

INSPECTION REPORT

BRECKENBROUGH SCHOOL

Thirsk

Society of Friends

Unique reference number: 121765

Headteacher: T Bennett

Reporting inspector: R Thompson
10781

Dates of inspection: 20 - 24 March 2000

Inspection number: 188668

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Residential Special: Emotional behavioural difficulties

School category: Non-maintained Special

Age range of pupils: 9 - 16

Gender of pupils: Boys

School address: Breckenbrough School
Thirsk
North Yorkshire

Postcode: YO7 4EN

Telephone number: 01845 587238

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Quentin Fowler

Date of previous inspection: May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
R Thompson	<i>Registered inspector</i>	French; Information technology.	How well is the school led and managed?
D Jenner	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupil's attitudes, values and personal development.
K Boyle	<i>Team inspector</i>	Music; Religious education; Equal opportunities.	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?
I Naylor	<i>Team inspector</i>	Physical education; History.	How well are pupils taught?
Paul Copping	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Art; Special educational needs.	How well does the school care for its pupils?
A Webber	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Geography; English as an additional language.	School's results and pupils achievements.
K Gutteridge	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Design and technology.	How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Residential provision.

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Breckenbrough school is an independent, residential special school, providing education for boys aged nine to sixteen years with emotional and behavioural difficulties. At present there are no boys between the ages of nine to eleven. The school is administered by the Society of Friends (Quakers). All boys have statements of special educational needs, which indicate they are above average intellectual ability in at least one area, although on entry to school they are functioning below expected attainment. The school is situated near Thirsk in North Yorkshire, but draws pupils nationally from 22 local education authorities. The present population is white except for two pupils: one Indian pupil, for whom English is an additional language, and one Chinese pupil. Last year there were four fixed-term exclusions and one permanent exclusion. Attendance is very good, with no unauthorised absences. The school's priorities and targets are decided through the process of the school development plan. The main priority identified in the headteacher's statement is to develop staff skills in conflict resolution, assessment and counselling.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Breckenbrough school is very effective in providing high quality education for its pupils. Pupils achieve well across the curriculum. Teaching is a strength of the school. Leadership and management are effective, and the headteacher and knowledgeable governing body give clear direction to the work of the school. Overall, the school has a relatively low unit cost and provides very good value for money. The school is in a good position now to make further improvements.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Teaching is very good overall and is a strength of the school.
- Behaviour, relationships and attitudes in school are very good.
- The range of learning opportunities is very good, and outdoor education and extra-curricular activities are excellent.
- The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance, behaviour and personal development are excellent.
- Attendance is very good.
- The community's contribution to school life is good.
- The school's links with parents are very good.
- Residential provision is very good.
- Overall, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- Pupils make good progress academically and in their personal development.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Whole-school performance targets should be set.
- The governing body should further develop its role to evaluate school performance.
- All reports to parents should consistently meet the standard of best practice already established in school.
- The governors' report to parents should be more informative.
- All subjects should have written schemes of work.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning should be more formalised.
- Accommodation for physical education should be improved.

The many strengths of the school far outweigh the few weaknesses of the school. The governors' action plan will set out how the weaknesses are to be tackled. The plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of the pupils at the school. The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in May 1996, the school has made good improvement. Teaching has improved so that it is a strength of the school. The curriculum follows the National Curriculum. Information and communication technology is taught and pupils achieve well. Individual education plans (IEPs) are securely established. The school development plan (SDP) has improved, so that it is now prioritised and costed fully. Safety issues in design and technology have been resolved. Attitudes and personal development have improved. Very good behaviour has been maintained. Pupils have opportunities to develop independent learning skills and attend homework clubs. The medical room has been improved and pupils' rooms in the residential wing have been considerably refurbished. Pupils make good progress in academic and personal development. Effective child protection procedures are fully in place.

