

INSPECTION REPORT

SOUTHBROOK SCHOOL

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LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113634

Headteacher: Mrs. Hilary Green

Reporting inspector: Mrs. Sue Aldridge
8810

Dates of inspection: 18th – 22nd June, 2001

Inspection number: 187958

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	9 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bishop Westall Road Exeter
Postcode:	EX2 6JB
Telephone number:	01392 258373
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. Carol Hicks
Date of previous inspection:	April 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8810	Sue Aldridge	<i>Registered inspector</i>	French; Religious education.	The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
14032	Marion Saunders	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development.
21899	Gillian Lawson	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Information and communication technology.	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
19907	Paul Snook	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Design and technology; Music.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
27243	Ian Tatchell	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art; Geography; History.	How well does the school care for its pupils?
10668	David Walker	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Physical education.	Efficiency.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Southbrook is a day, special school which caters for 118 boys and girls, from nine to sixteen, with general learning difficulties. It is situated in Exeter but takes pupils from a wide catchment area, with a radius of 40 miles. All pupils are white, and the numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals is roughly average. All pupils have statements of special educational need. Most pupils have moderate learning difficulties and over a third have emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). There has been an increase in the proportion with EBD in recent years. There are more than twice as many boys as girls. Attainment on entry is low, either because pupils have learning difficulties or because they have missed schooling.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Southbrook is a good school. Pupils achieve well; they have very positive attitudes to school, and behaviour is good. Pupils' personal development is very good, and so are relationships throughout the school community. Teaching is good, with some very good features, and the school is well led and managed. The school educates its pupils for a very low cost and therefore provides very good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Standards of achievement in physical education are very good; pupils achieve well in art, music, history, design and technology, speaking and listening, reading at Key Stage 4, and mathematics at Key Stages 2 and 4.
- Very effective arrangements for monitoring and supporting teaching have resulted in a high proportion of teaching that is good or better.
- Very good arrangements for promoting pupils' social and moral awareness contribute to high standards of personal development.
- Relationships amongst all members of the school community are very good.
- Leadership by the headteacher and governors is very good; staff are committed to school improvement.
- The school makes very effective use of its limited financial resources, and invests well in staff development.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Not all of the oldest pupils have access to the same learning opportunities or to external accreditation.
- Teachers do not plan well enough for pupils of all abilities in science and French; record keeping in music and history has not been developed, and Individual Education Plan (IEP) targets are not always precise enough.
- The accommodation for physical education, design and technology, and food technology restricts learning opportunities; the surface in the playground is breaking up in several places.
- The staff handbook does not contain information about child protection procedures.
- There are too few staff in the school. A few pupils have been admitted whose needs are not well matched to the school's provision. Some statements are inaccurate or have not been amended as recommended at annual reviews. Transition reviews do not follow recommendations. A few of the vehicles used to transport pupils to and from school do not have escorts on them. None of these weaknesses can be addressed by the school on its own.

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

Since the school was inspected in 1995 there has been good improvement overall, and it has been particularly rapid since the present headteacher was appointed. Standards of achievement have been raised, largely as a result of much improved teaching. Assessment arrangements are now better, taught time has been increased, and curriculum planning has been improved. Health and safety issues identified in the previous report have been addressed. Arrangements for the appraisal of teachers have improved. The accommodation is now better suited to secondary pupils, and the school provides a stimulating and pleasant learning environment.

STANDARDS

The table below 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 11	by age 16	Key	
speaking and listening	B	B	<i>very good</i>	<i>A</i>
reading	C	B	<i>good</i>	<i>B</i>
writing	C	C	<i>satisfactory</i>	<i>C</i>
mathematics	B	B	<i>unsatisfactory</i>	<i>D</i>
personal, social and health education	C	C	<i>poor</i>	<i>E</i>
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B		

**Individual education plans*

The school has set targets for raising standards but it is too soon to say whether these will be achieved. Pupils achieve well in most subjects, and particularly well in physical education. However, the most able secondary pupils do not achieve well enough in science or French because their work is not challenging enough, and the least able secondary pupils do not have their achievements in science accredited.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning, and take part in the full range of opportunities provided by the school. They take pride in their work, including tasks they complete for homework.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are well behaved. Despite the high proportion of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, exclusions are low.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are very good. This helps to create a purposeful learning environment.
Attendance	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school.

Pupils show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Through the School Council, pupils experience the personal responsibility of representing the interests of others.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 5-11	aged 11-16
Lessons seen overall	Good	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.

Inspectors saw 74 lessons or parts of lessons. Teaching was excellent in 3 per cent, very good in 26 per cent, good in 38 per cent, satisfactory in 31 per cent, and unsatisfactory in 3 per cent. Teaching is good in English, mathematics and personal, social and health education; it is satisfactory in science, where work is not always well matched to pupils' abilities. Teaching is very good in physical education, and good in art, design and technology, information and communication technology, history and music. It is satisfactory in all other subjects.

There are many good opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills in subjects other than English. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to read and write in other subjects, but too few for the use of their numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics. Overall, the individual needs of pupils are met in a satisfactory manner. Although pupils are involved well in reviewing their behaviour at the ends of lessons, not all teachers involve them in reviewing their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. A good range of learning opportunities is planned, but some of the oldest pupils miss parts of some subjects when they take part in work-related activities off the school site.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school has very good arrangements to develop pupils' social and moral awareness, and good arrangements to promote pupils' cultural development. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory; the school does not take advantage of opportunities for collective worship. Preparation for life in multicultural Britain is underdeveloped.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Arrangements for encouraging personal development and attendance are very good, and a careful check is kept on them. There are good systems for improving pupils' behaviour, and pastoral care and support are good. A few weaknesses in recording remain, and arrangements for checking pupils' academic progress are satisfactory.

The school works effectively with parents to support pupils' learning, and information provided for parents is good. Extra-curricular activities and provision for personal, social and health education are good. There are constructive links with the community, and these enrich the curriculum. There is good provision for careers education and work experience.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The headteacher provides very strong leadership. The senior management team contribute very well to the smooth running of the school, but not all members lead well in their areas of responsibility. Subject co-ordinators are committed and hard working; most lead their subjects well.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Governors provide very strong leadership and are a skilled and supportive group. They keep the school's work under close review and have a thorough knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Parents' views are sought regularly and the school has established a programme of self-evaluation which involves all staff and governors.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school uses its very limited resources effectively to raise standards and improve provision.

There are too few staff, and in this the school compares most unfavourably with similar schools nationally. This affects standards and the school's capacity to improve.

There is good application of the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Parents are comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. • The school expects pupils to work hard and do their best. • The teaching is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework pupils are given. • Behaviour in the school.

Inspectors support parents' positive views of the school. They find that arrangements for homework are good; there is a clear policy that is implemented well. A homework club is provided two afternoons each week. Taking account of the fact that a third of the pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties, inspectors judge behaviour to be good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils achieve well overall. Standards of achievement are very good in physical education, and good in art and design, design and technology, history, music, speaking and listening, and reading at Key Stage 4. Standards of achievement in mathematics are good at Key Stages 2 and 4. In all other subjects, standards of achievement are satisfactory. There has been a good improvement in standards since the last inspection, largely as a result of improvements in curriculum planning, the accommodation, and the quality of teaching. Weaknesses in the curriculum at Key Stage 4 contribute to lower standards at this key stage in some subjects.

2. Although the school has set whole school targets for raising standards in literacy and numeracy, it is too early to judge progress towards these.

3. In English, standards of achievement are satisfactory overall; they are satisfactory at Key Stages 2 and 3, and good at Key Stage 4. Better standards in English at Key Stage 4 are associated with the quality of teaching, and with the provision of external accreditation, which pupils find challenging and motivating. The literacy strategy is having a positive impact on standards of reading and writing across the school, though it is at an early stage of development. Literacy skills are reinforced well in subjects other than English.

4. Good standards in speaking and listening are associated with a strong emphasis on oral work across the curriculum. For example, in a religious education lesson, pupils were encouraged to look at whoever was talking, and to answer questions in whole sentences. In all classes, pupils are encouraged to put up their hands when they have something to say, and to listen to others' contributions. When they enter the school, many pupils lack confidence in speaking, but by the time they are 11 most speak clearly and listen carefully to what others have to say. By 14, pupils are able to explain their reasons for choices, and higher attainers show a good awareness of audience, for example when they use persuasive language to advertise a place worth visiting. By 16, pupils are able to develop an argument and state clearly the reasons for an opinion. Higher attainers are mature and confident communicators, but lower attainers do not find it easy to initiate conversation, for example with their colleagues on work experience.

5. Standards of achievement in reading are satisfactory at Key Stages 2 and 3, and good at Key Stage 4. Reading skills are promoted well by carefully planned and structured teaching. Pupils have positive attitudes to reading, and are particularly enthusiastic about poetry and rhyming verse. Well established routines and attractive resources encourage all pupils to read and enjoy books. By the time they are 11, lower attaining pupils read familiar words and have some strategies to help them read unfamiliar ones; higher attainers read simple texts with expression, taking note of punctuation. When they reach 14, all pupils are confident in using books to find information, and higher attaining pupils can retell the plot of a story, and

recall details about the characters. As they approach 16, pupils read a wide range of texts, including Shakespeare plays, showing a good understanding of characters and plot. Lower attainers are still developing their accuracy and fluency and need support to read more complex texts, though they continue to appreciate these.

6. In writing, standards of achievement are satisfactory across the school. By 11, lower attaining pupils are still copy writing, or over-writing, and refining their letter formation. They need support to write sentences, although higher attainers do this independently, using suitable punctuation and generally accurate spelling. When they reach 14, pupils have experienced writing for a range of different purposes, including creative pieces, diaries and job descriptions. Lower attainers write short phrases and sentences independently, whereas higher attainers can produce sustained, accurate writing, with suitable punctuation, including speech marks. By 16, pupils all use word processing well to present their work neatly. Lower attainers need support to write at length, but higher attainers draft and redraft their work, and write for a variety of audiences. Work is usually correctly punctuated, but some pupils need help to identify errors, such as mixed tenses.

7. In mathematics, standards of achievement are good overall. They are good at Key Stages 2 and 4, and satisfactory at Key Stage 3, where staffing difficulties make it necessary for more than one teacher to teach one of the classes for different lessons during the week. In general, standards are promoted well by the quality of teaching, particularly in the use of methods from the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS). However, there is room for improvement in the use of numeracy skills in other subjects. By 11, all pupils know their number bonds to 10; higher attainers have a secure understanding of numbers to 100, and know the place value of tens and units. They recognise simple two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. By 14, lower attaining pupils understand simple fractions but still need unifix cubes to help them add numbers to 10. Higher attainers understand positive and negative numbers and are beginning to work in decimals; they understand the principle of symmetry, and use tally charts and bar graphs. Higher attaining pupils at 16 are preparing to enter General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations in mathematics, or the Certificate of Achievement; lower attaining pupils are preparing for the Associated Examinations Board (AEB) Numeracy Skills Certificate.

8. Standards of achievement in science are satisfactory overall. They are best at Key Stage 2, where careful planning ensures that the work pupils are given is well matched to their levels of ability. At Key Stages 3 and 4, a few higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged, and lower attaining pupils are not given the opportunity to gain external accreditation for their achievements.

9. In physical education (PE), standards of achievement are very good, and the subject is a strength of the school. Pupils are given a wide range of suitable learning opportunities, including occasions when they can compete with pupils from other schools. Teaching is very good, and pupils are well motivated and keen to improve their performance.

10. Standards of achievement are good in art and design, design and technology, history, and music. High standards in art and design are associated with improvements in planning and good teaching. A broader range of learning opportunities has been made possible by improvement in the accommodation for the subject. In design and technology, high standards are linked to better planning and assessment. These promote high standards at Key Stages 2 and 3. At Key Stage 4 a broad range of experiences is planned, but not all pupils have access to the full range, as they miss sessions when they engage in work-related activities off the

school site. In history, standards are good at Key Stages 2 and 3, and satisfactory at Key Stage 4, where the subject forms part of a humanities course, with the result that pupils do not study it in depth. High standards in music are linked to a very broad range of experiences, including extra-curricular clubs, visiting performers and opportunities for pupils to perform themselves. Planning for the subject has improved, and good teaching, by a music specialist, shows high expectations of the pupils, who respond well.

