especially evident at Key Stage 4. Teachers use the learning support assistants satisfactorily to support pupils with the greatest difficulties, but in a few lesson they only sit alongside pupils in a 'minder' role instead of working with pupils.



97.The curriculum is overall good, and is based on two commercial schemes of work which the school has adopted, and consequently they cover all aspects of National Curriculum mathematics. There is equal opportunity for all pupils, and the amount of time allocated on the timetable to the subject meets recommendations. However, although using and applying mathematics is planned for, there is little evidence in the pupils' work of this aspect being rigorously taught and no evidence of the use of information technology within the subject. Medium term planning is in place and the schemes of work provide the framework for teachers to plan the curriculum for individual pupils and set specific and measurable targets. The school makes good use of base line assessment when pupils are admitted into the school, and this identifies pupils' strengths and weaknesses and forms the basis for setting targets. Targets set in the individual educational plans are very good, are specific and measurable and provide good information for measuring pupils' progress over time. All pupils are entered for end of Key Stage 3 national tests as required, and the school uses external accreditation at the end of Key Stage 4 which is appropriate to individual pupils' abilities and needs.

98.There are no judgements in the last report concerning the quality of the leadership of the subject with which to make a comparison. The present leadership and co-ordination of the subject are satisfactory but could be further improved, and have a clearer direction for developments. The co-ordinator has only assumed the responsibility for the subject at the beginning of this term, although he has been involved in the teaching of the subject for three years, and therefore has a satisfactory overview of the curriculum, its planning, pupils' progress and assessment. However, the real task of co-ordinating and developing the subject in relation to standards has yet to be developed fully, and is unsatisfactory. There has been no real analysis of the standards achieved in last year's end of key stage test results. The areas identified for development, such as, additional accreditation and evaluating the transition from one scheme of work to another, do not arise from a systematic review of the subject in relation to the standards being achieved.

99.The co-ordinator has a job description but is not secure in his awareness about the role of a co-ordinator, and the development of the subject and curriculum evaluation. Although, there is monitoring of curriculum development by a member of the senior management team, this development and evaluation is not firmly in the hands of the co-ordinator. In addition, monitoring of teaching by the co-ordinator so that good practices, in terms of style and strategies, can be shared and built on, does not take place, and therefore there is a difference in approach and consequently a variance in the quality of teaching.

100.The number and qualifications of the teachers teaching the subject is satisfactory and adequately meets the needs of the pupils and the curriculum. All are experienced in teaching pupils with these specific difficulties. The numbers of support staff and their experience is good, but in a few lessons they were not used efficiently to record progress, or help pupils self evaluate their work. This varies with the confidence that individual learning support staff have in this particular subject. Arrangements for additional training for both teachers and support staff are unsatisfactory and not securely linked with developments in the subject, or the professional needs of individual teachers or support assistants. For example, the co-ordinator has had no training in the co-ordination of the subject, and has only been on assessment training for a specific scheme of work. The accommodation for the teaching of the subject is good and there is an available information technology room to support the curriculum. The adequacy of resources, in terms of books, is good, and they are in good condition. However, although each room has a computer, these were not used during the week of the inspection, and there is little use of the information technology room to support the work of the pupils.

101.There has been improvement in this subject since the last inspection, as standards, progress and teaching have improved, as have the resources. However, there are some weaknesses that were identified in the last report, such as the use of information technology, which are still in need of attention.

## 105. Science

102. Standards and provision in science have improved considerably since the last inspection, when there was underachievement by pupils, poor behaviour and ineffective teaching. All these areas are now satisfactory, and during the week of the inspection there were examples of good teaching. The greatest improvement has been in the provision of a specialist science room.

103. The progress that pupils make over time in relation to their differing abilities and difficulties is overall satisfactory. In 1999, a number of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 successfully completed Certificates of Achievement and GCSE accreditation. This is an improvement from the last inspection when there were a significant number of pupils underachieving. Most pupils, in both key stages, have a basic understanding of the topics they have studied recently with a wide range of quality in their written work. Oral answers show they have the ability to recall good scientific knowledge and they use appropriate vocabulary, such as, 'hypothesis' with an understanding of the concept. Most pupils enjoy investigation work; setting up simple experiments and recording the results, either in written form or through a table or graphs. However, there is little evidence of the use of information technology for recording, displaying or researching. Students at Post-16 successfully attend a variety of courses at local colleges including a NVQ level one small animal care course.

104. At Key Stage 3, pupils discuss the differences between internal and external skeletons, remember the correct names for parts of the human skeleton and offer sensible suggestions about movement. They can describe vertebrates, mammals and amphibians. Pupils of all abilities, with supervision, set up and conduct simple investigations, for example, to look at changing states of matter. They investigate different rocks and make conclusions about the characteristics, but during this lesson progress is unsatisfactory due to unchallenging activities, and an over-reliance on the information in the textbook. This does not support their literacy skills or their personal development of independent study. At Key Stage 4, pupils set up investigative work, for example, to examine the burning of hydrocarbon fuels, or the stretching of a spring under increasing loads. They set hypotheses, and from their experiments prove that the ratio of the extension is proportional to the weight. They are able to talk about results, record their findings, both in written form and as a graph. They use their numeracy skills well when interpreting the data and drawing conclusions.

105. The progress pupils in the Asperger's group make is overall satisfactory. They record their work in written form, and their books show that they make good use of their writing skills with no over-reliance of work sheets. They understand about energy and warmth from the sun, and understand pollination, germination and reproduction of plants. They have made a study of habitats and food chains, and have knowledge of basic genetics. Those pupils who are in this group and able to integrate into GCSE classes make the same progress as their peers.