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	Key	
Speaking and listening	A	<i>very good</i>	A
Reading	B	<i>good</i>	B
Writing	B	<i>satisfactory</i>	C
Mathematics	B	<i>unsatisfactory</i>	D
personal, social and health education	A	<i>poor</i>	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B		

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

Pupils achieve well in almost all subjects across both key stages. They achieve well in speaking and listening, science, design and technology and physical education at Key Stage 4. They make good progress towards academic and social targets set in their individual education plans. Pupils achieve GCSE examinations in several subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	All pupils have very good attitudes. They enjoy school and take pride in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of pupils is very good. Pupils are clear what is expected of them and work hard to achieve it. Breckenbrough school is an orderly community.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils develop initiative, confidence, and social skills well.
Attendance	Attendance is very good. Unauthorised absence is extremely rare.

Pupils enjoy lessons, are keen to learn, and quickly become confident in lessons and in the school community. They take responsibility for their own learning and pride in their work. Very good teaching and a well structured curriculum help achieve this. Behaviour is very good throughout the school. Pupils know what is expected of them and achieve these standards most of the time. The very good relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff, help them to focus on learning in class. Attendance is very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-16
Lessons seen overall	Very good.

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

Teaching is of a high quality throughout the school and very good overall. Over nine out of ten lessons have good or better teaching. A third of all teaching is very good and over half is good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. More lessons have very good teaching at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3 where it is predominantly good. Excellent teaching occurs in religious education and physical education. Teaching is very good at both key stages in mathematics, science and physical education. It is good overall in each of the other subjects. This represents a considerable improvement since the previous inspection, when nearly one in five lessons was unsatisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good. It is broad, balanced and relevant. Pupils are provided with a very good range of learning opportunities. The contribution of pupils' extended and outdoor education has a positive effect on their progress and development.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision is good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school has an excellent ethos based on Society of Friends' tradition. Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Relationships within the school community are very good. Provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is very good, social development is excellent and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The care the school provides is good, and well grounded in a shared philosophy of mutual respect. Personal support and guidance is very good. It is at the heart of the school's purpose.

The partnership between school and parents is good. The school has developed an effective range of methods by which parents receive information about their child's progress and how they can support his learning. In addition to learning opportunities in the classroom, the school provides a wide range of extended and extra-curricular activities. The school uses

opportunities to enrich the curriculum through links with the local community, and pupils' personal and social development is enhanced by these programmes. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance, and promoting personal development are excellent, as are procedures for promoting and monitoring good behaviour. Residential provision is very good. Accommodation is well maintained. Pupils are provided with nutritious food. Care staff and teaching staff work together very effectively to aid pupils' emotional, social and educational development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, key staff and governors provide strong leadership with clear vision.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body plays a good part in shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is developing and is satisfactory. Academic performance is monitored by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and some members of the governing body.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used effectively and efficiently.

There is an adequate number of staff for the number of pupils on roll. Accommodation, including residential accommodation, is good. Governors are very influential in shaping the direction of the school. Monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching, by way of self-evaluation, are in the early stages of development. The shared commitment of staff and governors to school improvement is a strength of the school. The governing body is very knowledgeable about the principles of best value, and applies them effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with a problem or questions.• Parents think the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.• The school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best.• The school is well led and managed.• The school works closely with parents.• The school is helping pupils to become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No issues were raised at the parents' meeting or in the parental questionnaires returned.

The inspectors' judgements support parents' very positive views of the school and what pleases them most.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The achievements and progress made by all pupils are good overall. At Key Stage 4, their achievements and progress are very good in speaking and listening, science and physical education.
2. The standards achieved by pupils on entry to the school are below national expectations. Although all pupils are identified as having above average talent in at least one area, they have emotional and behavioural difficulties that have affected their learning, and many pupils have also had considerable disruption to their schooling. The school provides them with a very positive experience of education in Years 7 and 8 so that they make good progress. This gives them a good foundation to their learning and they build on this well in Year 9. By the end of Key Stage 3, their progress is very good, and they achieve standards in line with national expectations in all subjects. Several high attaining pupils take GCSE examinations at this age. By the end of Key Stage 4, all pupils continue to make good progress and achieve standards in line with national expectations in all subjects. They also make good progress in other targets set out in their statements, annual reviews and individual education plans. Talented pupils make very good progress and sit examinations early. They achieve GCSE examination results as shown in the table shown below.

Nationally Accredited Achievement: 1999

	A	B	C	D	E	F	U	No of pupils entered	% above C	% above G
Mathematics			1	2	2	1		6	17	100
English										
Written			2	1	3			6	33	100
Spoken		2	1	3				6		
Science (Double Awards)		2	3	2				6	83	100
Geography				1	1	1	2	5	0	100
History		2	1	2	1			6	50	100
French	1			2				3	33	100
Art			1		1	2		4	20	100
CDT			2	1				3	66	100
Photography			1	1				2	50	100
Physical Education					2			2	0	100

Number of pupils entered: 6. Examinations entered: 48. Results above grade C: 19.
Percentage with five or more passes at any grade: 100%.

3. Pupils' achievement and progress in English are good overall, and they are very good for speaking and listening at Key Stage 4. On entry to the school, pupils' standards are below national averages and they are not always confident in expressing themselves orally or in writing. They make good progress in their first two years at the school, which provides a very good foundation for their future learning. By the end of Key Stage 3, their standards are in line with national averages for speaking and listening, reading and writing. By the end of Key Stage 4, standards are above national averages for reading and writing, and well above average for speaking and listening.

4. Standards in speaking and listening are good at Key 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. For example, by the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are able to summarise the plot of Shakespeare's Macbeth very accurately and succinctly. By the end of Key Stage 4, they can articulate themes that they notice from a video they have watched; for example they speak of a 'conflict of fear' and compare this with a 'conflict of loyalties'. By the end of Key Stage 3, they make good progress; for example, higher attaining pupils read fluently and take on appropriate accents. Less fluent readers are prepared to read aloud, and show an awareness of the need for variety in their expression. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils use higher reading skills, such as skimming and scanning, when they are working towards their General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examination. They make good progress by the end of Key Stage 3; for example they complete book reviews and undertake extended writing based on comprehension exercises. They continue to make good progress so that, by the end of Key Stage 4, they complete coursework for General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), which shows a very good command of essay style and presentation, including use of word-processing.

5. Pupils make good progress in mathematics, and their achievements are good when they are compared with their prior attainment. They also become more positive about the subject and show greater confidence in their abilities. They make good progress in their number skills and show an increasing understanding of shape, space and measurement. They carry out investigations using data handling well, and use what they have learnt to solve problems. They apply their mathematical knowledge well, for example in constructing models, making kites and in working out complex computer simulations. By the end of Key Stage 3, they gain the Certificate of Educational Achievement, and show, for instance, that they know the difference between different types of questionnaire questions for collecting data. They follow GCSE examination courses in Key Stage 4. Several pupils gain passes in Year 10, though a few pupils take the examination as early as Year 8. Those with higher attainment go on to gain higher grades, sit A/S Levels or undertake other related examination, such as statistics.

6. Pupils' achievements and progress in science are good overall. When pupils enter the school, they have varied levels of scientific skill. Some are unsure about using their skills to carry out experiments, applying the concepts of a fair test, whilst others have well developed skills in some areas of science. They make good progress in Key Stage 3, so that by the end they achieve standards in line with national averages. For example they set up and explain a hypothesis and discuss reasons for possible outcomes. They make very good progress in Key Stage 4, and gain good results in General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) Double Science Award examinations. They understand the use and effects of variables in experiments, for instance in relation to enzymes and electricity. They also understand the elements of photosynthesis and changes in heart rate during exercise and rest.

7. Pupils' achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is good. The recently developed information and communications technology room enables pupils to extend their skills. For example, they program a lego model vehicle by entering commands to move it forwards, in reverse and change direction. They use computers for work in other subjects. For example, they word-process their work for subjects such as English, and develop their mental arithmetic and number skills in mathematics games. They also search for data, information and ideas on the Internet Web Site.

8. Pupils' progress and achievement in music are good. For example, extend their keyboard skills and learn to read music. They progress through an internally accredited four level system and give performances in school.

9. Pupils' achievements in learning a modern foreign language are good. By the end of Key Stage 3, they are keen to speak French and try hard to improve their pronunciation and accent. By the end of Key Stage 4, they carry out conversations and decide which food and drink is healthy or unhealthy. They can give accurate directions from a map, and name and find the major buildings of the town. They greet each other and staff, and say how they feel. They freely state which subjects they like or dislike, and say what their hobbies are.

10. Pupils' achievements in art are good at both key stages. Younger pupils use a range of techniques, such as making things with cardboard, colouring with felt tips, sketching and painting, and apply them, for example, to ideas for a T Shirt, an Easter egg competition and a mother's day card. Some older pupils work on their GCSE coursework, which includes clay modelling.

11. In humanities, pupils' achievements are satisfactory, and for history they are good at Key Stage 4. For example at Key Stage 3, they show they understand the way different people use their skills and the environment to hunt. At Key Stage 4, they take GCSE examinations in geography and history, each in one year.

12. Pupils' achievements and progress in religious education at Key Stage 3 are good. Pupils learn about the customs, values and beliefs of different religions. For instance, they understand the meaning of Jewish festivals such as the Passover, and relate them to celebrations within the Christian Faith, such as Easter.

13. Pupils' achievements in design and technology are good overall, and at Key Stage 4 they are very good. By the end of Key Stage 3, they show good progress, using a variety of processes to shape and form materials and choosing tools that are appropriate to the practical tasks they undertake. They are beginning to be independent and take notice of health and safety issues. At Key Stage 4, they gain good results in GCSE examinations. In 1999, for example, out of three pupils entered, one gained a D and two gained C grades, which demonstrates very good progress. Pupils use hand and electric saws and hand planes with a variety of materials, such as metal and different types of wood. They also apply a range of finishes, such as varnish, spray and lacquer.

14. Pupils' achievements and progress in physical education are good overall. Younger pupils take part in a wide range of activities. Older pupils have a good choice of different sporting activities, including five-a-side soccer, squash and badminton. They understand, for example, the rules of squash; they serve and volley accurately, and show tactical skill when they play competitively. A few pupils take General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations in the subject. Pupils achieve well in outdoor activities, which make a good contribution to pupils' self-awareness and self-esteem, so promoting their personal development.

15. The one pupil who speaks English as an additional language is making good progress. Individual support is provided and strategies are implemented in classrooms to ensure that he understands all the concepts in use in lessons.

16. Pupils achieve well and make good progress towards the targets in their Individual Educational Plans. When they arrive at the school initially, their primary targets frequently concern their behaviour and social relationships with staff and other pupils. They meet these targets well as they move through the school and begin to work towards improving their attitudes to learning and academic targets. They also work towards personal development targets, for example, by organising for themselves a school trip to a local exhibition.

17. Since the last inspection, there has been good improvement in the achievement of pupils in all subjects, apart from humanities, music and religious education where the improvement has been satisfactory. The high standards in science have been maintained. There has been a notable improvement in the pupils' achievements in English and physical education. These improvements are clearly linked to improvements in teaching. In information and communication technology, a notable improvement in pupils' achievements is the use of web sites on the Internet during revision of examination subjects. This has only been possible due to the establishing of a new computer suite.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. At the time of the last inspection, pupils were judged to behave very well, and this high standard has been maintained. The last inspection judged pupils' attitudes to be satisfactory, and this has improved. Pupils' attitudes to work, behaviour, and personal relationships are now very good. Parents overwhelmingly said that behaviour was good at Breckenbrough, and that the school helps pupils become mature and responsible. The inspectors agree with parents' views.

19. Many pupils arrive with a history of failing in the classroom, but, at Breckenbrough, they quickly learn to take responsibility for their own progress. In Key Stages 3 and 4, nearly all pupils enjoy their lessons most of the time, with only a few occasions when a pupil fails to meet the individual challenges that the school sets them. Pupils for the most part speak enthusiastically about their work and all aspects of school life. They take pride in their work. Pupils' learning is helped by the personal maturity and social skills they gain through participation in the many educational outings and activities available. Parents support the school in maintaining their sons' progress.

20. Significant contributions to pupils' very good attitudes are the very good teaching, a good curriculum that is appropriate and relevant to the pupils' needs, and effective use of an imaginative range of teaching methods.

21. Behaviour is very good throughout the school, in lessons, in the community and in the residential units. Breckenbrough is successful in translating into practice the ethos of the Society of Friends. Conflicts are resolved and defused, so that pupils' self-confidence, self-discipline and self-control develop well. Pupils know what is expected of them, and strive to achieve it for the most part. Staff are highly skilled at managing behaviour sensitively and consistently. Effective individual counselling plays a large part in this. Pupils respect their environment, which is largely free of litter, graffiti, or vandalism. A small amount of bullying does occur from time to time. It is mainly verbal, and physical bullying is rare. Pupils, staff and parents all report that when bullying does occur the school deals with it quickly, effectively and sensitively. Pupils are courteous to staff and visitors. Exclusions, mainly fixed term, are only used when other methods have failed, and its emphasis is on a period of self-evaluation as well as being a temporary cooling-off before returning to school.

22. Many pupils arrive at Breckenbrough having had time out of school. They have difficulty forming relationships, lack confidence and have low self-esteem. They quickly learn to make independent choices with confidence and to take responsibility for organising their daily routines. The school provides many opportunities to exercise personal responsibility, for example through the school council, and most pupils do so.

23. Attendance is very good. As an independent residential school, Breckenbrough is not required to keep registers of attendance in a statutory format. The small number of boys and the close relationships they have with staff ensure that any absence from lessons is noticed very quickly. The school reports that unauthorised absence is extremely rare, and there were none during the inspection week. However, pupils do not always arrive promptly at the start of lessons, which delays the start of teaching.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

24. Teaching is of a high quality across the school and very good overall. More than nine lessons in ten have good or better teaching. A third of all teaching is very good and over half is good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. More lessons have very good teaching at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3, where standards are predominantly good. Excellent teaching occurs in religious education and physical education. Teaching is very good at both key stages in mathematics, science and physical education. It is good overall in all other subjects. This represents a considerable improvement since the previous inspection, where almost one lesson in five was unsatisfactory.

25. This very good teaching means that pupils' learning is consistently good at both key stages. Often it is very good, particularly at Key Stage 4, in English, mathematics and science, design and technology, religious education, history and physical education.

26. Many lessons in all subjects through the school have some very good qualities. Teachers use their high level of subject expertise to great effect in supporting pupils' achievements. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils' participation, attitudes, behaviour and performance. They understand their pupils' individual needs extremely well, and make their teaching relevant and stimulating by using a wide range of methods and strategies. Very good use is made of praise and encouragement with suitable use of reward, for example in the certificates for achievement presented in assemblies. Very skilful management and control of pupils, with consistent use of the school's agreed strategy for conflict resolution, is enormously effective in producing very good attitudes and behaviour. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and establish an excellent rapport. This promotes pupils' confidence and helps to boost their self-esteem. Most lessons create an atmosphere of calm, which aids concentration and productivity. Lessons generally make very good use of time and resources, with a range of very relevant and challenging activities. This has the effect of generating interest and motivation and increasing pupils' involvement and performance. Good use is made of informal assessment, and there are regular opportunities for evaluation, including pupil self-evaluation.

27. Teachers have high expectations for the quality of writing in English and pupils therefore take great pride in their written work. Pupils are given very clear goals in mathematics. While the work is challenging, it does not frustrate and is set precisely to extend pupils' learning. A calm atmosphere ensures pupils are productive and purposeful. In science, pupils are allowed to try for themselves. There is very good use of praise, which encourages pupils to maintain interest and stay on task. The teacher models good practice in experiments, which pupils readily copy. In art, a Year 11 pupil who is over cautious in his approach is encouraged to be more adventurous. Very good planning with excellent use of resources in religious education is used to celebrate and bring to life a Jewish Passover ceremony. In history and geography, teachers make good use of what pupils already know, and deepen their understanding through skilful questioning. This means pupils feel their knowledge is valued. In physical education, pupils are given very careful and clear explanations about what they have to do, and each pupil is given the individual support to be able to take part. This promotes team-building and pupils succeed very well. Pupils evaluate their own performance and make conclusions about how they could have done things better.

28. A minor weakness in teaching is that lessons often have no written plans with aims and objectives that are linked to formal schemes of work, or plans lack sufficient detail. As a result, it is not always clear what part individual lessons play in the overall curriculum, which makes it more likely that pupils will not make continuous progress. Occasionally, there is an over reliance on the use of worksheets, which detracts from pupils' skills in independent working, investigation and analysis.

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

29. The curriculum is good. It is broad, balanced and relevant, giving pupils access to the full range of National Curriculum subjects, together with religious education. Religious education is not shown, however, as a subject on the timetable, but is taught through core time and personal social development, because previously pupils have demonstrated poor attitudes to the subject when it is identified by name. The extended education curriculum makes an excellent contribution and has a positive effect on pupils' progress.

30. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in addressing issues related to the curriculum. All pupils now have access to the National Curriculum. Management and planning of the curriculum is satisfactory and all pupils now have specific and useful individual education plans.

31. Pupils are offered a good range of both internal and external accreditation opportunities. Most pupils achieve success in General Certificate of Secondary Education. In addition, the school has recently introduced an external unit accreditation system to supplement GCSE.

32. Pupils are provided with a very good range of quality learning opportunities, within the context of the school's strong Society of Friends tradition. The curriculum reflects the school's aims and values and matches well specific provision set out in statements. The school matches the requirements of the national literacy and numeracy strategies to pupils' needs, and ensures these strategies support teaching and learning. Equality of opportunity is ensured, so that all pupils have access to all learning opportunities.

33. The school provides an excellent range of extended and extra-curricular activities opportunities to enrich the curriculum. There is a whole timetable of these activities offered outside the traditional school day, including, for example, information communication technology, individual music keyboard tuition and clubs to support homework activities. There is a range of outdoor activities, including off-road motor bike riding. The school makes regular use of visiting specialists, and pupils enjoy a range of educational visits outside the context of a residential school.

34. The school enjoys good links with the community. Pupils use local community facilities, for example for swimming and squash. Members of the local community welcome the pupils to such activities. There are educational links with local schools and colleges; for example, the design and technology department is currently working with a local special school, for children who have severe learning difficulties, in designing and making items to aid communication. Senior pupils also attend local colleges to sample activities.

35. At the heart of the work of Breckenbrough is the provision made for personal and social education, both formally and informally. Relationships within the school community are very good. Pupils are given instant and regular feed-back in relation to their achievements and behaviour. The morning assembly is well used in reviewing the range of activities available to pupils, together with recognising pupil achievement and allowing time for silent reflection, setting a very good spiritual atmosphere in school. Honesty, trust, tolerance and responsibility underpin personal and social education. Where problems arise, a strategy of conflict, diffusion and resolution through discussion is employed well. As a result, pupils' social development is excellent.

36. The school has an excellent ethos, based on Society of Friends tradition. Provision for pupils' social development is excellent. Many opportunities are provided which allow pupils to develop their social skills both in and outside of school and in the wider community. Moral development is very good. Staff understand their pupils and provide very good role models. They are fair and concerned. Pupils clearly understand right from wrong, in spite of their emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school council meets on a regular basis and discusses issues brought to the meeting by pupils, through their representatives.

37. Provision for cultural development is good. There are many opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions, together with the richness and diversity of other cultures. As an example, Key Stage 3 pupils study the Jewish Passover in religious education, and relate this to Christian beliefs. The school often hosts students from other countries. During their stay, they work as care assistants, which involves them working and socialising with the boys. This works very well, as they swap stories and experiences about their different cultures. During the week of the inspection there were two students on site, one from Guatemala and one from Brazil.

38. Provision for pupils' careers education and guidance is very good. Pupils in Key Stage 4 have weekly careers education guidance lessons, together with individual support from the head teacher and a member of the local careers education and guidance service. Through this system, pupils plan post-school provision. For example, one Year 11 pupil described his wish and intention to become a paramedic, hopefully within the services, after leaving school. He was very clear of what was needed to make progress in his chosen career path.

39. The school has an over-arching curriculum statement, together with policy statements for each subject. Not all subjects, however, have written schemes of work linked to National Curriculum programmes of study.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The care the school provides for pupils is good. It is securely rooted in a philosophy of mutual respect that is shared by all staff, teaching and non-teaching, and strongly influenced by the Society of Friends' tradition. Pupils and their families have the non-confrontational ethos of the school made explicit to them. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is good.

41. The school has a system of pastoral care that is very good. Pupils have clear routes to access advice from the staff. The daily life of the school demonstrates mutual respect between individuals to a very advanced degree. Two and a half days of professional counselling available each week on site ensures very easy access to advice for pupils. Pupils readily acknowledge the care for their interests by staff. Telephone numbers are displayed to facilitate pupils in contacting outside bodies if they feel it necessary, that of Childline being one of them.

42. Since the last inspection, child protection procedures, in partnership with North Yorkshire LEA, have become consistent with best practice. The health and safety of pupils and staff are established by sound routines in maintenance and fire safety. The school has a very extensive extra-curricular programme included within which are adventurous activities such as motorcycling on site and regular trips to a range of outdoor activities. Staff manage and control such activities carefully and securely.

43. Staff share a belief in techniques of conflict resolution, which they feel have brought about a radical improvement in promoting good behaviour amongst pupils. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are excellent. Poor behaviour is rare and is sensitively dealt with by staff, who encourage a rapid return to full participation in lessons.

44. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are excellent. The ethos of the school places premium importance on individual pupils and their education. The strongest factor contributing to full attendance is the evident enjoyment that pupils take in lessons. A second factor is the close involvement of care staff in the educational life of the school.

45. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are in place and are very good. During the inspection, it was impossible to detect any such behaviour.

46. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Pupils are assessed on entry. Their individual education plans initially set targets related mainly to their behavioural difficulties. Care staff and teaching staff share in this process together with the pupil concerned. Families are encouraged to report on time at home and receive comprehensive reports in return. A range of educational tests helps establish each pupil's educational needs, but academic target setting is on a lesson by lesson basis. This would be improved by using a common format.

47. Teachers share information about pupils freely with each other and the use of assessment to inform curricular planning is satisfactory. These informal procedures are being formalised to make the process of assessment and subsequent planning more explicit. Once in place, this will allow more thorough review and development.

48. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are good, and the situation of each pupil is known well to each member of staff. More formal recording systems and enhanced analysis of data are developing.

49. The growth of pupils into rounded individuals is central to the ethos of the school, and procedures to monitor and support this are excellent. All staff, academic, care, administrative and domestic, take a keen interest in the emotional growth of all pupils, allowing them to learn within an environment where high expectations are matched by keen insight, well-supported by knowledge shared among the staff group. The involvement of the school cook in offering cooking to pupils is one of a number of initiatives that heighten the collegiate feeling amongst the whole staff group. Another is the involvement of the maintenance officer, who runs an effective design and technology course for the boys.

50. Day and residential provision is very good and meets the requirements of all specifications within pupils' statements of special educational need.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. The school has very good links with parents, and this has improved since the last inspection. Parents express a very high degree of satisfaction with the school, especially in terms of the range of out-of-school activities and the school's high expectations of their children. They feel comfortable about approaching the school to discuss issues about their children.

52. The school continues to work hard to maintain and extend links with parents. Key workers contact parents on a regular basis by telephone and letter, and make home visits if necessary. Parents are asked to complete holiday reports on their child, and are provided with a stamped addressed envelope for this purpose. Most parents complete and return these forms, and the school uses comments effectively to monitor pupils' progress, especially in terms of improvements in behaviour.

53. Parents receive reports on their child's progress in subjects on a termly basis. The quality of the subject reports are generally good, and received well by parents. However, some subjects fall short of best practice reporting what pupils know, understand and can do. The school needs to ensure that all reports consistently meet the standard of best practice already established in the school. Parents receive the school's annual report and although this is very readable and helpful to parents, it could be more informative and follow more closely best practice.

54. Parents are invited to their child's annual review. Although great distances are involved for some parents, most attend and make a contribution to the review.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The headteacher, senior staff and governors provide strong leadership and have a clear vision for the future of the school. The influence of the Society of Friends has a very positive effect on the ethos of the school and its aims. There is evidence to support this in the way in which behaviour has improved over the past few years. Day-to-day management is good, and leads to the smooth running of the school through the work of a committed team, including finance, administrative, teaching, care and residential staff.

56. The monitoring of teaching and learning is in its early stages, but is satisfactory. It is undertaken by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, with some involvement of the governing body. The management of the school has acknowledged this is an area for further development, and it is planned for in the school development plan. This is now a three-year plan. It successfully addresses areas of achievement, teaching and learning, community, provision, and leadership and management. It is an effective document with costings and time scales, which is an improvement on the previous inspection. The co-ordinators for curriculum subjects provide effective leadership for their subjects. This has led to improvement in curriculum delivery since the previous inspection. However, there is a lack of formal schemes of work in most subjects across the curriculum.

57. The governors hold regular meetings and there are appropriate committees in place. The governing body has successfully implemented the action plan from the previous inspection report. There is a good relationship between the governing body and the headteacher and the staff. The governors have identified links with classes in the school, and this works well. As a result, the governors have good knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This helps them to shape the direction the school takes, and they do this very well. Governors are very knowledgeable about the management priorities of the school featuring in the improvement plan and are aware, through accreditation evidence, of a rise in standards, in academic achievement and in behaviour throughout the school. They work very effectively with senior staff in ensuring that priorities are achieved. Nevertheless, the governors have not yet set whole-school performance targets. The school has acknowledged this and has plans to set targets. These measurable targets will then be used to indicate degrees of success.

58. The governors are very effective in raising funds for the school, and some members are also involved in running the Breckenbrough School After Care Committee, a registered charity, which monitors and supports the boys after they have left school. Although parents state they are very satisfied with the communication they have with school, and that they are always welcomed when approaching the school, there are some minor aspects of school life that are omitted from the governors' report to parents. The governing body is well aware of the principles of best value. Governors compare the school's costs and standards with those of similar schools, and satisfy themselves that competition is fair when investing in services and resources.

59. Management and planning of the curriculum are now satisfactory. The deputy headteacher holds termly planning meetings with subject co-ordinators. Core subject co-ordinators meet regularly with all teachers who teach their subject.

60. Financial planning is well matched to the priorities of the school. Accounts are kept strictly in accordance with the Charities Act 1993, and are regularly audited and any recommendations quickly implemented. Information technology is used effectively to control financial systems. These are very well managed, and the bursar provides informative budget summaries for the use of the governors and staff. This information allows governors and the headteacher to ensure that finances are kept in good order.

61. The number, qualifications and experience of teaching and care staff is good. They form a highly competent and well-motivated team that work well together to achieve the school's aims. New staff are helped to develop through a good induction programme that provides induction-mentoring support. This was verified by one teacher who had undergone induction last year and was very pleased at the extra support he received. The school also uses a staff mentor very effectively. He is available to give professional and personal support to all staff.

62. The accommodation is generally good. It is well maintained and clean. There are high quality, attractive and educational displays of pupils' work and interests, which enhance the learning environment. However, the standard of accommodation for physical education is unsatisfactory. The floor in the sports hall is not appropriate for gymnastics. Residential accommodation is good. Pupils are provided with accommodation that supports privacy and dignity, but allows social interaction when they wish.

63. