

INSPECTION REPORT

WATERGATE SCHOOL

Newport

Isle of Wight

LEA area: Isle of Wight

Unique reference number: 118227

Headteacher: Mrs. Anne Munt-Davies

Reporting inspector: Mrs. Janet Bond
2642

Dates of inspection: 19 – 23 June 2000

Inspection number: 187261
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special (Moderate Learning Difficulties)

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 18

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Watergate Road
Newport
Isle of Wight

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs. V. Cranwell

Date of previous inspection: 11.3.1996

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		Music	Special Educational Needs
		Under Fives	
Francis Herd	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Attendance
			How well the school cares for its pupils
			How well the school works in partnership with parents
Glyn Essex	Team inspector	Mathematics	Leadership and management
		Physical education	
Philip Winch	Team inspector	English	The curriculum
John Lomas	Team inspector	Science	
		Information technology	
		Design and technology	
Joanna Peach	Team inspector	French	Post 16 education
Janet Simms	Team inspector		Teaching and learning
			Personal development
Ian Tatchell	Team inspector	Religious education	Pupils attitudes
		Geography	
		History	
		Personal and social education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Watergate Community school is one of two special schools on the Island and is a mixed junior and secondary local authority school for pupils from 3 to 19 years of age. There are currently 197 pupils on roll with twice as many boys as girls. Most of the pupils come from outside the town, many travelling considerable distances in transport provided by the local education authority. 32 per cent of pupils receive free school meals. There are no pupils from ethnic minorities. All pupils in the school have statements of Special Educational Need except in the nursery, where mainstream children attend as well as children with special needs. On entry to the school, all pupils have attainments which are below national expectations. The majority of pupils have learning difficulties. Recent admissions to the school have included an increasing proportion of pupils with more significant learning difficulties, additional behavioural difficulties or who are on the autistic spectrum. Specialist provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties is being developed at the school with the support of speech and language therapists. Primary pupils are taught most lessons by their class teacher. Secondary aged pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 have a class tutor and move to subject specialists for their lessons. The number of primary pupils attending has decreased and the nursery is changing at the end of this term as a result of the Local Education Authority policy. Teachers from Watergate school provide educational support to pupils in a number of mainstream schools. The school offers a wide range of accredited courses for Year 11 pupils and Post 16 students as well as preparing them for leaving school through work related education.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Watergate is a very good school. Pupils make very good progress because teaching is very good. The school is very well led and managed and resources are used efficiently and effectively. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Leadership and management are very good. As a result, teaching is very good and this leads all pupils and students to make very good progress and achieve standards that are higher than expected for their degree of special educational needs.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to work. Their self esteem and confidence is raised through their successes and their good relationships with staff.
- Pupils benefit from a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, particularly in the expressive arts and the very good work related education programme. Very effective use is made of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies.
- Children in the nursery, at Key Stage 1 and Post 16 students make very good progress because teachers provide good and appropriate learning experiences that meet individual needs.
- Pupils with more complex speech and language difficulties are well supported by the developing specialist provision.
- The very good links with parents and the wider community effectively support pupils learning.

What could be improved

- A common format for recording and monitoring pupils' targets
- Individual personal and social targets set.
- Targets for specific areas of special need, such as behaviour.
- Targets to be monitored and reviewed frequently.
- Extending the use of ICT in the classroom to support learning in all subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has significantly improved since the last inspection. Pupil achievements have improved in all subjects, particularly in literacy and numeracy and information and communication technology. There has been a rise in accredited qualifications gained by pupils. The quality of teaching has improved. Subject planning and assessment has improved. Effective systems are now in place for reviewing, monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. All staff are involved in decision making. School development planning has improved. All but one of the key issues identified at the last inspection have been fully met. Further developments are required to enable the governing body to fully carry out their responsibilities.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Pupils achievements have significantly improved in literacy and mathematics because of the impact of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategy and because teaching is very good. Pupils achieve very well in art, design and technology, information and communication technology and music. Pupils' achievements in personal development and in all subjects are good and have improved since the last inspection. During the last academic year the majority of Key Stage 4 pupils gained accreditation through a variety of courses, including the General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) mathematics, and the Certificate of Achievement in English, mathematics, science, French, art, land studies, music design and technology, physical education and life skills. Pupils with speech and language difficulties make very good progress towards their individual targets. Pupils in the nursery, in Key Stage 1 and Post 16 students achieve very well in all areas. Targets set at annual review are challenging but realistic. School target setting is effective in raising achievements.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils have very good attitudes to school, their work, each other and staff.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The majority of pupils behave well in school and when out in the community. They are polite to adults and each other. The behaviour of a minority of pupils is not satisfactory when teaching is inappropriate.

Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are confident and work increasingly independently. They are supportive and considerate of others
Attendance	Satisfactory. Most pupils want to come to school.

Pupils have very good attitudes to school and learning because they achieve success and because relationships with staff are very good. Pupils are self-confident and the very good work related education programme contributes significantly to pupils' personal development and maturity. The increasing proportion of pupils with more complex and significant needs, while managed effectively in the younger classes where appropriate IEP's are in place, has the potential to disturb the high levels of achievement of other pupils if their individual needs are not specifically planned for.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5	aged 5-11	aged 11-16	aged over 16
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

The very good quality of teaching across key stages is a strength of the school. 76 per cent of lessons observed were good or better, 34 per cent were very good or better, only one lesson was less than satisfactory, Teaching is very good in literacy at Key Stages 1 and 2 and in numeracy across all key stages. Teachers combine a good knowledge of their subject and of the pupils' learning needs to plan lively and engaging lessons that pupils find interesting. Where teaching is very good, teachers have high expectations and encourage pupils to do their best. Lessons are planned well to allow all pupils to participate and learn at an appropriate level and to build on earlier learning. Teamwork between teachers and support assistants is particularly effective and this ensures pupils receive sensitive, well-focused support.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is enhanced by the expressive arts and work related education. An appropriate range of options and accredited course work has raised expectations and achievement.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils moral and social development is very good. Provision for cultural development is good. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Opportunities are well planned for pupils to take responsibilities and work independently and co-operatively. The very good life skills and work related education supports pupils personal development and maturity.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a safe, caring, learning environment. A good range of experiences, including accredited course work and high achievement, raises pupils' self-image. The good procedures in place for monitoring pupils' attainment and for whole school target setting contribute significantly to pupils improved achievement.

The school works very well with parents and uses a highly effective range of approaches to keep parents informed and involved in their child's learning and in school life. Pupils receive a broad,

balanced and relevant curriculum and benefit from a good range of visits and extra curricula activities. Very effective links with the community and other schools enrich the curriculum. Appropriate options and a good range of accredited courses contribute to the relevance of the curriculum for older pupils. Subject planning is good and ensures pupils build on earlier learning. The school recognises and celebrates pupils' successes. Systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress are very good in the nursery, at Key Stage 1 and in the speech and language class. While they are more variable across subjects, appropriate assessment and recording systems are developing that inform teachers lesson planning. However, in a number of subjects there are insufficient individual targets for pupils with more complex needs. Personal targets are reviewed and set at pupils' annual review but there is insufficient monitoring during the year to improve the rate of progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher and senior management team provide very strong and successful leadership that has significantly raised expectations and pupils' achievement. They have a very good understanding of the schools strengths and weaknesses. The weaknesses give focus to the school development plan. All staff are actively involved in development planning.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. Members of the new governing body are well informed and very supportive of the school but have yet to establish their own systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school. They are developing appropriate sub committees and becoming more actively involved.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good systems are in place for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. The information is used very effectively to set and monitor whole school targets. There is a whole school culture of review and improvement. This has contributed significantly to pupils improved performance and the improvement in teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Staff, buildings and learning resources are managed and used efficiently and effectively to promote and improve the good quality of education available for pupils.

There are an appropriate number of teaching and support staff to support individual pupils needs and the delivery of the curriculum. Accommodation is good and effectively supports pupils accessing specialist subjects such as science, art and ICT. The food technology room, while adequate, requires updating. Resources are adequate in all subjects and are well used to support learning. Careful and well planned financial management and very good systems of monitoring school performance effectively support the school in seeking best value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school, are happy and well cared for and are expected to work hard • Their confidence improves • Teaching is good and parents are kept well informed • The school is approachable and supports families as well as children • Leadership and management are good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More information on what children have to do with the work set for homework • A wider range of activities out of lessons

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Inspectors confirm that children are happy in school and are expected to work hard; that teaching is good and parents are kept well informed; that the school is approachable; and that the school is well led and managed. Inspectors felt that there could be clearer instructions provided with homework. Inspectors confirm that the range of activities outside of lessons has improved, although after school activities are limited by transport arrangements. However, the school has addressed this issue appropriately.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The characteristics of the pupils make it inappropriate to judge their attainment, in the majority of cases, against age-related national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about progress and any references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews. There have been significant improvements since the previous inspection in pupils' achievement at all key stages. These significant improvements are most clear in English, mathematics, information and communication technology and in design and technology. During the last academic year the majority of Key Stage 4 pupils gained accreditation through a variety of courses, including the General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) mathematics, and the Certificate of Achievement in English, mathematics, science, French, art, land studies, music design and technology, physical education and life skills. The provision of these accredited courses is a significant advance on the previous inspection findings.

2. The achievement of the majority of pupils is never less than good in all subjects, and is very good for the under five's, reception class children and for Post 16 students. It is very good in English at Key Stage 1 and 2, in mathematics, music, and at Key Stages 3 and 4 in art. Pupils make good and very good progress in their learning. Progress against targets in younger pupils' individual education plans (IEP's) is equally good in academic and personal development. Progress against whole school targets, set to raise achievements, is good. Two interrelated factors have led to the improvements since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved and expectations have been raised. The guidance provided by the National Numeracy and Literacy strategies has developed teachers' knowledge and skills most effectively. Challenging school targets and the introduction of accredited courses has raised teacher and pupil expectations significantly.

3. Children who enter the nursery for assessment and the children who enter the reception class have depressed levels of ability, many particularly in their language and literacy and personal and social skills. As a result of very good quality teaching and a highly relevant curriculum, they make very good progress. This prepares them well for lessons in National Curriculum subjects in Key Stage 1. Children achieve very well, particularly in their ability to communicate and in their personal development.

4. In English, pupils' achievements are consistently good at all key stages across the three areas of speaking and listening, reading and writing. They are very good at Key Stages 1 and 2. This overall improvement in English is very much due to the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, which has resulted in much better teaching. The successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has had a significant impact on standards in mathematics, which although good at the time of the last inspection have significantly improved and are now very good across all key stages. Key Stage 4 pupils achieve very well in their accredited course work, and a number now achieve close to the national average in mathematics. In science, pupils make good progress across all key stages, particularly in their gains in knowledge and skills in relation to experimental and investigative science activities. Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well in music. They achieve very well in art at Key Stages 3 and 4 where teaching and the curriculum are very good. In discrete ICT lessons pupils make good progress; this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. However, although ICT is well used to support some subjects such as mathematics, art and music, the shortage of up to date equipment in classrooms means it is not used as fully as it could be to support pupils learning across the curriculum. In geography, history, French, religious education and physical education achievements are good and pupils make good progress across key stages. Post 16 students achieve very well and make very good progress both in their accredited course work and in their work preparation for leaving school.