106. Attitudes to lessons and behaviour in them are overall satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy the investigation work, and maintain good levels of concentration. They usually respond very well to the clearly presented lessons and give perceptive answers to questions. They demonstrate a good understanding and draw on previously learned knowledge. The well planned, interesting work encourages a high level of involvement and good behaviour from most pupils. However, in one lesson during the week of the inspection, a few individual pupils at Key Stage 3 reacted adversely to the presence of the inspector in the class and unsatisfactory behaviour results. This had a negative impact on the progress pupils made in that particular lesson.

107. The quality of teaching is overall good in both key stages. There was unsatisfactory teaching in one lesson where the teacher allowed pupils to talk about unrelated topics. A science specialist carries out the majority of teaching, so knowledge of the subject is very

good and this has a very positive effect on standards and progress. All lessons are carefully planned and very clearly presented at a level appropriate to the need of different groups, so that learning builds on a range of previous experiences. Lessons conclude with a good summary to recap the main points taught and to check progress. Investigations are well prepared and allow pupils to reach their own conclusions as they collect data. For example, one group successfully set up complicated equipment to observe the effect of burning hydrocarbon fuels, while another class examined the effect of forces in stretching a spring. The management of pupils is usually effective using non-confrontational methods tempered with a little humour. All safety procedures are in place and observed. However, during the week of the inspection, the computer was out of commission, and prevented pupils from making use of some appropriate and available software. A weakness in teaching is the lack of homework in the subject.

108. Overall the curriculum is good, and this is an improvement from the last inspection. It is broad and balanced, meets National Curriculum requirements and offers equal access to all pupils. The teacher of pupils with Asperger's syndrome benefits from the advice of the qualified science teacher and this has a positive impact on the content of their curriculum. Assessment is satisfactory, and as the one teacher teaches most pupils there is a good overview of pupils' progress and levels of attainment. By following a well-organised single science scheme at GCSE, pupils at Key Stage 4 have the opportunity to progress through a range of work and enter the examination at the end of the key stage. Certificates of achievement are also used as appropriate alternative external accreditation without compromising the aim of achieving a worthwhile GCSE examination result.

109. The leadership and management of the subject are now satisfactory, with a policy and schemes of work in place. These provide a framework for planning, and along with the science scheme for GCSE ensure that learning is built on previous experiences. However, the two teachers are not actively involved in the monitoring of each other's teaching and therefore unable to share good practice. Development planning is in place but the co-ordinator is not actively involved in steering the developments in the subject.

110. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources have improved considerably since the last inspection and are now good. There has been an appointment of a qualified and experienced science teacher who has brought a mainstream perspective to the subject and the setting up of a well-equipped science room. Most lessons now have the support of a learning support assistant but there is still a lack of technical support, which would be beneficial for setting up computers and equipment. The science accommodation is good. However, there is still an absence of a fume cupboard, and some unnecessary chemicals need to be safely removed and disposed of from the store room.

#### **114. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

##### **114. Art**

111. The school makes satisfactory provision for art. Pupils' progress in art is satisfactory, particularly in practical activities. Pupils at Key Stage 3 use simple tools, such as diffusers, and simple techniques, such as marbling, to create rich, colourful effects which are then used as backgrounds for subsequent work. They can draw firm, bold outlines and shade them in with precision, although such work tends to lack expression. They show some understanding of such elements as balance and proportion when developing their work, but make little use of sketchbooks, or other planning tools, when considering their ideas. Pupils at Key Stage 4 develop these practical skills when considering the design of logos and brand names. They combine found objects to create thought-provoking, 3-dimensional work, and use cardboard and junk materials to build cityscapes that capture such qualities as oriental glamour and urban seediness. More able pupils have a basic grasp of concepts such as style, and a few

can discuss such ideas when considering work that has been inspired by Picasso's portraits.

112. Pupils respond well in art lessons; they enjoy the subject and handle such tools as brushes and felt tip pens with care and intention. They concentrate well, and often become increasingly absorbed in their work. Pupils have a tendency to stick with familiar ideas and images, although some pupils, particularly the older ones, are more adventurous. They do, however, produce work that is individual, although there is little critical self-evaluation. Pupils are careful when storing their work, and many work on it in the evenings during their leisure time.

113. Teaching in art is satisfactory and sometimes good. Lessons are well organised, and under-pinned by positive relationships between all concerned. The staff successfully adopt a consistent, patient approach and quiet, supportive questioning effectively helps pupils decide what they want to do in a range of practical activities. Time and resources, including information technology, are used to good effect. However, the scope created in lessons to enhance pupils' and students' understanding is under-developed, and opportunities are missed to engage pupils in planning and reviewing their own work in ways that allow them to gauge whether or not they have achieved what they wanted.

114. The scheme of work for art recognises all aspects of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, but it still lacks the detail to ensure that pupils build upon their previous experience, develop their skills in an increasingly wide range of media, and broaden their knowledge and understanding of art. In this respect, there has not been a significant improvement since the last inspection, and the contribution the subject makes to pupils' spiritual and cultural development is not as significant as it should be. The specialist art room is adequate for the purpose and used to good effect, but the kiln is not used, due to a lack of expertise amongst the current staff, and storage space is limited. There is a good range of simple, practical tools and media for pupils to use, but there are few resources such as posters and books to illustrate ideas and challenge pupils' thinking. A modest range of well-presented displays brightens the school building and examples of pupils' work, neatly mounted and properly framed, enliven the residential accommodation.

#### **118. Design and technology**

115. Improvements in this curricular area since the last inspection have been very good. Two specialist teachers teach the subject and the school now has two new specialist rooms. The requirements of the National Curriculum are now being met.

116. The progress pupils make at both key stages and in both aspects of design and technology, is satisfactory. In 1999 a small number of pupils achieved Certificates of Achievement. In food technology, pupils are moving through well-organised schemes of work and working towards City and Guilds Basic Cookery accreditation. In their work with resistant materials, lesson objectives are successfully met, with some pupils keen to continue work as an after-school activity.

117. In food technology at Key Stage 3, pupils have worked with a range of foods so that they gain confidence in handling and preparing dishes. They describe how to make a Christmas cake, and know how to apply marzipan and icing. They confidently use a variety of small equipment, selecting the correct implement for the task. Pupils express individuality in their designs, and are anxious to produce a product of good quality that reflects their chosen design. At Key Stage 4, pupils through their City and Guilds work are making gains in their knowledge and understanding of foods, nutrition, food hygiene and basic cookery skills. As part of this, they are expected and are able, to make choices of dishes and share ideas to fulfill a design brief. They evaluate previous work and are not afraid to be critical, but are able to make suggestions on how to improve it. However, the quality of written work is often unsatisfactory with immature writing.

118. In work with resistant materials, pupils at both key stages have established good workshop routines. These have been established since the new teacher has been employed and is evident in the developing standard of their practical work. Pupils use, with supervision, a variety of tools, both hand-held and machine tools. The awareness of health and safety issues is good and pupils are willing to wear protective clothing and goggles when necessary. Designing skills and knowledge and understanding are emerging but are presently unsatisfactory. Pupils have little experience or knowledge of structures. The quality of some focused practical tasks is good, for example in the production of wood joints. However, they are anxious to finish work with insufficient regard for the quality, although some self-evaluation is now being carried out. Pupils are beginning to think about wider issues, such as, the fitness of the design for the purpose, for example, when designing a rack to hold compact discs.

119. In all lessons pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They are able to work together in pairs and small groups, and generally they enjoy very good, mutually respectful relationships with the teachers. They share ideas, such as when planning a "ready steady cook programme", and are willing to help each other in the workshop. For example, pupils with Asperger's syndrome, work together helping each other to form a piece of plastic into an egg holder. Behaviour is usually very good in both aspects of the subject, and is the result of firm behaviour management, and a respect by the teachers for all pupils' efforts. Due to this, pupils, including those with complex behaviour and learning difficulties, show good levels of interest in their work. Pupils are proud of their work and this has a positive impact on their self-esteem. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection.

120. Teaching is good at both key stages, and in half of the lessons seen during the week of the inspection teaching was very good. Both teachers have specialist training in the subject and therefore have very good knowledge of the subject and the requirements of the National Curriculum. Both teachers have been employed in the school since the last inspection, with one having mainstream school experience and the other having extensive special needs experience. They manage all pupils very well, and particularly those pupils with Asperger's syndrome and this results in mutually respectful and friendly relationships. Planning is overall good, with learning objectives and intended assessment criteria clearly identified. Both teachers emphasise numeracy and literacy through their lessons but opportunities for writing and the use of information technology are not well developed. Resources and time are used very well and the pace of lessons is good, so that pupils are actively engaged in the tasks and this results in high interest levels. However, there is limited use of homework.

121. The curriculum is satisfactory but the present range of design and technology is limited to food technology and resistant materials technology, which mainly involves woodworking, with some plastic moulding. The development of the curriculum for resistant materials has been adversely affected by recent staffing problems as the qualified teacher has only been in post for one term prior to the inspection. In a short space of time the new teacher has established good baselines from which pupils are now progressing in practical skills and safe workshop practice. The wider implications of the theory of the subject are gradually being introduced. The assessment of pupils' attainment, and the record keeping of the progress they are making, are good. They reflect both the schemes of work and National Curriculum levels, and form the basis for lesson planning. However, the use of information technology in both aspects of the subject is underdeveloped.

122. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Both teachers' curriculum planning is good and well organised, and in the short time they have been working together, there have been informal discussions concerning the future development of the subject. There is a very good awareness of the need to develop the subject to include work with metal, textiles, and systems and control. Teachers have yet to monitor and evaluate the curriculum planning, each other's teaching, and formulate a subject development plan.

123.The qualifications and experience of the staff are now very good with the added advantage of having a wider experience, including work in mainstream schools. Accommodation is good, but the size of the workshop, unfortunately, impedes the development of metalwork. Resources for the present curriculum are satisfactory but will need to increase as subject developments take place. The last inspection highlighted the need for technician support and this has not improved.

#### **127. Geography**

124.The school makes good provision in geography. Throughout the school, pupils' progress is good. Pupils at Key Stage 3, know of recent changes in national shopping habits, and can relate these to the Banbury neighbourhood. They can identify symbols on Ordnance Survey maps, and more able pupils can work out the shapes of hills and valleys from the contour patterns. Pupils at Key Stage 4, know how to record and interpret data on a simple table. They use a variety of sources to find out about the economic status of developed and developing countries, and understand how the different features and circumstances of those countries have resulted in contrasting wealth, different degrees of development, and political changes. Throughout the school, pupils have a good understanding of environmental issues, and they apply their geographical skills and knowledge in a variety of other contexts, ranging from surveys of local shopping developments to the consideration of third world issues, such as poverty. In this respect, the subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' personal, social, and cultural development.

125.Pupils' response in geography lessons is good, occasionally very good. They settle to work quickly, and concentrate well. They are keen to answer questions, willing to contribute information, and are interested in finding out about other places. Pupils co-operate with one another, and sometimes collaborate in pairs, for example when cross-checking information. They are careful with their work, and volunteer to continue their course work for homework. As a result, their personal study skills, particularly in the case of older pupils, are good.

126.Teaching is good and often very good. Relationships are very positive; all staff know the pupils well, and older ones in particular are treated in ways that reflect their development as young adults. Lessons are well organised, purposeful, and briskly delivered. A particularly positive feature is the clear, simple cross-questioning that reinforces the learning of all pupils. Simple resources are used to good effect, but the use of information technology for research and analysing data is under-developed

127.The school has consolidated the satisfactory provision noted at the time of the last inspection, and the subject is well managed. The scheme of work ensures all pupils have a secure foundation for the work that they will encounter as they progress through the school, and the reintroduction of the GCSE short course is a welcome development, but the range of accreditation at Key Stage 4 is unnecessarily limited. There are strong cross-curricular links with other subjects, notably history and physical education, although these links are not clearly defined in the medium term planning. There is a satisfactory range of resources, and good use is made of facilities both in the local community and further afield.

#### **131. History**

128.At the time of the previous inspection, history was combined under humanities. Expectations for pupils at Key Stage 3 were low, and opportunities for extended writing were limited at both key stages. There is a significant improvement in the provision of history, with systems for monitoring the pupils' progress and achievement now well established and matched to National Curriculum attainment targets. The pupils at both key stages make good progress in relation to their abilities.

129. At Key Stage 3 the pupils make good progress. Although no teaching was seen at this key stage during the inspection, an examination of the pupils' work and teachers' records indicate that all pupils have a secure understanding of early settlements. The pupils show knowledge of North American peoples and their ways of life. Written exercises demonstrate the pupils' understanding of the importance of the reindeer and the buffalo to tribes such as the Inuit and American Indians. In Year 9, they progress to the making of the United Kingdom, developing a clear knowledge of key factors in the industrial revolution. They examine society through the change from cottage industries to the factory system, and the effect of enclosures on agriculture. There is a wide range of ability, and the more able pupils are encouraged towards further study and independent research, as is evident in their written development of the theme. The pupils show a good understanding of the importance of individuals such as Abraham Darby and Henry Cort in the development of the iron industry, and they know why coke replaced charcoal in the smelting process. They consolidate their learning through off-site visits to Coalbrookdale open-air museum. Higher attaining pupils increase their knowledge, investigating the development of steam driven machines. By the end of this key stage, the pupils begin to look at the causes and effects of World War I.

130. At Key Stage 4, and at post-16 where this option has been chosen, the pupils follow examination syllabi for either the General Certificate of Education (GCE) short course or the Certificate of Achievement. The more able pupils are encouraged towards the full GCE, and in 1999, two pupils achieved A\*-C results. In Key Stage 4, the pupils make good progress overall. They develop their earlier studies, analysing the effects of the Treaty of Versailles and its contribution to the outbreak of the Second World War. By the end of the key stage, they examine modern world issues such as the Berlin blockade and the cold war. There is much evidence in their folders of personal analysis and opinion, which they express through extended writing.

131. The pupils are positive in their attitudes towards history. They work hard, producing neat and well-presented work of a good standard. They collaborate well, sharing ideas and opinions. At Key Stage 4, pupils examine the allies' desire for revenge on Germany, and debate the moral issues of this, which strongly supports their moral development. They take care in their presentation and there is evidence over time of improved handwriting and spelling skills. Pupils show respect for each other and form good trusting relationships with staff, who present very good role models.

132. Although no teaching was seen at Key Stage 3, the quality of teaching at Key Stage 4 is good. Well-planned lessons are balanced to include clear introductory discussions and expectations. Lively teaching strategies are stimulating and motivating and the pupils respond with enthusiasm and interest. There is good teacher movement around the classroom, ensuring that all pupils receive individual attention. There are good cross-curricular links with mathematics, such as when looking at population tables, and in geography, when identifying areas of conflict on the world map. Marking procedures are good, with constructive and encouraging comments. Day-to-day recording of the pupils' progress is linked to National Curriculum levels at Key Stage 3 and examination grades at Key Stage 4. Further assessment is made against the pupils' individual education and behaviour plans with the award of effort marks. The pupils' progress is monitored through regular test assignments, which inform lesson planning, schemes of work and curriculum development.

133. A subject policy is in place, and is implemented through effective schemes of work, which are planned to ensure continuity and pupil progress. Teaching is not formally monitored, although regular staff liaison allows discussions on the development of history. Staff are appropriately qualified, and the accommodation is satisfactory overall. However, resources are limited. There are no hands-on artefacts to enhance learning, and no simplified texts to support those pupils with weak literacy skills. Although there is some software, computers are insufficiently used to support the subject. Good use is made of external resources, such as



off-

site visits to various museums or to the historic ships at Portsmouth. The department is well managed and efficient, and is good overall.

### **137. Information technology**

134.Considerable advances have been made in information and communication technology since the last inspection. This is clearly evident in the attainment levels achieved and the progress made by all pupils. A number of pupils have recently completed and passed two Open College units in "Introduction to Information Technology". In 1999, a number of students have been successful in achieving certificates of achievement. All students are now working towards these targets and evidence in their very good records of work suggests that most will be successful. A number of students will also enter GCSE short course in information technology and again their current work suggests reasonable success. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding is less advanced than their skills.

135.Progress in both key stages is good and during the week of the inspection there was good progress being made in some lessons. Pupils are given clear expectations for the amount of work to be covered in each lesson and are often enthusiastic to achieve these targets. The very good files maintained by all pupils show the good quality work and steady progress they are making.

136.At Key Stage 3, pupils use information technology to generate and communicate ideas in a number of different forms, such as, text, tables and pictures. They save and retrieve work, and keep examples of their work in files. Some pupils and students construct basic databases and use simple spreadsheets. All use word processing at different levels of skill, and work through the carefully constructed, progressive schemes at their own pace. By the end of Key Stage 4, skills have continued to be developed to a level and most will be eligible for GCSE entry at the end of this academic year. A number of pupils produce very good work related to other areas of the curriculum by importing digital images to illustrate their text, such as, a geography expedition to Snowdonia. However, despite the availability of a computer in each classroom, the use of the skills learned in discrete lessons is under-exploited in subject areas. There is a small range of subject appropriate software but teachers do not fully exploit the potential, for example, in design and technology.

137.Response to lessons is good. All pupils and students enjoy working in the information technology room, show very good concentration and interest in the work. They are proud of the quality of their own files of completed work and are very confident in using the computers. Pertinent questions are asked and they readily accept and value the support of the teacher. There is a high level of respect. Behaviour is at all times very good, pupils often make useful exchanges of information and are willing to offer help to each other. There is little evidence of frustration when problems occur due to the positive attitude of most pupils and the immediacy of good teaching.

138.The teaching of the subject, when it is taught by the co-ordinator, is overall good, and during the week of the inspection there were examples of very good teaching. The teacher has good subject knowledge and plans well. Expectations for work and discipline are very high and there is a working ethos of mutual respect. The teaching of information and communication technology in other subjects is less well developed and varies between teachers. Some teachers are still not confident and do not exploit the skills the pupils have in this area. This is despite a detailed survey of the skills of staff, and appropriately focussed training.

139.The curriculum complies with National Curriculum requirements. The structure of the scheme of work is good and facilitates good assessment of pupils as they progress through the schemes. The leadership and management of the subject throughout the school are

satisfactory but there is a lack of monitoring of teaching and evaluation of the use of computers across the curriculum. Consequently, this area remains underdeveloped.

140. The qualifications and experience of the staff for teaching the subject are satisfactory, and in-service training is in place for all staff including learning support assistants. There has been considerable investment in new computers and appropriate software. The very good organisation of the subject has resulted in a much-improved curricular area.

#### **144. Modern foreign languages (French)**

141. The previous inspection found no provision for the teaching of modern languages. The school has responded to this and French is now taught at Key Stages 3 and 4, which is an improvement.

142. At both key stages, pupils make satisfactory progress overall. At Key Stage 3, the pupils make satisfactory progress in acquiring basic vocabulary, and respond accurately to simple questions such as 'comment t'appelle-tu?' They use simple sentences to describe their likes and dislikes, for example, 'j'aime le chat'. Although they have not yet learned negative responses, they rephrase statements using regular -er verbs, such as 'je déteste les chiens'. By the end of Key Stage 3, their vocabulary covers a range of topics, including food, animals, themselves and their families. Higher achievers write answers in both French and English. They copy accurately and show developing comprehension in their written work.

143. At Key Stage 4, the pupils make satisfactory progress in following the Certificate of Achievement syllabus. They extend their vocabulary to include topics on leisure, shopping and fashion. Their written and oral work shows an understanding of French, for example, when asked their ages they reply 'J'ai quinze ans', and they can write this accurately. They enhance their learning through residential trips to Brittany, and some accounts of their visit, supported with photographs, make good reading.

144. The pupils with Asperger's syndrome make good progress. Their written work indicates progressive vocabulary development and sentence structure. They demonstrate their understanding of spoken French in responding to questions, and singing. More able pupils complete simple translation work,

145. The pupils' attitudes to French lessons vary considerably. At Key Stage 3, the pupils show interest, participating in lessons with a degree of enthusiasm, and trying hard with their accents. However, at Key Stage 4, the majority of pupils are very negative towards the subject. Much of the work of lower attaining pupils is unfinished. The folders of higher achievers contain a range of completed work sheets and examination questions.

146. Pupils' response and attitudes are overall satisfactory, but the behaviour and language of a small minority of pupils at Key Stage 4 is unacceptable. There were some incidents of inappropriate comments and threats. Where the teachers ignore such behaviour, it impacts on the pupils' personal development, and does not prepare them either for reintegration into mainstream schools or for citizenship.

147. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory. Over half is of a good standard, and lessons are structured to promote French by including an element of speaking, listening and written skills. In the best teaching, there is variety, relevance and purpose to the pupils' learning, such as when learning a French Christmas carol for an end of term assembly. However, in some lessons activities lack challenge, and less able pupils quickly lose interest, which has a negative impact on the behaviour of pupils. In some lessons there is insufficient use of computers to support learning. At Key Stage 4, where the teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject, they make good use of the target language throughout the lesson. However, it is less well used at Key Stage 3. Where teaching is less than good, the teachers have weak behaviour management controls. In the best lessons, learning support assistants are effectively deployed, offering strong support to pupils. Marking is consistent, although at

Key Stage 3, some incorrect exercises are marked as correct. The teachers' records are detailed in recording what individuals have achieved. This informs lesson planning, and is linked to the pupils' individual education and behaviour plans, which are used as working documents

148.A policy is in place and is reflected in the curriculum, which is satisfactory in meeting statutory requirements. Additionally, the curriculum contains elements of work designed to support the pupils' personal, social and moral development. However, whilst there is a global overview of the subject in long term schemes of work, short term schemes of work lack detail, which impacts on continuity and progression. In addition, the curriculum is not monitored. Assessment procedures are in place, but there is no evidence to show that these are implemented or used to inform curriculum development, and classroom assessment is not linked to an overall plan. This is unsatisfactory.

149.Staffing levels are satisfactory; however, there is no full-time specialist teacher for the subject, which influences the use of the target language in the classroom. The subject co-ordinator, currently absent through long term illness, is experienced in the language, as is one learning support assistant. A newly appointed part-time temporary teacher is a linguist. In the absence of the subject co-ordinator, the curriculum head manages the department.

150.Accommodation is satisfactory, but resources are inadequate. Many textbooks are old and unsuitable in meeting the National Curriculum programmes of study. New textbooks are totally inappropriate to the pupils' ages, and Key Stage 4 pupils are restricted to photocopied samples of examination papers. There are no artefacts representing the culture and the range of computer software is limited. However, good use is made of external resources, and all pupils have the opportunity to participate in day trips to France, or visit a local French shop. Older pupils annually spend a week in Northern France. Such activities promote pupils' social and cultural development.

151.Although the school has satisfactorily addressed its modern language provision, subject planning and resources are weaknesses. Nevertheless, these are outweighed by strengths in teaching and pupil progress.

## **155. Music**

152.The progress pupils make in music is poor. Few have acquired technical skills in playing instruments or have any reliable knowledge of rhythm, pitch or note values. For example, two pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 can play five or six notes reliably on the descant recorder but need labels to name the printed notes. In relation to their ability, pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 4 but unsatisfactory progress at Key Stage 3. Pupils at Key Stage 3 illustrate their use of the keyboard by playing a tune they have learnt over a long period of time. However, they are reluctant to attempt more difficult tasks and their progress is limited by this reluctance, by their unacceptable behaviour and by the lack of clear parameters for work and behaviour set by the teachers. At Key Stage 4, pupils are more focused and, within a narrow range of activities, make some progress in expressing their opinions about various styles of Christmas music; despite this involvement in the lesson pupils lack the necessary skills and maturity to express their thoughts clearly and analytically.

153.Pupils' response, and behaviour in music lessons are satisfactory at Key Stage 4 but unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3. Some pupils take advantage of the fact that teaching lacks a clear direction and try to decide for themselves what they will do. For example, in one lesson a pupil arrived with a cassette tape, fetched a player from the cupboard and played the tape despite the fact that this did not form part of the planned activity. In a recorder group, the friction between pupils erupted several times and they only worked co-operatively when singing an inappropriate song without being asked. By Key Stage 4 pupils show a little more

interest in music; they are still reluctant performers but their increased maturity keeps them better focused upon the taught activities.

154. Teaching is overall unsatisfactory and varies between classes and teachers. The teachers' knowledge of music and their ability to use strategies which develop pupils' skills and understanding are limited although when singing a good role model was provided. Teaching lacks direction and purpose. Activities are potentially suitable to the needs and interests of the pupils but expectations regarding the equality and amount of work and effort are not made clear. Pupils are allowed to disrupt lessons by continually banging instruments or choosing to sing rude songs rather than playing their recorders. In satisfactory lessons, pupils' were more interested in the activity, for example, listening to Christmas music and prioritising their opinions of it. At the end of this exercise they overcame their inhibitions and the temptation to misbehave and sang 'The Twelve Days of Christmas ' with gusto and in tune - thus illustrating their potential to do well when they choose to.

155. Music has been introduced into the curriculum since the last inspection. There is a policy and schemes of work but lessons observed during the inspection did not reflect the philosophy outlined in the school's policy. There is no assessment in music. There is no evidence that the school involves outside musicians or workshops to support the development of understanding, knowledge and skills. Some extra-curricular musical activities enhance pupils' enjoyment, such as, the music club where pupils learn to perform and accompany others in readiness for the school pantomime. This is a popular approach to music and is not used in the more formal teaching of the subject.

156. The accommodation and resources for the teaching of music are unsatisfactory. The school does not have a specialist room and lessons take place in a mathematics classroom. Resources are very limited and are insufficient to support the teaching of the National Curriculum or extend pupils' cultural awareness or creativity.

157. Although there has been some improvement since the last inspection, it has been insufficient and music is still a weak area in the curriculum.

#### **161. Physical education**

158. The school's provision for physical education is good and improving. Pupils' and students' progress in physical education throughout the school is good, particularly in activities that are new to them. In swimming, pupils who have been reluctant to participate, gain confidence in the water, and develop a front crawl style that, though lacking grace, is effective. In games, pupils show good poise and control, and observe the conventions of serving and scoring in, for example, badminton, basketball, and rounders. Pupils of all ages develop a good understanding of how to handle weights safely and appropriately. They "spot" for one another, and know the main muscle groups in the human body. In football, pupils of all abilities learn to combine as a team, running off the ball and passing accurately and at speed. Older pupils and students apply their skill and understanding in a wider variety of contexts, such as the local rugby and athletics clubs, and in all these respects, the subject makes a very positive contribution to the pupils' social development.

159. Pupils and students respond well, and often very well, in physical education lessons and activities. They are keen, enthusiastic, and expend considerable energy in trying to succeed in, for example, the weights room. Pupils, notably those with Asperger's syndrome, are sporting and good-humoured. They are usually attentive, and the few individuals who are reluctant to co-operate gradually become more interested and involved as a result of patient and persistent encouragement from staff. All pupils have sensible attitudes towards health and safety issues and show very good personal development in the way they cope with emotions, such as, frustration as when, for example, offside decisions go against them.

160. The teaching of physical education is good and occasionally very good. Teachers know their pupils very well and have a good grasp of the subject. Lessons are well planned, and

pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. The lessons are also well paced and, although the flow is sometimes interrupted by the need to address the behaviour of individual pupils, all staff manage the pupils well, and work together effectively as a team. There is appropriate consideration given to health and safety issues, but opportunities for pupils to measure and review their own performances, though present in lessons, are not exploited.

161.The positive way in which the school uses physical activities, such as weight-training, and games such as basketball, not only in physical education lessons but breaktimes as well, means that pupils are actively engaged and occupied in ways that effectively promote their physical, personal and social development. In this respect, the provision endorses the aims of the school particularly well, and the contribution made by various after-school sporting and leisure activities is fully exploited. The curriculum pays due regard to games, athletics, outdoor activities and swimming; there is insufficient provision in dance and gymnastics, but the recently appointed co-ordinator has realistic plans in place to address this imbalance and also to extend the modest range of accreditation currently available.

162.Good use is made of the skills, qualifications and interests of both teaching and care staff, and there is a good range of small equipment, such as, balls and rackets. The gymnasium provides an adequate floor area, but lacks large-scale equipment such as wall bars, and facilities for gymnastics are further compromised by a lack of crash mats and other large-scale apparatus. The swimming pool is small but adequate, particularly for non-swimmers. The school has now sought appropriate advice as to the best way to supervise this facility, and the availability of a panic button for the member of staff concerned will address the one weakness in the pool's safety procedures. Outdoor facilities are good: adventure play equipment has been improved, there are both grassed and all-weather surfaces, and local community facilities, such as the sports centre are used well to enhance the learning opportunities for pupils.

#### **166. Post-16 Provision**

163.The school makes good provision for students over sixteen years of age through a well-organised and vocationally orientated curriculum. Students are able to access part-time placements at college, extended work experience and continue to work towards enhancing their basic skills within the school setting. Post-16 provision makes a very strong contribution to students' spiritual moral social and cultural development through the rich and varied curriculum. The unit has maintained its high achievement since the last inspection

164.Students make good progress. By the time students leave the school they have very good progress in personal and social education. In information technology, they use their skills particularly well to present evidence in their portfolios for NVQ. One student is studying for a Level 2 NVQ in catering, and documents the evidence he has acquired at work experience in a local food preparation factory, through good use of information technology, including word processing, spread sheets and data bases. Long term progress is well exemplified by the extended writing completed by some students where they write freely expressing their thoughts about their work experience placements.

165.Students enjoy the varied opportunities they have for study. They are interested in all aspects of their work and speak with confidence about it to visitors and each other. One student with autistic tendencies sometimes starts lessons by isolating himself, but later responds well to the challenge of helping another student with a computer problem. Most students know their own targets and discuss with confidence their progress towards GCSE or other qualifications.

166.Teaching is good and well matched to pupils' individual needs. The level of supervision in



the work place varies according to the support needs of the students. Work at college on NVQ courses enables them to work in a mainstream setting and familiarise themselves with a larger and busier learning environment. Within the school setting each student is well supported on his individual learning programme. The teacher's role is as an enabler, offering support and guidance as appropriate but having clear expectations that students will work independently as far as they are able. The resulting adult approach to their work results in good progress overall. The teacher knows the students well and handles them sensitively, at the same time setting relevant challenges in terms of quality and quantity of work. Files, books and portfolios are well organised with supportive teacher remarks.

167. The curriculum is good and achieves an excellent balance of work experience and study. Whilst accreditation opportunities have been extended and students are able to access vocational and academic qualifications, the school is currently exploring opportunities for further qualifications for lower attaining students. The work undertaken in the school forms part of the students' curriculum and is well documented and recorded. Very good use is made of photography for recording of achievements, and pupils' participation in the very wide and rich range of extra-curricular activities. These include opportunities for scuba diving, golf, cultural visits and evening, indoor activities. The students are effectively involved in self-assessment on a daily basis and also as part of the target setting process.

#### **171. Religious education**

168. The school's provision for religious education has significantly improved since the previous inspection. The profile of the subject has been raised through regular timetabled lessons and a weekly act of collective worship.

169. At Key Stage 3, the pupils' levels of attainment are closely linked to their literacy ability. They make satisfactory progress overall. Their folders and displayed work indicate that they have a basic knowledge and understanding of Buddhism, Judaism and Islamic beliefs and celebrations. In their current studies of Christianity, they recognise the relevance of Advent in the Christian calendar, making simple artefacts to represent God as the light of the world, which they use during assembly.

170. Although no accreditation is offered in religious knowledge at Key Stage 4 and Post-16, where pupils attend religious education lessons they make satisfactory progress. They participate in debates, discussing aspects of belief in the Christian God. They reinforce their earlier knowledge of the birth of Christ, watching videos and reading modernised biblical texts, such as the census proclamation that took Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem. Much of their written work is in the form of note taking or copywork, which promotes their handwriting skills and reinforces their religious knowledge.

171. At Key Stage 4 and at Post-16, the pupils' personal records show that a number have been withdrawn from religious education and acts of collective worship by parental request. However, during lessons on personal, social and health education, these pupils consider moral issues, which include racism, drug problems and becoming good citizens. There are too few opportunities within lessons for the pupils to develop independent learning skills, but there is evidence in their work of improved presentation and handwriting skills.

172. The pupils' attitudes vary towards religious education, but the great majority are positive in their response to teachers' expectations. They remain on task, showing good concentration skills. A small minority of pupils resent the subject, but where teaching is good and the lesson content is matched to the pupils' ability levels, they complete the set tasks. Some pupils at Key Stage 4 also make artefacts as Christmas gifts for their families, and use some of these during the weekly act of collective worship.

173. Behaviour is variable and some is unacceptable, with a small number of pupils leaving the room or making irrelevant comments. Where teachers are skilled at handling disruption, such incidents are reduced to a minimum, and other pupils continue their work, ignoring the poor behaviour of their peers. However, the majority of pupils speak politely and show respect for each other and staff. Religious education makes a positive impact on the pupils' personal development. There is positive action towards thinking of others, such as adopting a child in India or sending Christmas shoeboxes to Romania. The pupils are encouraged to develop tolerance and consideration for the beliefs and cultures of others, and they develop good moral awareness in identifying right from wrong.

174. There were no lessons observed at Post-16 but, at Key Stages 3 and 4, the quality of teaching is good. During the inspection it was good or better in almost two thirds of lessons. Lesson expectations are mostly realistic and well planned, although lesson structures are sometimes too rigid, and leave no opportunity for individual development. Work is not always matched to specific needs, for example, the biblical language of 'The Magnificat', is too difficult for most pupils. Although textbooks and Bibles are used, there is an over reliance on worksheets, particularly at Key Stage 3, and this impacts on the progress. Nevertheless, good attention is given to promoting literacy skills through handwriting, spelling and reading. There are good cross-curricular links, such as matching religions to the geographical areas of India or the Holy Land, or learning French Christmas carols. In the best lessons, there is variety and structure, which includes clear guidelines and an element of practical work to reinforce learning, however, the use of computers to support learning, is insufficiently developed. Relationships between staff and the pupils are good overall, and staff present good role models. However, poor behaviour is not always well handled, and sometimes the teachers demonstrate weak pupil management skills.

175. Day-to-day assessment is satisfactory, and is linked to the pupils' individual education and behaviour plans. These records inform subsequent lesson planning. Long term assessment is ongoing and informs annual reports, but does not inform curriculum planning. Although the school does not follow a locally Agreed Syllabus, it does offer all pupils a range of religious education, including aspects of multi-cultural faiths. Departmental documentation is in place, and long term schemes of work give a developmental overview of the subject. However, short term schemes of work are less well planned and this impacts on continuity.

176. Staffing levels are satisfactory, as is accommodation; although learning resources are limited and are insufficiently reinforced through visits to places of worship or by guest speakers. The deployment of classroom assistants is often inefficient, providing little support to the pupils or the teacher. However, the strengths of the subject outweigh its weaknesses and the provision for religious education is satisfactory overall.

## 180. PART C: INSPECTION DATA

### 180. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

177.A team of six inspectors including a lay inspector undertook the inspection.

- During the week, 84 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. The team also observed assemblies, registrations, breaktimes and lunchtimes, and hand-overs.
- Observations were also made of early morning preparations and after school leisure and evening activities in the residential provision.
- Pupils and students who were attending college or work experience were also observed.
- Interviews were held with the headteacher, the head of education, the head of care, school administrators, curriculum co-ordinators, staff with specific responsibilities, medical staff, learning support assistants and care staff.
- Three members of the Governing body came into school during the week and talked to members of the team about their responsibilities, governance and financial control.
- Informal conversations were held with the pupils, volunteers, care assistants and office staff.
- Documentation, provided both before and during the inspection was analysed. This included pupils' records, statements of special educational needs, reports to parents and individual educational plans, school policies, curriculum and staff planning documents, minutes of the governing body and financial records. Pupils' and students' work was scrutinised, and a member of the team listened to some pupils reading.

### 1.DATA AND INDICATORS

#### 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
Y7 – Y13	45	45	45	N/A

#### Teachers and classes

##### Qualified teachers (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	12.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	3.6

##### Education support staff (Y7 – Y13)

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked each week	237

Average teaching group size:	KS3	5
	KS4	5

## Financial data

Financial year:

1998/1999
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	£
Total Income	1 627 625
Total Expenditure	1 598 688
Expenditure per pupil	33 306
Balance brought forward from previous year	1 818 012
Balance carried forward to next year*	1 846 949

\*This includes the fixed assets of the school

## PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

45
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Number of questionnaires returned:

13
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### Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

#### Summary of responses

- They find it easy to approach the school concerning problems or for information.
- They feel that they are very well informed about the progress their sons are making.
- They are very satisfied with the amount of extra-curricular activities, and experiences outside the classroom.
- They are extremely happy with the values and attitudes that the school teaches and the effect it has on their sons.
- They felt that standards of behaviour were high.
- A few parents were unsure what was being taught.
- A few were not satisfied with the amount of homework being given.
- One parent did not think that behaviour, attitudes, or standards and progress were high enough.