

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **COLN HOUSE SCHOOL**

Fairford

LEA area: Gloucestershire

Unique reference number: 115412

Headteacher: John Davidson

Reporting inspector: Mary Henderson  
19827

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> November 2001

Inspection number: 188598

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:	Maintained
Age range of pupils:	9 - 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Horcott Road Fairford Gloucestershire
Postcode:	GL7 4DB
Telephone number:	(01285) 712308
Fax number:	(01285) 713011
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Anne Bowman
Date of previous inspection:	19 <sup>th</sup> November 1999

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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19827	Mary Henderson	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities EAL	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
13874	Jane Chesterfield	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes and values How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work with parents?
21397	Ingrid Bradbury	Team inspector	English Music SEN	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
14596	Anthony Fiddian-Green	Team inspector	Mathematics Art Religious education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
11249	Joseph Edge	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology	
13101	Mike Kell	Team inspector	History Geography Physical education	How well are pupils taught?
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Coln House is a maintained, residential special school for pupils aged 9-16 who have a statement of special educational need because of their severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. At present there are no pupils below the age of 11. Some pupils have additional moderate learning difficulties. Pupils are drawn from a wide area of Gloucestershire. The school can admit up to 55 pupils and has residential accommodation for 42 pupils. There are 54 pupils on roll, of whom 10 are girls. The majority of pupils are resident. All Year 11 pupils become day pupils as part of the re-integration programme. The majority of pupils achieve at a level lower than that expected nationally for pupils of a similar age. This underachievement is related primarily to their emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school admitted 23 new pupils this term, a very large proportion to induct into the school. Seven per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority groups, 11 per cent are 'looked after' by Social Services and 39 per cent are entitled to free school meals. The school is housed in a mixture of ageing and temporary buildings on a large site divided by a main road. The future of the school is subject to a review of all special school provision by Gloucestershire County Council.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Coln House is a good school where pupils are taught in a supportive environment. The residential provision is good and is very well managed. The improvement in pupils' personal and social skills and the preparation of pupils for employment and further education are at the heart of the school's work. The quality of teaching is good and pupils make good progress overall. The headteacher and senior managers provide good leadership and standards for the management of behaviour and the development of good learning skills. The school makes the best use of inadequate accommodation and gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Overall, achievement and progress of pupils are good and, by the age of 16, pupils in this school make better progress than pupils in similar schools.
- The quality of residential care is very good and the residential care staff give excellent support for developing literacy and personal and social development.
- Pupils develop good attitudes to school.
- Pupils are being very well prepared for employment or further education after they leave school.
- Provision for spiritual, moral and social education is good.
- Leadership and management are good and senior managers work very well to ensure an orderly and supportive atmosphere for learning.
- There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities.

#### **What could be improved**

- The standard of accommodation.
- Pupils' progress in writing and setting of consistent literacy targets across the school.
- Unsatisfactory behaviour in a small number of lessons.
- Provide better preparation for living in a multi-cultural society.

*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**

Coln House is a good school. It has continued to improve since the last inspection. Overall, there have been improvements in progress made by pupils in most subjects, but particularly in mathematics,

science English, art, information and communication technology, physical education and French.. There have been improvements in the management of behaviour and expanded learning opportunities to prepare pupils for employment and further education. The key issues identified at the last inspection have been satisfactorily addressed by the school. The local authority is responsible for improving the accommodation overall and progress in dealing with this key issue is unsatisfactory.

## STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age 16	<b>Key</b>	
speaking and listening	C	Very good	A
reading	B	Good	B
writing	C	Satisfactory	C
mathematics	B	Unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	B	Poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in Individual Development Plans	B		

Overall, pupils make good progress in relation to their special educational needs and in the light of their low levels of achievement when they enter school. They make good progress against the targets in their Individual Development Plan. Achievements are highest in mathematics, science, art, food and textiles technology, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education (PE), French and personal and social education. The school is making good progress against its targets to improve examination results at 16 and to improve pupils' reading skills. The consistency of approach in supporting learning and managing pupils' behaviour by staff in the classrooms and staff in the residential houses has been a major contributory factor to improvements. The consistency of approach in supporting learning and managing pupils' behaviour by staff in the classrooms and staff in the residential houses has also been an important factor to improvements in standards.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good, particularly amongst pupils who have attended school the longest. Pupils' concentration lapses when teaching lacks challenge and does not meet their needs.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good, especially amongst older pupils, whereas some younger pupils have still to develop adequate self-control. Behaviour in the majority of lessons is good and only a few lessons were spoilt by inappropriate behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Pupils usually relate well to staff, but find it more difficult to relate well to each other in lessons where they lack confidence. They are usually sociable and appreciative of the help and support they receive in the residential houses.
Attendance	Good. Attendance has much improved both at school and in lessons. It is higher than that of similar schools. Pupils are punctual coming to



	lessons. A few poor attenders cause concern.
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Pupils develop much more mature attitudes to each other, to school and to work as they progress through the school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged 11-16</b>
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall and in one fifth of lessons it is very good. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is unsatisfactory in a few lessons. Learning support workers work well with teachers and make a major contribution to improving pupils' learning and in promoting good behaviour. The introduction of homework and the support given to learning after school by the residential care staff have also contributed to improvements in pupils' learning.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The links with the community and extra curricular activities are very good and the new work-based curriculum is very appropriate to older pupils in preparing them for employment or further education.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school provides well for pupils' personal development; social development is very good, spiritual and moral development is good and cultural development is satisfactory. However, there is insufficient planning for pupils' multi-cultural development so that they understand the richness and diversity of modern society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Pupils' personal development is very well supported and monitored by all staff. Arrangements for developing better attendance and more positive attitudes to school are very good. Assessment procedures are good. The residential care is very good.

The school has good relations with parents and carers.

A good range of learning opportunities is offered to pupils. The Foundation class helps new pupils settle in the school. Another strength is the encouragement given to older pupils to re-integrate into their home community by finding work experience placements and courses at their local colleges of further education

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. An effective senior management team which works well together, supports staff development and morale. The school has been well led by the headteacher and this has enabled the school to overcome previous weaknesses and develop new strengths.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. Caring, knowledgeable and supportive governing body. The governing body meets frequently and has a good oversight of the school and its areas for development.

The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school is developing good systems to keep under review its own effectiveness, such as improving the standards of behaviour, the educational achievements of pupils and the quality of teaching.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of its financial resources to support educational development. Recent improvements include better specialist accommodation in science and resources for information and communication technology.

The level of staffing is good and resources for learning are generally satisfactory. Accommodation is still poor, despite the improvements that have been made. The efforts made by senior management to develop an orderly community have been very successful and have provided a better atmosphere for learning. There is a satisfactory application of 'best value' principles.

## **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The approachability of staff.</li> <li>• Good leadership and management.</li> <li>• The high expectations that the school has for its pupils.</li> <li>• The way pupils learn to behave in a more mature way.</li> <li>• The good information on progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few parents want more homework set.</li> <li>• A few parents were concerned about racially abusive language used by some pupils.</li> </ul>

The inspection team endorses the very positive views of parents. The school works hard to develop good standards of mutual respect and deals with poor language or behaviour in a very effective way.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils achieve good levels of work in relation to their special educational needs. Standards on entry are well below national expectations for the majority of pupils. Pupils enter the school with significant levels of underachievement and gaps in basic literacy and numeracy skills. However, most pupils make good progress, in line with their overall ability, as a result of good teaching, their development of better attitudes to work and more self-control and the very good support for learning provided by residential staff.
2. Table 1: Improvement since the last inspection

	<b>Progress and achievement 1999</b>	<b>Improvement since 1999</b>	<b>Progress and achievement 2001</b>
English:	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory at Key Stage 3; good at Key Stage 4
Speaking & listening, Reading, writing	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	
	- weak	Good Satisfactory	Good Satisfactory
Mathematics	Weak at Key Stage 3, Satisfactory at Key Stage 4	Good	Good at both key stages
Science	Good	Good	Good at Key Stage 3 , very good at Key Stage 4
ICT	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory at Key Stage 3; Good at Key Stage 4
Religious Education	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Design & Technology	Good	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory : good in food and textiles, unsatisfactory in resistant materials
History	Not evaluated		Satisfactory
Geography	Not evaluated		Satisfactory
Art & design	Good	Good	Very good
Music	Not evaluated		Satisfactory
Physical education	Not evaluated		Good
French	Unsatisfactory	Good	Good
Personal & social education			Good

3. The table shows there has been good progress in learning in the majority of subjects since the last inspection, but particularly in reading, mathematics, science, ICT, PE, French and art and design. Achievement and progress could be improved in design and technology where there is unsatisfactory progress in the use of resistant materials. In several subjects, progress is better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. This reflects the greater progress made by pupils who have been in the school the longest and developed better attitudes to work and improved study skills as their behaviour has improved.

4. There have been improvements in results in externally accredited examinations since 1999. More pupils have sat and obtained GCSE<sup>1</sup> grades in English mathematics and art. Science is now offered at GCSE level and ICT will be offered in the future. The school has increased accreditation opportunities in all subjects at age 16. Internal monitoring shows that pupils' reading and mathematics ages have risen considerably over the last year. In comparison with other schools of a similar type, attainment at Coln House is higher. It has an average points score of 4.9 per cent against the national average of 4.1 per cent and the percentage of GCSE passes A\* to G was 73 per cent against the national average of 49 per cent.
5. The school is committed to educational inclusion. There is more evidence now of the development of learning opportunities for the higher attaining pupils in science and art in particular, but also in mathematics and English. The increased range of accreditation opportunities using a variety of examinations shows an increased willingness to offer further opportunities for all pupils. Pupils may enter for GCSE, Certificate of Achievement, AEB<sup>2</sup> Basic Skills or ASDAN<sup>3</sup> Youth Award, according to the progress they have made in subjects. However, there is insufficient evaluation of the progress of different groups of pupils, for example, boys and girls and pupils from ethnic minorities and the small number of day pupils. There is, however, good overall practice in the assessment of all pupils on admittance and teachers, support and care staff all contribute to this. This forms the basis of the Individual Development Plans for each pupil.
6. Pupils' achievements and progress in English are satisfactory by the age of 14 and good by the age of sixteen. Before pupils enter the school, their emotional and behavioural difficulties have led in many cases to exclusion from school and sometimes long periods out of school. Speaking and listening and literacy skills are often well below those expected nationally for pupils of their age. During Key Stage 3, pupils begin to express themselves with greater clarity and widening vocabulary. Listening skills develop as they respond to the very positive programme for personal development which includes respect for others. They start to read a wider range of books both in class and in the boarding houses. Writing skills develop more slowly, as on entry some lack the fine motor control to write neatly and most find writing more than short sentences difficult. By the age of 16, pupils have made good progress overall. They join in discussions of chosen texts well, take part in play reading with enthusiasm and are able to express themselves well. Written work has developed. There is a very noticeable improvement in handwriting and presentation but there is too much copying of texts and insecurity in the use of punctuation and grammar. There is inadequate target setting in relation to writing with a view to ensuring that individuals have a planned programme for improvement.
7. Pupils' achievements and progress in mathematics are good. By the age of 14, pupils have developed good skills in number bonds, in constructing and using graphs and in understanding and using concepts such as 'mean' and 'average' and square roots. By the age of 16, pupils have built on the initial knowledge and skills and can undertake more complex work in handling data, for example. Most work on the frequency with which items appear, but higher attaining pupils move on to work on averages. They have the confidence to work on more complex investigations. They show an understanding of how they can make use of computerised presentations to solve and interpret problems.
8. Pupils' achievements and progress in science are good by the age of 11 and very good by the age of 16. During Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils make very good progress, although all pupils make good progress. Although many lack good presentational skills, they do develop good observational skills and show a good understanding of how different sources of power work. During Key Stage 4, pupils develop more self-control and choose more mature patterns of behaviour. The scope and breadth of their work increase and they make good use of the extra curriculum time available to science. Very good teaching ensures that the majority develop a good use of scientific

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<sup>1</sup> General Certificate of Secondary Education

<sup>2</sup> Associated Examining Board

<sup>3</sup> The Award School Development and Access Network

vocabulary, conduct investigations with due regard to correct procedures, analyse results and evaluate outcomes successfully.

9. Pupils' achievements would not be possible without the acquisition of better behaviour in classrooms to allow work to proceed and as pupils mature they develop better concentration and numeracy and literacy skills. There has been a substantial decline in the number of incidents of pupils running out of class or refusing to work. The introduction of homework and the support given for learning by the residential care staff have strengthened the whole atmosphere for learning within the school. In addition, the regularity of assessment has improved and this has also under-pinned progress.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

10. The school has maintained good standards in this area of its work since the time of the last inspection in 1999. Attitudes and behaviour are good, particularly amongst the older pupils who have been at the school for longer. This indicates the success the school is having in helping pupils to overcome their emotional and behavioural difficulties.
11. Pupils' attitudes to the school and to their learning are generally good. In Year 10 and 11 classes they are often very good. Pupils listen to their teachers, follow instructions and get on with their work. Their response is closely linked to the quality of the teaching they receive. When teaching is challenging and tasks are well matched to pupils' academic needs, pupils concentrate and persevere with what they are doing. In a Year 10 personal, social and health education lesson, for example, the teacher had selected cartoon drawings for discussion, which the pupils found fascinating. As a result, they all wanted to comment on these images and then produce their own poster. If their work does not interest them, however, pupils easily become distracted and this interferes with their learning. Most pupils are keen to take part in the wide range of other opportunities the school has to offer them at lunchtimes and in the evenings. They enjoy activities such as football, trampolining or computer games, and apply themselves wholeheartedly to these.
12. Behaviour in class and around the school is usually good. The older pupils are developing self-control and most know how to behave appropriately in lessons. They are aware of classroom conventions such as taking turns and listening to others. Sometimes younger pupils can be volatile and refuse to do as they are told and this wastes teaching time for the whole class. Occasionally, pupils use bad language for effect in lessons and so teachers have to spend time reminding them of what is and is not acceptable. In their houses, pupils of all ages behave consistently well for the care staff. They willingly help with household tasks, for example, such as making supper or changing beds and they treat their surroundings with respect. They look after their bedrooms and sitting rooms and do not cause deliberate damage to property. There were no permanent exclusions last year, which is good compared with similar schools. Eighteen pupils were excluded for fixed periods, when their behaviour meant they were a danger to themselves or to others. Some pupils upset others through bullying or racist comments and the school works very hard to monitor and deal with such incidents thoroughly.
13. Pupils' personal development and relationships are satisfactory. Most respond positively to the very good opportunities for social development the school offers them and the majority relate well to adults. They flourish in the warm and secure environment of their houses, where they are polite and hospitable to visitors. Relationships between pupils, however, are sometimes fragile and they often find it hard to co-operate with one another in lessons. Many lack confidence in their abilities in class and some need the constant support of adults to carry on with their tasks. Sometimes, for example, pupils are unwilling to read out loud, even though their records indicate that they are just as good as the others in their group. Girls are a minority in the school, but they stand up for themselves and do not allow boys to dominate. The school provides all pupils with very good preparation for their future life and work and some respond well to this and are successful in their work experience placements.
14. Pupils' attendance is good compared with similar schools. Most pupils come to school regularly and there is little internal truancy or lateness to lessons. The school has worked effectively to

improve attendance since the last inspection and the use of a day duty officer has ensured that for pupils it is now normal to be in lessons rather than out of them. There is less unauthorised absence than in similar schools, but there are a number of poor attenders who cause the school concern. These pupils usually have many difficulties in their lives and the school draws on a range of support services to help them.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching is very good in one fifth of lessons and it is good or very good in over half of all lessons. Teaching is unsatisfactory in 8 per cent of lessons. The high proportion of teaching that is good or better and the reduction in the number of unsatisfactory lessons shows good improvement since the previous inspection, when one third of lessons were judged to be good or better and 16 per cent of lessons were considered unsatisfactory. This overall improvement in the quality of teaching contributes positively to pupils' good learning in lessons across the school. Teachers have high expectations and these are supported by effective planning and good pupil management that demonstrate clear understanding of pupils' needs. Learning support workers work well with teachers and make a significant contribution to improving pupils' learning opportunities and promoting good behaviour. There were no differences in the quality of teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4 and teachers' secure subject knowledge in most areas enables them to promote good learning opportunities for the oldest pupils who are following externally accredited courses.
16. The teaching of science, art and mathematics (including numeracy) is very good. Teaching of the other core subject of English (including literacy) is satisfactory. ICT, French (taught only in Key Stage 3 and Year 10) and PE are well taught. There is satisfactory teaching of history, geography, and religious education. Design and technology is also taught satisfactorily overall but there are weaknesses in the teaching of resistant materials. Learning support workers are class-based and they know their pupils very well. As a result, their collaborative work with the number of different teachers who teach each class is particularly important in maintaining relationships and ensuring that individual pupils' behavioural targets are monitored closely and recorded.
17. Teaching across the school has many strong features and, therefore, pupils learn well. Pupils with additional special educational needs learn equally well. Many pupils try hard in lessons and, consequently, they achieve well in learning new skills, acquiring knowledge and developing understanding. Their efforts are supported by good concentration in most subjects and many display their positive approach to work through independent learning in lessons. Teachers promote this effective learning by providing activities that match pupils' needs and maintain their interest, because they have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. This is particularly evident in mathematics, science, art and physical education. Key subject vocabulary is identified, well promoted and emphasised in these lessons. In addition to teaching this subject-specific detail, teachers promote the basic skills of literacy and numeracy satisfactorily across both key stages, but teachers of mathematics and science do this extremely well. Pupils' development of skills in using information and communication technology is also encouraged well through many subjects of the curriculum across the school, but it is a weakness in some subjects such as English, history and geography.
18. Well planned and prepared lessons generally have clear, overall learning objectives which are shared with pupils, although the planning does not always identify the anticipated learning outcomes for individual pupils. Planning is extremely good in mathematics, science and art but is unsatisfactory in design and technology. Lessons are well structured and follow a consistent format with an introduction which recaps on what pupils have done and learned previously, a main teaching and practical middle part and a notional plenary session at the end. These plenary sessions are not effective. Teachers in many subjects, including mathematics, English, history, geography and music do not use this time to celebrate pupils' achievements by enabling pupils to show what they have learned, nor do they take the opportunity to fully assess pupils' progress. Lessons tend to finish abruptly, so that the time spent in allocating points to pupils for their achievements, effort and behaviour in lessons is extremely rushed. On a number of occasions, this is a disorganised procedure, so that pupils frequently leave lessons in a state of excitement instead of being dismissed in a calm and orderly fashion. Therefore any friction that has developed escalates as pupils change lessons and this has implications in terms of settling pupils down quickly at the beginning of the next lesson.
19. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and academic achievement. Pupils are generally well managed and, therefore, classrooms are usually orderly environments in which well-organised

and relevant activities are made enjoyable. However, not all teachers maximize the benefits to pupils of these activities. Teachers of mathematics, science, art, physical education and information and communication technology are skilful in helping pupils to learn through activities that are clearly explained, well timed and frequently changed to maintain pupils' interest. Pupils' learning is good on these occasions, because teachers combine a variety of individual, group and whole class teaching, so that collaborative work is encouraged and higher attaining pupils are challenged when they work in pairs or groups. On the other hand, teaching methods in religious education, history, geography and design and technology are sometimes much less effective, because these different strategies are not used.

20. Good relationships exist between staff and pupils. Both teachers and learning support assistants use praise and encouragement well to motivate their pupils. Pupils are willing to try out new experiences, secure in the knowledge that they are in a supportive environment in which help and guidance are readily at hand. As a result, they approach tasks with interest and concentration and many are able to demonstrate their growing maturity as they move through the school by their increased ability to work independently. Learning support assistants make a positive contribution to teaching as they are particularly effective in providing good quality individual support that maintains pupils' interest. Even though teachers monitor and direct activities learning support staff are sufficiently skilled to use their initiative and intuitively support the most demanding pupils well. Learning support assistants also have an important role in monitoring pupils' behaviour and targets in their Individual Development Plans throughout the day, as they provide a consistent link between different lessons and different teachers. However, the ways in which teachers carry out ongoing assessment of pupils' academic performance and use this information to plan the next lessons or stages of development is much less effective.
21. The use of homework is inconsistent. In subjects such as English and science it is planned for, suitably challenging and regularly provided; consequently it contributes well to pupils' learning. Teachers of other subjects do provide homework but it is not always set in the same planned and structured way. However, learning in literacy and in personal and social education is very effectively supervised and supported by the residential care staff.

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

22. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for the pupils are good and the appropriate statutory curriculum is in place. The activities are planned to suit the different abilities and special educational needs of this group of pupils.
23. On entry, all pupils are placed in a Foundation class. The aims of the Foundation class are very well realised. The main aims are to stabilise pupils, many of whom have erratic previous behaviour and attendance problems, assess their levels of achievement and identify their main learning needs and induct them into school life and rules. Pupils are transferred into other classes which have different teachers for each subject when they are thought to be ready. There is a good balance between opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy and social skills which will enable them to work in specialised subject groups later. In Year 9, pupils are involved in an environmental project under the leadership of the deputy headteacher which involves chopping up and selling logs in order to raise money to buy more 'go-peds'<sup>4</sup>. The underlying aim of the project is to develop an understanding of the work ethic. Classes are 'set' in Year 9, with some higher attaining pupils sitting for the Certificate of Achievement at end of Year 10.
24. A new 'Work-Related Curriculum' began in September: Year 11 now become day pupils three nights a week and attend colleges or have work placements in their home area on Thursday and Friday. The school is piloting this arrangement this term, monitoring placements very carefully and consulting pupils through the School Council. The initial signs are that this is working well. The changes are designed to help pupils develop the right attitudes and skills to help them find and sustain full-time employment after they leave school. In the three days that Year 11 pupils are in

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<sup>4</sup> Power-driven scooters which pupils are allowed to use, under supervision at lunchtimes



school, they study a more limited number of subjects. For pupils at Key Stage 4, the work-based curriculum is working well and, although pupils are away from school every Thursday and Friday, either at college or on work experience, they gain a great deal from this in preparation for work. Support for careers, both through work experience and careers advice is very good and entirely appropriate. They also follow courses in personal and social education and citizenship and work towards appropriate examinations, for example, GCSE examinations, Certificate of Achievement, Youth Award Scheme and ASDAN, depending on individual ability and aptitude. There were 11 leavers last July and, of those, nine had had work experience. At the end of the year, four went on to Further Education and seven pupils went into full time employment.

25. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 covers all the areas of the National Curriculum, together with religious education, personal, social and health education and citizenship, and is taught at a pace which is suitable to meet the pupils' needs. Time is well used during the school day, although the afternoon break is short and pupils can find it difficult to settle for the final two lessons of the afternoon. The senior management team are aware of this and are looking at ways to minimise the disruption. The residential care workers' support for the pupils in completing and extending their skills, particularly in personal and social development and reading is excellent and makes a positive contribution to their progress. The minority of pupils who are not boarders are supported at home to complete the tasks set.
26. The National Curriculum documents are used to inform planning for all subjects, although not all aspects of planning are referenced to the National Curriculum and are sometimes weak, for example, in history and geography. The school makes sure that everyone has a fair and equal chance to succeed. Teachers help all pupils to do as well as they can. There have been some improvements since the last inspection; for example, the mathematics curriculum is now good and well suited to the pupils' needs. But in some subjects, schemes of work, for example in citizenship, do not have sufficient detail to support teaching strategies. There is a satisfactory curriculum policy in place.
27. The curriculum co-ordinator checks the schemes of work for all the subjects and is well supported by other members of the senior management team. The headteacher also monitors aspects of the curriculum during regular monitoring of teaching. The teacher in charge of the foundation class, liaises with the subject specialists to plan the subject-specific content of lessons to ensure coverage of the schemes of work. The senior management team meet regularly to discuss curriculum development and the senior teacher in charge of the curriculum meets with the teaching staff on a regular basis for in-service training and discussion. This is satisfactory, overall, but does not include the monitoring of short term planning or of how assessment informs the planning.
28. The National Literacy Strategy for Key Stage 3 is not fully in place, although some elements of it are reflected in the teaching of English. The English co-ordinator has begun training and is receiving suitable support from the adviser to ensure implementation in the near future. Overall improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The school is rightly focusing on the development of literacy skills and the raising of reading ages across the school. There are weekly whole school learning objectives in English, for example, the use of capital letters. Although these reminders are helpful they are not precise and difficult to monitor. Reference both in teaching and short term planning to individual literacy targets is inadequate. The strategies for teaching the basic skills in numeracy are good.
29. The provision for personal, social and health education is very good as it is well supported in school and in the residential provision attached to the school. There is a suitable policy, supported by satisfactory policies for sex and drugs education. All the staff work hard to develop the pupils' skills in managing their behaviour and the individual development plans have an appropriate focus on behaviour targets. However, targets for other subjects, particularly in English, where they might be appropriate, are not written in a way that is specific and measurable enough to support individual needs and this is unsatisfactory.
30. Links with the community are good and the school makes very good extra-curricular provision with a wide range of activities such as computer games, 'go-peds', snooker and field activities.

However, some girls do not find the range of activities attractive. All the activities are very well supervised by the staff, led by the deputy headteacher. Other activities after school in the residential houses include visits to a local youth information service, membership of the local Army Cadet Force, ten pin bowling, swimming, fishing, canoeing and visits to the local sports centre. This very good variety of extra-curricular activities enables pupils to extend their experiences and gives very good support to the curriculum and pupils' learning.

31. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is very good and the school has a policy to support and rationalise the links with the community. A number of visitors come into the school from a wide range of professions, including drama groups, American pilots from the nearby airbase and the local football academy. Visitors have given poetry readings and cricket coaching. There are good links with local schools and with a donkey sanctuary as well as work on the environmental project. The pupils hold coffee mornings to support local and national 'good causes'. These activities give the pupils the opportunity to learn how to behave in a variety of social situations, help them develop interests in leisure activities and boost their confidence.
32. The school provides well, overall, for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and this finding represents good improvement since the last inspection. In the last report, spiritual development was found to be weak, but is now good and the moral and social aspects also have improved well. Cultural development however remains satisfactory as in the last report and has made no overall improvement.
33. Assemblies provide good opportunities for spiritual development when teachers usually give a "thought for the day." For example, in a good assembly during the inspection week, a passage was read about building positively on poor experiences we may receive, such as bullying. In evening sessions involving some religious education, pupils think about some of life's deeper questions such as life after death, or the existence of God. They learn to respect other people's points of view and that they themselves have a worth that is unique to them. Citizenship lessons help them to further a sense of self-awareness and to think about the meanings and purpose of life. In the more formal religious education lessons of the curriculum, pupils study the faith and practice of various world religions. For example, they understand that Muslims engage in careful, ritual washing before they enter the mosque to pray. Pupils found this out firsthand when they visited a mosque, and heard all about the worship arrangements. Art lessons often extend pupils' thinking to include appreciation of abstract ideas and paintings, as well as observational pictures of the natural world around them. In general, the school promotes pupils' spiritual development well.
34. Teachers and assistants promote moral values well and expect good behaviour both in lessons and in the boarding situations. They provide good role models for pupils and set high standards, often reinforcing rules, such as not interrupting when others are speaking. In the boarding houses, pupils are encouraged to respect one another's privacy and space and they do not enter each other's rooms unless invited. Learning support workers monitor pupils' behavioural targets well and keep good records, so that they can encourage pupils to improve their behaviour. The school teaches pupils to be tolerant of others, whatever their background or belief, and everyone's personal dignity is respected. There is a strong and positive reward system so that pupils are encouraged to behave well and earn their points. Most lessons end with the distribution of these points or "raffle" tickets, which are given for good work or behaviour and entitle the holder to enter the weekly raffle. The school teaches right from wrong and teachers and assistants frequently remind pupils of this in their daily routines and lessons. There are good opportunities for moral development throughout the school.
35. The school gives the pupils some very good opportunities for social development. A wide range of activities are available to pupils both at lunchtimes and in the evenings. For example, pupils can take part in a variety of sports, such as football, rugby or swimming. Some have joined the local Army Cadet Force, and the school arranges visits to local amenities such as the adventure parks, Youth Club or the shops. The boarding houses arrange meals in a family setting and pupils are expected to help in laying tables and clearing away. They are encouraged to try their hand at social and home making skills, such as ironing clothes, which is also encouraged by the expectations of a smart turn-out for the Cadet Force. On occasions, pupils help locally, such as

walking a dog for a local person, or becoming involved in projects such as flowers in the community or the Fairford Art Society.

36. The school council provides a very good opportunity for the members to have some influence in the organisation of the school. For example, they asked for the adventure play area to be enlarged and a drinking fountain to be installed. There are some very good residential trips, such as those to outdoor centres and the Fairford Rugby Football club helps the school with training.
37. Opportunities for pupils to develop their own cultural understanding are often good, especially in art, where the standards are very high. Some musical experiences are offered in lessons and there is music playing when pupils arrive in the hall for assemblies. Visits outside school are made to local churches, the mosque in Gloucester and to the local air base. The school has good European links with schools in Holland, France and Finland.
38. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to prepare for life in a multi-cultural society. Although the school does its best to counter racism by promoting positive and tolerant attitudes, there is no planning for visiting speakers, or visits out that will enhance pupils' understanding of ethnic minority issues or appreciate the cultural diversity and richness in modern society.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

39. Personal support and guidance for pupils are very good. This is because staff make every effort to get to know their pupils very well and because the systems the school has set up enable this to happen in a structured, well-organised way. At the heart of the school's pastoral system is the keyworker, either a residential social worker or a learning support worker. The keyworker takes responsibility for each pupil throughout their time at the school and liaises with their teachers and families. This works very well, as it helps pupils to feel secure and it allows the school to follow individuals' personal development closely. The recording and monitoring of pupils' personal progress are very good. Staff keep detailed daily records on behaviour and make excellent use of ICT to chart improvements or problems. As a result, they can determine what pupils have now achieved and what future help they may need. The school makes good use of support services wherever necessary, bringing in outside expertise to give pupils specialist help. A good system of staff and management meetings and communication books ensures that information is shared quickly between all the adults involved in the pupils' school lives. Occasionally, day pupils stay over night to take part in additional evening activities. Learning support workers provide them with additional support during the day.
40. The school pays good attention to the welfare of its pupils. Its daily routines are carefully planned and run smoothly, allowing pupils to channel their energies into a range of activities throughout the day. At break and lunchtime, however, there are fewer activities designed to appeal to girls than to boys and this can mean that girls have little to keep them occupied at those times. Health and safety in the school are satisfactory. The school is vigilant in its procedures and monitoring. However, the poor condition of much of the premises means that it is difficult to ensure that the buildings meet acceptable standards. The presence of asbestos across the site is currently a particular concern and it is important that the school's site manager is trained in dealing with and managing this issue. There are good arrangements for first aid and appropriately stringent procedures for administering and recording medication. Child protection has a high priority in the school and there are very good procedures for dealing with concerns. All staff are trained in detection and disclosure and they keep full records of any worries, however minor. The school strictly adheres to local area guidelines and makes referrals to social services where necessary.
41. Behaviour is well managed in the school. Staff usually deal with pupils calmly, but firmly, and make clear their expectations for behaviour. This means that pupils know what the acceptable standards are, even if they are unable to meet them. Teachers and support staff work well together in class, helping pupils to control their behaviour, and act as good role models for pupils. The positive relationships and co-operation between staff show them how to interact constructively with others. Occasionally, teachers can be too confrontational in their dealings with pupils, which leads to poor behaviour in class. This inconsistency in approach inflames rather than diffuses

situations. The school's points system of rewards works effectively, as pupils are anxious not to lose their privileges, but sometimes the clamour for points can interfere with the plenary session at the end of lessons. The school applies sanctions appropriately and follows its policy on restraint closely. Exclusions are used where necessary if pupils' behaviour represents a danger to themselves or to others. Staff are diligent in recording, monitoring and reporting any instances of very poor behaviour such as bullying or racism. The school handles such incidents very well, liaising with parents and drawing on support services to try to resolve the issues. The use of an internal unit is well managed and extends the strategies for managing behaviour before a fixed period exclusion is considered.

42. There are very good procedures for monitoring attendance and chasing up absence, at both a daily and a strategic level. Support staff and administrative staff record and chase up absences each day, while the senior staff monitor the poorly attending pupils closely. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection. At all times, the school liaises closely with the education welfare service and social services in order to improve attendance. These services help in a variety of ways, from transporting pupils into school in the morning, to planning the action needed to end long term absences. A particular strength of the school's approach is the emphasis staff place on the pupils' overall needs. If pupils are near to school-leaving age, for example, the focus is on ensuring that they get the necessary preparation for seeking work or a college place, rather than simply trying to get them back into school.
43. The school's residential provision is very good. The school makes the best of premises, which are inadequate, to offer pupils a secure and comfortable environment where they feel safe and protected. The house arrangement works very well. The youngest boys and the girls have the advantage of living in traditional houses with bedrooms upstairs, living rooms downstairs and an enclosed garden outside. The older boys' houses are on the top floors of the main school building, but the staff make the surroundings as homely as possible to offset the limitations of the accommodation. Pupils have adequate space for themselves and there is an appropriate balance between supervision and privacy. Care staff look after pupils very well. They adopt the same calm, but firm, manner as the teaching staff, so that the pupils experience a consistent approach day and night. The routines and facilities in each house are well suited to the ages of the pupils who live there. Mealtimes and bedtimes vary accordingly. The pupils are well fed and encouraged to have high standards of personal hygiene. Meals are well balanced, well prepared and appetising and staff try to make sure that pupils eat enough of the right foods. The care staff work hard to promote pupils' personal development. They do this through a very good range of evening activities including visits, literacy time and support groups and also by involving pupils in household chores to boost their independence and co-operation skills. Care staff make a full contribution to pupils' annual reports and reviews. The head of care and his deputy manage the provision very well and maintain a very clear overview of pupils and their progress by means of the extensive recording and monitoring systems.
44. Procedures for assessment are good. There is a good policy for recording and reporting pupils' progress. Firstly, on entry pupils are put in a Foundation class, where they are mainly taught by the same teacher. This enables the school to establish the literacy and numeracy attainment of each pupil as well as to identify their gaps in basic skills. This is important as many pupils have been out of school for considerable periods of time before coming to Coln House. The second way that progress is monitored is through the setting and monitoring of individual development plans targets each class by the learning support workers. Each pupil's progress towards their behaviour targets is recorded each lesson. Sometimes, very low levels of literacy are identified as a main impediment. Annual reviews are held regularly and impediments to progress identified. There is inconsistency in setting literacy targets which the school has already identified. Literacy targets are set at present by the English co-ordinator. However, these are not sufficiently accessible to other teachers. In order to raise standards further, literacy targets are needed for all pupils and progress in meeting them evaluated by senior management. The third system for monitoring pupils' progress is led by the deputy headteacher who keeps weekly records of lessons for each subject, identifying the topic taught and pupils' response and progress.

45. Assessment procedures in most curriculum areas are at least satisfactory and in mathematics, art, science, PE, modern foreign language and food and textile technology are good. Procedures are unsatisfactory in design and technology in relation to resistant materials such as metal and wood. The academic targets are not consistently precise. In some curriculum areas they are good but generally they are too focused towards behaviour rather than learning.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

46. The school is successful in establishing good relationships with the majority of its parents and, as a result, they have a very positive view of the school. Most feel able to approach staff with any concerns they have and believe that the school keeps them well informed and works closely with them. They feel that the school is well run and has high expectations for their children. Parents are pleased with the wide range of activities available and feel that the school is helping their children become more mature. At the meeting for parents, one commented on how much her son's behaviour had improved at home since he began attending the school. These positive views are well founded. One or two parents have concerns about the amount of homework given to their children, the standards of behaviour in the school and instances of racist comments. Inspection did not find sufficient evidence to substantiate most of these concerns. Homework is appropriate and supports the work pupils are doing in class effectively. When poor behaviour such as racism or bullying does occur, the school handles it very well. Incidents are recorded in detail and monitored carefully. The school involves pupils, parents and support services in order to deal with problems thoroughly.
47. The school's links with parents are good, because they are so closely matched to the needs of individual families. The school tries hard to establish close connections from the start, visiting the parents at home as part of the induction process. Every child has a keyworker allocated to them so that parents know who their first point of contact is and this works very well. Home books are very effectively used as the main means of communication between keyworkers and parents and both parties write in them at length. Keyworkers are vigilant about checking entries and following up concerns by telephone. Staff are always accessible on the phone to parents, and the headteacher is available to see parents at a set time each week. The school provides parents with an appropriate range of written information. The new prospectus is well designed and readable and the governors' annual report gives a clear impression of the life of the school, although it omits a number of items required by law.
48. Reports to parents on their children's progress are good. This is because they provide parents with detailed information on how well their children are doing both academically and personally. Some subjects include national levels reached by the pupils, so parents can see how their children's attainment compares with standards expected for their age. All subjects have targets for the future so parents know what their children need to do to improve. Often, though, these targets focus too much on pupils' personal development rather than their academic needs for that subject. Annual Reviews are held regularly and the majority of parents attend.
49. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to their children's education and the life of the school. Most uphold the school's work and support the school's efforts to help their children make progress. They co-operate with the school's initiatives and requests, for example in using the home book system and attending their children's Annual Reviews. As almost all live considerable distances from the school, however, it is difficult for them to play an active part in the school's daily life.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

50. Leadership and management by the headteacher and senior staff are good and have ensured that the school has continued to improve and promote good standards for pupils. They work hard to ensure a unity of purpose across the school and to maintain a purposeful and orderly atmosphere for learning. The school has been well led by the headteacher and this has enabled the school to overcome previous weaknesses and to continue to improve standards. The headteacher ensures

that there is a consistency between managers in the school and that all staff work together in the oversight and support of pupils. He is developing a new internal accreditation system and has considerably improved the quality of data collection and presentation. For example, trends in the frequency or severity of behavioural incidents are shown graphically. This means that the information is easier to understand and staff and pupils use it to reflect on progress and set new targets. The deputy headteacher has been very effective in his work to raise the standards of pupil behaviour and in monitoring pupils' progress across all subjects. He has changed the curriculum to provide additional learning opportunities to develop work-related skills and prepare pupils for employment. The head of care has maintained the high standard of residential care noted in previous inspections and, with his deputy, has developed a united and hard-working team. A senior teacher has a responsibility for timetabling and effectively coordinates the development of targets for inclusion in the individual development plans and monitoring medium term planning. However, she is also the subject co-ordinator for physical education, music and the Youth Award Scheme, with a substantial teaching commitment and has, therefore, very limited time for other aspects of the coordinator's role.

51. The key issues identified at the last inspection have been satisfactorily addressed. Pupils have made more progress and there is more evidence of better planning to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils. Monitoring of teaching by senior management and local authority inspectors is good. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection is now good and higher than that seen at the time of the last inspection when it was satisfactory. There is a need to monitor more specifically opportunities for improving literacy skills across all subjects and to set whole school targets related to this. Arrangements for improving the leadership and management of the curriculum are better, but overall responsibility for curriculum development and monitoring is not entirely clear and is shared between members of the senior management team. Nevertheless, there has been a substantial improvement in some aspects of literacy and in mathematics. There has been an improvement in the work of subject co-ordinators. The role of subject coordinator is well carried out in art, PE, mathematics and science. In the other subjects, it is satisfactory, except in design and technology in relation to resistant materials. There has been only limited progress in relation to the key issue to improve accommodation. The local authority has removed the old outdoor toilets used by the girls and built a better shower and toilet block for all pupils. It has changed access routes into the school to eliminate the hazards of vehicles delivering goods very close to classrooms and installed new cables to improve internet access. The LEA has developed better provision for science and changed access routes. The school has installed new cables and improved the kitchens in the residential areas. However, the bulk of the repair and maintenance work remains undone.
52. The school is committed to educational inclusion. This commitment is shown in a number of ways. There is very good partnership working with other agencies responsible for 'looked after' children, those on the Child Protection Register, pupils with serious attendance problems, bereaved pupils or those in danger of exclusion. This good practice has enabled pupils to stay in school and avoid any further permanent exclusion. The school is successfully developing work and college experience programmes for older pupils. Those in Year 11, for example, are helped to reduce their need for weekly boarding and, instead, work from home at least two days per week, integrating back into their local communities by attending colleges near to their homes. They take up work experience opportunities near home to increase the possibility of them finding full-time employment when they leave school. There has been good curriculum development in religious education to include a study of world religions, the Christian response to racism in Britain and the evils of prejudice, such as that experienced by Jews during the holocaust. Pupils have visited a mosque. The school has yet to monitor separately the progress of pupils from ethnic minorities, or girls or develop an overall policy on strategies to prepare pupils for life in a multicultural society.
53. The governing body has a sound awareness of the strengths of the school and areas for development. It is appropriately consulted and meets regularly. The governing body works well to support the school and has strengthened its strategic role in guiding the school over the last four years. Governors are frequent visitors to the school and they have developed good links with all staff. They intend to develop their role further in rotating their visits to cover all parts of the school day, including more visits to the residential houses. Governors have a sound understanding of

'best value'. For example, when staff make their annual application for subject funding, they are asked to justify them in terms of expected outcomes for pupils. Governors have continued to negotiate with the local authority over premises and maintenance issues.

54. The finances of the school are satisfactory and they are soundly managed, although the delay in setting the budget by the local authority causes some difficulties for the school. Capital funds available in the budget were identified over a three- year period to develop facilities for science. This very successful development has meant that a wider curriculum preparing pupils for more GCSE work, can be taught. Specific government grants are well used to support education developments such as the purchase of more computers. Tenders are generally well used, although a servicing contract for the computers has several negative features and leads to frustration for the staff. Many classroom computers have been out of action this term.
55. There is a satisfactory match of teachers to the needs of pupils and the curriculum. Generally, teachers are well informed about the special educational needs of pupils. In a small school, it is not possible to have subject expertise in all areas and this is unsatisfactory in places. Induction and on-going training are good, but more support is needed in design and technology, music, history and geography and in the use of ICT across all subjects. The school recognises the need in most of these areas.
56. Resources for learning are, overall, satisfactory.

- Resources are good in art, mathematics and science

Resources are satisfactory

- in religious education, which lacks artefacts
- in PE; fields are good, but there is no hard play areas e.g. for tennis; the gym lacks suitable equipment for secondary age pupils
- in design and technology
- in English
- in ICT, although resources are ineffective currently because of disruptions caused by building activity

Resources are unsatisfactory

- in history, which lacks computers to help develop historical enquiry skills
- in French

Resources are poor

- in geography which lacks basic equipment, such as globes, to help develop an understanding of relationships in different parts of the world.

57. Accommodation is poor. Limited improvements have been noted earlier in the report. The school had to close for one week this term as most of the toilets were out of action. There have been another two occasions in the last two years when either the school closed or parts of the school were inaccessible, due to inadequate heating or burst pipes. One of the boarding houses had no water for one evening during the inspection. The subjects most affected by the lack of space are music, art (which has virtually no storage space) and PE. However, other rooms such as the Foundation classroom are very cramped. Not all pupils have their own desk, nor is there any room around the periphery of the classroom to allow pupils to do independent work, use a computer, or to develop a reading corner or any other specialist activity. The room used for teaching the Youth Award group, which is shared by music, is a small hut where pupils sit in a very close group far too cramped to use instruments to any effect. Staff sometimes find the management of pupils and their behaviour more difficult in these very confined spaces. A serious problem for the school is the management of the asbestos, the danger arising from rotting window frames and loose roof tiles

and the leaking roof, which damages electrical systems as well as creating unpleasant working conditions. The local authority began a review of special provision some years ago, but has yet to reach a conclusion on provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. This has limited investment in maintenance and expansion of the current buildings. Boarding accommodation is quite unsuited to disabled pupils, although the access to some classrooms could be developed.



## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. To develop provision and standards further the school should improve:

- i. pupils' progress in writing and setting of consistent literacy targets across the school;  
*(paragraphs 6, 29, 44, 65)*
- ii. unsatisfactory behaviour in a small number of lessons;  
*(paragraphs 12, 18, 41, 65, 93, 99, 104, 119)*
- iii. provide better preparation for living in a multi cultural society;  
*(paragraphs 32, 38)*

The local education authority should help the school to improve:

- iv. the standard of accommodation.  
*(paragraphs 40, 43, 51, 57)*

In addition, the school should make minor improvements to the governors' annual report to parents (paragraph 47).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	59
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	13	21	20	5	0	0
Percentage	0	22	36	34	8	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	54
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	19

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

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.8

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

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001			

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total		3	2

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)***

GCSE Results June 2001

Boys  
Girls  
Both

Pupils aged 15

9  
3  
12

Pupils achieving 5 A\*-C grades

0  
0  
0

Pupils achieving 5 A\*-G grades

0  
0  
0

Pupils achieving 1 A\*-G grades

5  
3  
8

Total points score

35  
19  
54

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	26
Any other minority ethnic group	19

**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	37	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: Y6 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4.8
Average class size	6.0

**Education support staff: Y6– Y11**

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	638

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Financial information**

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	1,122,825
Total expenditure	1,176,739
Expenditure per pupil	26,744
Balance brought forward from previous year	62,505
Balance carried forward to next year	8,591

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*



## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	53
Number of questionnaires returned	10

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	50	0	10	0
My child is making good progress in school.	30	60	10	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	20	50	20	0	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	20	20	10	10
The teaching is good.	50	40	10	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	80	10	10	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	10	10	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	20	10	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	70	20	10	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	80	10	0	0	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	20	10	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	60	30	0	0	10

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

### **ENGLISH**

59. Pupils' achievements in English are satisfactory. By the age of 14, they have made satisfactory progress and by the age of 16 progress is generally good. Progress in reading is good throughout the school. Higher attaining pupils are entered for GCSE and in 2001 six pupils gained passes. Six pupils gained distinctions for English examinations in the Certificate of Achievement, two pupils gained merit passes and one pupil gained a pass. In the end of Key Stage 3 tests last summer, of the 11 pupils on roll, only three took the tests and were at level 3 of the National Curriculum. Improvement since the last inspection is good, particularly in the monitoring and assessment of reading and the gains made in reading ages over the last 12 months. Suitable targets are set for the pupils' reading levels and the pupils are aware of the test results and show pride in their achievements in gaining higher scores over time. Pupils with additional special needs make satisfactory progress and all pupils are included in lessons and have equality of access.
60. Pupils are most confident and make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening. Nevertheless, limited vocabulary sometimes makes it difficult for them to express themselves and they do not always listen to what their peers are saying. Pupils at Key Stage 4 are able to discuss the effect that society has on the characters in the play 'An Inspector Calls' and act out scenes from the play, demonstrating their understanding. They are able to answer questions about the play, express their opinions about the characters and tell the others what they would do in a given situation. The younger pupils in Key Stage 4 are able to discuss story structure and show a particular interest in the Harry Potter novels. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 are able to describe how Macbeth's character changes as the play progresses and to identify the main characters in the play. They are beginning to understand the impact which a change of tone has when characters are speaking. The younger pupils in Key Stage 3 are able to describe the stories in their reading books with enthusiasm.
61. Pupils make good progress, overall, in reading. Pupils in Year 9 make a creditable attempt when reading the witches' scene in Shakespeare's Macbeth in the original text before seeing it on film. The pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 read the play 'An Inspector Calls' with expression and understanding. Pupils at both key stages make good progress over time in reading. The more able read with expression and fluency and some are able to predict the outcomes of the book they are reading. However, others do not have the word attack skills to read new words. All the pupils are able to talk about the books they are reading and some are able to write about them. The support given to the pupils by the staff in the residential houses is very good. They listen to the pupils read on a regular basis, record the work well and support the pupils in writing about what they have read. The pupils are tested three times a year, using a standardised reading test and progress is carefully recorded. There is evidence that all pupils make good progress.
62. Pupils' progress in handwriting and extended writing is satisfactory, overall. Presentation of the work is less satisfactory and pupils find it difficult to write without help. They become frustrated when the work does not look good to them. Some have difficulty in forming letters and focused work is done in the Foundation class in handwriting. Some of the younger pupils and those who are new to the school are still working at level 2 of the National Curriculum. They write in short sentences and are unsure of using basic punctuation. This is often due to prolonged absences at their previous schools and their difficulties in forming letters. Pupils in Key Stage 3 have difficulty in presenting written work well and writing is generally less well formed; sentences are also less well structured. Some of the older pupils are able to write more extended prose, although too much of their written work consists of copying texts. A majority of older pupils have difficulty with tenses, sentence structure and the use of punctuation and capital letters. Marking does not always help the pupils learn what they should do to improve their writing. It is not consistent nor does it reflect the marking policy.

63. The quality of teaching and the pupils learning in English is satisfactory, overall. There were examples of good and very good teaching in the lessons observed. Where the teaching is very good, the teacher's subject knowledge and enthusiasm had a very positive effect on the pupils' learning, helping them to understand characters in a play. The pupils respond with enthusiasm, concentrate well and work hard. Relationships between staff and pupils and pupils and pupils are good. Very good use is made of the elements of the National Literacy Strategy, such as word and sentence work, especially in the Foundation class. The pace of lessons is good, helping the pupils to stay on task. Good questioning is used to check pupils' understanding of text or issues within a play, and the pupils learn to express opinions in a thoughtful way. The effort made by the pupils acting parts is good and this helps them to learn in a concrete way about the intentions and moral values of the characters. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory the lack of a proper plenary session is a weakness. Pupils need more opportunity to discuss or consolidate what has been learned during the lesson.
64. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is satisfactory. When objectives are not clear and the tasks are less challenging, behaviour is adversely affected. Pupils become restless and lose concentration. The use of homework in English is good and very well supported by the care staff. Homework is referred to appropriately during the lessons and clearly linked to the lesson. There is an over-reliance on photocopied sheets and exercises which includes cutting and pasting. ICT is not used sufficiently for drafting and producing good quality writing by the pupils. Individual learning plans have objectives for English, but they are not specific enough to measure progress and they do not sufficiently inform lesson planning.
65. The co-ordination of English is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a suitable job description and she is a qualified English specialist. She is relatively new to teaching and to the school, but has already made a positive impact on the teaching and learning in the subject. The results of reading tests are carefully analysed and show a positive trend. The introduction of an appropriate reading scheme, the use of homework and the support of the residential care staff contribute to the pupils' good progress in reading. The appropriate emphasis on reading throughout the school is reflected in the good progress pupils make in the reading ages they achieve. The library is still under construction. The scheme of work for English is linked to the National Curriculum, although not through specific references. The texts for both key stages and for examination work are well chosen and supported by visual and video resources. The resources and accommodation for English are satisfactory and the room used for the majority of teaching in the subject has a good range of displays to support the pupils' learning. There are sufficient computers available in the classroom. The National Literacy Strategy has yet to be introduced on a formal basis, but there are examples of many of the elements already in place.

## **MATHEMATICS**

66. Mathematics is an improving subject and standards of achievement by the end of Key Stage 3 are good. Pupils make good progress towards their targets, and they acquire new skills and learn well from the programme, which covers all the necessary topics of mathematics. They apply these skills in their written work when they solve problems from their textbooks. Teachers and assistants give them very good support, and most pupils receive individual help in each lesson.
67. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils also achieve well and make good progress. A few pupils enter GCSE examinations and are successful when measured against similar schools, but the majority enter for the Certificate of Achievement, where their results are good. In 2001, 12 pupils gained grade 3, and 3 pupils gained grade 2, from a total of 19 entrants. Teachers and assistants ensure that all pupils have appropriate work and receive the help that is needed. Teachers and assistants work very well together for the benefit of these pupils.
68. However, the most significant measure of pupils' progress is the school's analysis of the gains that they make, expressed by charts and graphs, so that progress can be seen at a glance. These charts demonstrate how well pupils do in mathematics when matched against their real ages in years and months and over six months there has been significant progress across all levels for the



majority of pupils. This shows good improvement since the last inspection, where achievement was reported as weak at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at Key Stage 4.

69. The quality of teaching and learning is generally very good, with none of the lessons that were observed being unsatisfactory. This leads to good progress by the majority of pupils. At the start of lessons, teachers begin with some quick fire mental mathematics to warm up before moving to the main part of the lesson. For example, a Year 9 lesson started with some tables work and finding the square root of numbers. Pupils were keen to answer and this prepared them well for getting down to work on the main part of the lesson.
70. Planning for lessons is very good and the structure of them ensures that pupils are actively engaged in written work very quickly after the start of the lessons. One of the strengths of the subject is the very good pace that teachers set for lessons. This means that pupils are appropriately challenged, that they maintain an interest and behave very well in most lessons. For example, in a Year 8 lesson when pupils were seen plotting graphs, teaching and learning were very good because of the very brisk pace and challenge. The teacher gave very good explanations of how to do the work and followed this immediately with opportunities to use the new skills. Teachers and support assistants take care to encourage pupils to be neat and tidy in their presentation of mathematics and to ensure appropriate responses and behaviour in lessons. Presentation is improved by putting the day and date and underlining. The relatively new pupils in the Foundation class were seen learning to use a ruler, and to use it to double the length of the lines they had drawn. Much of the lesson was spent in establishing good behaviour and appropriate responses to mathematics and the adults conveyed their expectations well, so that pupils behaved well and remained focused on their work.
71. Teachers show good management of pupils and in several lessons pupils' attitude and behaviour were very good. In the Year 10 class, pupils worked very hard and were very well behaved. It was difficult to recall that they have behavioural difficulties and their response in this lesson was exemplary. Teachers ensure the inclusion of all pupils in the work, providing suitably graded tasks and some work that extends those who are able to do the main task quickly. This inclusion extends across the range of ages and abilities. One pupil worked on problems planned for an older class, in order to stretch his ability and press on with more challenging work. Teachers make mathematics as relevant as possible to everyday life. For example, Year 11 certificate group were seen in a lesson working on data from weather charts, while two were studying for GCSE examinations, working from the textbook, receiving a good level of help from both the teacher and the assistant.
72. Appropriate mathematics vocabulary plays an important part in these lessons and teachers frequently use the new topic's words, such as 'mean,' 'average,' and 'mode.' They provide easy to remember methods such as the "along the corridor and up the stairs" when pupils worked on graphs and data. In this way, pupils remembered to use the horizontal figures first and the vertical ones second.
73. The subject is well led by the new co-ordinator, and the overall planning is successfully linked to the National Numeracy Strategy, together with a mathematics project, which is modified to suit pupils' needs. The co-ordinator clearly understands what is required to improve standards and manages and monitors the subject well. The assessment of pupils' work is good and there are frequent tests to check that pupils have understood the work. Results are analysed carefully and used to focus areas for development when new planning is undertaken.
74. Numeracy skills are used in other subjects when the occasion arises. For example in geography, Year 8 related the time of day to the weather conditions when they were studying the equatorial rain forest. They interpreted the data and transferred it to line and block graphs. In history, pupils calculated how long Henry VIII lived, when given his date of birth and when he died.
75. Mathematics is an improving subject and the better planning and organisational systems mean that pupils are making good progress towards the targets set for them.

## SCIENCE

76. Science is a strength of the school as teaching and learning are very good.
77. The standards achieved by pupils are good. Achievement for pupils between 14 and 16 is very good and for pupils aged 11 to 14 is good. The difference is because, although the younger pupils are improving well, their progress is not yet secure. Higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 3 make good progress. Low and middle-attaining pupils, especially those aged 12 and 13, progress well. They showed this in a mixed-age Key Stage 3 class made up of pupils who are new to the school. They watched a demonstration of a hand-powered turbine, so as to understand how turbines can be powered. The high-attaining pupils understood quickly how wind, water and tides could also be used. Most others in the class followed the ideas given by the teacher well, but without thinking hard. A few did not focus on the topic full-time because of their emotional and behavioural difficulties. In contrast, the older pupils in Key Stage 4 consistently work hard, so that their progress is very good. For example, pupils aged 15 have completed a lot of work in the first term of their leavers year. An impressively wide range of coursework has been completed, including magnetism, flotation, displacement of metals from solutions, and personal reaction times. Both low- and high-attaining pupils are completing coursework within the range needed to attain a grade at GCSE.
78. Overall, for Key Stages 3 and 4, achievement is consistent over the full range expected of science, broadly scientific investigation, life process, materials and physical processes. Pupils write carefully and present their work very well. By age 16, pupils can describe an experiment clearly, analyse strengths and weaknesses in the procedure and draw conclusions. Number skills are adequate, including good attainment in drawing and interpreted graphs. Computers are used well, such as good competence at data handling.
79. Standards by age 16 have been good in recent years and are now even better. Up to 2001 all pupils completed the Certificate of Educational Achievement, the majority with a merit grade. Now pupils, by age 16, work effectively at GCSE level. Pupils by age 14 attain well in the national tests. The results have improved steadily since 1999. For example, in both 2000 and 2001, the cohort attained Levels in the range 3-5. This means the school is able to secure appropriate attainment for high-attaining pupils and ensure that all pupils make significant progress in terms of national expectations for their age-group. There are no differences in progress for science amongst the various groups at the school. Boys and girls prosper equally well, including pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. Pupils new to the school quickly settle and learn as well as the other pupils.
80. Science provision is now much better than it was at the time of the previous inspection in 1999. Standards were then good and are now very good, especially for Key Stage 4. Also the school has invested well, so that pupils now learn in specialist accommodation, with age-appropriate resources. The science coordinator has shown very good leadership by making sure pupils benefit immediately from these much better resources, extending attainment to GCSE even for the current leavers group. The new provision was completed only a week or so before the inspection.
81. Teaching and learning overall are both very good, for pupils of all ages. Pupils take a strong interest in science and they work at a very productive pace. This is largely because the teacher plans very thoroughly. Plenty of work is available, including extension work. The work is very well matched to the previous levels of work achieved, so as to be manageable by pupils. The teacher controls behaviour very well, calmly and promptly steadying any misbehaviour as well as giving instant feedback as soon as a pupil achieves well. The support staff are used exceptionally well. They contribute greatly to the very good learning because they are confident and clear in the way they integrate what they do with the teachers' overall objectives. An additional strength of the teaching is that the work set is ambitious - much is expected of the pupils. Pupils, especially pupils in Key Stage 4, make very good gains in knowledge and understanding in their lessons. For example, a Year 10 class compared skin sensitivity by touching with calipers on areas such as fingertips and the back of the neck. Equipment was very well organised to avoid pupils becoming frustrated. Word lists and other aids were to hand to help the writing. Teacher and

support staff were unflappable and precise as they directed pupils to cover the planned objectives. Consequently, pupils made clear predictions, which they remembered as they checked for results. Then they wrote clear scientific conclusions, with good use of technical scientific terms. Most pupils learnt very well and enjoyed their success and even one boy who was prone to silly behaviour made good progress

82. Achievement is boosted significantly by several other factors. The coordination of science is extremely thorough. Schemes of work are fully detailed, such as the resources and teaching methods to be used. Assessment systems track the detail of learning for each unit, including ample references to National Curriculum Levels. Clear targets are set for pupils for future units of work based on how well they have achieved so far. The leadership of science is exceptionally good. GCSE work has been introduced very effectively so that pupils have been able to achieve this more demanding standard. The new specialist accommodation is used to very good effect. Many changes have been successfully implemented during the re-building period. For example, twenty three pupils new to the school have been helped so well that most learn to the same high level as the already well-established pupils.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

83. Pupils of all ages achieve very well in art and design. They are given a very wide range of experiences, with many references to famous artists and sculptors and they produce their own work after the style of these famous names. For example, two pupils have made a very large model of a hamburger after the style of Oldenburg. They researched on the Internet, found reproductions of his work and then designed and made the model, which is excellent. Pupils' folders are full of such examples and they work from their own observations, their imagination, or follow the leads from their research. The most recent GCSE results for 2001 exceeded the school's targets and were good. Often, pupils' work is above that which would be expected for their ages.
84. All pupils have experience of a range of two- and three-dimensional work and there are some good examples on display in the art room, such as the pictures and the mobiles that pupils have made that have a bicycle theme.
85. There have been good improvements since the last report, most especially in teaching, which is now very good and in the overall planning which gives such a wide range of work. The quality of teaching and learning is very good across both key stages. An analysis of pupils' work across all the year groups shows that the teaching in a range of skills enables pupils to make very good progress. For example, they have done some work on cave paintings, distortion pictures, and sometimes use the computer to generate pictures for colouring or cutting out. Pupils are given overall themes such as 'water' and for several lessons they work on related themes. So, in Year 11 they were seen working on card prints of fish. After only a brief demonstration from the teacher, pupils set to work cutting out shapes, which when pasted onto card, later made the finished print. They produced some very imaginative work, with a crab design from one, and some 'skeleton' fish from others. Pupils finished some very good pictures after the crayon rubbing over the resultant relief composition. Some were taken to assembly later, as a celebration of the good work.
86. The teacher plans very well and this enables pupils to paint, draw, make collages, work with textiles, and model in plaster. They research from books, paintings and on the computer so that they have some good ideas before they begin.
87. The art room is full of colour and vibrancy. There is a huge montage of poppies and texts, for the theme, 'War and Peace' at Remembrance. Pupils have produced a very large poster of work on the Black Death, with models of rats as well as their written work to strengthen links with history. Some of the blown ink silhouettes on display are excellent and there are examples of observational drawings, still life and some very good compilations about work and industry. Pupils work in pastels and make three-dimensional models such as the large "Man Standing", or a huge shark suspended from the ceiling. The pictures done by pupils in the style of Mondrian are excellent, and there is an impressive direct print of a pair of jeans, coloured in gold; simple, but very effective. Pupils show much flair and imagination, ably led by the teacher, and he ensures that all pupils are

included in the art lessons. For those who are not keen on art work, there is direct access to the Internet; what they can find and read for the teacher is used by the class as a basis for the work. This is very good practice and means that everyone is always fully involved.

88. Very good organisation and a relaxed but industrious atmosphere are always part of art lessons. Pupils get straight to work after a short introduction and may take two or three lessons to complete a project. They take much pride in their work and clearly enjoy art and the success it brings. The co-ordinator manages the subject very well. His great strength lies in the large range of experiences that he has planned for pupils. These experiences are ideally suited to pupils' needs and there is a good range of resources and materials that enhance pupils' learning well. Art and design is a strength of the school. Pupils experience a good deal of success in this subject and it helps their self-esteem greatly. Standards are high and examination successes show the overall success of the subject.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

89. Pupils achieve a satisfactory standard overall, although this reflects a balance between good standards in food technology and textiles and unsatisfactory standards in work with wood and metal [resistant materials].
90. Standards in both food technology and textiles are good. By age 14, pupils achieve well in both these elements of design and technology. They design with sketches based on clearly expressed ideas. They check and then improve their products. They convert their designs into practice competently, using a reasonable range of tools and materials. For example, a Year 9 pupil has completed several projects. In one project he compared cake mixes by making and then testing. In another he designed and made a working kite. By age 15, standards are higher. For example, last year a pupil studied various styles of pasta-based meals. The design work was good. Surveys were conducted and the needs of several types of consumer were considered. The final meal was much better suited to people's requirements than the first attempt. Pupils cease to study design and technology in Year 10 and just a few of the pupils coming up to age 15 complete the relevant Certificate of Educational Achievement. Attainments include Distinction, Merit and Pass levels.
91. Achievements in work with resistant materials are unsatisfactory. Over a year ago, a few pupils attained well in the relevant Certificate of Educational Achievement. Current work shows limitations in achievement. Many pupils up to age 14 have little completed work to show, especially design work. A few pupils coming up to age 15 are progressing reasonably to the level required by the Certificate of Educational Achievement. For example, they are on a project to make a fisherman's stool. The pupils have made a model, with sound ideas about how to meet the needs of the user. The first steps in the making of the full-scale product are sturdy enough, though not yet well-finished.
92. Achievements have fallen since the last inspection, due to weak provision for design and technology, using resistant materials. Teaching and learning about resistant materials require improvement.
93. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, but the range is from good to unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory teaching is in lessons where pupils work with resistant materials. Pupils do not gain enough understanding about design, nor do they increase their skills enough because the pace of work is unsatisfactory and the conditions needed to foster concentration are lacking. The teacher too often lets behaviour deteriorate. The methods used to manage behaviour create stress and pupils cannot make progress. Often these weaknesses are linked to simplistic planning. When tasks were set with a better combination of design and make, then pupils learnt satisfactorily. Sometimes their concentration was weak, but mostly pupils had enough interest to maintain an adequate focus on the work. The good teaching in textiles includes calm and clear action to manage behaviour. The planning is very thorough so that pupils have plenty to do and interesting matters to think about. The good lessons include feedback to

pupils so that they begin to understand how to improve their work and useful homework involving design tasks is set.

94. Several factors affect achievement. The areas needing improvement in design and technology have been monitored, but the steps taken have not yet resolved matters. The curriculum leaders differ greatly in the success with which they manage their separate elements. For example, curriculum and assessment systems for food technology and textiles are very well organised. These systems are lacking for design and technology, using resistant materials. Neither subject area is making sufficient contribution to other areas of learning, such as to enhance pupils' capability with information technology, or work to enhance pupils' social and cultural development.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

95. Pupils' achievements in lessons are satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress over time. Therefore, they are able to follow an externally accredited course in Key Stage 4 and many are successful in obtaining a Certificate of Educational Achievement at the end of Year 10.
96. Subject planning identifies a broad and balanced curriculum, but this was not evident in the sample of pupils' work that was examined. However, pupils do develop a number of geographical skills and extend their understanding and knowledge of different places during Key Stage 3. Therefore, at the age of fourteen they know the locations of significant places in the British Isles and some identify the location of major European and world countries, cities and features, such as continents and oceans. They understand the social and environmental differences between major cities such as London and small market towns and represent these differences, such as occupations, means of travel and amenities, as simple block graphs and pie charts. Topics such as this also develop pupils' understanding of the differences between physical and human features, so that they know how local environments can be improved or damaged. Pupils get a much wider perspective on such issues through studies of ecosystems like the tropical rain forest, so that they know about the effect man can have by damaging natural vegetation.
97. Fifteen year old pupils develop geographical skills well through investigations, using local resources that form part of their accredited course work. In particular, they develop the skills of collecting data, presenting the information and interpreting it. They do this through investigations that include measuring the dimensions of a local river and calculating the rate of flow of water and shopping surveys in bigger local towns such as Cirencester. Pupils also improve their mapping skills through using street maps, so that they understand the use of scale. Travel maps extend their numeracy skills as they use airport and rail timetables to calculate travel times.
98. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Strengths in the teaching include the good use of targeted questioning to include all pupils and to assess understanding and to identify gaps in knowledge. This is particularly effective when questions and explanations are linked closely to the learning objectives identified in planning. Teachers are also adept at providing activities that encourage pupils to extract and interpret information through independent work. As a result of such expectations a class of fourteen year olds extended their understanding of climate and its effect on vegetation through retrieving information from a text and developed their numeracy skills through extracting information from a table and displaying it as line and block graphs. Teachers' good behaviour management also invariably promotes pupils' progress in lessons when teaching is satisfactory so that they are able to learn without distractions caused by other pupils' inappropriate behaviour. Learning support workers provide a significant input when working with individual pupils.
99. Although teaching was satisfactory overall, some lessons did have unsatisfactory features that restricted pupils' learning opportunities. In particular, higher attaining pupils were not sufficiently challenged in a number of ways. Main teaching sessions did not challenge pupils to make predictions or to draw inferences, such as how the climate might change if equatorial rain forest is destroyed. Similarly, extension tasks that required these pupils to investigate and report in more detail were not identified and work that promoted additional challenge through small group discussion and activities was not considered. The lack of group work also reduced opportunities to develop pupils' social and communication skills through collaborative work.

100. The whole-school management and co-ordination of geography is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has produced plans for the subject and a policy statement is in place. However, this has a number of omissions that are evident in practice. The absence of detailed references to the use of local facilities and the contribution the subject can make to promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in the under- use of the local environment in Key Stage 3. Subject resources are poor, to the extent that a teacher could not demonstrate the world areas of highest volcanic activity on a globe because the school does not possess one. Procedures for assessing pupils' geographical skills, knowledge and understanding are in place, but they are not yet sufficiently refined to relate back to the National Curriculum programme of study.

## **HISTORY**

101. Pupils' achievements in lessons in Key Stage 3 are satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress by the age of fourteen. The oldest pupils do not study history. Previously, a restricted curriculum reduced pupils' learning opportunities, but improved planning is now beginning to develop a subject curriculum that is broader and increasingly challenging during Key Stage 3. This means that pupils now follow a curriculum that is more balanced in terms of the different periods of history that they study.
102. By the age of fourteen, pupils have increased their knowledge of a number of different periods of British history. They know about the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I and significant events that occurred in Tudor times, and many features of the Industrial Revolution associated with factories and the growth of industry. Pupils have also developed some understanding of other societies from the past. They have learned the features and background of these past societies, such as details of the Roman Empire, and understand characteristics of aspects of everyday life and details associated with the Roman occupation of Britain. Pupils also develop historical skills of enquiry through their study of British, European and world societies. They are encouraged to learn about the past by seeking clues and therefore they know about potential sources of evidence. Consequently, they have an emerging understanding of the differences between primary and secondary sources through studies of topics such as Europe and the Slave Trade. Topics such as this contribute well to pupils' moral and cultural development.
103. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall, although some unsatisfactory teaching was observed. When teaching is satisfactory, pupils are presented with a good mix of activities that are varied and interesting and build systematically on their previous learning. As a result, pupils generally remain attentive and responsive, because they have good understanding of the subject content and pupil management is secure. These features were evident in a lesson when a class of fourteen year olds extended their understanding of the life of Henry VIII. The teacher presented a range of activities that encouraged pupils' speaking and listening skills and provided opportunities for reading and written work. The teacher used a good mixture of explanation and questioning to prompt pupils to make contributions about the characteristics of Henry VIII and opportunities to reinforce other basic skills were used well. For example, numeracy skills were encouraged as pupils were challenged to calculate mentally the king's age when he died given the dates of his birth and death. The written activity further developed pupils' knowledge of the period and learning. Support workers were particularly effective in working with individual pupils to assess their understanding. However, a weakness in all lessons is the lack of variation in teaching methods, particularly the use of group work to provide extension activities that meet the needs of higher attaining pupils.
104. At other times, pupils do not make progress, because teaching has a significant number of unsatisfactory features, most notably when teachers' classroom management skills are ineffective. On these occasions, teachers do not gain the attention of all pupils before beginning or changing activities and insufficient use is made of the whiteboard to plan and demonstrate what is required. As a result, pupils' learning is unsatisfactory, because they do not have an understanding of what they have to do and find independent work difficult. They are increasingly demanding of the adults' time and when this is not provided quickly pupils become increasingly disinterested and disruptive.

Poor behaviour disrupts the learning of other pupils and it takes time before classroom order is restored.

105. The subject co-ordinator is not a subject specialist, but is keen and enthusiastic, so that overall management of the subject is satisfactory. As a result, long term planning schemes are in place and assessment procedures have been developed. However, these are not yet sufficiently sharp and focused to record precisely what pupils can do, know and understand. Resources for the subject are inadequate and the school does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to use new technology as part of their historical investigations.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

106. Achievement for pupils aged from 14 up to 16 is good. Achievement by pupils aged 11 to 14 is satisfactory. The difference is because newer pupils lack basic skills. Until recently, the school did not do enough to teach information and communication technology to pupils aged 11 to 14. The work now with the youngest pupils is interesting and varied. For example, they use clip art and word-processing to produce attractive documents, such as birthday invitations. The pupils in Year 9, so far, have completed similar tasks to the same standard as the younger pupils. However, recently they are making better progress. Pupils were seen using a spreadsheet to calculate costs. Most learnt quickly how to create a formula and then began to understand why the spreadsheet method is more useful than just using a calculator. Even so, some were unsure about the basic task of how to save their work onto a disc. Standards by age 16 are better, because pupils understand how their work can be applied to real purposes, for example, using spreadsheets. They understood that they were costing a business proposal. They used the spreadsheet competently. They understood why and how they needed to integrate information found from the internet into their costings. Standards now for pupils by the age of 16 are in line with the level required for the Certificate of Educational Achievement. In the previous two years, all pupils have attained distinction in this Certificate.
107. Provision of information and communication technology is in transition. In the previous inspection provision was satisfactory. The situation is the same now. However, teaching and learning are now good, and the very recent improvements in resources and leadership already benefit pupils. The school is well placed to bring about strong improvement. Pupils improve their capability in information technology to a satisfactory extent through work in some of the other subjects. The contributions from work in science and art are very substantial. The contributions from work in history, geography, religious education and design and technology are insufficient. Progress and standards are equal for boys and girls and for pupils from different ethnic groups. Pupils new to the school settle quickly and very soon learn as well as the others.
108. Teaching and learning are both good, for pupils of all ages. Pupils make a good effort to understand the work and they work productively. Mostly they concentrate well and many older pupils learn with a good degree of independence. Pupils enjoy working on the computer. The activity enhances confidence and this helps many cope better with their emotional and behavioural difficulties. The effective teaching creates these strengths in learning. In particular, both teacher and support staff meet the needs of the pupils very well. In part, this is because lessons are planned in detail, including how work is to be presented differently to match individual needs. The control of behaviour is very good, because it rapidly achieves the required effect with pupils. For example, pupils in a Year 10 class started the lesson tired and unhelpful. Gradually, as the teacher carried through the well-planned lesson, pupils took interest and made good progress. In a Year 7 lesson the teacher was very alert, effective and calm in asserting control. A boy spontaneously apologised after a glance from the teacher, after he rather rudely resisted an instruction. A weepy pupil calmed herself largely because the atmosphere created by the teacher was so encouraging. All pupils in this class made good progress.
109. Other factors are boosting achievement. The school has recently recruited an effective curriculum leader. The school is aware that it lacks a fully completed scheme of work for information and communication technology. As yet, there is no formal assessment system. These gaps are not yet hampering achievement, because the lessons are planned in detail, including effective planning for individual needs. The hardware is adequate to help pupils use information technology effectively in other lessons. Staff have adequate levels of training. As yet, the installation of the network is not complete and it is not able to sustain the required level of use of the equipment in all areas. Even so, progress in information and communication technology is good because the school gives enough time for lessons for all classes, in a suitably equipped specialist room. The curriculum leader overcomes the many problems caused by the weaknesses in installation for that room. The commitment and determination to bring about success for the pupils is exceptional. Pupils achieve well. The school has the staff and resources in place to sustain further improvement.



## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

### French

110. The standards of attainment of almost all pupils in French are well below average compared with national averages. However, their achievement is good in lessons and almost all pupils have good pronunciation and reliable aural memories. Older pupils study for the Certificate of Achievement in French and last year achieved satisfying results. At both key stages, pupils are able to repeat words and phrases after the teacher with a good accent. This is because the teacher insists on good pronunciation and will not accept anglicised versions. It is also because the pupils are very good at listening and thoroughly enjoy the aural drill, which begins each lesson. The great majority of pupils are eager to speak the French phrases they know, which they accompany with Gallic shrugs where their vocabulary is insufficient for what they actually want to say. Much of the start to lessons is vocabulary and pronunciation drill by the direct teaching method and pupils respond to this approach very well.
111. In a lesson for pupils at the beginning of Key Stage 3, they worked on developing their vocabulary for animals and pets. Because they are good listeners, they were readily able to work out what an animal might be from the teacher's pronunciation, such as 'tigre' though they were a little stumped initially by the mention of a 'cochon d'Inde', though at the end of the lesson they all remembered that it was a guinea pig. They all knew a great deal more at the end of this lesson than they did at the beginning.
112. In a lesson for pupils in Key Stage 4, they revised their knowledge of numbers, which they had acquired last term. At the beginning of the lesson, they struggled to remember single words for numbers, such as 'vingt' or 'trente' but by the end of the session and after much jollity, all pupils could reliably manage such complicated numbers as 'quatre-vingt quinze'.
113. The pupils enjoy their lessons. They know that they are ensured of success, provided they listen and co-operate and most of them show enthusiasm for the activities and game-type tasks which they are expected to do. They often work well together and there is much humour in the lessons. The singing of 'Ancien MacDonald a une ferme' was done by the younger pupils with gusto and hilarity. This enables them to remember the vocabulary automatically.
114. The standard of teaching is good, sometimes very good. The teachers and learning support workers operate very well together to ensure that pupils remain involved in their learning and therefore successful. There are good relationships between the adults and pupils in the classroom. There is secure subject knowledge and excellent pronunciation. All pupils are ensured equality of opportunity within the subject. The planned differentiation within tasks to accommodate differing abilities is good. There is sometimes positive discrimination towards the girls in the classes, as there are so few of them. The teacher points out that, instead of 'je suis anglais' for the boys, they have the use of the feminine form of 'je suis anglaise' and as a result, everyone learns more. The curriculum is logical, and follows the National Curriculum, though occasionally it may be necessary to work from a lower key stage focus than actually applies to some pupils, in order to ensure their success. Recently-devised assessment procedures ensure that both the pupils and teachers can clearly see, in graphic form, the progress which pupils have made and where there are gaps which need to be filled or extra work to be done. This is particularly useful for the older pupils studying for their Certificate of Achievement. Although the learning targets on the pupils' individual education plans are not yet sufficiently subject-specific, there has been good improvement in the school's provision for French since the last inspection.
115. The department is significantly under-resourced, but very good use is made of the materials which are available. Inventive use is made of programs and materials available from the Internet and pupils are encouraged to check their written responses and confirm their understanding, through the use of the computer. This sustains their effort, concentration, success and delight. Construction of more subject specific targets for the pupils' individual development plans will greatly assist pupils' progress in the future.

## MUSIC

116. Insufficient lessons were seen to make an overall judgement on the teaching of music. Standards in music are well below national expectations; however, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress over time.
117. All pupils in Key Stage 3 are involved in the music lessons and there is equality of access and opportunity. The younger pupils are able to use the vocabulary they have learned to describe different types of vocal sounds, for example, a drone and a chant. They listen with concentration to different types of music, for example, chants and more complex music by Mozart and are able to compare and contrast the sounds. They are beginning to represent the sounds through drawing patterns for the sounds from simple straight lines for a drone to more complex lines for high and low notes. The older pupils are able to choose instruments to play, but have difficulty in containing their enthusiasm to play and the rhythms they play lack discipline. They are able to contribute to a multiphonic exercise, but do not always listen to each other's playing sufficiently. Some of the pupils are able to conduct the others while they play and do this with a satisfactory sense of rhythm and timing. If the exercise becomes too complicated, for example overlapping series of rhythms mainly played on percussion instruments, the rhythm falters and the pupils cannot regain the appropriate pattern.
118. There are additional opportunities for the pupils to sing during assemblies and they join in the singing well. The older pupils work on musicals such as 'Cats' and link this with the poems of T S Eliot.
119. The lessons indicate that the long term planning for music is satisfactory and that a subject appropriate vocabulary is used. The plans are linked to the National Curriculum and a wide variety of music is covered, as well as simple notation and the development of music over time. The planning does, however, indicate that too much is attempted in each lesson and this is reflected in the pupils' behaviour which at times can be noisy and undisciplined. The pupils do learn to interpret sound pictures into actual sounds and can play a range of simple instruments. The assessment of what the pupils learn is satisfactory as is the teacher's use of subject specific vocabulary.
120. The curriculum is satisfactorily based on the National Curriculum programmes of study and the school's scheme of work is also satisfactory. The co-ordinator is not a music specialist and her leadership of the subject is praiseworthy. The resources for music are satisfactory, but the accommodation used to teach music is cramped and has very poor acoustics, which inhibits the quality of teaching and the pupils' learning.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

121. A limited range of activities was seen during the course of the inspection, but there was sufficient evidence to show that pupils achieve well in lessons and make good progress as they move through the school. A well-planned programme of study that is relevant to pupils' needs provides them with a good range of learning opportunities that promote the acquisition of a number of skills. The good breadth and balance of the curriculum also promote pupils' understanding of health-related fitness and safety issues. Therefore, pupils are able to follow an externally accredited course in Key Stage 4 and many are successful in obtaining a Certificate of Educational Achievement.
122. By the age of fourteen, pupils know about the importance of warming up and recovering after exercise and have some understanding of how different exercises contribute to certain aspects of fitness. They also develop physical skills through a variety of activities which include gymnastics, athletics, swimming and games. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 have improved their knowledge of games such as basketball, hockey and football and the skills associated with playing them. The Certificate of Educational Achievement programme in Key Stage 4 is a practical course that places increasing emphasis on aspects of pupils' performance. By the age of sixteen pupils plan

and perform activities, analyse their performance, make suggestions for improvement and understand how physical activity can promote better health.

123. Teaching is of high quality overall and sometimes it is very good, particularly when taught by the specialist subject co-ordinator. At these times, pupils are managed extremely well in a potentially difficult environment which was very well demonstrated in a gymnastics lesson with a class of fourteen-year-olds. Very high expectations of behaviour and performance meant that pupils were able to work very well in pairs in a variety of activities that explored the idea of balance and counter-balance and the teacher emphasised the point that this required mutual trust. Pupils were supported by the very good use of praise and encouragement and they responded in a mature way, displaying very positive attitudes and concentration. Equally high quality teaching was evident on the games field where a very well planned, prepared and supervised games lesson enabled Key Stage 4 pupils to improve their hockey skills. A very good variety of different teaching methods enabled support teachers to provide group and individual coaching in different skills and demonstrations were used effectively to improve techniques. However, pupils' learning in other lessons is not always so good because teaching is much less effective. This is generally because pupils are not managed so well and, therefore, they do not focus on the activities, so limiting progress.
124. Leadership and management of the subject are good. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory, with good outdoor facilities, and the school supplements its provision by making use of local amenities such as the leisure centre and ice rink. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social and moral development through its links with other schools. Inter-school football matches and tournaments such as swimming and cross country provide good opportunities for pupils to appreciate the concepts of sportsmanship and fair play. Social and communication skills are enhanced when pupils act as hosts to visiting teams.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

125. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in religious education and make sound progress across all ages in the school. This shows satisfactory improvement since the last report, where religious education was unsatisfactory. They take part in a three-year programme in Key Stage 3, which prevents any pupils from repeating work. The planning is successfully linked to the locally agreed syllabus and the co-ordinator has worked hard to put this in place. Pupils study Christianity and several other world religions.
126. By the age of fourteen, pupils acquire a basic knowledge of Islam and understand that the Qur'an is written in Arabic, that it was revealed to Muhammad and that Makkah is the Muslim's sacred place. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that some make good progress, but others find this subject difficult, particularly the writing. Pupils in Year 7 study which foods are acceptable to Muslims. They took more interest in the lesson when the teacher produced various foods from a bag, such as crisps and tinned ham. They had to identify which food a Muslim would eat and which he would not. Most were successful at this and settled down to write a few notes about it quietly. Some pupils found the lesson difficult and were noisy, but the teacher and assistant coped well with this and a firm, but gentle, approach largely worked.
127. By the age of sixteen, some pupils work for an examination and this leads them to consider such topics as the sanctity of life, abortion and also to study some aspects of other religions such as Sikhism. Because they have an introduction to six world religions, it is necessarily very broad and time does not allow much depth of work. Pupils study other aspects of life, such as the problem of suffering. They look at the Christian view of this and also a Muslim view. When looking at some of these problems, such as euthanasia, they use up to date material by taking cuttings from newspapers. They have used the details of a recent High Court case about a very sick woman asking for permission to end her life. In the lessons seen, Year 10 were tackling the problem of suffering, with reference to the Holocaust. The teacher used some very disturbing film from a concentration camp and all pupils were silent, taking this topic very seriously. The concept of the Jewish covenant and the various views of the world in the light of such atrocities, was difficult for

these pupils, but they worked well and made satisfactory progress. Pupils in Year 11 looked at the Christian response to racism and used a case study of some Nigerians almost deported from Britain. They worked and behaved very well, but found the writing difficult. However, they were able to express their own feelings and opinions in the discussion that followed.

128. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Although only one pupil gained a certificate in 2001, results were better in 2000. However, this raises a question over the suitability of examinations in the subject, which does not allow many practical activities for pupils to be included in lessons. For example, a link with design and technology could enable pupils to make an article to do with religious education, such as a Star of David. The result of the present planning is that the teachers do most of the work and pupils listen. Pupils write answers to questions, but many find writing difficult and would benefit from more active involvement.
129. The co-ordinator leads the subject well. He has worked hard to write all the schemes of work and make them fit together. He has planned the programmes round the locally agreed syllabus to include world religions, but, although the resources are generally satisfactory, there are insufficient artefacts to give pupils firsthand experience of handling and seeing articles used in the various faiths.