5. There is no significant variation in the achievement of boys and girls. However, a small group of pupils with behavioural difficulties in Key Stage 3 are not achieving as well as they could because they are often not interested in their lessons or are challenging the authority of the teacher. The lack of short term targets for the small but increasing number of pupils with more complex needs means that these pupils are not always achieving as well as they might because the work is not as focused to their needs as it needs to be. Pupils in the speech and language class make very good progress towards their individual targets because teaching is very good and because of the very good support from the speech and language therapist and assistants.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. This is an improvement on the positive attitudes noted in the schools' previous inspection report. The large majority of pupils arrive at school with enthusiasm, clearly looking forward to the day and to starting work promptly. In stimulating lessons they work purposefully and concentrate on their work knowing that their personal achievement in the lesson will be valued. Pupils' very good attitudes to work are supported by their very good relationships with staff. Pupils are interested and involved in their lessons and want to learn. They are actively engaged in a wide range of activities both in and out of the classroom, including dance, horse riding and sports, which they thoroughly enjoy. Pupils value the many opportunities to visit other parts of the island as part of their studies. For example, to support their learning in religious education, pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 visit the local church. Other pupils are proud and confident to represent the school in sports with other schools or in taking part in the many musical performances given in the community. Pupils gain in self confidence during their time in school, from playing together in the nursery to achieving success in a range of courses and work experience at the end of Key Stage 4 and in Post 16. Pupils find their work relevant to them and think it is helpful, for example a Year 10 pupil on work experience in school said, 'it will help me get a job,' and talked with enthusiasm and anticipation about his Year 11 planned work experience with a local employer.

7 As at the previous inspection, pupils are well behaved, courteous, polite and helpful to visitors. Parents commented on their children being polite to each other and to adults. Most parents noticed that pupils' behaviour outside the school and on visits is very good, raising the school's standing within the community. Pupils generally behave well in class and respond positively to the school systems of awards for good behaviour and hard work. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are very keen to receive credits for their behaviour, presented at the gold assembly. Here they enjoy and are proud of the praise given publicly for their achievements, good behaviour and being helpful to others. All pupils know the school and classroom rules and try hard to follow them. Most pupils who arrive with challenging behaviour gradually build good relationships within the school and want to please and win their teachers praise. Pupils respond well to the calm and orderly community of the school and to staff who promptly deal with minor behaviour problems. A whole school behaviour policy has been agreed and pupils are clear about how to behave and what is expected of them. Permanent and fixed term exclusions for unacceptable behaviour are low given the number of pupils who enter with quite significant behavioural difficulties. Pupils respect the school buildings, no graffiti or vandalism was seen and very little litter was about. They also take good care of their own and other people's property. In a small number of Key Stage 3 lessons pupils' behaviour was not satisfactory. Teaching was not as effective because of the lack of specific behaviour targets and management strategies used by the teacher and because the work was not appropriate to individual needs. Attendance is satisfactory.

8 In most lessons, relationships between staff and pupils are very good and pupils benefit from the very good role models that staff provide. As pupils develop their social skills, they form friendship groups, for example at lunchtime when they sit with their friends. Pupils co-operate well in their work and plan together in lessons such as science, technology and history. They are helpful to each other in class. Because of effective encouragement pupils reflect on the impact of their own behaviour on the feelings of others, for example in personal and social education and religious education. Pupils at Key Stage 4 enjoy the age appropriate opportunities in social and religious studies to compare, contrast and reflect on the values and beliefs of others. While pupils acknowledge there are occasional incidents of bullying behaviour in school, they are comfortable that these are dealt with quickly and effectively. No examples of bullying, racism or sexism were observed during the period of the inspection.

9 As pupils progress through the school they take increased community responsibility, for example through class responsibilities, helping at events such as sports day and as members of the school council. Pupils help with the routine tasks such as collecting and returning the class registers to the school office and collecting their own lunch. On sports days, older pupils assist staff with judging, measuring and recording results, taking their responsibilities seriously and carrying them out very efficiently. The school council has representatives from all classes from Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 who meet with the teachers and discuss possible improvements to the school. They participate

effectively in decision making and take responsibility to act upon the decisions taken at these meetings.

10 Pupils become more personally responsible and independent through involvement in working towards their personal development targets. However, targets set vary in quality, quantity and time span across the school. Where they are most effective they are set on a short-term basis and are known and agreed by the pupils. Older pupils respond well to social and education placements, work experience and school visits. Pupils use these opportunities well to practice their developing social and personal skills in a wider context.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

11 The good and improved quality of teaching has resulted in the improved progress made by pupils. Teaching is good or better in 76 per cent of lessons observed. It is very good or excellent in 34 per cent of lessons. In only one lesson observed was teaching less than satisfactory. The high quality of teaching is consistent across all key stages and is a strength of the school.

12 Teachers have a very good understanding of their pupils' individual needs, and a very effective knowledge of their specialist area or subject. Teachers know how to teach subjects so that pupils understand what they are learning. Teaching is very good in English at Key Stages 1 and 2. Teaching is very good at all key stages in mathematics. For example, in a Year 8 mathematics lesson pupils were completely absorbed in their work because of the teacher's excellent instructions and class management and organisation, which led to excellent learning in a numbers sequencing lesson. Teaching is very good in art at Key Stage 3 and 4 and is very good in music. Teaching is good overall in all other subjects. Teachers' understanding of individual needs is very good in the nursery, in Key Stage 1, and in the speech and language class in Year 5/6 where teaching contributes very effectively to pupils' very good achievements and progress. A significant strength of the teaching throughout the school is the very effective teamwork between teachers and support staff to support all pupils in working at an appropriate level and making progress in the lesson.

13 Teachers' medium term, topic and project planning is good, ensuring appropriate sequences of lessons from which pupils can build on their earlier learning. In many classes, especially in the lower age range, lessons are planned with very good attention to individual needs, and include planning to allow all pupils full access to the lesson at an appropriate level. For example, in a Key Stage 1 mathematics lesson all pupils participated in counting, higher attaining pupils to 20 and lower attaining pupils to 10. The good questioning by the teacher made each question appropriate to each individual and the group work allowed all to work on appropriate activities. Individuals or groups receive the support or extension work they require to provide a good pace of learning for each pupil.

14 The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught at all key stages other than a Key Stage 3 class where teaching does not always meet individual needs sufficiently. This reflects the emphasis placed on these subjects in recent staff training. In an excellent Year 5/6 literacy lesson, for example, pupils benefited from a range of work appropriate to their needs all with very good emphasis on phonics to support spelling, which pupils learnt and remembered very well at the end of the lesson. These basic skills have become a significant factor in raising pupils' overall achievement and to their progress across their whole curriculum. In subjects such as art and music, reinforcement of basic skills is planned into the schemes of work, providing very good opportunities for pupils to apply these in a practical context. A Year 9 art lesson, for example, supported pupils reading and language skills by the teacher reinforcing the vocabulary and spelling related to artists and portraiture. During a Year 2 geography walk to the nearby river bank, staff constantly emphasised numbers on the house doors they passed, questioning whether they were odd or even numbers. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson, very good emphasis on the accurate use of subject vocabulary, and excellent teaching of keywords produced a very high standard of oral work and very good progress in pupils' understanding of the concepts involved in plotting co-ordinates. A weakness to this consistent re-emphasis is in ICT, where the lack of sufficiently good hardware and software in classrooms sometimes prevents the reinforcement of the discrete ICT learning in all subjects. Where such equipment is available staff are keen to use this and encourage pupils to use what exists to best effect in their lessons. Teachers use available resources imaginatively to gain pupils' interest and to extend learning opportunities.

15 Teachers' expectations are high but realistic, so that pupils' learning is usually challenging and paced well to extend their achievements. In most classes the variety and changes of activity keep pupils interested, with younger pupils learning that there is little opportunity for misbehaviour, and expecting to work hard. Good relationships between pupils and most teachers and support staff lead to good class management, and to good management of each individual pupil. Teachers use praise effectively and pupils respond well to their work being valued. However, in a few lessons the lack of specific, short-term targets for pupils with more complex learning and behavioural needs led to difficulties. For example, in a Year 7 lesson the teacher had difficulty gaining pupils' attention. Here, where pupils did not sufficiently understand the mathematical problems and where their behaviour was inappropriately managed, their progress was hindered. Teaching is most often appropriate, with clear introductions, explanations and demonstrations to help pupils understand, and opportunities for pupils to actively participate. At the end of many good lessons appropriate opportunities are made for pupils to reflect on what they have learned and to use any new subject vocabulary in discussions with their teachers.

16 Assessment has improved since the last inspection, and teachers' plans include planned work for most pupils' individual needs. This is more explicit in the nursery and the lower key stages where IEPs are in place for pupils. At Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils are taught by subject specialists who maintain their own assessments of pupils' progress within the subject. These vary between subjects, the best assessing each half term or at the end of a module of work. Information from assessments is used well to plan lessons to ensure planned learning is appropriate to the pupils. Homework is used appropriately in Key Stages 3 and 4, and well in mathematics through the school. Reading and literacy work is also used well as homework at Key Stages 1 and 2.

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

17 The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. It contains all the statutory subjects as well as religious education. In addition, at Key Stage 3, Years 7 and 8 have instrumental enrichment classes to develop pupils' thinking skills across the curriculum. The classes have only been timetabled since the beginning of this school year and their impact has yet to be assessed. The Social Use of Language Programme (SULP) is very well organised and has led to significant improvements in speaking and listening and the social communication of pupils. The curriculum is further enhanced by well planned work-related education (from Year 9), which pupils agree is of good quality, by expressive arts, and by activities weeks. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils follow a primary school curriculum, remaining in their own base with their class teacher for most of the week. In Key Stages 3 and 4, subject specialists deliver the curriculum and this is a significant factor in the good achievement of pupils.

18 There is good balance in the curriculum, with appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. However, religious education is allocated too little time in Year 7 to cover the Agreed Syllabus. While the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum is better than at the time of the last inspection, when it was a weakness, it is still insufficiently used, partly owing to a lack of computers in certain areas. The school has plans to correct this when funds permit. The last inspection report was critical of the narrowness of the Key Stage 4 curriculum and its lack of accreditation. This is greatly improved. There is a well thought out options system leading to the Certificate in Educational Achievement in many subjects. Entry numbers have risen year on year and results have improved. Selected pupils take GCSE in mathematics and achievement is very good, with a third of Year 11 pupils entered gaining a grade in 1999.

19 The effectiveness of strategies for teaching literacy skills is good. The National Literacy Strategy is having a positive impact on lesson planning and on standards of literacy across the curriculum. Teachers, supported by good learning displays, provide a language-rich environment in which pupils improve reading and writing skills. There are good cross-curricular links between English and other subjects, for example, music, and these help to raise achievement in literacy. The effectiveness of strategies for teaching numeracy skills is very good and reflects the work done on the National Numeracy strategy. Achievement in numeracy is very good, compared to pupils' capabilities, in all key stages.

20 Provision for extra-curricular activities has improved since the last inspection. There has been an increase in sports and music-related activities at lunchtime. Competitive sports events take place with other schools. The school provides opportunities for pupils to have residential experiences, and to visit France in connection with their French studies. Such activities support the classroom curriculum well and give pupils valuable contact with the wider world.

21 The school's links with the community were described as 'effective' at the time of the last inspection. They are now very good in their variety and richness, and are a major strength of the school, making a very significant contribution to pupils' learning and development. The role of the two community co-ordinators has been significant in these developments. Because of the high profile of the school in the community, public perception of the school has been greatly improved. Many local businesses and organisations help with fund-raising and in the school. For instance, Toyota staff provided support in classrooms and the Rotary Club provided the wood which pupils used to make a variety of objects which were sold through the pupils own company. Professional advice on the company's organisation was also made available.

22 Pupils take part in external activities with other mainstream schools, such as the annual country dancing event at Carisbrooke Castle and the Newport Primary Schools Music Festival. This helps to change public perceptions of special school pupils and provides opportunities for pupils to mix with other children on an equal footing. The school makes very good use of the local environment to enhance the curriculum, with pupils of all ages visiting, for example, museums, art galleries and historical sites, both on the island and on the mainland. Pupils benefit from a range of speakers coming into school, particularly, for example, in art, where many local artists have worked with the pupils. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to the community through fund-raising for a variety of causes, for example, the profits from the Woodworking Company are to be donated to the NSPCC and the local hospice. The school has close links with a local church, the vicar takes assemblies and pupils visit the church to take part in special services. Recently the school hosted the annual meeting of the island's school governors, and the Post 16 students did the catering and served the food.

23 The school promotes equal opportunities well and works hard to ensure that all pupils have access to the curriculum and to extra-curricular activities. Classroom assistants make a very valuable contribution here. In lessons, teachers provide different materials and resources to match pupils' needs and this helps pupils to learn well. For example, in English, different groups have spellings that match their prior attainment. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, and whole school co-ordination of the subject is good. The scheme of work provides for varied activities to prepare pupils very well for life after school. The sex and drugs education programmes meet statutory requirements. By the time pupils enter Key Stage 4, they are well prepared to embark on the Certificate of Educational Achievement course in lifeskills. In 1998 and 1999 all pupils in Year 11 passed.

24 Links with the college of further education are very good. A transition worker assists the school in giving careful guidance to pupils wishing to transfer to college to ensure that pupils' needs are closely met. Links include a practical careers day attended by Year 11 and 12, and most pupils progress to do work related courses there such as plumbing, childcare and car mechanics. The school provides placements and staff deliver elements of the course in the training of nursery nurses. There are very good links with the nursery, the other local special school and mainstream schools on the island. The Outreach Programme involving teachers working in mainstream schools widens teachers' experience and cements good relationships between the schools. The programme is highly regarded in the locality.

25 The careers and work related education available to pupils in Years 9 to 12 is very good and prepares pupils very well for leaving school. There are extensive links with local businesses and all pupils do at least one week of work experience. This is a resounding success, with both employers and students reporting favourably on the outcomes. Students' return with an enhanced awareness of what work and the job they have experienced entails. Because of the careful matching of placement to student those who need extra support are not at a disadvantage. It has also provided an excellent advertisement for the school and its pupils. An employer interviewed described Watergate pupils as polite, reliable and hard working, and he has been happy to recommend them to other employers. The careers education programme is well taught and covers a range of topics including writing a

curriculum vitae and selecting a job from a series of advertisements. Pupils in Year 11 run their own business called 'Top Notch' and this enables them to sell shares to raise capital, and design and make wooden artefacts which are then sold. The profits are then returned to the shareholders in the form of dividends.

26 Pupils' cultural development is good and has improved since the last inspection because provision has improved. Some subjects such as art and music now include planning for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and this has contributed to the improvement. For example, pupils study a rich variety of art forms and music from other cultures, they are familiar with and use art techniques and musical instruments from other countries. The school's links with Anguilla has greatly enhanced pupils' experience of other cultures. A strong link with the local museum and art centre ensures that history, geography and art teaching are well supported with real artefacts to give pupils experience of their local cultural environment. Pupils read and listen to stories from their own and other cultures. This helps pupils be better prepared for life in a multi-cultural society.

27 The provision for pupils' social and moral development, to which pupils respond very positively, is very good. The school provides a strong moral framework, with expectations from a very early stage that pupils will behave responsibly, consider the effects of their behaviour on others and take responsibility for themselves increasingly where they can. Pupils work well together as they grow up, developing very good social skills which are often publicly commended, for example by their work experience mentors and many others in the community. A very effective school council considers ideas which pupils put forward, and achieves effective action in many cases. Older pupils have developed a good degree of self-esteem and self-confidence that contributes to a happy, friendly community for all. The school's PSE programme provides strong support for pupils' social and moral development.

28 Pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Opportunities for quiet reflection and celebrations of pupils' achievements are provided in assemblies. In many subjects pupils sense of curiosity and wonder are aroused, for example in art and science. In English pupils reflect on events such as war, and in PSE pupils learn, for example, about friendships. In religious education pupils learn about the beliefs of their own and other cultures and have opportunities to discuss similarities and differences. Prayers and discussions during collective worship appropriately contribute to pupils' spiritual development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

29 At the time of the last inspection, the school was described as a caring community where pupils felt secure. However, educational and careers guidance for older pupils was underdeveloped, and there were a number of minor health and safety concerns. The school now provides good care for the pupils. Very well led and managed support and guidance for pupils leaving school from Y11 and Post 16 is now effectively in place. Health and safety are closely monitored, with regular risk assessments of all areas of school life being conducted either by the relevant co-ordinator or an outside agency such as the fire brigade. All staff are given detailed briefing on child protection procedures when they join, and any concerns are shared at weekly staff meetings. The school works closely with outside agencies where there is concern about a pupils well being.

30 There are good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and effective liaison with the education welfare officer. All unexplained absences are investigated within 24 hours, and those of children felt to be particularly vulnerable are followed up on the first morning of their non-appearance. Parents complete printed slips provided by the school to explain absences on their child's return. At present the school does not make use of a computerised system for monitoring attendance. However, the school does monitor, evaluate and analyse trends effectively. Registers are completed correctly and conform to statutory requirements.

31 There are effective measures in place to promote good behaviour. Class rules, drawn up in consultation with pupils, and a variety of wall chart reward systems are two examples. No evidence of bullying was seen during the inspection, and parents did not see it as a problem. Teaching and non-teaching staff work extremely well together to competently support good behaviour. In most cases where necessary, appropriate individual pupil management programmes are in place. Staff know their pupils well, and there is mutual trust and affection. Considerable efforts are made to promote

pupils' self-esteem, through, for example, accreditation, work experience and public performances. Their achievements in and out of school are publicly celebrated in assemblies and through the weekly newsletter to parents. Pupils are effectively encouraged to take responsibilities, for example they elect representatives to sit on the School Council, where their suggestions are discussed and often acted upon. For instance, they asked for litter bins to be installed around the site to help keep the grounds tidy. From next term older pupils will be invited to join the Compact Club, a branch of a nationally run scheme which offers a variety of challenges to lower-achieving pupils. Pupils will be able to undertake the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, for which a member of staff is already a mentor. While effective use is made of some outside agencies to offer specialist help, for instance, trained bereavement counsellors visit when appropriate, there is insufficient support from other agencies, for example for pupils' behaviour needs.

32 The school works hard and is effective in offering support to pupils' families. For instance, in partnership with the island's other special school, a club has been started for the siblings of children with disabilities and learning difficulties. Most pupils appreciate what the school does for them, one Post 16 student commented 'I used to think school was a joke, but it can help you a lot'. Many former pupils enjoy revisiting the school, and feel able to call on staff for help and advice.

33 Aspects of assessment were identified as weaknesses in the last inspection report. The school has produced a draft assessment policy to consolidate existing good practice and create consistency across subjects and between key stages. While many aspects of assessment have improved and are good, there is still no common framework for setting and assessing, on a short-term basis, pupil's personal targets. Most teachers and support staff know their pupils very well indeed, which results in good, sensitive assessment of their individual progress towards subject targets and which informs lesson planning. IEP's are used effectively at Key Stage 1, more variably at Key Stage 2, to set short term academic and personal targets, monitor pupils progress and inform teachers lesson planning. Pupils in KS 3 and 4 are set targets by their teachers for what they are expected to learn in each subject. However, there are a number of pupils who have specific difficulties, for example, in their behaviour. Because IEP,s are not used for these older pupils, teachers and pupils have insufficient knowledge of what they should do in lessons to improve these aspects of personal development. In the speech and language class very appropriate short-term targets are set and the teacher, support staff and speech therapist effectively monitor pupils individual progress. The information is used well to plan lessons, to plan individual work and to modify targets

34 From analysis of the information obtained from assessment on entry, the school effectively monitors progress across key stages in literacy and numeracy. Pre-National and National Curriculum assessments and levels are used well to support planning and whole school target setting. Assessments on all aspects of the pupils' experience, including pupils' own self-assessment where appropriate, are reported at their annual review, and longer-term targets for the coming year agreed. Assessment informs how pupils are grouped for Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils in the core subjects so that lessons can be made more appropriate to pupils needs. Information from Year 9 assessments is used well to plan which subjects and accreditation courses will best match pupils' needs at Key Stage 4. Records of Achievement are used effectively to record each pupil's progress across all aspects of school life and are much valued by the pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35 At the time of the last inspection, links with parents were good, and parents were kept adequately informed. Links with parents are now very good and make a major contribution to pupils' learning. Parents' questionnaire responses show them to be very satisfied with what the school has to offer, although there was some concern about homework and about extra-curricular activities. The school's approachability and friendliness are particularly appreciated, as one parent commented, 'I know my daughter is seen as an individual, and so am I'. The wide geographical distribution of pupils, combined with transport difficulties on the island, mean that it is not possible for many parents to help in school. However, the majority do make every effort to attend the essential events in their child's school life, such as annual review meetings, Christmas performances, and the leavers' assembly, which is always appropriately timed to coincide with the governors' report to parents. There are

monthly coffee mornings for parents, with speakers likely to be of interest to them, such as the occupational therapist.

36 Parents are broadly happy with the quantity and quality of homework provided. Inspectors agree with parents that more guidance to parents from the school on how it is to be done would be helpful. While parents would like the school to offer more activities after school, at present there are only sporting and musical activities, they recognise that since most children travel by arranged transport this is not really possible. The school is attempting to help with this problem by providing more information about suitable facilities near pupils' homes, for instance the community co-ordinators have compiled a directory of Cub, Brownie, Guide and Scout troops accessible to the pupils. The school applied for a grant to run a Breakfast Club, and although unsuccessful its application will be renewed. In partnership with the social services, the school runs a holiday play-scheme for younger children.

37 Parents generally make good use of the homework diaries and the many other forms of communication used by the school. They help their children with reading and language work and any therapy work directed. They also make every effort to help their children with homework except when, as mentioned above, they are unclear about the nature of the task. Through these activities and the support given in classrooms parents make a good contribution to the children's learning. They also support the school's fund-raising efforts by their own donations and by making use of any contacts they may have with charitable and business organisations.

38 The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about their child's progress is good. The governors' Annual Report provides all the necessary information for parents and carers. Annual reviews are informative and clearly show children's progress across all subjects. Targets for the following year are discussed and agreed with parents. The regular newsletter keeps parents well informed about all aspects of school life. Nearly all parents have agreed and signed a home-school agreement.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

39 The high quality leadership and management of the school are reflected in the success in raising the quality of teaching that leads to high standards in pupils' achievements and progress. The headteacher and senior management operate with a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school which makes their planning for improvement very effective. In the quality of teaching, for example, and in the development of literacy and numeracy, major improvements have been achieved through very effective programmes of training, monitoring of pupils' attainment and through setting appropriate whole-school targets. Effective organisation has ensured a very high level of staff involvement in developments such as these, for example through their contribution to the partnership groups and to key stage and subject co-ordination meetings. There is very effective delegation of responsibilities to support this process and very good teamwork among all staff. As a result, the school's aims and values are very clearly present in all that the school does, both in and out of lessons. Staff and pupils are valued and a strong sense of purpose is apparent in their work.