11. Standards in information and communication technology are satisfactory. Although teaching of the subject is good, the school has only recently acquired specialist resources for the subject. Pupils are making rapid progress, but they are doing so from a low baseline. In French, standards of achievement are satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils are not given challenging enough tasks, and pupils in Year 7 do not read or write in French until the summer term. This slows their progress. In religious education, standards of achievement are satisfactory; not all pupils at Key Stage 4 have access to the broad range of experiences planned. Standards of achievement in geography are satisfactory overall; they are good at Key Stage 2, where the teaching is best, and satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4.

12. All pupils have targets in their individual education plans for personal, social and health education (PSHE), and some have additional targets for improving their behaviour. It is not always possible to judge whether targets are met or not, because they are not always precise enough. When targets are precise, pupils make satisfactory progress towards their PSHE targets and good progress towards behaviour targets. Progress towards behaviour targets is better because pupils have the benefit of reviewing their behaviour in every lesson. In the planned programme of personal, social and health education, pupils achieve well in acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding. Teaching is good; planning is being enhanced, and assessment is good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' personal development, their attitudes toward their learning, and the quality of relationships are a strength of the school. They promote high standards of achievement.

14. Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning. Most parents said that their children like coming to school. Pupils are keen to learn and enthusiastic in their attempts to achieve the set tasks. For example, during a Year 7 (PE lesson, pupils' determination to succeed enabled them to master the technique of the triple jump. They take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities both during the school day and after school, and make good use of the rich variety of school outings and residential trips. These include a school journey to London, to Manchester United football club, and to France. Pupils are pleased and proud to show their work to visitors, and they often take care in presenting it well. During a religious education lesson, pupils enthusiastically recounted what progress they had made in their homework task, which involved them in finding out information from library books and the Internet.

15. Pupils' enthusiasm towards their work contributes to the good standard of behaviour seen in most lessons. Pupils respond well to the new system of behaviour monitoring, and play a willing part in the discussions about the allocation of points at the end of each lesson. Many pupils show a high level of awareness of their behaviour during this process. An example of very good behaviour was seen in a Year 9 design and technology lesson, where health and safety requirements were met and the teacher had very clear expectations of behaviour.

16. In the playground and around the school behaviour is mainly good; incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with promptly by staff. Pupils are polite and friendly, and appreciate the school buildings and grounds as a pleasant environment in which to work and play. When exclusions are necessary, they are dealt with appropriately and only after significant efforts to try to keep pupils in school. When account is taken of the high proportion of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, exclusions are low.

17. The very good quality of relationships, throughout the school, makes a major contribution to the quality of learning for all pupils and their attitude towards school. Pupils trust staff and respond well to the school's provision for their personal development. Pupils are involved at the end of most lessons in evaluating their achievements, and in many cases in identifying what they need to do to improve further. They are very supportive of one another and frequently compliment each other on their achievements. They are also willing to offer support and advice. Pupils are developing an understanding of differing beliefs and values. For example, in a Year 10 class, pupils learnt about the symbols of Hindu worship, and they showed interest and respect for the beliefs and customs of Hindus. Through the School Council, pupils have been able to influence the provision; for example, it was the pupils' idea to have a five-a-side football pitch in the grounds.

18. Pupils take part in assemblies and organise equipment for use at break times and lunchtime. Older pupils benefit greatly from the high quality work experience placements, and have the confidence to travel independently to and from their workplaces and play a full part there. Boys and girls work well together and there are no groups of pupils excluded from the full life of the school.

19. Attendance is good. The level of unauthorised absence is well below that for similar schools. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and reporting attendance and involves the education welfare officer if necessary. Punctuality during the day is good, and most lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20. Teaching is good overall. Altogether, inspectors saw 74 lessons or parts of lessons. Teaching and learning were excellent in two (3 per cent), very good in nineteen (26 per cent), good in twenty eight (38 per cent), satisfactory in twenty three (31 per cent), and unsatisfactory in two (3 per cent).

21. Teaching and learning are very good in PE, and good in English, mathematics, art and design, design and technology (DT), information and communication technology (ICT), history, music, and personal, social and health education. In science, French, geography and religious education (RE) teaching and learning are satisfactory.

22. In all subjects, there are good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, and satisfactory opportunities for them to read and write. However, there are too few opportunities to reinforce numeracy skills, though the need for these is identified on the school's form for planning lessons.

23. Teachers are particularly skilled at selecting methods which interest and enthuse pupils. For example, a successful geography lesson involved pupils in role playing, which brought the topic to life. In French, good use is made of games, and there are frequent changes of activity. Pupils' interest is thus maintained, even though they are practising the same vocabulary over and over again. The teaching also encourages pupils to use strategies to help themselves to recall language. Pupils maintain their own French dictionaries, and use these help them to spell accurately. Following the teacher's example, they make up their own ways of remembering new vocabulary; one pupil noted the similarity of the French word *campagne*, to the English word camping, and used this to help him remember that *campagne* means countryside. In mathematics, teachers make good use of mental sessions at the start of lessons, to increase pupils' mental agility. In one maths lesson, very effective use was made of food, namely semi-circular cakes, to give the pupils practical experience of the division of a whole into halves and quarters. This secured the pupils' interest, and the practical activity kept them involved; the lesson concluded with the consumption of the cake! In art, the work of other artists was used to inspire pupils in the use of colour and paint. A visit to a football ground, where pupils took digital photographs, helped to give them ideas for designing printing patterns in design and technology.

24. In general, teachers have a good understanding of their subject, even where they are not subject specialists. Subject expertise is particularly good in English at Key Stage 4, art and design, design and technology, music, and physical education. For example, older pupils benefit from the teacher's subject expertise in English when they are supported in extending their writing, and they are well motivated by the increased opportunities to achieve external accreditation. In art, pupils are helped to improve their work through discussion, and they make effective use of sketch books to develop their work. In design and technology (DT), an increased emphasis on design has helped pupils to progress in this difficult skill. In music, there is good use of subject-specific language, which is explained well. In physical education, there is a very good range of learning opportunities, skilful demonstration, good relationships, and effective management of pupils. The result is that pupils are challenged physically, are well motivated, want to improve their skills, and know how to set about doing this. They work hard throughout lessons, and make clear improvements in skills.

25. Teachers have a sound understanding of how best to teach pupils with learning difficulties. However, there are some weaknesses in the way teachers plan their lessons for pupils of different abilities, particularly in science and French. Occasionally, tasks are too difficult, with the result that lower attainers can achieve little; they then become frustrated and their behaviour deteriorates. On other occasions, higher attainers, who could reach more challenging objectives, too easily complete their tasks. Teachers are good at sharing with pupils the objective for the lesson. In the best practice, lesson objectives are different for pupils of different abilities, and these are reviewed at the end of the lesson, so that pupils are clear about what they have learned. This practice is emerging in design and technology, ICT,

and English at Key Stage 2, and it works well. Teachers also successfully plan their lessons so that different groups of pupils do slightly different tasks, with varying degrees of support. This was seen in a religious education (RE) lesson, where a group of higher attaining pupils were working as a group to write about the Ark found in a synagogue. These pupils helped one another, with spellings and sentence construction, and sought the teacher's help only occasionally, thus learning from one another. The other two groups were well supported by adults.

26. In response to the changing pupil intake, some staff have revised schemes of work to include more challenging material, or material more suited to the needs of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Expectations have been raised in English, art and design, design and technology, and in religious education. The planned programme of personal, social and health education is being revised to better meet the needs of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD).

27. Staff generally manage pupils well. The very good relationships between staff and pupils make a strong contribution to learning. There is a consistent whole school approach to encouraging pupils to behave well in class. Teachers review behaviour at the end of each session, and award a maximum of six points to each pupil. Pupils and support staff are usually involved well in this, and pupils are extremely honest and objective when it comes to their assessment of their own behaviour. They certainly have the capacity to evaluate their own learning. Teachers do not always leave sufficient time for the review of behaviour, though, and points are occasionally awarded without negotiation. In a few instances, staff did not manage pupils well. In a small number of lessons, teachers' response to pupils was inconsistent, so a suitable climate for learning was not achieved.

28. Support staff make an important contribution to teaching and learning. They give well-judged support, encouraging pupils to do what they can on their own but intervening to give help before frustration causes pupils to lose their interest and motivation. All staff know pupils well, and are quick to respond to signs that individuals are losing concentration or motivation. In parts of lessons where discussions take place, support staff often record pupils' contributions, leaving teachers free to question pupils, encourage discussion and deepen understanding. Detailed records of pupils' speaking skills, and of their knowledge and understanding, are built up in this way.

29. Teachers use a good variety of resources to help pupils develop their knowledge and understanding. Illustrated timelines help to extend pupils' understanding of chronology in history. Videos are used well in geography, and artefacts in RE. A particularly good range of artefacts sparked pupils' interest in a lesson on Hindu worship. Pupils were curious; they asked questions, and showed respect for Hindu beliefs. There is increasing use of the Internet and CD ROMs, to enable pupils to find information themselves. They particularly enjoy this method of learning. However, at present, there is too little use of ICT as a learning tool across the curriculum.

30. A good variety of methods is used for assessing pupils' learning, and most teachers keep good records, which they use well to inform the planning of subsequent lessons. However, there is a need to develop records in music and history.

31. Teachers use homework effectively to extend pupils' learning or provide reinforcement. There is a suitable homework policy, which is monitored well, and teachers act on the feedback they are given. For example, staff noticed that homework was not always written

into pupils' planners, and this became a focus for improvement. Planners are now completed well. Pupils are given homework regularly in English and mathematics, and they also take other tasks to complete at home too. They are enthusiastic about their work and are keen to show it to the teachers, as was seen in a religious education lesson, where pupils had been given a research task. One pupil reported that he had used library books and the Internet to find information. For pupils who find it difficult to work at home, there is always the opportunity to complete tasks at the school's extra curricular homework club, which is held on two afternoons each week.

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

32. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is good at Key Stages 2 and 3, and satisfactory at Key Stage 4. At Key Stages 2 and 3, the curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant; it is enriched well by extra-curricular activities. At Key Stage 4, an attempt to retain a broad curriculum has resulted in overcrowding of the timetable, and not all pupils receive their entitlement.

33. The breadth, balance and quality of the curriculum have improved since the last inspection, when learning opportunities in design and technology, history, geography and ICT were weak. These have now been successfully addressed. Learning opportunities in history and design and technology are now good, and in geography they are satisfactory. The discrete curriculum for ICT is good. All subjects are supported by useful curriculum policies, which have been ratified by the governing body. Schemes of work are now in place for all subjects. The planned curriculum at Key Stage 4 is broad, but not all pupils have access to all subjects, as some miss parts of these when they are engaged in work-related learning off the school site. Accreditation is not available for all pupils in all subjects.

34. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully introduced for pupils between the ages of nine and eleven, and their use with pupils between 11 and 14 is proving to be beneficial. The development of literacy across the curriculum is good, with all teachers providing opportunities for pupils to speak and listen, read, and write. Numeracy is not yet effectively planned for across the curriculum, although this is a formally recognised objective in the subject action plan.

35. The school is developing a range of accreditation for the pupils at the end of Key Stage 4. This includes Certificate of Educational Achievement (CoEA) and the opportunity to take a General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) in English. A very small number of pupils follows examination courses in a mainstream school, leading to GCSE in maths and English. Accreditation has now been introduced in all subjects offered to Key Stage 4 pupils, with the exception of humanities. Pupils also have access to accreditation through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN). This has links to a number of subjects in the Key Stage 4 curriculum and does much to support the personal development of the pupils. However, there are too few opportunities for lower attaining pupils to have their achievements recognised externally. This is particularly evident in science, where a whole class has not been entered. There is no clear options system in place at Key Stage 4. This results in subjects having to compete for teaching time with the college link courses, the community service programme, and the work experience programme offered to pupils throughout Key Stage 4. As a result, Year 11 pupils have not all been able to follow and complete accredited courses in science and design and technology, and some pupils miss some religious education lessons.

The school has identified the need to extend the range of GCSEs being offered to accommodate the more able pupils now being admitted throughout the age range.

36. The length of the school day was identified as being unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. Taught time has now been increased in line with recommendations. The curriculum now meets requirements. A number of subjects are not offered at Key Stage 4, or they take the form of a short course. This allows pupils to follow an extensive careers programme, community service, work experience and college placements in Year 11; it adds relevance to the curriculum for older pupils.

37. Provision for pupils with additional needs is satisfactory. In most cases, pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are accommodated well. Where additional needs are identified on statements, satisfactory provision is made. For example, support for anger management is provided through visits to the school by an occupational therapist for one hour each week. The school's educational psychologist is currently working with staff to consider how best to organise and manage the increasing number of children with emotional and behavioural difficulties who will be in Year 8 in September.

38. The provision of physiotherapy by the Health Authority is currently under review. The school plans to include pupils' individual physiotherapy programmes into the taught curriculum, in line with the approach now being successfully developed with the speech and language therapist. Some statements are inaccurate, and some are not amended as recommended in annual review reports. The local education authority is not represented at transition reviews, and this has resulted in lengthy delays in securing suitable post-school placement.

39. The school has recently introduced an alternative curriculum for a very small number of pupils who otherwise might not have received schooling, owing to behavioural and attendance difficulties. This is supported by funding from the Department of Education and Skills (DfES) and is used to provide accreditation for these pupils through the introduction of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ). Every effort is made to ensure that the small number of girls in the school is not marginalised in lessons. All pupils have the opportunity to undertake the full range of sporting activities taught in PE and are able to represent the school in sporting activities as members of mixed teams.

40. The programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good. The school nurse is actively involved in teaching the programme in partnership with teaching staff. All pupils have a Personal and Social Profile, which serves as a record of their achievements and supports the National Record of Achievement well. Year 10 pupils are given the opportunity to undertake a community service placement. The work-related programme is well developed, and prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. Work experience is offered to all pupils for one day each week in Year 11, culminating in a one week placement in the summer term. Placements are well planned to ensure that pupils' individual needs are met. A range of placements is offered over the year, to enable pupils to try different types of employment. Year 11 pupils also attend local colleges in the spring term as part of a phased introduction to pre foundation courses.

41. The careers programme is very comprehensive, and forms part of the PSHE programme from Year 6 to Year 9. In Key Stage 4, pupils have access to a very good programme that is closely linked to the work-related programme and college link courses. The college link enables pupils to experience a different environment in a supportive way and take advantage of

a wide range of vocational opportunities. In Year 11, pupils regularly meet the careers officer, and their parents and carers are given the opportunity to meet with the officer and school staff termly. The success of these programmes last year was such that four pupils gained full time employment with work experience employers and 24 took up college placements or further training.

42. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good, and is proving effective in supporting children's learning and developing their confidence and self-esteem through a diverse range of opportunities. The school has good sporting links with other schools and has recently been recognised by the Football Association as a Charter School. Opportunities exist at lunchtime for pupils to join in activities. An after school club is also available; this is targeted at pupils who find it difficult to attend regularly or have difficulties when in school. An off site youth club is available to pupils in the evening; this is well attended by past and present pupils and is staffed by the school and the youth service.

43. A range of residential opportunities is available to all pupils. These include Burston Manor for younger pupils, trips to London, a visit to Manchester United football ground, and a trip to France for pupils in Year 10. Links are also in place to support the school's curriculum; these include visits to the local church by the Key Stage 2 pupils and visits by a local farmer to the school as a part of a healthy eating food technology project by Year 7 pupils.

44. The school has constructive partnerships with other educational institutions. Links with other schools provide a range of full and part time re-integration opportunities for both social and academic purposes. This year, seven pupils have been re-integrated into mainstream provision, and one Year 11 pupil is completing GCSE in maths and English as a result of a part time placement. This reflects the headteacher's vision for the school.

45. The school's provision for pupils' social and moral development is strong. Provision for pupils' personal development is good. The very good relationships contribute well to the equally good provision for social and moral development. The recently introduced points system encourages pupils to evaluate their own behaviour and achievements and in many cases the successes of their peers. When this process is given enough time at the end of the lesson, there is a significant contribution to pupils' willingness and ability to consider both their own actions and those of others.

46. Activities such as the youth club within the local community and the high quality work experience placements also make a significant contribution to pupils' growing maturity as they prepare to leave school. This is enhanced through the wide range of visits arranged by the school and in particular the residential trips, which promote pupils' independence.

47. Throughout the school day, pupils are encouraged to be aware of the needs of others, both in the playground and in the classroom. There are very good opportunities for pupils to work together in pairs, as seen during an English lesson with a Year 10 class. Younger pupils are also given challenging tasks which involve them working together; this was seen in a geography lesson, where pupils role-played the various interested parties involved in the process of obtaining planning permission for a seaside hotel. This gave pupils a very good opportunity to try and understand the differing needs and viewpoints of others.

48. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good overall. Pupils have many opportunities to consider their own culture through local visits, music, geography and history.

Opportunities are taken in class discussions to relate issues to the differing backgrounds of individual pupils' e.g. from fishing or farming communities. There is also a good range of extra-curricular activities in both sport and music for pupils of all ages. Pupils have the opportunity to explore other world cultures through their lessons. For example, pupils encounter Aboriginal art, and mosaics in the style of *Gaudi*, and a Year 8 class listened to and practised the rhythms of folk music from around the world. Religious education (RE) makes a strong contribution to pupils' cultural and multicultural awareness, but there are few opportunities in other subjects for pupils to consider their place within a multi-cultural Britain.

49. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory, though this is not planned for within the curriculum. In assemblies, RE, and personal, social and health education (PSHE), pupils are given opportunities to reflect upon their own lives and the lives of others. In a Year 8 RE lesson, pupils reflected upon the interdependency within the natural world and between human beings, identifying the people they depend upon. During a music lesson, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils responded very well to the use of a soundtrack of the seaside. The school has three whole school assemblies each week, with one of these planned as an act of collective worship. Greater use could be made of these whole school opportunities to plan for and enhance pupils' spiritual development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

50. Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are generally satisfactory. The school has appointed a child protection officer, who is well aware of her duties. Staff are aware of their responsibilities, which they take seriously. However, procedures are not always fully understood, and there is a need for ongoing refresher training in child protection, particularly for new staff. The staff handbook does not contain information on child protection procedures, and written information is not provided for volunteers. The school has an adequate number of first aiders, all of whom have received the relevant training. There are effective procedures for the testing of fire alarms and holding fire drills. Accidents and incidents are currently recorded appropriately. Pupils receive guidance on how to take care of themselves, and this is incorporated in personal and social education. There is effective liaison with other professionals to enable pupils to receive the support and help they need.

51. The school has adopted a formal health and safety policy, including routine risk assessment for relevant activities such as residential trips. Health and safety concerns identified at the last inspection, relating to design and technology, have been rectified. However, there are concerns regarding the health and safety of pupils whilst they are being transported to and from the school. For example, during the inspection week one group of pupils arrived without the support and supervision of an escort. Information on transport shows that there are four vehicles without escorts at all. The pupils on these are all 15 or 16. Suitable checks have been carried out on drivers, and risk assessments conducted by the local education authority. Informal monitoring takes place, but this should be formalised.

52. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. They are clearly set out and maintain the high standards reported at the last inspection. Some pupils have individual behaviour plans. These support improved standards and are particularly effective in classes where they are supplemented by achievable short term targets which are shared with pupils. The school's system of awards covers all areas of school life ensuring that achievements are acknowledged. Where behaviour patterns change or cause concern, this is monitored effectively by staff and shared with parents, whose views are valued.

53. The school has suitable procedures for dealing with exclusions, involving governors where necessary. When pupils return after exclusion they are carefully monitored and receive good support that usually results in improved behaviour.

54. Procedures for promoting and monitoring attendance are very good and the school swiftly intervenes if there is concern over a pupil's attendance.

55. The school has suitable procedures to deal with the few instances of bullying that occur. All members of staff have received training in behaviour management in response to the school's growing number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Lessons observed were rarely disrupted.

56. The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' progress and levels of achievement. Staff have worked hard since the last inspection to ensure that records provide the necessary detail for the pupil concerned and their parents.

57. The assessment co-ordinator is developing these procedures in conjunction with curriculum co-ordinators to establish a coherent whole school approach. Policy documents are clear and informative. The school offers a good and developing range of accreditation and external moderation for Key Stage 4 pupils. Arrangements for annual reviews are satisfactory. However, pupils' statements are not always updated as a result of annual reviews, and some statements have inaccurate information in them. The fact that the local education authority (LEA) does not attend transition reviews has led to some delays in finalising placements for those approaching the time when they will leave school.

58. There are satisfactory arrangements in place for pupils' individual education plans, and these include targets in English, maths and personal and social education and, where relevant, behaviour. However, the effectiveness of this format is reduced because targets are not always specific and measurable, or linked clearly to targets agreed at the pupils' annual review.

59. The application of these procedures for assessment varies between subjects. Good practice is evident in English, mathematics, art, geography, physical education and French, but elsewhere provision is still developing. For example, in history, music and design and technology, recently appointed co-ordinators are working hard to produce assessment strategies to identify and record what pupils can do, enabling teachers to plan subsequent lessons.

60. The marking of pupils' work is carried out satisfactorily in most areas of the school. It is particularly good in English, art and history, giving pupils a good indication of what they have achieved and how they can do better. Pupils' annual reports are detailed, and contain all the required information.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

61. Parents are supportive of the school and find the school approachable should there be problems. A number of parents were not happy with the amount of homework set but the inspectors found good use of homework, well recorded in the pupils' planners, which serve as homework diaries. These are also well used by the school to keep parents informed of day-to-day occurrences and to praise good work. Parents' views of the school are generally good and parental involvement makes a sound contribution to their child's progress.

62. The school has effective links with parents, which support the work of the school. A high percentage of parents attend their child's annual review and those that do not are sent copies of the review. The school provides a formal opportunity each term for parents to meet with staff to discuss their child's progress. Annual reports to parents are well written, informative and give clear targets which will enable pupils to progress. Parental support has been effectively used to support pupils at risk of exclusion. Parents have also helped with school residential journeys.

63. The school has a coffee morning for parents and pupils each half term, and regular whole school events at Christmas and Harvest Festival, which are well attended by parents. There is a termly newsletter and an informative prospectus and annual report to parents from governors.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

64. Leadership by the headteacher and governors is very good; it has ensured good school improvement despite considerable difficulties in the continuity of staffing, a falling roll, and a significant change in the nature of pupils admitted to the school. Much of the improvement has been effected since the headteacher was appointed as acting headteacher, less than two years ago, when the substantive headteacher was on sick leave. As acting headteacher, she faced a difficult period when several members of staff had to be made redundant as the school's roll was falling. During this time, the governors, particularly the chair, provided very effective support.

65. The headteacher has a very clear vision of how the school might develop in the future, playing its part in increased inclusion of pupils in mainstream schools. Although the school's future role is not entirely clear, as the local education authority is undertaking a review, the headteacher's leadership has ensured that the school has responded as well as it can to the needs of its changing population. Investment in staff skills, and rigorous monitoring and support for teachers, has helped to secure improvement in standards, and ensured that most pupils' needs are met well. However, a small number of pupils have been admitted whose needs are not met well matched to the provision, and despite the school's efforts, placements have subsequently broken down. The school does not have an admissions policy to guide governors in their consultations with the local education authority (LEA).

66. The governors are a skilled, supportive and proactive group. They are fully involved in the school's developing self-evaluation programme, and in planning for further development. They review the school's work in a number of ways, including taking regular reports from the headteacher and subject managers, and a programme of probing visits to the school. Visits have a clear focus, are reported in writing to full meetings of the governing body, and they add to its thorough awareness of the school's strengths and areas for development. Weaknesses identified are followed up, acted upon, and revisited at a later date. For example, the quality of school dinners has been subject to scrutiny, and improvement later noted.

67. The headteacher is well supported by members of the senior management team, and as a result of their hard work the school runs smoothly. The team is also effective in supporting and bringing about change. All members have suitable delegated responsibilities. However, not all members of the team are sufficiently involved in monitoring and evaluating the school's work, or contributing ideas for future development. For example, the deputy headteacher is responsible for co-ordinating the school's curriculum but does not carry out monitoring of the curriculum; this is performed by the headteacher. Weaknesses in leadership of the curriculum at Key Stage 4 have resulted in a curriculum that is overcrowded, so that some pupils miss parts of subjects when they are on work related courses off the school site.

68. There are too few staff in the school. When compared with those of similar schools nationally, numbers of teaching and support staff are very low. At present, the school's budget does not allow for staffing increases. Additional funding is expected to be available to appoint another teacher and member of support staff for the coming academic year, but this will still not bring staffing levels in line with those of similar schools nationally. Low staffing levels have an impact on standards and on the amount of development that subject managers are able to carry out. However, there is a strong shared commitment to school improvement; staff are keen, hard working and receptive to ideas for improvement. Staff morale is good.

69. In response to its admission of mainly secondary pupils, the school has gone to great lengths to appoint teachers who are subject specialists. It has also put into practice a rolling programme of training for subject areas, and successfully increased staff skills in teaching and managing pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

70. Monitoring of teaching is very well developed and has been effective in significantly improving the quality of teaching since the last inspection. There is a timetable of monitoring of lessons, written feedback is given to staff, and objectives are set. There is a clear link between monitoring of teaching and whole school development; the proforma used for lesson observations is designed to allow identification of action points to be addressed by subject managers, the senior management team or for discussion in staff meetings. As a result, there is whole school involvement in supporting the improvement of teaching. The school's arrangements for performance management are well developed.

71. There is a sound programme for the induction of all adults new to the school, with senior staff as mentors and a carefully planned rolling programme of training, over two years, for newly qualified teachers. The programme of staff development addresses all levels of

management. Care is also taken to fully involve support assistants in all staff training. Some support staff have significant responsibilities, such as running homework sessions; one assistant supports the maintenance of the school's ICT network, and has provided much valued help during the time of recent changes in the ICT provision.

72. There has been considerable investment in decorating and carpeting the classrooms and refurbishing several areas, and this has made the accommodation attractive and welcoming. This is further enhanced by exciting and relevant classroom displays, and a high standard of cleanliness. A recently completed new science laboratory, computer suite and redesigned art room, with new housing for the kiln, have considerably improved the accommodation, and extended its suitability for teaching secondary aged pupils. This has had a positive impact on standards.

73. In the interests of safety there has been a heavy investment in strengthening one wall in the hall and paving some of the playground. While the school accommodation is generally satisfactory, there are areas that still need attention. The food technology and design and technology areas are in need of refurbishment. The soft tarmac in the main playground is breaking up and needs replacing. The hall is too small for older pupils to use for PE and is also used for lunches and assemblies and some storage. This has an impact on the curriculum in PE.

74. Resources are generally satisfactory. They are good in ICT, which now has a new suite of 15 new workstations and one new personal computer (PC) in each classroom. All 23 new PCs are networked. Resources are very good in art, and the art curriculum has now been extended to include ceramics. There are sufficient textbooks and materials for teaching all subjects. Priorities set in the school development plan determine whether requests from subject co-ordinators for additional resources are approved. The school library has an adequate range of fiction material, but the non-fiction range is limited.

75. The cost of educating pupils at Southbrook is low when compared with that of schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties nationally. In light of the fact that roughly a third of pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties, it is clear that the school makes very effective use of its limited budget.

76. The school improvement plan is detailed and contains suitable priorities and costings. It is prepared after wide consultation and reflects national priorities as well as areas the school has identified as needing further improvement. Responsibilities are given to identified personnel and the headteacher, senior management team and governors monitor the implementation of the plan. It is well costed. All financial planning procedures involve the governing body as well as the senior and middle managers, and the school makes good use of external advisers. The objectives of the school development plan and related budgets are closely monitored, and comprehensive reports are provided for the governing body. Specific grants are allocated for their intended purposes and are used well to support school improvement. The principles of best value are rigorously applied to the use of resources and services purchased, so that value for money is obtained from all expenditure.

77. Administration and financial management are very good, and a recent audit confirms high quality practice. The use made of new technology is good overall, and there is very good use of computers in the financial management and administration of the school. Monthly budget reports are presented to the governors, and new software, which will help monitor pupils' attainment and progress, is being used well.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

78. The headteacher, staff and governors should:

- Improve leadership of the curriculum, especially at Key Stage 4, to ensure that:
(Paragraphs 35, 67)
 - * all pupils have equal access to subject areas offered at Key Stage 4;
 - * accreditation is provided, in all subjects, for pupils of all abilities at Key Stage 4**.

- Improve teaching to ensure that:
(Paragraphs 25, 30, 58)
 - * pupils of all abilities are set work at a suitable level in science and French;
 - * teachers keep records of pupils' achievements in music and history**;
 - * all targets in pupils' IEPs are specific and measurable.

- Improve arrangements for child protection to ensure that:
(Paragraph 50)
 - * information on child protection is included in the staff handbook;
 - * child protection forms part of the induction process for all staff and volunteers.

- Improve (a) the accommodation for the teaching of physical education, design and technology, food technology, and (b) the surface in the playground **
(Paragraph 73)

- Liaise with the local education authority (LEA) to ensure that:
(Paragraphs 51, 57, 65, 68)
 - * staffing is increased so that it compares more favourably with similar schools nationally;
 - * pupils are not admitted to the school unless this is consistent with the school's admission policy;
 - * statements are accurate, and are amended when the need to do so is identified at annual review;
 - * action points identified at Transition Reviews are addressed;
 - * arrangements are carefully monitored in those cases where pupils are on school transport without escorts.

** This forms part of the school's development plan

79. Governors should consider including the following minor points in the action plan:

- * increasing the opportunities for collective worship;
- * further developing the pupils' awareness of life in multicultural Britain.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	74
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2.7	25.6	37.8	31.1	2.7	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y5 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	118
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	32

Special educational needs	Y5 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	118
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	118

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	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.2
National comparative data	N/A

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	N/A

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

Attainment

Key Stage 2

No pupils were entered for National Tests in Summer 2001.

Key Stage 3

Less than 10 pupils were entered for National Tests in mathematics, so results are not reported here.

Science Tests Summer 2001 eleven pupils entered: seven achieved Level 3; four achieved Level 4.

Key Stage 4

Certificate of Educational Achievement	Percentage achieving	Number of pupils	Number entered
Mathematics	0	0	19
Distinction	32	6	0
Merit	47	9	0
Pass	21	4	0
English	0	0	15
Distinction	27	4	0
Merit	67	10	0
Pass	6	1	0
Science	0	0	14
Distinction	43	6	0
Merit	50	7	0
Pass	7	1	0
Art	0	0	14
Distinction	71	10	0
Merit	14	2	0
Pass	14	2	0
Physical education	0	0	0
Distinction	0	0	0
Merit	0	0	0
Youth Award Scheme	0	0	26
Gold	0	0	0
Silver	42	11	0
Bronze	54	14	0

Associated Examination Board (AEB) Tests

Eight pupils achieved passes in Numeracy Level 1: seventeen achieved passes in Literacy Level 1.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	118
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y5 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	10.5
Average class size	13

Education support staff: Y5 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	249

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	664577.00
Total expenditure	654421.00
Expenditure per pupil	4709.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	-2156.00
Balance carried forward to next year	8000.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

118
37

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	23	9	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	15	17	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	13	17	5	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	9	18	7	2	1
The teaching is good.	20	16	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	17	16	3	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	24	10	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	21	13	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	20	14	1	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	17	14	2	1	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	18	12	4	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	14	15	2	0	3

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

ENGLISH

80. Standards of achievement in English are satisfactory overall. They are good in speaking and listening throughout the school because of a strong emphasis on oral work, and a large number of opportunities for spoken English in other subjects. Standards of achievement are good in all areas at Key Stage 4, where pupils have the benefit of an experienced specialist teacher and follow a range of accredited courses which are challenging and motivating. At Key Stages 2 and 3, speaking and listening skills are strong, but pupils acquire reading and writing skills at a slower pace, although they still make satisfactory gains. The recent appointment of a literacy co-ordinator and the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) throughout the school are beginning to have a positive impact upon standards, and there is potential for good achievement in all key stages.

81. Many pupils enter school with limited speaking and listening skills. They lack confidence and have a restricted vocabulary. However, by 11 most learn to speak clearly and listen carefully to their teachers and to each other. Higher attaining pupils are able to talk thoughtfully about their work and school life. They develop good vocabulary and answer questions in simple sentences. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) make good progress in participating in group work. They speak confidently in a range of situations and listen attentively to the teacher. Most pupils follow instructions carefully, and co-operate within small groups and pairs. They make rapid and sustained progress in speaking and listening. Their achievement is good because teachers give specific and detailed instruction, and make lessons exciting experiences.

82. Pupils enter the school with a very low level of literacy, and they make slow but steady progress in reading and writing and achieve sound results. Through carefully planned and structured teaching, pupils develop reading skills. They enjoy shared reading and are particularly enthusiastic about poetry and rhyming verse. They remember and practise unusual words and the sequence of events in their class text. For example, Year 6 pupils reading *The Naming of Cats* were delighted by names such as 'Munkstrop, McCavity and Jellylorum' and enthusiastically shared their own names and nicknames. They read and recalled phrases from the poem on their own. Most pupils knew the initial letters and sounds of unknown words in the poem. Higher attaining pupils read lines from the poem clearly and accurately. Well-planned and established routines encourage all pupils to read and to enjoy books. Resources are attractive and pupils want to use them. Lower attaining pupils develop initial skills in writing. They overwrite, copy letters, and form simple sentences with support. Higher attainers write sentences independently, using simple punctuation, and their spelling is generally accurate.

83. Older pupils also make good gains in speaking and listening through formally structured sessions where they learn to speak in a variety of different situations for different audiences and to present their opinions. By 14, pupils can explain clearly their reasons for choices and the advantages and disadvantages of using certain words in their work. For example, in one lesson pupils were asked to comment on writing which was describing a countryside centre. They warmed to the task, and explained clearly why words like 'breathtaking' and 'spectacular' and phrases such as 'home cooked food' were relevant. Most showed a good awareness of audience in using persuasive language to advertise a place worthy of visiting.

Pupils listen with good concentration, and respond to each other in conversational activities with maturity and confidence. Younger pupils are clear and concise when they answer questions. For example, pupils in Year 7 gave detailed examples when discussing the difference between fiction and non-fiction, using words like 'proof' and 'evidence'. Higher attaining pupils are reasonably accurate readers and have a good sight vocabulary. Most pupils are steadily building phonic skills, which they use to decode unfamiliar words. They know how to find information and understand the conventions of non-fiction. Pupils enjoy the structured reading lessons, which ensure they have a chance to read aloud, with a partner, or to one of the adults in the room. They enjoy talking about their favourite books and can retell the plot and describe characters accurately, showing good understanding.

84. Pupils make sound progress in developing writing skills. The work of higher attaining pupils shows evidence of editing and redrafting, and is generally accurate in spelling and punctuation. During the inspection, pupils worked on job descriptions based on Prospero from *The Tempest*; they showed a creative response to literature and a good understanding of the play. A few pupils have difficulty in producing writing of any length that is accurate and fluent. Some pupils use joined writing but a significant minority have difficulty in managing the size and shape of some letters. Similarly, although many pupils spell common words correctly and have a good sense of sentence punctuation, a few have difficulty in using capital letters and redrafting work after correcting errors.

85. During the week of the inspection, Year 11 pupils were on work experience, so it was not possible to observe them in class. An analysis of their work, including that submitted for external accreditation, shows that by 16 pupils can construct arguments and clearly state reasons for their opinions. A Year 11 boy, who returned from work experience during his lunch hour to join in a general discussion between inspectors and pupils, showed a mature and confident approach. He was clearly at ease in a variety of formal and informal situations and spoke in a perceptive and lively way about his progress at the school and future plans. Year 10 pupils listen with good concentration and respond to each other in conversational activities with maturity and confidence. They are clear and concise when giving instructions or descriptions and answer questions confidently. Pupils continue to build up phonic skills and to develop accuracy and fluency in reading. They talk about their reading enthusiastically and thoughtfully, with a good understanding of character and plot. They look carefully at what they read and use this to inform their writing. For example in a project on writing for a specific audience, in this case very young children, pupils investigated early language acquisition and speech patterns of children under two. From word lists they were given, they analysed the language patterns and vocabulary of young children. This was used to help them in writing for a young audience. In work produced for their examination course, pupils produce more varied writing, focusing on style and purpose. Their writing is persuasive and informative but some have difficulty in extended writing. All pupils need support to spot and correct grammatical errors, such as mixed tenses and punctuation. Pupils use word processing well to present work attractively.

86. Teaching and learning are good overall, although there are variations in lessons. Most of the teaching seen was good or better, and there were no unsatisfactory lessons. Two lessons in three were good in Key Stage 2 and one in three was satisfactory. At Key Stage 3, two lessons in six were very good, three were good and one was satisfactory. In Key Stage 4, three lessons in four were very good, and one was good. A strong feature of teaching is the very good planning, which supports highly imaginative and stimulating lessons. Teachers and learning support assistants work very effectively to provide stimulating lessons that include a variety of well structured activities. Pupils are usually highly motivated and fully involved in

the task, and so behaviour and their attitudes to work are good. Most teachers have clear goals for learning and provide good models of work, so pupils know exactly what they have to do to achieve good results. This raises their self-esteem and they work hard to produce the best work they can. Work is generally well matched to pupils' abilities, and expert individual teaching enables even those pupils with the most severe difficulties in reading to access and enjoy texts at all levels, including classical texts. Most teachers have a good understanding of how to teach reading and writing. However, where the teacher is not a subject specialist the teacher does not have sufficient knowledge about the teaching of reading to enable pupils to achieve as they should. Pupils are encouraged to sound out words, but some are left to read silently and pupils' progress is not monitored; as a result, reading skills are not extended. Lessons usually move at the right pace to keep up interest and assure good concentration. Teachers use questions of different levels of difficulty. By this means they challenge pupils to think for themselves, and to put forward ideas about how to do things, such as how to create atmosphere, or to extend and develop a story line. Pupils respond with enthusiasm and, in voicing their ideas and listening to others, they develop confidence in their oral skills.

87. Leadership and management of English are good. Since the last inspection there has been substantial improvement in planning, teaching, and the organisation of English. This is largely to the credit of the English co-ordinator who, more recently, has been supported by the assistant literacy co-ordinator. They have put into practice a suitably adapted form of the National Literacy Strategy in Key Stage 2, and have adapted the long and medium term planning for Key Stages 3 and 4 to give a strong literacy focus. This is already having an impact on standards of achievement and, when the systems are embedded, should have an even greater impact. The speech therapist has made a good contribution to development in English. She has contributed to planning, and has shared ideas and resources.

88. Work has begun on monitoring teaching, and the sharing of good practice, such as during model lessons, is instrumental in producing good standards of teaching and learning. Assessment is good, and is well used to plan future work. Accreditation has been extended and pupils now have a range of accredited courses to choose from, including GCSE in language and literature. Future priorities are in line with current educational thinking and governmental directives.

89. Literacy in subject areas is at an early stage of development. Although some teachers give a great deal of attention to literacy development, practice is inconsistent overall. There is a need to develop a coherent whole school approach to literacy in subject areas.

MATHEMATICS

90. The subject shows a substantial advance since the last inspection. This is a reflection of the very successful and enthusiastic leadership by the co-ordinator, and of improved teaching, a consequence of the monitoring of lessons and of evaluative discussion. An audit of the strengths and weaknesses of the department has led to an effective development plan and well thought out strategies for further improvement.

91. Standards of achievement and progress are good. Pupils in Key Stages 2 and 4 achieve well and make good progress. Pupils in Year 7 make very good progress in lessons, but in Key Stage 3 overall, pupils make satisfactory progress. In some part, this is a result of the number of teachers involved in the teaching of mathematics. In some classes, more than one

teacher teaches a class, because of staffing difficulties, and lessons do not build well on one another.

92. By the time they are 11, higher attaining pupils have a secure understanding of numbers to 100. They know which numbers are odd and even, and know the place value of 'tens' and 'units' and that all tens numbers end in 0. Some can count in twos, fives and tens. They recognise the simple two- and three-dimensional shapes and can continue patterns. They recognise days of the week and months of the year. They know that length is measured in centimetres. Lower attaining pupils are working towards a confident understanding of numbers to 20. All can count to 20 and are beginning to know their number bonds to ten.

93. By 14, higher attaining pupils are able to add together a string of single digit numbers and understand positive and negative numbers. They carefully work out the reasons for the league positions of football teams with the same number of points. Higher attainers recognise simple fractions and begin to understand the meaning of equivalence, and begin to work with decimals, especially in the context of money. They complete reflective symmetrical drawings. They begin to use tally charts and bar graphs. Lower attaining pupils complete similar tasks, but are slower and need much support. For example, they use unifix cubes as aids when calculating number bonds to ten, and recognise that two halves of an apple make the whole.

94. By 16, the higher attaining pupils know most of their times tables and they understand doubling and halving, completing mental calculations quickly and accurately. They recognise the equivalence of simple fractions and can write statements such as $\frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{4} = \frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{2} = 1$. They can compute the perimeter of a simple shape and name angles as *acute*, *obtuse* or *right angle*. They understand co-ordinates in the first quadrant. In investigative mathematics, they discover the 'rules' for adding and multiplying odd and even numbers. They successfully complete the Certificate of Educational Achievement. The highest attaining pupils may sit for the General Certificate of Education examination following a period of inclusion in this subject in a local mainstream secondary school. Middle attainers follow a course leading to the Certificate of Educational Achievement, and lower attaining pupils work towards the Associated Examining Board's Numeracy Skills Certificate.

95. Some examples of mathematics were observed in other lessons, and in display around the school. They included the use of data and bar graphs to illustrate litter dropped around the school, the use of timelines in history, and stop watches and tapes to measure time in races and distance in the triple jump. However, this aspect of mathematics is insufficiently reinforced through other subjects. The co-ordinator is aware of this weakness and is addressing it in the current subject development plan.

96. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. It is sometimes very good, and rarely less than satisfactory. Of the 11 lessons observed, one was unsatisfactory, four were satisfactory, four were good and two were very good. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stages 2 and 4. In the best lessons teachers are enthusiastic and motivating. There is a lively, prompt start, with a well planned and executed mental exercise to focus the pupils on the subject. In the main body of the lesson, activities are included which interest all pupils in the class and help them to learn. Well established routines for managing pupils enable the lesson to proceed smoothly, and minimise disruption when activities change. Learning is reinforced at the end of the lesson by a plenary session, where pupils are praised and rewarded for their efforts. An important part of the plenary is the review of behaviour and effort, which encourages positive attitudes in the pupils and usually actively involves the learning support staff. Learning support staff make a very positive contribution: they know the pupils very

well, and often prevent situations arising which might produce confrontations or problems in class. There are good relationships between pupils and adults, and pupils display good attitudes to their tasks. Resources are used to good effect to raise the pupils' self-esteem. The change between class and individual or group work is well timed, resulting in motivated pupils who play a full part fully in their tasks. Additionally, pupils sometimes have the opportunity to develop their mathematical skills by using the computer, both through published software or pre-selected Internet sites. The co-ordinator is aware that these facilities are not fully exploited and is addressing the issue in the subject improvement plan. The staff provide good role models and there are many activities which demand working together by co-operating and collaborating. Mathematics thus contributes well to the moral and social development of pupils.

97. Very occasionally a lesson is unsatisfactory. Generally, this is a result of insufficient care and detail in the planning, so that the teaching does not match the stated objectives. The work is too difficult for some pupils and lacks challenge for the higher attaining ones, resulting in loss of interest; several pupils make insufficient progress as a result.

98. The co-ordinator leads the subject very effectively. The development of the subject since the last inspection has been managed very well. A new scheme of work has been introduced and is being successfully used. Teachers have been supported constructively with the introduction of the numeracy hour, through monitored teaching, observation and discussion. Teachers keep accurate records of pupils' attainment against 'P' Scales and National Curriculum Levels, and use this information when planning future work and to establish progress over time. Pupils' progress in mathematics is reported clearly to parents in the pupils' annual reports and in the annual reviews, by stating what pupils can do, understand and know. Resources are satisfactory, and have been improved since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

99. Standards of achievement are best at Key Stage 2, where all pupils make good progress. The standards achieved by pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 are satisfactory overall, although a small number of pupils at both extremes of the ability range do not achieve as well as they could because they are not set work that challenges them at a suitable level. The co-ordinator has identified the need for greater challenge in the work provided for the more able pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 in the school development plan.

100. Since the last inspection, provision for the teaching of science for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 has been significantly improved by the recent opening of a purpose-built science laboratory. The facility is having a positive impact on learning by giving all pupils increased

opportunities to use investigative approaches. Weaknesses in planning and assessment identified in the previous inspection have been addressed. The small steps programme identifies clearly what pupils know, understand, and can do. Good use of this information is enabling pupils to build well on their knowledge, skills and understanding.

101. Standards of achievement are good at Key Stage 2. In one lesson observed, pupils were able to remember from a previous lesson what happened to ice when it was heated. They then went on to describe changes that occurred when bicarbonate of soda was added to vinegar, and were able to record their findings. By the time pupils are 11, they are able to observe and record their findings by talking, drawing and writing, and are able to use scientific language to describe what they have found. By this age they understand the link between practical observations and the outcomes obtained, and are able to compare objects, living things and events.

102. As pupils progress through Key Stage 3, they continue to develop their investigative skills. For example, younger pupils were able to confidently identify and build a complete electric circuit, and then moved on to use the circuit to test a variety of materials to see if they conducted electricity. They were able to record their findings using prepared grids. The more able pupils were confident in making predictions, and could group materials accordingly. In another class, pupils were encouraged to draw on previous knowledge about soluble and insoluble states and to discuss how they might separate materials using this knowledge. Pupils were able to identify what apparatus was required and set it up in a safe and sensible manner. They carried out experiments with enthusiasm, and worked well in pairs; they were able to describe what was happening, and reported their findings both orally and in writing. The most able understood that the remaining solution contained dissolved salts and that they could be changed back to their original state. In a lesson on the solar system, the oldest pupils understood that the earth orbits the sun, that the moon orbits the earth, that there are 24 hours in the day, and that the rotation of the earth causes day and night. In this lesson, pupils were able to confidently use the Internet to find additional information, which they used to complete a work sheet. By the age of 14, pupils are able to undertake investigative science with confidence and understanding, and they use apparatus with increasing skill. They are able to predict with greater accuracy the likely outcomes of investigations, based on what they already know and understand about science.

103. As pupils approach 16, they set out their work to an agreed framework, make predictions, record their results, both with ICT and on paper, and are able to draw conclusions based on their findings. The most able pupils label plants, know what plants need to survive, and can describe and understand photosynthesis. Less able pupils are aware of how plants reproduce and that they need light, water and soil to survive. In one lesson, pupils consolidated their knowledge about solids, liquids and gases by heating ice and recording temperature changes up to boiling point, then recording their data on spreadsheets. All pupils in Key Stage 4 follow an accredited course, which leads to a Certificate in Educational Achievement for some. Results in previous years have been very good, with all pupils achieving distinctions or merits. The more able pupils now being admitted to the school have the potential to achieve at a higher level and should be given the opportunity to enter GCSE examinations in addition to the Certificate of Educational Achievement. The involvement of the less able pupils in the present Year 11 in a variety of college link courses and work related programmes has meant that they have not been able to complete the course work required to gain accreditation in this subject.

104. Teaching is satisfactory overall. At Key Stage 2, teaching is good because the pupils are actively involved in their learning and are well managed, and the work is accurately matched to the ability levels of all pupils. The very good planning by the teacher is well supported by continuous assessment. Detailed records of pupils' knowledge and understanding are kept, through the use of the small steps assessment programme, and notes are made by the teacher and the learning support assistant during lessons. Detailed planning is shared with the support staff and they are well deployed in lessons to ensure that pupils of all abilities make progress. In this key stage, the teacher has high expectations of pupils in terms of behaviour, and these are made known to the pupils and consistently applied. The involvement of the pupils in all aspects of the lesson, the good pace, the variety of activities, and the good match of activity to ability all help the staff to manage behaviour well and promote good learning. Scientific language is well used and is supported by word banks and displays. Every opportunity is taken for pupils to demonstrate their understanding through good questioning, and their efforts are rewarded by praise from both the teacher and the support assistant.

105. At Key Stages 3 and 4, the teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are well planned, the newly refurbished laboratory supports investigative science, and the use of ICT to support learning is now developing. Learning support staff are well directed to support practical activities; they use questioning to good effect and are particularly effective supporting the least able.

106. Pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively and do so well. The attitude of pupils towards practical work is good; they are interested and enthusiastic but do not always follow carefully the instructions given. Behaviour in the laboratory is satisfactory, with pupils aware of safety requirements. The lack of consistency towards calling out means that not all pupils make a contribution. Instructions are not always clearly understood and the level of noise in the room is often too high; occasionally this disrupts teaching and learning. Assessment is satisfactory; pupils' knowledge and understanding is recorded but is not as yet used effectively to inform planning; as a result, the needs of the least and most able are not fully met in the laboratory. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to review and revise the existing scheme of work for Key Stage 3 pupils to ensure greater challenge for the most able.

107. In science, the staff make sound use of the subject to support literacy and numeracy. Science is particularly effective in supporting literacy through the use of work banks, the introduction of scientific language linked to words more commonly found in everyday life, and the reinforcement of reading, writing and speaking and listening skills. The use of ICT is still at an early stage of development. There is evidence of its being used effectively by some pupils for research and recording purposes; this practice needs to be extended to include all pupils.

108. The recently appointed co-ordinator is a science specialist. She has used her very good knowledge and understanding of the subject to good effect in making the best use of the new science laboratory. Investigative science is developing well as a result, and this is having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes towards science as it is increasing their interest and understanding of the subject. The co-ordinator has identified weaknesses that exist in the Key Stage 3 scheme of work and the supporting assessment processes. She is aware of the effect of work-related programmes on equality of opportunity for pupils in Key Stage 4. This is identified in the school development plan, as is the need to develop more comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of the teaching of the subject across the key stages.

ART AND DESIGN

109. Standards of achievement in art and design are good. Pupils make good progress in art, and some older higher attainers reach national standards. They work towards the Certificate of Educational Achievement. Higher achievers gain distinctions, whilst some others are awarded merit. It is clear from the colourful and very well presented displays of art that pupils enjoy the subject. Spurred by praise and encouragement, they work hard to produce good quality work, particularly in drawing and painting.

110. Since the last inspection there has been marked improvement in art. Leadership in the subject is very good. There is now a new policy and a whole school scheme of work, revised in line with the new National Curriculum and including good links with Western art and culture. The recently completed art room provides good specialist accommodation, which is already having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and achievements. There is now scope to extend the range and size of two- and three- dimensional work. The new kiln provides scope for ceramics to be included in pupils' programmes of study.

111. By the age of 11, pupils are encouraged to observe closely and be creative, using their own experience whilst making good attempts at different paint techniques. For example, in the study of the works of Kandinsky, pupils in Year 6 selected a variety of colours and flat shapes to create pictures and decorated pottery, using similar techniques. Teachers use the work of other artists to inspire pupils in the use of colour and paint. Year 6 pupils are enthusiastic and well informed about their involvement in producing aboriginal designs to decorate their rainmakers and boomerangs, incorporating the colours and techniques used by the Australian aborigines. They use their previous knowledge, along with sketches, photos and artefacts, to produce a design for a polystyrene printing block. They look carefully at the original designs, and their own sketches, before producing and using their printing block to print designs on paper with the natural earth colours used in aboriginal art. By the time they are 11, higher attaining pupils use their sketch books to record observations, and adapt and improve their work. Lower attaining pupils work hard to complete their work and, with support, choose and use appropriate resources.

112. By the age of 13, pupils are researching the origins of gargoyles, producing their own designs and working with clay to make their own gargoyle. By the age of 14, the most able pupils are producing fine pencil observational drawings of still life, with good likeness to the subject and effective use of shading within carefully drawn lines. Younger pupils use their observational and making skills well to plan and make three-dimensional sculptured figures, applying modroc to their wire figures. Higher attaining pupils carefully apply the strips of modroc and within the lesson they refine their techniques and look critically at their work to see if it needs any modification.

113. By the age of 16, pupils are working with some confidence in two and three-dimensional media, creating sketches and preparing work for the Certificate of Educational Achievement. They use paint, pencil and paper with skill and care, using the work of *David Hockney* and *Andy Warhol* as inspiration for their own sketches and paintings. Pupils working towards the Certificate in Educational Achievement enjoyed their visit to Exeter City football club to look at the building, recording interesting shapes with the digital camera and designing printing patterns inspired by the visit.

114. Teaching and learning in art and design are good. Five lessons were observed, one of which was excellent, two good, and two satisfactory. Strong teaching features good planning linked to very good assessment of pupils' progress, knowledge of the subject, and the use of

interesting methods which capture the imagination of the pupils. Tasks are well directed and pupils are given good support, so they learn quickly and refine their practical techniques. Another strong feature is the emphasis on discussion and the very good use of sketch books. Pupils feel free to express their ideas and reflect on the work of artists and on their own work. Where teaching is less successful and the planning has shortfalls, which become apparent during the lessons, pupils are then unsuccessful in completing their tasks. Learning support assistants give very good support, usually to groups of lower achievers, whom they support and encourage, helping them to be successful and to have confidence.

115. Good use is made of visits to museums and art galleries in the local community. Year 8 pupils visited and contributed to the Moving Sun Exhibition in Exeter Cathedral. Year 11 pupils visited Exeter football ground as part of their studies of buildings and shops. Provision of books and picture resources, supplemented with information downloaded from the Internet, has improved the study of famous artists. There is a range of media for work in collage, clay and papier mâché. Art and design makes a good contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

116. Standards of achievement are good at Key Stages 2 and 3, but at Key Stage 4 they are satisfactory. Here, pupils in year 11 who take part in college link courses and other work related opportunities, have missed some parts of the planned work. Improvements in planning and assessment since the last inspection have ensured that the requirements of the National Curriculum are being met, and pupils are able to build on their knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers are actively encouraging pupils to have a greater involvement in their own learning. There is a much greater emphasis by teachers on the design element, with ongoing assessment by pupils of their own work. This culminates in rigorous self-evaluation and results in a greater sense of ownership. This was not the case at the last inspection. Although a broad and balanced curriculum is planned, it cannot be fully accessed at present. This is due to the unsatisfactory accommodation for food and resistant materials and a limited range of materials and equipment. These shortcomings have been identified by the co-ordinator and have a high priority within the school development plan.

117. Lessons in Key Stage 2 were not seen as they were taught outside the inspection period. Judgements are therefore based on policy documentation, talking to teachers and pupils, looking at pupils' work and the limited evidence gathered from lessons where design technology was a feature. Younger pupils are confident in the use of materials and are developing increased skills in cutting and fixing of card, paper and material. In a project on '*Joseph's coat of many colours*' the pupils have used computers to develop designs. They have then experimented with colours before transferring their patterns to materials using water-resistant liquids and chosen colours. Models produced as part of class work based on the book '*The Borrowers*' have been made with accuracy and care, and with regard to scale.

118. As pupils progress through Key Stage 3 they develop skills in the designing process. They become more confident in producing designs matched to criteria, have regard for aesthetics, and are able to put their actions in order of priority. In the making stage, the most able are becoming increasingly confident in adapting their ideas as they evolve. Younger pupils worked with enthusiasm on a desk tidy made from 'junk material'. They took time to design and plan colours, and then used paints carefully to produce a good finish. They were aware of the need to record their work, and to identify where changes had been made and

why. In another class, pupils making pneumatically operated puppets were working to a very high standard, using a wide range of materials to get the required results. For example, one girl had developed a technique to weave wool through a container to make hair; her choice of wool improved the style considerably.

119. At Key Stage 4, pupils are encouraged to make choices as to the most appropriate area of the department in which to work to realise their designs. In their current project, as a part of the Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts (OCR) Certificate of Achievement, the Year 10 pupils are designing and making a toy. This has involved them in researching toys via the Internet and other sources. They consider materials that might be used, and their appropriateness, and produce a range of designs. Their final designs include working drawings, and identify the means by which the model should be made.

120. In lessons, pupils were able to draw on previously learnt skills and techniques and were prepared to experiment as a part of the design process. The achievements of the present Year 11 pupils have been significantly disrupted by college link courses and other work related opportunities. As a result they are following a short course in resistant materials, with a greater focus on the making element of the subject; this will not lead to accreditation.

121. Teaching in all key stages is good, and it is very good at Key Stage 3. Teachers have a very good knowledge of their subjects and are developing very effective ways of collaborative working to teach the Key Stage 3 and 4 curriculum in a manner that gives pupils as many opportunities and experiences as possible.

122. Planning and assessment in all key stages is of a good standard, and very good at Key Stage 3. It is as a direct result of this that the achievements of pupils at Key Stage 3 are so high. Lessons are thoroughly prepared and well introduced. The work is well matched to individual pupils' abilities, and provides every opportunity for extension for the most able. The use of double lessons is less successful for the younger pupils. Despite a range of activities introduced by the teacher, the pace slackened and pupils lost interest towards the end of the lesson. Learning support staff are deployed well by teachers and are very effective in supporting learning. In one lesson the member of support staff worked with a group of pupils who were using textiles as the main material for their puppets. She worked very effectively with the pupils by encouraging them to consider the use of materials and the possible techniques they might use, she and provided support where it was most needed. Teachers set high expectations and provide work which offers challenge, and the pupils are developing skills in the areas of design, making, and self evaluation. As a result, pupils' attitudes towards learning are very positive.

123. The behaviour of pupils is good. They are responsive to the need to work safely, are considerate to their peers, and have positive relationships with teachers and support staff.

124. The existing food and resistant materials areas are not suitable for many of the activities that teachers would normally provide for pupils of this age group, so pupils cannot safely use certain tools and equipment. This restricts the extent to which pupils can develop their designs, and the practical skills necessary to realise them. This was evident in one lesson where pupils were using coping saws to cut through 25mm plywood, as the electric fret saw was unavailable and there was no more suitable material available to the class. The co-ordinator is very aware of this shortcoming. He has identified it within the school development plan and is adjusting the content of courses in the short term, to ensure that pupils have as many suitable learning experiences as possible.

125. Literacy and numeracy are well supported in this subject, and every opportunity is being taken to involve the use of ICT in the designing and making processes. Pupils are encouraged both to draw and to write about their designs. All newly introduced projects are well supported by word banks, and speaking and listening is actively encouraged by getting pupils to talk through the design and making processes. Pupils see the relevance of design and its application in every day products, and are increasingly appreciating the extent to which other areas of the curriculum have an influence on it and on their work.

126. The recently appointed co-ordinator is a subject specialist. He has, with the full support of his colleagues, brought about considerable improvement in a short period of time. The planned curriculum now fully reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum and is well supported by a detailed assessment and recording programme which involves the pupils in evaluating their own learning. Very effective team teaching and joint planning by all the teachers helps to ensure that pupils continue to build on their knowledge, skills and understanding. Design and technology is providing excellent links with other subjects, particularly in the areas of art and ICT. The co-ordinator has very sensibly decided not to introduce a wider range of materials and equipment until such time as the two rooms have been refurbished. This is fully documented and costed within the school development plan. The subject is very well led and managed by the co-ordinator. Provision of technical support would increase his efficiency, and that of his colleagues, as much time is currently spent in preparing for and clearing up after practical work.

GEOGRAPHY

127. Standards of achievement in geography are good at Key Stage 2, and satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4. Geography is taught as part of a humanities course at Key Stage 4. During the period of the inspection, Year 11 pupils were on work experience and only one geography lesson was observed at Key Stage 2. Judgements on pupils' achievement have been made on the basis of discussions with pupils and teachers, scrutiny of teachers' plans, and pupils' work in books and on display.

128. There has been a good level of improvement since the last inspection. A revised policy and a whole school scheme of work linked to the National Curriculum programmes of study have been developed and agreed by staff and governors. Medium term planning includes evaluation of units, and assessment strategies include opportunities for pupils to make their own assessment of achievement. Resources have been extended and are adequate. The use of information and communication technology is being developed to help pupils' understanding. For example, the Internet has been used to explain volcanoes, and videos have helped pupils to develop their knowledge of life in Brazil.

129. By the age of 11, pupils are beginning to find similarities and differences between places locally and those in different countries. Pupils enjoy carrying out geographical investigations based on direct experience, local fieldwork and practical activities. They are aware of the importance of the River Exe and the development of villages and towns along the river. Year 6 pupils investigate the amenities and attractions along the river, and present their findings on a large scale map. They also follow up their trip to Exmouth by discussing the present impact of a new hotel development, exploring through role play how this will affect the quality of people's lives. They know that in the wider world there are contrasting lifestyles, in the Indian village of Chembakali, for example. They know that some of the children there do not go to

school, and they interpret how land is used around the village by using a sketch map and key. They are able to make observations and predictions about the work the people are doing in the photograph of Chembakali. Mapping skills are developing from pictures to plans of the class, the school and the local streets.

130. By the age of 12, pupils have some understanding of the world. They can point to several different countries on a map or globe, observe changes in the weather and recognise some of the effects of weather on people around the world. Their mapping skills move on from simple maps to the use of atlases and map references to locate major cities and rivers around the world. Higher attaining pupils use the Internet to find information about different countries. Older pupils are beginning to grasp the physical aspects of volcanoes and earthquakes and their impact on people. By the age of 14, pupils use their developing geographical skills to make effective use of secondary information resources, such as books, pictures and Internet sites to compare lifestyles. For example, they compare education in Brazil with that in England. They produce a graph, using information and communication technology, of climate differences between the UK and the Arctic Bay.

131. By the age of 16, pupils are extending their geographical skills, knowledge and understanding of places as part of the Key Stage 4 humanities course. A residential trip to France for Year 10 pupils provided opportunities to make extensive use of maps. Visits to important landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower and the beaches of Normandy gave pupils the opportunity to compare another locality at first hand, and to experience a different language and culture.

132. Teaching and learning in geography is satisfactory overall. Of the six lessons seen, two were very good, two were good and two were satisfactory. Teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 is good. Where teaching was at its best, the teacher was creative, and planning was thorough with a good focus on maintaining pupils' interest throughout the lesson. Learning was brought to life through role-play, and pupils of all ability levels were involved. They were inspired to give their best efforts and able to achieve the objectives set. Conversely, where teaching had weaknesses, the work was not interesting and did not match the skills and needs of pupils of differing abilities. In some lessons, the language used to explain concepts was unnecessarily technical. For example, in a lesson about energy sources the term hydro electricity was not explained.

133. Literacy and numeracy are promoted well through reading, use of reference texts and the writing of factual information. Information is recorded in tables and graphs. Pupils use atlases and maps and are developing an understanding of co-ordinates. Geography makes a good contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

HISTORY

134. Standards of achievement in history are good at Key Stages 2 and 3, reflecting the good standards of teaching, and satisfactory at Key Stage 4. History is satisfactorily taught as part of a humanities course at Key Stage 4, giving pupils an opportunity to extend their historical knowledge and understanding.

135. During the period of the inspection, Year 11 pupils were on work experience and the Year 10 humanities lesson observed had a geographical focus. Judgements about achievement and progress are based on discussions with teachers, scrutiny of teachers' plans, and examination of pupils' work in books, folders and historical displays.

136. By the age of 11, pupils make good progress in their historical understanding. For example, they are familiar with some of the significant figures, such as Queen Victoria, and events in British history like the impact of the factory system on the working life of men, women and children. They have experienced topics on the Elizabethans, Ancient Greece, local history and the Victorians, and are beginning to have some concept about how things change over time. Dressing as Victorian children, linked to visits and special occasions, reinforces their knowledge and understanding of previous times.

137. By the age of 14, most pupils make good progress and develop a good sense of chronology as they look systematically at life in different periods in the past; they are becoming increasingly aware of time lines. They have experienced topics on the invaders and settlers. Year 8 pupils have a good knowledge of the events and kings of the Stuart era, and with support can place them in correct chronological order. Higher attaining pupils recall the dates of key events such as the great fire of London, and the reasons for the Civil War. Lower attaining pupils also make good progress in their understanding of events, due to the good support they receive from teachers and support assistants. Pupils use a variety of sources and are beginning to develop hypotheses about certain key events, for example Hitler's climb to power, and how the use of new weapons affected the outcome of World War II.

138. By the age of 16, pupils are extending their historical skills, knowledge and understanding of events as part of the Key Stage 4 humanities course. A residential trip to France gave Year 10 and Year 11 pupils the opportunity to see at first hand some of the sights and consequences of major world conflicts. They visited World War II museums, invasion beaches and the well kept war graves of the thousands of soldiers who died during the invasion.

139. There has been good improvement in the subject since the last inspection. The new co-ordinator is managing the subject well and has a clear vision of how it needs to develop. The curriculum is now planned to ensure a smooth transition between Key Stages 2 and 3, and the Key Stage 4 humanities course is effectively planned by the history and geography co-ordinator. However, the assessment of pupils' progress is an area for development, and is rightly included in the action plan for the subjects. The history policy and scheme of work have been revised in line with recent developments, and discussed with staff. Resources are improving and good use is being made of information and communication technology to support the subject.

140. Teaching in history is good overall. In the four lessons seen, two were very good and two were good. Where teaching was at its best the teacher was enthusiastic, work was well planned, and pupils were keen to complete practical activities designed to reinforce their learning. Learning was well directed at the different levels of ability, so that pupils were able to succeed in their learning objectives. Pupils were eager to show their history work. Older pupils used their books to illustrate points they were making. Videos, photographs, historical texts and Internet sites used to good effect in stimulating pupils' questions, and provide good opportunities for pupils to use their historical enquiry skills. Copies of newspaper photographs and text are used well by pupils in Year 10 to research aspects of the Northern Ireland conflict. Firm and clear guidance helps pupils with educational and behavioural difficulties to concentrate on their learning. The interesting and interactive history displays provide good reinforcement, while illustrated timelines demonstrate a clear reference to chronology. Teachers include plenary sessions in their lesson planning to allow pupils to reflect on key learning objectives.

141. The history co-ordinator has a good knowledge of the subject. He has reviewed the subject policy, schemes of work and resources, and has drawn up an action plan for the subject. In conjunction with the head teacher, he monitors the pupils' learning through a scrutiny of planning and classroom observations. Literacy and numeracy are promoted well through reading, use of reference texts, and the writing of factual information. Information is also recorded in tables and graphs. History makes a good contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

142. Standards of achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) are satisfactory. In the past, ICT has been inadequately resourced, and this has limited the progress pupils have made. Now, many of them make good gains in learning new skills and in knowledge and understanding, promoted by the new resources and the good quality of teaching.

143. By age 11, pupils are confident in using the computer, mouse, and printer. For example, they use a commercial package to draw and size boxes, which they then fill with colour. They can save and retrieve their work and are able to use a range of word processing and art packages to design and produce posters, identity cards, book marks and puzzles. Pupils work well together and are supportive of each other.

144. Older pupils know the safety procedures when using computers. By the age of 14, most pupils can format the layout of a document and use word processing programmes to combine text and pictures. This skill is used well to support work in English. A project on the *Iron Man* made good use of a news article, entitled 'Risk of Life', which combined text and graphics with scanned images. Work on pupils' own topics in ICT is beautifully presented. It shows evidence of finding the most effective illustrations from picture files or eye-catching headings to go with the text. In using art packages, pupils can find their files, load images into their files and use the programme tools to change the colour and parts of the design of their image. Higher attaining pupils work independently, but lower attainers need some support. All pupils can load, save, and print their work independently. The keyboard skills

of lower attaining pupils' are developing, but at present their mouse skills are stronger. Pupils from 11 to 14 extend their use of ICT to using graphics, databases, spreadsheets, and modelling. They collect information to set up personal databases and know how to interrogate them to answer questions efficiently.

145. At age 16, pupils prepare portfolios for the OCR Certificate of Achievement. They change data in a spreadsheet and record the effects of variables being changed. They use electronic models to solve problems and make decisions, and they are confident in using desktop publishing. They combine pictures and text with ease. Year 10 pupils are confident in using different menus to load and use software. For example, as part of a *Moving House* project, pupils produced an estate agent's leaflet. They collected and recorded information, drew floor plans, and scanned and incorporated digital images. They moved confidently between different menus and evaluated their finished work and the ICT programs they used. With support, pupils can use e-mail to communicate with friends and can find information from a range of sources, including the Internet. They clearly understand the need for security when using the Internet, and are quick to inform the teacher if they reach an inappropriate site.

146. In all lessons seen at Key Stage 3 and 4, teaching was consistently good. In the one lesson seen at Key Stage 2 teaching was very good. A strength of the lessons is good preparation and planning. This leads to a smooth start to the lesson, where pupils know quite clearly what they are supposed to do. The teacher works in strong partnership with a knowledgeable and experienced classroom assistant. They both have a patient, thorough approach, and manage pupils well. This enables lessons to proceed at a good pace and makes effective use of time. The teacher has secure knowledge of the subject and the pupils' needs. His confidence and enthusiasm spreads to the pupils and helps them to be successful. Occasionally, the pace is slower and the level of challenge is not quite high enough for more able pupils. Planning needs to include structured extension work for pupils who make particularly rapid progress and finish before the others.

147. Pupils clearly enjoy using computers; they respond well to their teacher, and work co-operatively together. Relationships are very good. Pupils have a developing understanding of the systems in a computer, and they are increasingly able to use their new skills to gain access to text and images on the Internet to enhance their work in other subjects. They concentrate well and their behaviour is good. They use the computers sensibly and take care of all the equipment.

148. There has been good improvement in ICT since the last inspection. This is largely due to the hard work of the recently appointed co-ordinator, the replacement of outdated hardware by new machines linked to the Internet, and new planning which ensures that all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered. Pupils are now getting much more 'hands-on' experience with computers, both in the computer suite and in their classrooms; they also follow an accredited course at 16. The subject is rapidly developing, and is led with enthusiasm and clear educational direction. Assessment is used well to monitor pupils' progress. The co-ordinator has introduced good schemes of work, but he does not have sufficient time to fulfil his role as well as he would like, and to maintain the rapid rate of development. The knowledgeable and experienced support assistant plays a valuable role in helping to maintain the ICT network and in supporting teachers in the ICT room.

149. Some good examples of computers being used in other lessons were observed, for example to draft and redraft work in English. However, this practice is not consistent in all subjects. The school is fully aware of the need to use its new resources to establish ICT as an

integral part of the school's curriculum, but some of the staff have been waiting for training and are not yet confident ICT users. The school recognises the importance of staff training to support pupils' learning in this important area. It has waited for some time for a training provider and is at present implementing a rolling programme of skills training for all staff.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

150. French

151. Standards of achievement in French are satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4. Although the subject has been introduced at Key Stage 2 for one term this year, the focus is on speaking and listening only, and there is insufficient evidence to allow a judgement on standards at this key stage. At Key Stages 3 and 4, lower attaining pupils achieve well, but a few higher attaining pupils could achieve more if they were set more challenging work. For example, pupils in Year 7 do not tackle reading or writing in French until the summer term. Pupils at Key Stage 4 do not continue their study of the language into Year 11. For a few Year 10 pupils, achievement is limited by patchy attendance.

152. The present Year 7 pupils have not had the benefit of an introduction to the language in Year 6, but they soon acquire an understanding of the common classroom commands and key vocabulary. Several pupils use French when agreeing with teachers how many points they should be given at the end of lessons in other subjects. They make better progress in speaking and listening, as reading and writing are not introduced until later in the year. By the time pupils are 14, they achieve satisfactorily in all three aspects of the language. Pupils are confident in returning greetings, and respond to questions with a word or short phrase. Lower attaining pupils label items, copy familiar single words, and select words to complete written phrases and sentences. All pupils know that capital letters are not used in French for writing the months of the year. Higher attaining pupils follow instructions in French, and read short phrases in familiar contexts. By the end of Year 10, lower attaining pupils recognise and read familiar language in short passages, note the main points, and can read short texts with some prompting. Higher attaining pupils speak in whole sentences, and with approximate punctuation. They can perform a prepared task of two or three exchanges, and memorise some language. Although they still need help with reading text, they can write two or three sentences on familiar topics, using dictionaries to help with spellings.

153. Teaching and learning are satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4. No teaching was timetabled at Key Stage 2 during the inspection period. The detail of long and medium term planning supports pupils' learning well, although the content of the scheme of work, and of lessons, needs to be more challenging for some if higher attaining pupils are to reach their full potential. For example, in one lesson all pupils were set the objective of being able to say some of the months of the year in French. At least one higher attaining pupil could do this by the mid-point of the lesson. In fact, he could say the months correctly in French and in the right order. Teachers and support staff have good relationships with pupils, and pupils have good attitudes to the subject. These result in purposeful lessons, where there is a productive atmosphere, and pupils work hard at the tasks set. The teacher encourages pupils to be independent learners. For example, the use of personal dictionaries, where pupils enter new vocabulary, is well established, and pupils are given prompts to help them recall French words. Pupils use these self-help strategies to good effect. For example, one recognised the similarity between *campagne* and camping, and used this to help him recall the French word for countryside. The teacher also makes good use of games to reinforce language acquisition.

Pupils enjoy these, and the introduction of several different activities during the course of a lesson helps to hold pupils' interest and motivation. In one lesson, a support assistant made a strong contribution to pupils' learning by taking pupils one at a time and practising key vocabulary, using a language master. The use of interactive software is not yet established, although pupils occasionally word process their writing in French. In common with other subjects, teachers review pupils' attitudes and behaviour at the end of each lesson. However, opportunities to review achievement against the objectives set are not seized, and this means that pupils do not develop a thorough knowledge of their learning.

154. Leadership, is given by a non-specialist teacher who systematically develops her skills, and is satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the subject has been introduced at Key Stage 2, and assessment and recording have been further developed. However, there has been no improvement in standards at Key Stages 3 and 4, because the planning has not been adapted to take account of the intake of more able pupils.

155. MUSIC

156. Standards of achievement in music are good at all key stages. Pupils come from a low baseline in music, but make good gains in knowledge of the elements of music, performing skills, listening skills and composition. The previous inspection identified a lack of clear focus to the lessons, resulting in too few opportunities for pupils to achieve mastery and success. This has been successfully addressed by the new co-ordinator through the introduction of a revised scheme of work and through improved teaching. The outcome is that pupils are making good progress in the development of skills and musical appreciation.

157. All pupils are encouraged to participate and perform in lessons. The youngest pupils become interested and involved through a mixture games, group and individual work. In one lesson they were encouraged to listen to a tape of the sounds of the seaside. Through a series of activities they progressed to creating their own 'sea' type sounds, using a variety of untuned instruments. This then developed to include a song, with pupils encouraged to explore beat and rhythm, and to make up their own words. The older pupils are able to write their own compositions, and the most able are developing an understanding of pace, rhythm, style and staccato. In one lesson, pupils were actively involved in experimenting with instruments to produce a certain style and accompaniment to support their compositions. One group of pupils performed well together, with one on a keyboard, the second on drums, and the third singing.

158. Teaching is good overall. Of the four lessons observed three were good and one was satisfactory. The teacher has a very good knowledge of the subject. Lessons start well, have a clear focus and are well organised. Planning is detailed; it takes account of the progress made by pupils in previous lessons and ensures that pupils build on this. Musical language is used well by the pupils; where they do not understand the words the teacher asks other pupils to explain. The range of practical activities within lessons keeps most pupils interested and enthusiastic, yet allows them to practise their new skills and knowledge in a variety of ways. Occasionally, the teacher provides work that is too challenging, and when this happens the pace is lost, as is pupils' confidence in their ability to perform. The use of learning support staff is well planned. They are encouraged to take a lead role in the lesson, to enable the teacher to assess the performance of individual pupils. They also take responsibility for leading small groups of pupils in practical activities.

159. Pupils' attitudes towards music are good. They treat instruments carefully, are willing to work in pairs and groups, and listen to each other and celebrate each other's success. Behaviour is well managed by the teacher; there are clear rules in place and the teacher has high expectations of all pupils.

160. For the most part the lesson content is sufficient to manage pupils' behaviour by keeping them interested. When this is not the case the teacher uses a number of successful strategies to manage individuals, and for the most part these are successful.

161. Literacy and numeracy are well linked to music lessons. Every opportunity is taken to take advantage of an activity to promote learning of basic skills. For example, in a Year 6 lesson pupils were asked to describe a scene, to make up a phrase associated with an object, and to attempt to spell a word that this involved. The lowest attaining pupils are involved in counting the beat; their understanding is assured by their participation in games and activities associated with the task.

162. Music makes a contribution to the wider curriculum through a number of lunchtime clubs, hymn singing for the whole school, and performances in assemblies. The involvement of performers from other cultures and countries is planned for later in the summer term. The lunchtime club is open to all pupils, and this enables Key Stage 4 pupils to pursue their interest in the subject. The club is well attended, and pupils take part in a number of concerts and performances in and outside the school. They are currently practising a number of pieces, including a 'rap' that they have composed themselves, to perform at the Exeter Festival. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, although not all opportunities are sufficiently explored. For example, in a lesson involving world folk music, too little was made of the source of the music and its links with spirituality and religion.

163. Leadership in the subject is good. The recently appointed co-ordinator is a music specialist and regularly performs with and for the children. She has refined the curriculum to match the requirements of the National Curriculum and the needs of the children. However, there is no detailed assessment in place to support the scheme of work or to record pupils' achievements and progress over time. This has been identified by the co-ordinator for inclusion in the school development plan, and she has recently attended training on how to develop this aspect of the subject. The co-ordinator is keen to develop the subject across the curriculum. As a result of a partnership with the religious education co-ordinator, a successful performance of 'Off to Bethlehem' was staged at the end of the autumn term last year. Further links are now being developed with the speech and language therapist to see how music can be used to support programmes being devised for individuals and groups of pupils. The range and number of musical instruments limits the opportunities for all pupils to perform. The dual use of the room was identified at the last inspection as having an impact on learning. This continues to be an issue. Time is lost when instruments have to be got out and then put away, or when the room is set up for performing.

164. PHYSICAL EDUCATION

165. Standards of achievement in physical education (PE) are very good. In Key Stages 3 and 4, progress is very good. Although no lessons were observed in Key Stage 2, discussion with pupils, scrutiny of teachers' records and reports, and other evidence indicate that progress in this key stage is at least good also. Pupils' achievement is directly attributable to the high quality of teaching and the pupils' motivation. There has been very good improvement in this subject since the last inspection.

166. By age 14, pupils can suggest and complete jogging and stretching warm-up exercises. During the inspection, all pupils were practising their athletic skills. They worked together well, practising the different elements of the triple jump. Pupils listened well to the instructions of their teachers and were pleased to be chosen to demonstrate a particular movement. They worked hard, and by the end of the session about three quarters of the group

had mastered the co-ordination required to successfully complete the jump. There was spontaneous applause for one girl who achieved a very high standard.

167. By 16, pupils continue to improve their understanding of warm-up routines. They learn and practise the sprint start for short distance races, after which they compete against each other. They understand the reason for lanes and keep to them well when running. Working in pairs, they observe and appraise their partner's performance, and offer suitable advice. During the competitive races, near the end of the lesson, they use stopwatches accurately to time their partner. The times are recorded so that they may work to better their own achievement in a later session.

168. The quality of teaching and learning in physical education is very good overall. Four lessons were observed, of which three were very good and one was good. In all lessons, the planning is very good, linked to clear learning outcomes. It provides opportunities for all the pupils to be tested physically and to improve their knowledge, understanding and proficiency in the activity, as well as to develop their personal independence. Behaviour management and organisation are of high quality. Coupled with motivating activities, they keep the pupils fully engaged, and no time is wasted. Pupils enjoy physical education and want to improve and do more. Relationships are very good, resulting in high levels of co-operation. Teachers give clear instructions and good demonstrations, so that pupils try hard to imitate, and this results in an improvement in their performance. All involved in teaching PE activities show good coaching skills. Learning support staff work very well with teachers to ensure that all students play as full a part as possible, and this very good teamwork promotes effective learning. Lessons are presented enthusiastically, and all staff have high expectations of the pupils. There is good assessment and recording of pupils' skills. As a result, teachers are well aware of what their pupils know, understand and can do. There is a praiseworthy attention to detail, especially of health and safety issues, and all lessons are conducted with an inconspicuous, but very high regard for safety. Pupils are taught to observe the rules and to be good sports, so that physical education makes a significant contribution to their social and moral development.

169. The subject is very well managed and co-ordinated. The curriculum leader for the school is highly effective and keen to raise the profile of the subject and to celebrate the success of students. The curriculum for physical education has been carefully planned. It is broad and balanced and enriched by competitive activities. It includes all the required elements and other exciting additions. For example, there is a residential opportunity at the Manchester United football coaching school. Achievement is carefully assessed and recorded. Pupils gain certificates and nationally accredited awards. Resources have been improved and are satisfactory, but the small, general-purpose hall that serves as the gymnasium is unsatisfactory for secondary-aged pupils.

170. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

171. Standards in religious education are satisfactory across the school. Although a wide range of learning experiences is planned, not all pupils at Key Stage 4 have access to these as they miss some sessions when they attend college link courses. A few weaknesses in teaching affect standards at Key Stages 2 and 3.

172. Pupils at Key Stage 2 make satisfactory gains in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other main world religions. During one lesson, several showed their understanding of the importance of the Ark and the Torah to the Jews. Higher attainers recalled that the Ark contains scrolls, but none could remember what was written on the scrolls. In one lesson, pupils in Year 8 were thinking about how humans and the natural world are interdependent. They made very good progress during this lesson. Pupils enthusiastically recounted how far they had got with their homework task; several had used the Internet and library books to research the topic. They built on this effectively during the lesson by identifying people they depend on; some were able to articulate well the meaning of *depend*, by substituting the word *trust*, for example. By the time they are 14, pupils have a sound knowledge of the main religions, and have looked in some depth at their founders and leaders. For example, some have researched the life and work of Mother Theresa. In Year 10, pupils build on their knowledge by looking at some aspects in greater depth. During the inspection, Year 10 pupils were developing their knowledge and understanding of why and how Hindus worship. They were able to design a shrine of their own, based on the information they had gained in the session. In Year 11, pupils further develop their understanding of beliefs and values, and they find out about the work of charities.

173. Teaching and learning are satisfactory at each key stage. Four lessons were seen; one was very good, one good, one satisfactory and one unsatisfactory. Teaching has a number of strengths; lessons are based on a good range of learning experiences set out in a detailed scheme of work. Very good use is made of ICT to enable pupils to record and to find out things for themselves; they greatly enjoy this and tackle tasks with enthusiasm. Literacy and speaking and listening skills are promoted very effectively in RE lessons. In one lesson, the teacher encouraged pupils to answer questions in whole sentences, and others were exhorted to look at the person speaking, and listen carefully to what was said. This helped pupils to improve their speaking skills, and to learn from one another. Teachers make very good use of artefacts. In a lesson about Hinduism, the artefacts really captured pupils' interest and attention. They asked questions, showing curiosity and respect for the beliefs of others. The teacher's thorough knowledge of the subject enabled her to answer questions fully, and to pupils' satisfaction. The unsatisfactory teaching was marked by the setting of tasks that were too difficult for pupils. For example, pupils were given a research exercise, and several could not read the texts supplied. As a result, they became frustrated, their behaviour deteriorated, and they achieved little.

174. Teaching makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils are encouraged to think and reflect, for example on those things that are special to them. On one occasion it was noticeable that pupils became still and quiet – they were clearly thinking deeply about those on whom they depend. Good relationships between staff and pupils, and between pupils themselves, led to good co-operative learning in several lessons. In Year 6, a few pupils worked together to write about the Ark, some doing the word processing, others helping with spellings. Teachers value the contributions that pupils make, and this encourages pupils to take part and to articulate their thoughts and ideas.

175. Leadership of the subject is good, and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. More time has been allocated for teaching the subject, resources have improved, and the curriculum has been revised in the light of the intake of more able pupils. The co-ordinator is now pursuing the matter of external accreditation for older pupils. There is a portfolio of pupils' levelled work to help inform teachers' assessment. Assessment procedures have been developed, but records are not yet compiled, though this is identified as an area for improvement in the subject action plan. The co-ordinator has the advantage of being able to liaise with RE co-ordinators from other schools on a regular basis, but is not often able to get together with the other teacher of the subject at Southbrook, as both are part-time members of staff.