40 A system of observation of each other's lessons by teachers has been established. This has proved very effective. The resulting written reports show the value of this both to the school in monitoring the quality of teaching and to individual staff in suggesting areas for development through training and further support. The school improvement plan is a weighty document with a very wide range of areas for development. It provides, however, a good focus for the school's work and records show a very high level of success in meeting its targets. There is a very strong emphasis in planning on the raising of standards. The school monitors the achievement of its pupils through the analysis of statutory assessment, external examinations and other assessment information very effectively and uses the results to set targets for improvement in various areas of its work. This process is very effective in promoting a shared commitment to succeed.

41 The Governing Body shares in the process of development planning and monitoring through its membership of the partnership groups, but its contribution to strategic planning is satisfactory and currently at an early stage of development. A significant number of governors are recent

appointments and are still getting to grips with their responsibilities. Minutes of their meetings show that they hold wide-ranging discussions on all aspects of the school's work. Although governors have the benefit of very informative reports from the headteacher there is as yet little evidence that they are taking the lead in monitoring the school's work or planning for the long term. They do however have a clear idea of the school's strengths and weaknesses and of priorities for the allocation of any development funds which may become available. The last inspection found that links between the development plan and the budget were weak. This is no longer the case. Proposed developments are now all carefully costed and funds, which become available, are used flexibly to implement them, the development of the information and communication technology suite being one example. However, priorities for expenditure are still not specifically stated in budget papers.

42 Specific grants are efficiently targeted and used. The school budget operates on a very tight contingency but there is effective monitoring of expenditure on a monthly basis. Financial systems and procedures appear to be sound. Governors are aware of the need to seek best value for money and have taken well-informed decisions on several areas of the school's expenditure, such as ground maintenance and the provision of therapy services. There have been some significant improvements in the management of the school since the last inspection, particularly in the role of senior staff in the development planning process and in the effective monitoring and evaluation of the school's work.

43 The school has a good balance of appropriately qualified teaching and support staff who work very well together to provide for pupils' individual and curriculum needs. The school's flexible arrangements for the induction of new staff work well. All staff are involved in a staff development programme which is planned to enable staff to meet pupils' changing curriculum and behavioural needs. An important aspect of professional development is the school's "Outreach" work that enables teachers to keep abreast of developments in mainstream schools. Recent school professional development on teaching literacy and numeracy has been very successful in raising pupils' attainment in these areas and in improving teaching. The school has recognised the current need for further ICT training. Support staff are very well deployed and joint planning reflects their specific role in lessons. This is also an improvement since the last inspection.

44 The school's well-maintained accommodation and good quality displays, including interactive displays, provide a stimulating learning environment. Classrooms are big enough for class numbers, appropriately equipped and organised for the needs of the curriculum. Specialist rooms such as the science laboratory, design and technology area, information technology suite and art room contribute to pupils' good achievements. The food technology area is outdated, and although pupils achieve well in this area the room being refurbished would enhance their learning. Although the play area for younger pupils is satisfactory the fencing is not secure and requires attention.

45 Resources overall are satisfactory. Most subjects and classes have sufficient resources and equipment to enable pupils to access the curriculum and for support staff to help groups and individuals with their learning. As at the time of the last inspection, the imagination and hard work of staff still serve to extend the effectiveness of available resources, so that pupils receive maximum benefit from them. ICT resources in the specialist suite are good, but additional computers are needed in classrooms to support the curriculum. The library is satisfactory and its central location allows access by all classes. The careers library provides a useful resource for older pupils in their developing understanding of the world of work.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

46 In order to continue to improve the quality of education and pupils' progress, the headteacher and governors should:

- Ensure all pupils and students have a common recording format that:
 - Identifies personal and social targets to be achieved (10,33)
 - Identifies specific areas of special needs to be improved, such as behaviour (7, 14,15,)
 - Are used by teachers to improve, in particular, the behaviour of some pupils in Key Stage 3 (7,14,15)
 - Are reviewed and monitored sufficiently often to improve the rate of progress in the areas identified (10,15)
- Extend the use of ICT in classrooms to support learning in all subjects (4,14,18,64,84,95,101)

The following less important weakness should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Improvement of the fencing in the early years playground (44,)
- Improve the food technology accommodation. (44,)
- Provide sufficient time for Year 7 to cover the agreed religious education syllabus (18, 121)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

101

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

64

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	30	42	23	1	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

No of pupils

Number of pupils on the school's roll

197

Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals

62

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

7

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.26

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	4.34

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	195
Any other minority ethnic group	

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	7	1
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YN – Post 16

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	25
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.9
Average class size	9

Education support staff: YN– Post 16

Total number of education support staff	34
Total aggregate hours worked per week	898

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	1180852
Total expenditure	1217903
Expenditure per pupil	5296
Balance brought forward from previous year	38882
Balance carried forward to next year	1831

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	197
Number of questionnaires returned	39

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	28	3	2	5
My child is making good progress in school.	56	28	10	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	44	8	5	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	33	13	10	8
The teaching is good.	74	18	0	3	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	51	33	8	8	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	23	3	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	36	5	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	51	36	3	5	5
The school is well led and managed.	72	21	0	3	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	26	10	3	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	31	10	13	18

Other issues raised by parents

Parents attending the parents meeting and those who made written comments believe their child's confidence had improved significantly since attending. They feel their children are very safe and secure and are very caring towards each other. They are particularly impressed with how well children behave both in and out of school and how polite to adults and each other they are. Parents believe the children have good relationships with staff. However, they think that there is less communication with parents of senior pupils.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

47 Pupils in the nursery and in the reception class make very good progress and achieve very well. The nursery provides an integrated provision, with just over half of the children undergoing an assessment of educational need. Children attend on a part-time basis and those with special educational needs begin full time education when they enter the reception class. By the time children reach statutory school age they can cope very well with attending school on a full time basis. This indicates the very good progress that children make overall, particularly in their personal and social development. The very good teaching, involving good quality team work between the teachers and nursery nurses, and a highly relevant curriculum, enables the transition to be very effective. There has been an improvement in all aspects since the previous inspection.

48 In personal and social development children make very good progress in their ability to form and sustain relationships, both with other children and with staff. They play together co-operatively, for example during outdoor play, two pupils played well together in the sand making a "birthday cake", decorating it and putting it in the oven. Children join in role-play, as when taking part in a journey on a train where one was the train driver and one collected the tickets. Staff are very quick to encourage children to establish social skills such as sharing and taking turns, for example with the bicycles when playing outside. Children are given many opportunities for taking responsibilities such as putting things away. Pupils learn how to behave appropriately through good use of praise and encouragement and firm but gentle reminders of what is expected of them. As a result children are friendly and happy in the secure learning environment of the nursery and reception class.

49 Children make very good progress and achieve very well in language and literacy. Teachers' plan their lessons very well to enable all children to join in at their own level and to ensure they build on earlier learning. The rooms and lessons are organised well to effectively provide a stimulating learning environment. Children listen very well to stories and rhymes and are keen to join in. Big books are used effectively and children are happy to listen to the story, anticipate what might happen, point to named items in the picture, name items the teacher points to and join in familiar phrases. Good use is made of puppets to "act out" a story to help children understand what is happening and to help maintain their interest. Children know how to sit, look and listen and all opportunities are taken to introduce children to an increasing vocabulary. For example, during a story time children talked about and learnt what a baby horse is called. Children answer questions and higher attaining children ask questions about the pictures and story. Children learn to enjoy books and realise that print carries meaning. This prepares them well for their work in the reception class. In reception, the National Literacy Strategy is effectively used to structure lesson planning and to make sure all pupils are actively involved in their learning. Through a very good variety of activities, for example linked to letters and words, children practice and develop their early reading and writing skills. Children's language develops well in both classes because staff talk to them and listen to them throughout the day.

50 Children make very good progress in the early stages of mathematics. Through play they learn to correspond objects, for example to put enough glasses for the teddies for their drink, or plates for their picnic. They develop awareness of sequence and number through counting rhymes and songs such as one green bottle sung while hanging bottles on a line, and through everyday classroom activities and routines. In story time, children are encouraged to count objects in the pictures such as 3 sheep, and to talk about whether things are over, under, more or less. In the reception class the National Numeracy Strategy is effectively used and this makes a significant contribution to children's learning. Activities and resources are appropriate for the children and are fun, for example knocking teddies off the chair and counting them as they go and then counting them back onto the chair. Lessons go at a good pace and all children are kept fully interested and involved, finding the activities challenging but stimulating and enjoyable. Very good lesson planning enables all children to be fully involved and gain new skills, knowledge and understanding. Different activities and support from staff enable all children to be confident and to succeed. For example higher attaining children counted to 20, identified the numerals and put them into sequence while lower attaining children matched objects, wrote over large numerals to 5 and jumped accurately onto numbered floor tiles.

51 Through actively exploring the objects and materials they are given children make very good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, children enjoy feeling sand and using a range of tools such as buckets, spades and funnels to experiment with the sand. They begin to realise that sand will flow or become a “cake” or castle when damp. Children begin to understand cause and effect, for example they realise that by using the computer mouse they can generate pictures. Children learn about the resources in the nursery and classroom, and through a series of planned support visits, such as to the railway and a trip on the train, they learn about the world outside school. Lessons are well planned to provide an interesting and appropriate range of activities. Through effective discussions and questioning staff support children in exploring and understanding things around them.

52 Children make very good progress in their creative development. Teachers provide interesting activities so that children learn to use paint, paper and a range of materials to make pictures and collages representing, for example, nursery rhymes such as Humpty Dumpty. They experiment with junk materials to make models, for example of planes and trains to support their work on transport. Good opportunities are planned for children to enjoy using construction toys and completing simple jigsaws. Children respond well to the enthusiasm of the teacher, and in musical activities they enjoy singing and join in enthusiastically.

53 Children achieve very well and make very good progress in their physical development. Lessons and activities are well planned to allow all children to participate and to increase their physical confidence. Nursery children have frequent access to outside activities and enjoy riding bicycles, pushing and pulling trolleys and climbing and balancing on the climbing equipment. Because instructions are given clearly, supported by demonstrations, children develop good gross motor skills in hopping, running, skipping walking and crawling both quickly and slowly. In physical education lessons children are confident and often independent, for example they were very keen to travel through the long tunnel without help. Staff appropriately respond to the interests of the children and carefully support them in exploring the possibilities of the equipment. Children listen to and follow instructions, sometimes with support from staff or by imitating other children.

54 Teaching is very good across all areas of development. Work is effectively organised and structured to provide a stimulating learning environment where all children can participate fully. All staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of the children’s learning needs and lessons are effectively planned to ensure the needs are well met. Very good planning takes account of children’s earlier learning. All staff work well together and have high expectations of the children, to which the children respond. Resources are appropriate and are used effectively to support learning. The fencing of the outdoor play area is damaged and requires attention.

ENGLISH

55 All pupils achieve well and make good progress in English. Teaching is consistently good and English is reinforced well in other subjects. Pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 achieve very well and make very good progress because teaching is very good. There has been an improvement in achievement and progress at all key stages since the last inspection.

56 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils listen well to the teacher and effectively develop their speaking skills. For example, they enjoy counting aloud the number of ladybirds in a big book, and talking about what they are doing, for example in group work. Reading skills are developing rapidly. From a low base on entry, pupils make very good progress in recognising the initial letters of words and selecting a letter card to match the sound. They reorganise letters in a computer program to make a given word. They read their own name, and sometimes the names of other pupils in their class. They know that words in a book carry meaning, and that letters represent sounds. More able pupils can print their own name and copy short words correctly. With their fingers, pupils model the teacher’s formation of a letter in the air and sometimes make a letter, for example, the letter m, with different materials such as pipe-cleaners which helps them understand the shape the letters are.

57 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils listen carefully to the teacher, for example when she pronounces words for a spelling test, and to their classmates, for example when talking about a poem. They answer questions enthusiastically about syllables and word patterns. Although

vocabulary is very limited, pupils generally make their meaning clear. Pupils with speech and language difficulties make very good progress in speaking, partly owing to the very good teaching in the Social Use of Language Programme. Teachers make very effective use of the National Literacy Strategy to help pupils improve their reading. Pupils enjoy reading in unison a poem or drama script from the big book. They use their phonic skills to assist them in reading unknown words, and this leads to very good progress. They suggest words to fill the gaps in a summary of the reading extract, showing they read with understanding. Pupils of lower attainment achieve well because they are given appropriate support from the teacher or classroom assistant. Reading records show many pupils read at home, and this has a positive effect on learning. Pupils show keen interest in books and know the function of an author, publisher and illustrator. Many pupils find writing difficult, but with the support of word lists and well-focused teaching they make very good progress. While lower attaining pupils can form letters and copy simple words, average and higher attaining pupils are beginning to write in sentences. Spelling is improving, helped by pupils' ability to link sound to letter. Pupils explain the purpose of punctuation marks, but sometimes miss out full stops in their independent writing. They write with enthusiasm about visits to local attractions and activities they have enjoyed such as making strawberry jam.

58 By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils listen well, for example they pay careful attention to a video of Macbeth. They listen carefully to what others are saying in an improvisation based on the play. They speak clearly, though vocabulary is restricted, and sometimes develop their ideas in several sentences, as when discussing the appearance of Banquo's ghost at the banquet. They make very good eye contact and are at ease when speaking to a stranger about their work. Progress in reading is good. Pupils use phonic and context clues to achieve fluency. Higher attaining pupils read with some expression, while average and lower attaining pupils concentrate hard on simply reading the words. Most pupils show a basic understanding of what they have read. Pupils learn to write in a range of styles. For example, they write limericks with obvious enthusiasm for rhyme and rhythm, and present book reviews. They write short paragraphs giving a pen portrait of characters, for example, Long John Silver and Jim Hawkins in *Treasure Island*. Although they can write about the parts of *The Lion*, *The Witch* and *The Wardrobe* they like best, they cannot explain clearly why. Full stops are often missing and sentences are not well linked. Pupils write well in response to literature. For example, they show empathy with the mariner's plight in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, and write poems powerfully reflecting the heat of the Equator, using word lists sensibly. From a structured outline, pupils make a newspaper, the *Tatchester Echo*, and present items attractively. Word processing is well used to vary presentation.

59 By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have developed good literacy skills and speak with confidence. They show clear awareness of audience and ask relevant questions about their work. A tape made for their Certificate of Educational Achievement studies shows they can organise thoughts about themselves, and interview one another about work experience. While ideas are not fluently linked and vocabulary is limited, pupils convey their meaning clearly and show a desire to communicate. Pupils are beginning to read with greater fluency. They break up unknown words into syllables to help with pronunciation, and understand what they have read. Lower attaining pupils read very haltingly and need constant support, but can often talk fluently about the contents of the book. Pupils make good use of local libraries, and higher attaining pupils can explain how to find a non-fiction book using the Dewey Decimal system. They know how to download information from the Internet and to use the Internet as a means of communication. Pupils develop a range of writing skills for their accredited course work and they make very good progress. In 1999, all pupils passed the Certificate of Education in English, with most achieving a merit or distinction grading. Pupils write movingly about war, as seen in their own writings 'in remembrance of war'. In verse and prose they show understanding of the horrors of trench warfare in World War One. Pupils write with interest about *Twelfth Night*, reflecting on the characters of Sir Toby and Viola. They draft letters of thanks to a neighbouring school, setting out the letter correctly in neat handwriting, though the 'signing off' is not always appropriate. Pupils find great difficulty with spelling, punctuation and organisation of ideas, but the teachers' very good use of drafting is having a positive effect on achievement.

60 The quality of teaching is good overall. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, when it was mostly sound. It is very good in Key Stage 1; often very good and excellent in Key Stage 2; satisfactory overall, and good (very good in Year 9) in half the lessons at Key Stage 3; often good and very good at Key Stage 4. The teaching within special groups for the social use of

language is very good. Teachers have a very good knowledge of using phonics and this enables pupils to make rapid progress in reading and writing. For example, in Key Stage 2 classes, teachers emphasise letter sounds and link sounds carefully to letter cards. Their enthusiastic teaching makes learning fun. Consequently, pupils show a keen interest in language. Teachers have high expectations for pupils' achievements. For example, in Key Stage 4 classes, the teacher selects challenging reading extracts to set pupils thinking and discussing. In one lesson, pupils in a Year 11 class were studying extracts by Ann Frank and Vera Brittain. The teacher's clear, sensitive reading captured pupils' attention. Subsequent discussion led to a good understanding of how both writers viewed war. Teachers encourage good relationships. As a result, pupils work well in groups and learn through discussions. Generally, teachers manage pupils well, though in a few Key Stage 3 lessons teachers have insufficient strategies to deal with inappropriate behaviour, and this affects the pace of learning, and progress in writing. In all lessons, teachers question pupils effectively to assess learning. Marking is good and guides pupils in improving their standards, particularly at Key Stage 4.

61 The school makes very good provision for English. The National Literacy Strategy is well integrated into other subjects and is having a strong impact in most classes. The Social Use of Language Programme leads to rising standards in communication skills, and the 'buddy' reading scheme in Year 5, where Year 9 pupils hear readers, is increasing interest in books. Assessment is thorough and teachers use information gained to group pupils and set targets. The assessment files in Key Stage 3 are a very good means of measuring the progress pupils are making. The English co-ordinator has worked extremely hard and with considerable success to promote literacy. Medium and long-term planning are excellent, and this is having a significant impact in raising standards across the curriculum. There are very good plans to link more closely the teaching of English and literacy at Key Stage 3. Displays of key words and pupils' work create a rich language environment in classrooms. Pupils use the displays to help them with their writing, and this increases independent learning skills. Computers are regularly used in Key Stages 1 and 2, where they are provided in class. Access to computers at Key Stages 3 and 4 is more difficult. Nevertheless, careful word-processing and effective use of clip art are adding to the attractive presentation of pupils' work.

62 Improvement since the last inspection is very good. The co-ordinator has encouraged all staff to see the importance of literacy, and her colleagues are giving her good support in raising standards. As a result, attainment, teaching and learning are significantly better than at the time of the last inspection. Spelling programmes are much more effectively organised, and accreditation at Key Stage 4 is well linked to pupils' needs. The library is more centrally located and book stocks have improved. Given the co-ordinator's very good management skills, and teachers' clear commitment to raising standards of literacy, the capacity for further improvement is good.

MATHEMATICS

63 Achievements in mathematics are very good in all key stages. Very effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, some very good and at times outstanding teaching and the very enthusiastic response of pupils to the subject are major factors in this success. The very good progress made by pupils is clearly reflected by their attainments in statutory assessment at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and in examinations at the end of Key Stage 4. A significant proportion of pupils are achieving merit and distinction grades in the Certificate of Educational Achievement and, in GCSE examinations, increasing numbers of pupils are recording passes at the higher levels available in the syllabus followed.

64 The youngest pupils make rapid progress in their basic number work. By the end of Key Stage 1, many are counting reliably on to and back from twenty and the higher-attaining pupils are writing numbers from one to twenty unaided. They fill in missing numbers in simple addition problems and are beginning to understand the operation of addition and subtraction, for example, when working out how many mini-beasts are left when a spider lands on their leaf. The use of resources in games like this is very effective in promoting pupils' interest in mathematical activities. Practical work on naming, sorting and building with different shapes is equally successful in developing their understanding of the shape, space and measure aspects of the curriculum. The written work of Key Stage 2 pupils shows very good progress in a growing range of mathematical activities. They are estimating and measuring, using coins with increasing confidence and accuracy and collecting and recording data in a variety of forms. In one lesson observed, Year 5 and 6 pupils were making very good gains in their understanding of words such as "array" and "multiples" and it is

a distinctive feature of work in all the key stages that the subject's specialist vocabulary is very effectively taught and reinforced by staff.

65 In Key Stage 3, there is less consistency in the quality of teaching and learning. In one Year 7 lesson observed, for example, pupils' concentration and effort wavered during their work on understanding that subtraction is the inverse of addition and their books showed that their progress in this area has been slow. Behaviour in this year group and problems in engaging the attention of pupils are affecting progress here but overall in this key stage there is some very good work being done by pupils, particularly on the development of their own strategies for solving problems. Year 8 pupils, for example, were observed identifying patterns and sequences and offering alternative methods of making mental calculations of numbers up to a thousand. At one point during this session, when the teacher called pupils back for a whole-class discussion of the work, one pupil said he didn't want to stop because "This is exciting". The quality of learning resources, most of them made or put together by staff, makes a very positive contribution to lessons. The use of artistic designs, for example, adds much to the work on shapes and angles. Teaching is very successful in bringing out the fascination and excitement of mathematics in a variety of forms and media such as these and pupils respond with great enthusiasm. The use of information and communication technology to extend and enrich learning in the subject, however, is still limited.

66 Very good progress continues to be made in Key Stage 4 and very good planning of work in the examination courses followed gives pupils a real sense of knowledge of and motivation in their learning as they work towards their final accreditation. As in all key stages, there is very high-quality oral work, with very high expectations from the teachers, for example in the work being done by a Year 10 class on plotting co-ordinates and learning the key words involved. Teaching is made interesting and very relevant to the age and interests of the pupils. Work being done in Year 11, for example, using spreadsheets on a computer to help with the planning of a holiday budget, engages the pupils enthusiasm and they all responded with great interest.

67 The very high standards of work in mathematics owe much to the excellent leadership and management of the subject. High quality school based training for staff, very clear and appropriate targets for attainment and very effective planning for the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy are examples of the successes achieved. There has, as a result, been a very significant improvement in standards in the subject since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

68 Achievement in Science across all Key Stages is good because teaching is good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Throughout the school, pupils are actively involved in their science work. As a result, pupils are keen, behave well and are motivated to learn. Exciting and challenging tasks keeps pupils concentrating throughout their lessons.

69 By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are developing their observational skills well and use an extending and appropriate vocabulary. For example, through observing carefully and discussing identifying features, pupils know the differences between a range of living things and identify parts such as wings and legs of insects in their mini-beast project. They show a high level of interest and enthusiasm when appropriately learning about science in everyday life. For example, pupils name a range of materials such as flour and begin to see that by combining materials they change. Most could anticipate, for example, what colour the mixture would be when cocoa was added. Pupils enjoy their science activities and the opportunities to experiment with a good range of appropriate and familiar materials such as sand and water.

70 At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are confident in using their knowledge and being actively involved in their work. They know the differences between liquids and solids and identify with accuracy the materials that various objects are made from. Pupils use an appropriate vocabulary and enjoy classifying a range of materials into similar groups. Most can explain why certain materials are suitable for particular purposes. Pupils in one class showed a good understanding of particles and how these contribute to the differences between fluids and solids.

71 By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are confident and enjoy their experimental and investigative work. Through a good range of experiences most pupils understand the definition of, and can carry out, a fair test. Pupils work co-operatively when using a variety of apparatus appropriately and they enjoy discussing what they are doing and why. They are very aware of the need for safety, for example when carrying out tests on a range of materials in order to test for relative strength. Pupils record and analyse their results effectively using simple tables and refer to the information in other lessons.

72 Pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 have built on the knowledge and skills developed at previous key stages. They use hypothesis well, for example to explain why plants grow in particular locations and how some plants have adapted to their location. Pupils undertake surveys, such as a survey of plants around the school, and answer questions accurately about what plants need to grow and the effects of shade, pollution and local animals on plant life. Because teachers use an appropriate technical vocabulary well, pupils are confident to use the words in their work. For example, in a lesson considering chemical reactions pupils used the terms “dissolving” and “concentrated” appropriately during stages of their experiment.

73 Teaching of science is good across all key stages and pupils are interested and curious. It is particularly strong in Key Stage 3 and 4. Teaching is most effective where the teacher has secure subject knowledge and planning and delivery is well matched to the needs of the pupils. In these lessons pupils are appropriately and consistently challenged, and are interested and involved in their learning. Teaching is less effective, but never-the-less satisfactory, when the teacher has less secure subject knowledge and the pace, aims and content of the lessons are not so well matched to all of the pupils’ needs. In almost all lessons the progress of pupils is good and they are building on previous skills and knowledge in a planned and progressive way. This overall good progress is linked to good planning that reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum. Most teaching challenges and engages pupils and in so doing, encourages good behaviour.

74 Pupils at Key Stage 4 follow accredited course work for the Certificate of Educational Achievement. The results over the three years that this has been in place have been good. Out of 22 pupils entered for this last year, 14 achieved a distinction. Accreditation has raised the school’s expectations of what pupils can achieve in science. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the absence of accreditation was noted as an issue.

75 Co-ordination of the subject is good. The co-ordinator monitors the planning and teaching of the non-specialist teachers through lesson observations, team teaching, frequent meetings and scrutiny of pupils work. Assessment procedures are in place to record pupil progress but as yet these have not been developed in a way that influences planning for individual needs. Resources in science are satisfactory and health and safety issues are dealt with effectively.

ART

76 Pupils across all key stages make good progress in art. Pupils’ good progress is a result of the good quality learning opportunities that are provided for them. At Key Stages 3 and 4 the high standard of work achieved is a result of very good teaching. Pupils make very good progress in learning and using a wide range of skills and techniques, for example in their developing use of textiles, in clay work, in observational drawing and in using colour and pattern. They develop their knowledge and understanding very well through studying the work of known artists, art work in other cultures and in other times and through the many opportunities provided to work with visiting artists using a range of styles and techniques. At all times, the creativity of pupils is encouraged and nurtured so that they are confident to apply themselves using a rich range of media and approaches. Key Stage 4 pupils achieve very well in their externally accredited course work.

77 Pupils make good progress because teachers plan for them to build on earlier learning in a consistent and systematic way using an increasingly rich and developing range of techniques. One example is the way in which pupils develop and use their observational skills in a range of settings. At Key Stage 1, very good teaching enables pupils to make very good progress in observing and in selecting materials to use, as in a lesson making models and paintings of “mini beasts”. Because of good demonstrations and encouragement pupils handle tools with confidence and select appropriate materials for their own “beast”, for example one pupil stuffed tights with newspaper and tied it around

its body with string to produce a wiggly worm. At Key Stage 2, pupils extend their observational skills, for example in one lesson pupils were well guided to look at, feel and smell a range of fruit, describe its appearance and then guess what it would look like inside when it was cut open. They then drew more carefully what they could see. In another lesson, pupils considered how facial expressions could illustrate the mood of a person and then looked carefully at other pupils' eyes. They enjoyed talking about the picture of the Mona Lisa and using their new vocabulary to describe what she was thinking. Good lesson planning and the teacher's very good knowledge of art enables pupils at Key Stage 3 to build on and extend these skills in a creative way. In one lesson, pupils used their observational skills in drawing a tree and extended their knowledge of techniques by learning a new way of printing. Pupils understood the process of using foam tiles, water soluble ink and rice paper to create some very good tree prints that they were very proud of. Key Stage 4 pupils continue to develop their skills and extend the range of styles and techniques they understand, for example through their Indian based textile work and through the very high quality of work produced after looking at the work and techniques of Michael Brennan Woods.

78 Teaching in art is very good at Key Stages 3 and 4 where the teacher has a very good knowledge of the subject and a good understanding of the pupils' learning needs. All pupils are enabled to participate and succeed in all lessons through good support and the use of appropriate resources. Information technology is used well to support pupils experimenting and learning, for example about colour and pattern. Expectations are high and pupils rise to the intellectual and physical challenges given to them. They concentrate and take great care with their work, modifying it if necessary. Lessons are made interesting for the pupils and they enjoy what they are doing. As a result, pupils take a pride in their work. Homework is used effectively to support the work they do in school, as one pupil said "we always love our art homework".

79 The curriculum for art is very well planned to provide a rich range of experiences while ensuring pupils have a secure and appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subject. Very good links to other subjects are effectively planned for as are experiences of other cultures and other times. A new and more effective system for assessing and recording pupils progress is being used which shows pupils progress in modules of work. Sketchbooks of older pupils are graded and work is appropriately levelled. The subject is very well led and managed and the teaching of art is effectively monitored by the co-ordinator. Resources are appropriate and are well used. Displays of pupils art work are very well used to enhance the school accommodation and to encourage pupils learning. There has been a good improvement in art since the last inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

80 Pupils' achievements in design and technology are good overall because teaching and lesson planning is good. Pupils build well on their learning and develop a good knowledge and understanding through the many and varied opportunities provided for making and designing.

81 Pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 are developing and applying the skills of designing and making well. They can suggest ideas for making models and select, from a good range of materials, what could be best used to construct these. They apply themselves well to constructing the models, and if their idea does not work are confident to modify their design and try using other materials. They develop their knowledge and understanding well, for example they enjoy experimenting with a range of glue and fasteners to attach wings to their insect. With effective guidance, some pupils are able to adapt and improve on their ideas as the lesson progresses. Pupils learn the names of appropriate tools to use and how to use them, and enjoy experimenting with them.

82 Pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 achieve very well in both design and technology and food technology. They can plan a product using labelled sketches, taking into account the requirements of the product. At all stages of the lesson, pupils respond to the very good questioning of the teacher who ensures their understanding of what they are doing and why. When making the product they can choose and use an appropriate range of tools safely, and accurately use good finishing techniques. Lower attaining pupils are able to plan and participate in a "tie and dye" project, making choices and decisions about colours and approaches. At the end of the lessons pupils use an appropriate vocabulary to discuss what they have been doing and are honest in their appraisal of their results. Pupils are confident in the food technology room, knowing the equipment, its purpose and how to use it. They follow the hygiene and safety rules well. In preparing meals, pupils help each other such as

pointing to where a piece of equipment is, making suggestions or checking nothing is burning. Pupils are very enthusiastic and enjoy shopping and cooking. They discuss with each other and staff what is happening, for example "its gone thick", "it smells sweet". Pupils are very proud of their achievements and enjoy eating some of their results or taking them home to share with their family.

83 By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have built well on earlier learning and some are working with independence and precision. Teaching, lesson planning and organisation are good and support pupils in more independent work. For example, pupils generate ideas and suggestions in planning projects and produce appropriate labelled sketches. Pupils independently plan menus, cost out ingredients and using the local shops, purchase these. In planning, staff and pupils are considerate of health and safety issues. The principles of healthy eating are always taken into consideration and reinforced with the pupils. When making, many pupils cut and assemble materials with precision and the minimum of guidance. Individual needs are well planned for and very good teamwork between teaching and support staff allows very appropriate individual pupil support, as it is required. In food technology, most pupils can prepare a meal hygienically and safely with some minimal help and assistance from staff. Pupils evaluate with accuracy the suitability of the product they have made and put forward ideas as to how this can be improved. These skills were particularly evident during a lesson where pupils were making wind chimes. At this key stage pupils follow course work leading to the Certificate of Educational Achievement. 17 pupils in all have taken this qualification during the present year. All have passed, many with merits and distinctions. Further evidence of pupils attainment at the later key stages is available as high quality displays around the school. The very good work of pupils in planning and constructing a model showing the blood flow through the heart and upper body is to be shown in an exhibition of secondary school work at a museum on the mainland.

84 In the majority of lessons seen, teaching is very good and effectively supports pupils' learning. In these lessons, planning is very good and assessment opportunities are effectively planned for. Teaching methods and strategies are very appropriate to the range of pupils learning needs enabling all pupils to participate and progress at an appropriate level. A strong feature of teaching at Key Stage 3 is classroom organisation. For example, the whole of a year group is split into five activity areas on a carousel system, changing each half term. This enables pupils to be in small groups, which maximises the learning opportunities offered to them. The use of support assistants as tutors for some of these activities, under the direction and supervision of the teachers, is effective and efficient. A similar system of organisation in Key Stage 4 is equally effective.

85 Co-ordination of design and technology is very good. Whole school planning and monitoring are effective in ensuring all aspects are covered and pupils build on earlier learning. Assessment of individual progress is good and informs lesson planning effectively. The curriculum has been enriched by a series of focused visits, for example to the Millennium Dome, the London Eye and the Tate Modern gallery. Resources are satisfactory and have improved since the last inspection, particularly in Key Stage 2. There is however no appropriate equipment in classrooms and the design and technology room to provide pupils with experience of computer aided technology. The food technology room is outdated. Health and safety issues identified at the last inspection have been addressed in the workshop area. The range of curriculum opportunities offered to pupils, particularly at Key Stage 4, have increased significantly over the last three years. Accreditation has been introduced at Key Stage 4 and is now a strong feature of the school. Planning for the delivery of design and technology across key stages is now good. Systems are now in place to monitor progress and evaluate learning. Overall, there have been significant improvements since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

86 Achievement in geography is good across all the key stages because teaching is good. Geography is taught as part of the land studies course at Key Stage 4. During the period of the inspection geography was not time tabled for Key Stage 1, however discussions with pupils and teachers, scrutiny of teachers' plans and pupils' work in books and geographical displays enable judgements about progress and pupils achievements to be made.

87 Pupils enjoy carrying out geographical investigations based on direct experience, local fieldwork and practical activities. For example, pupils at Key Stage 1 learn about places and their

different features through many local visits. They develop simple mapping skills, focused on directions, to locate parts of the large school site. Younger pupils at Key Stage 2 are gaining a useful understanding of, for example, rivers, which is effectively consolidated through a visit to a local river, where the pupils enjoyed using vocabulary such as source and mouth. Older pupils at Key Stage 2 consider the differences between the Isle of Wight and St. Lucia, and study the impact of weather on people and the environment. They study banana production in St. Lucia and discuss the sequence of production. Good planning of classroom work linked to local visits and the good use of resources enables pupils to experience and enjoy what they are learning, which supports their interest and enthusiasm well. Good planning allows pupils to build on previous learning, for example, older Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils study India, France and Majorca and use their skills of observation and enquiry effectively, to contrast and discuss the lives of people in these different settings. Pupils are directly involved in their learning and listen and concentrate well on their work. They are able to locate places on maps, use books, photographs and press cuttings to find out and record in their books and folders specific information about places and the lives of people around the world.

88 Pupils at Key Stage 3 investigate the quality of an environment using geographical terms. For example, pupils in Year 9 use their enquiry skills to investigate a series of photographs from different parts of France. They look at photographs and ask why, where, who and what, demonstrating their use of atlases, ICT and books to find the answers and pose questions for others. Higher achieving pupils use a range of geographical terms linked to these sources, for example describing Paris as an urban setting. Pupils with additional special needs make good progress because of the effective support they receive from the teachers and support assistants. The scheme of work has been well developed since the previous inspection to give pupils a very broad experience, which progressively extends their geographical skills and knowledge as they move through the school.

89 The quality of teaching is good and pupils make good progress. Lessons begin purposefully with clear explanations and expectations for the lesson so that they are clear about what they are to do. Good support from classroom assistants and teachers checking pupils' understanding during lessons enables pupils to work confidently and successfully. They are encouraged to use the correct vocabulary and most pupils are able to describe a landscape or explain their point of view accurately. The pupils behave well and co-operate in joint tasks because of the teachers' good class management.

90 Pupils share their ideas and learn from each other in work that is relevant to their age, for example a group of Year 10 pupils used information from maps and holiday brochures to describe similarities and differences between Majorca and the Isle of Wight. The teacher's good subject knowledge is well used, for example to encourage pupils to think of the wider implications of tourism on the island, and previously studied issues are effectively reinforced during their discussion. In a few lessons pupils with difficult behaviour distracted others from the learning process but the teacher's effective handling of these situations with the help of support staff enabled the lessons to progress.

91 There has been a satisfactory level of improvement since the last inspection. There is good liaison between the two co-ordinators so that there is consistency in the delivery of the programmes of study across key stages. The co-ordinators monitor the work of their departments effectively and set a realistic annual action plan. The previous report identified weaknesses in the use of information and communications technology and noted a lack of challenge for some pupils. These issues have been addressed and both are developing appropriately. The introduction of an optional accredited course, the Land Studies Certificate of Achievement, in which pupils achieve well, provides effectively for higher achieving pupils at the end of Key Stage 4.

HISTORY

92 Pupils' achievements in history are good because teaching and planning are good. History is taught at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and all pupils are gaining a real understanding and empathy for past events and the effect they had on people. The youngest pupils at Key Stage 1 know about the equipment used in the early twentieth century to wash clothes, and they enjoy and learn, for example, by practising with washboards and other equipment borrowed from the Carisbrooke Castle museum. Older pupils have studied aspects of Britain's mediaeval past, the Tudors and the Victorians, and

through careful use of resources higher achieving pupils can talk knowledgeably about the lifestyles of people in those times.

93 In Key Stage 3, teachers skilfully incorporate examples from the literature of the time and pupils are able to identify in their written work with the reality of, for example, the hardship of being a slave, in their written work. Pupils are able to use secondary resources to gain an accurate understanding of events. In a lesson on the mediaeval kings' struggle to control the church, pupils use sequencing skills effectively to order events leading up to the murder of Thomas a' Beckett. Pupils are encouraged to use and develop their English writing skills in their history workbooks and displays. In this way they are active in their learning and make good progress in their knowledge of past events. However, further use could be made of eye witness accounts and artefacts to give pupils greater empathy with characters and events they study. The thorough scheme of work and the high expectations of the teachers ensure that pupils from Key Stages 1 to 3 make good progress in applying chronology to the people, changes and events studied.

94 The quality of teaching is good, sometimes very good and never less than satisfactory. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge and expertise to impart that knowledge so that pupils can understand complex and sometimes conflicting points of view. A scrutiny of pupils' work about the great plague showed their understanding of the consequences for individuals and their families and the confusion at the time of how the plague spread. Pupils respond well to good teachers and because they are interested in what they are learning they are thoughtful and confident to join in and express their point of view. They appreciate the lively teaching, return the enthusiasm and try hard with their work, for example, Year 2 pupils put great effort participating in the early twentieth century washday.

95 The previous inspection identified that teaching was less sound where the lessons were worksheet led because pupils were not sufficiently stretched by matching of tasks to ability. In the best lessons seen this has now been addressed and teachers use a variety of tasks and give pupils appropriate levels of support to ensure that all pupils can succeed. Since the last inspection pupils' achievements have improved over a broad range of skills and knowledge. Pupils' work is regularly assessed against learning objectives and work sampling and individual targets are set for pupils at their annual review. The co-ordinators have begun to evaluate pupils' learning by monitoring teachers' planning and by classroom observations. Resources are satisfactory and good use is made of artefacts and the local environment to support pupils' interest and understanding.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

96 Across all key stages, pupils' achievements in information and communication technology (ICT) lessons are good because teaching is good and because the school has high quality equipment in a room dedicated to teaching the subject. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. The use of ICT to reinforce and extend the curriculum in a few subjects, such as music, is good. However, in some subjects it is still underdeveloped because of a lack of good equipment in classrooms.

97 At the end of Key Stage 1, many pupils are confident to use ICT equipment independently. They control the mouse and make selections from the programmes available. They particularly enjoy interactive programmes and when using, for example art programmes, are very pleased with their results. Higher attaining pupils understand the function of a variety of switches, for example one pupil knew how to turn up the volume on a programme he particularly enjoyed. ICT is used well to reinforce literacy and numeracy and by using computers regularly pupils are confident to work independently. Good use is also made of other ICT equipment, for example Language Masters, to enable pupils to practice their reading.

98 Most pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 can access the appropriate program using a password. They are confident and know how to add information to existing programs, such as data on a graph, and when completed they can interpret the data or other simple data displays. Pupils enjoy and understand how to send and receive e-mail and find this exciting. Pupils at this key stage are sometimes hindered in their use of ICT by their limited literacy skills rather than their inability to

understand and use ICT. While some pupils need significant levels of adult help, others work very well independently.

99 Lessons are planned on a six week module basis to allow pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 to systematically build on knowledge and skills previously learned. The skills of the teacher and support assistants have a significantly positive impact upon promoting pupils' progress. For example, using a multi-media demonstration to capture pupils' attention, pupils were fascinated with the demonstration on scanning and saving and could not wait to be involved. The lesson was made relevant to the pupils by focusing on each pupil's hobby, and pupils scanned pictures found about their interests. With support from staff many can retrieve a photograph from a file, alter its size and add text to this using a variety of fonts and colours of their choosing. Most pupils can access their personal files to add information. Most pupils have a good understanding of ICT related terminology and are competent in using a range of basic controls.

100 By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils are familiar with spreadsheets and are able, in many cases, to use these to calculate basic information. The lesson is made more interesting for them because it is related to "their" company, for example information about profit and loss. Pupils are confident to add to these files and accurately interpret the information held on them. Use of the Internet is thoroughly enjoyed by pupils who are keen to find and retrieve information for use in projects in other curriculum areas. A few pupils' ability to use this information well is hindered by their limited reading ability. Some pupils at this key stage are very computer-literate and have very good skills and understanding. Pupils work well towards accreditation and this is an improvement since the last inspection when such opportunities did not exist.

101 Teaching and the progress of pupils are good across all key stages. In the majority of lessons, teachers have high expectations and provide significant challenge for all pupils that they rise to and meet. Most lessons benefit from a high pupil to adult ratio and effective levels of assistance ensure all pupils participate at an appropriate level and learn. Planning for delivery of the ICT curriculum is good. It ensures pupils build on earlier learning and provides a good match to the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils' progress is monitored appropriately through regular recording of individual and group attainment and progress. The establishment of individual targets in this subject area is developing although, at present, few pupils have such targets.

102 The co-ordination of ICT throughout the school is good. The co-ordinator is based in the ICT room and has sufficient time to support other teachers and pupils across key stages as well as teaching discrete classes. The co-ordinator currently teaches all of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 lessons and this ensures pupils learn effectively. A good programme of professional development for staff is in place and teaching and planning is monitored. Resources in the ICT room are very good. The school has invested a significant amount of money in this facility. Some classrooms, however, do not have adequate and up-to-date equipment, although further investment and networking is planned for.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

[French]

103 Achievement in French is good because teaching and lesson planning are good and pupils respond well to lessons. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils understand simple language on a variety of topics such as colours, numbers and pets, with the support of pictures when necessary. When repeating these words they do so with good pronunciation. Pupils willingly take part in activities and many are enthusiastic about showing off what they know in French. Most writing involves copying but a few pupils can write phrases from memory using spelling that is approximate. Pupils respond well to practical French activities such as role playing using a puppet theatre and preparing and eating a French breakfast. By the end of Key Stage 4, last year every pupil had completed several accredited units in the Certificate of Achievement and this year several have achieved distinctions. Pupils read and write individual words and short phrases on topics, such as which sports they like playing and what the weather is like. Pupils make more progress in their ability to read and understand French than they do in speaking and writing as the curriculum is designed to concentrate on pupils' strengths. Pupils with additional special educational needs achieve well as their needs are

identified and are met through both the effective use of support assistants and well designed activities.

104 Last year, 27 pupils took part in a joint French and geography trip to Paris and returned with positive attitudes to France and an improved knowledge of French. The use of games and colourful authentic resources encourages pupils to take part, to work quickly and to maintain their concentration. Pupils work well together in pairs and groups and help each other if necessary. They are encouraged to listen carefully to the teacher and are aware of how much progress they have made and what they still need to do to improve.

105 Teaching is good in both key stages and this leads to good learning. The teacher has a good command of the subject and pupils learn how to pronounce words correctly by following a good model, but the higher attaining pupils do not always get the chance to use their spoken French extensively. The teacher has a very good knowledge of the pupils' needs and the planning of the lesson takes good account of this. There are some missed opportunities for pupils to hear more French used by the teacher, for example when greeting pupils or praising them, but generally listening skills are well developed. Pupils are involved in reading the language by a skilful choice of activities and some very appropriately designed resources. Basic literacy skills are also reinforced throughout the lesson with well supported reading tasks in particular, such as the use of colour coded word cards which are matched to pictures to make a dictionary of key words. Lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and pupils usually complete several tasks during one lesson. Support teachers are used very effectively to work with small groups of pupils to enable their individual needs to be met. This enables pupils with extra needs, including those with behavioural difficulties, to make good progress.

106 The subject is well managed and there is a clear programme for pupils to follow. The breadth of the curriculum in French is necessarily restricted by only having one lesson a week but pupils still cover a reasonable range of topics. Assessment of pupils' performance is satisfactory but it does not always identify how individual pupils might improve their work. Improvement in French since the last inspection is good.

MUSIC

107 At all key stages, pupils achieve very well and make very good progress in music because teaching is very good and because pupils benefit from a wide range of experiences in listening and appraising and in performing and composing. Key Stage 4 pupils achieve very well in the Certificate of Educational Achievement with all gaining either merits or distinctions. Pupils have good access to an interesting and good range of percussion instruments from many cultures and to electronic keyboards. They use these well and effectively in their lessons. Pupils achieve a high standard in singing and are keen to join the school choir and participate in the many performances both in and out of school. Pupils are also keen to be part of the dance group who perform at external events. Music makes a strong contribution to the expressive arts within the school.

108 Pupils make very good progress in listening and responding to music and in learning and using an appropriate vocabulary. For example, in a Key Stage 2 music lesson pupils listened to taped music and singing of sea shanties. By listening carefully they correctly identified and used the terms dynamics and pitch, explaining what they meant. The very good subject knowledge of the teachers and their enthusiasm ensures pupils learn, are confident and enjoy their active participation. In one lesson looking at music as a form of communication, pupils worked independently in small groups, composing music to represent an exciting picture about pirates that they had chosen. Pupils could name their instrument, work co-operatively and compose, practice and perform their piece to the rest of the class. Following each group's performance other pupils made a critical appraisal of the piece or asked questions, for example "did the snare drum signal the canon ball crashing into the water"? Because of their increasing knowledge and understanding pupils are confident to participate and to be creative; they are proud of their achievements and are enthusiastic about their work. Older pupils work with increasing independence, for example on "techno" music. One group spent some weeks composing rhythm and bass parts, filing their compositions onto a computer. They then composed and added the melodic part based on an eight beat sequence, using correct notation to record their compositions. At all key stages, pupils have a rich range of experiences in singing, composing and playing, in recording and in performing and in listening and appraising. Lessons are

planned to ensure pupils build on earlier learning and to ensure a good coverage of different forms of music from a variety of cultural traditions.

109 Teaching in music is very good. Lessons are well planned to ensure pupils build on earlier learning and use their skills and knowledge in a widening range of situations. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of music and of the learning needs of the pupils. Lessons are organised to enable all pupils to participate at their own level with appropriate and effective support given to individual pupils. The very good relationships between staff and pupils effectively support pupils in being confident to experiment, be creative and to perform in front of others. Pupils are very proud to represent their school in external events such as the Newport music festival. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils who rise to the creative and intellectual challenges given to them.

110 The music curriculum is of a very high quality with music planned for as a discrete subject and also planned to support other subjects, for example English, religious education and personal and social education. All elements of music are effectively covered so that pupils are given a very broad, balanced and relevant musical education. Pupils are introduced to composers and their style of music, and music from other cultures is very well covered, for example Key Stage 2 pupils are studying music from the Caribbean this term. Teachers make lessons interesting and relevant to the pupils' age as in the study of "techno" music. Pupils build on earlier learning, for example in developing their skills of notation to support their composing and recording. Two assessments a year are levelled against National curriculum averages, and the information from informal assessments following lessons is used in planning future lessons. The subject is very well led and managed and resources are good, with an interesting range of instruments being well developed. Information technology is effectively used to support the subject. There has been a good improvement in music since the last inspection.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EDUCATION

111 In personal and social education (PSE) pupils progress well and achievements are good. This is because teachers plan from a relevant programme of study and because teaching is good. The curriculum for personal and social development appropriately covers sex education, substance misuse, and health education and careers advice. In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils make good progress in lessons and tutorial time towards their targets in their IEP's. In Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils have discrete PSE lessons and pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 successfully complete a Certificate of Educational Achievement life skills accredited course. Last year over half of the pupils achieved a merit.

112 During the period of the inspection, it was only possible to observe PSE during tutorial times. However, a scrutiny of pupils work files, assessment records and discussions with teachers and pupils show that pupils have a positive attitude to their work and older pupils present their work neatly and carefully. At Key Stage 4, a developmental curriculum enables pupils to revisit areas of learning such as drug and sex education in a way suitable to the age and stage of development of the pupil. Accredited course work enables pupils to follow a broad and balanced curriculum. Cross-curricular opportunities for literacy are also reinforced well, for example as pupils write letters and application forms, and when they produce reports on their community projects. Pupils receive good quality guidance in a range of life skills that supports improving their confidence and self-esteem.

113 As no PSE lessons were observed during the period of the inspection it is not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching. However, teachers use other classroom activities well to reinforce work done in PSE lessons. For example, in registration time, assemblies and home preparation time opportunities are used well to talk about pupils' experiences, resolve differences and deal with pupils feelings towards themselves and others in a positive way. Teachers make good use of the well-planned PSE curriculum by linking learning to the local community. For example, a group of Year 11 pupils investigated local facilities at a leisure centre, checking available activities and prices and gaining sufficient information to enable them to use the facilities in their leisure time.

114 Co-ordination of the subject is good. An effective scheme of work and policy support teachers planning. Monitoring and assessment of coverage and progress are developing appropriately. There are effective links between PSE as a taught subject and the strong network of pastoral support in the school. The school's successful health week provides a wide range of

activities and speakers to encourage pupils to develop themselves as healthy individuals and provides good opportunities for pupils to work effectively with others. Resources for PSE are satisfactory and a range of speakers from outside agencies are used effectively to support pupils learning. Improvement in PSE is good since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

115 It was possible to observe only a limited range of physical activities during the inspection week, with none being seen at Key Stage 1, but it was clear from what was seen in games and athletic activities that achievements are good. The very good subject planning shows pupils experience the full range of activities in the physical education curriculum. In addition, there are lunchtime sports clubs and a range of activities including competitive fixtures and other events outside the school. There are now well-established opportunities for pupils to receive accreditation in the subject through the Certificate of Educational Achievement and results confirm the good progress made by pupils.

116 In athletic activities, Key Stage 2 pupils make sound progress in their understanding of various events. As in the other key stages observed, there is a wide range of ability among pupils but all are keen to compete and they persevere well despite their difficulties. In their enthusiasm to take part, some pupils do not listen carefully and occasionally become over-excited, but when reminded by staff they follow instructions and carry out a sequence of actions with improving fluency and control. A number of pupils find it hard to accept defeat and display an immaturity in their attitudes to competition. Both teachers and assistants monitor this behaviour effectively, however, and emphasise and reinforce the importance of rules and co-operation.

117 At the senior sports day which took place during the inspection week, Key Stage 3 pupils showed they had made good progress in these aspects of physical education. They competed sensibly, with clear regard for safety procedures, and showed appreciation of the performance of others. There were examples of very good progress by pupils in several events. In the shot putt for Key Stage 3 girls, for example, and in the boys' javelin competition, technique had clearly developed very well, reflecting the high levels of teachers' knowledge and expertise in the subject. In rounders and softball, Key Stage 3 pupils are making good progress in striking the ball and in fielding skills. The tasks used by staff for the practising of these skills are sometimes set at too low a level but in general the challenge presented by lessons is good and pupils respond well, in short tennis at Key Stage 4, for example.

118 Good management of physical education has ensured that the good standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained. Resources are satisfactory and the subject benefits from a good size sports field and a sports hall that are well used.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

119 Progress and achievements are good in all key stages. During the period of the inspection a limited number of lessons could be observed. However discussions with pupils, teachers and scrutiny of teachers' plans and pupils' work in books and displays, enable judgements about progress and pupils' achievements to be made.

120 Well planned and appropriate topic work enables pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 to make good progress. Themes appropriate to the topic are effectively linked to the Isle of Wight agreed syllabus. Pupils increase their knowledge of stories and festivals from different religions when learning about Buddhism and Christianity. For example, pupils in Year 6 write about how Peter the disciple felt when he let his friend Jesus down, during their work on the Easter story. As they move through the key stages pupils develop an understanding of famous and special people such as Jesus, and during this work discuss feelings and the importance of relationships. Their effective work on Christian crosses from across the world gave older pupils the opportunity to use their artistic and geographical skills. The pupils are very proud that a display of their decorated crosses won a millennium award in the Isle of Wight schools Spring festival for religious education.

121 Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 make good progress in the modules of work they follow. Themes appropriate to the agreed syllabus allow pupils to improve their knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, teaching and lifestyles and encourages them to ask and respond to questions about purpose, values and commitment. Pupils consolidate and develop their knowledge of different religions, learning the different ways of worship and celebration within those religions. For example, Year 10 pupils have some understanding of the Chinese New Year and why it is celebrated. They develop their understanding of beliefs and relationships and discuss the hardship and suffering of people in different parts of the world. This work is well planned to link with other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 9 look at the concept of fair trade and track the payment levels in the banana supply chain from Jamaica to the United Kingdom, comparing the amount of money the grower receives in relation to the shopkeeper. The school has links with refugees in Bosnia who are supported by gifts from the pupils. This ensures that when thinking about others, their beliefs and life styles, it is made more relevant to pupils. Linking to PSE pupils learn about relationships, for example Key Stage 4 pupils make perceptive comments about their own relationships following a lesson supported by two visitors who spoke to them and dramatically illustrated different kinds of relationships.

122 There has been satisfactory improvement in religious education since the last inspection and the present co-ordinators have worked hard to develop a good curriculum. The use of the Isle of Wight agreed syllabus is firmly established and the co-ordinators have improved the planning between key stages. There is insufficient time for Year 7 pupils to cover their course work for the year. Planning, particularly between Key Stages 3 and 4 has been significantly improved and made more relevant to pupils by introducing a social and religious education course. However consideration still needs to be given to enable pupils to visit places of worship for other religions to support the delivery of the programme of study and complement visits to the local church.

123 Teaching of religious education is now never less than good and often very good. In the best lessons seen, learning was very good; pupils were interested and fully involved due to the well planned work organised. This was planned to meet individual needs, and captured their interest through the good use of appropriate resources. Visits and videos such as 'The Parish Church' are used well to add interest and boost pupils' learning.

124 The curriculum is well planned through modules of work linked to the agreed syllabus to enable all pupils to make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of a range of themes. However, the assessment of pupils' progress is not sufficiently developed, particularly at Key Stage 2. Co-ordination of the subject is effective, however opportunities for the subject co-ordinator to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in lessons have yet to be organised. The subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral and cultural development of pupils. Themes appropriately include the importance of relationships, discrimination and prejudice, wealth and poverty, and human rights.

POST 16 EDUCATION

125 The nine students in Post 16 achieve very well. The focus of the learning is appropriately on preparing students for leaving school and all students are extremely well aware of the options available to them. Students are encouraged to work towards external accredited awards such as GCSE Mathematics. While students appropriately work at their own level and specialise in areas that interest them, they all follow a core curriculum of literacy, numeracy, work related learning and key skills development. In general, students oral skills are better developed than their writing skills but nevertheless students make very good progress in all areas during Year 12. For example, they are able to argue their points well in role-plays during the very good speech therapy sessions and can write for a variety of purposes including letters and giving directions. Students develop equally well in their numeracy skills and, for example, work out salary costing for an imaginary business. The links made with work related education in particular, for example running their own catering company, are impressive and contribute substantially to students' knowledge and to their personal development. Students become more independent and confident during the year through the success they achieve in their work and their contact with people outside school.

126 Overall, teaching and learning is very good. Teachers plan stimulating lessons using a variety of activities from role-play to creating their own cartoon video using the computer. The teaching often enables students to show a depth of understanding of, for example, the character of Lennie in the book 'Of Mice and Men' and in the preparation of insightful questions to ask a local businessman during their visit to his bookshop. There are, however, some missed opportunities for higher attaining students to be challenged to work more quickly and to do tasks from memory. Most students, especially those with extra needs, are given good support from both the teacher and classroom assistants who know their requirements precisely and enable them to perform very well. Students' response to lessons is very good. Students respond with great enthusiasm to interesting and practical activities. They delight in preparing food for a weekly Friday lunch club and achieve a great deal during these sessions. They are less enthusiastic when the teaching is not as imaginative and depends on worksheets that emphasise reading and writing skills. Generally students behave very well and teachers have excellent strategies to encourage this, including judicious use of praise. Students concentrate well on completing their work and persevere even if they find it difficult. They are encouraged to work independently as much as possible, for example they have to plan their own visits and outings. With the benefit of checklists students can see exactly how much they have achieved and are aware of how they can improve.

127 The leadership and management of the Post 16 course are very good. Documents are clear and informative and the course provides a flexible programme to meet the needs of the individual students. The course is continually reviewed to improve its effectiveness. The links with the college are very effective in preparing students for what will be the next step for the vast majority of them. These links include a lecturer from the college coming to the school to work jointly with a teacher and the students on the food hygiene course. Assessment of student performance is systematic and regular and helps to identify targets for individual development although this is not formally recorded in a consistent manner.

128 There has been good progress since the last inspection. There has been a significant increase in the number of externally accredited elements of the course and students are particularly well prepared, both academically and personally, for life once they leave school.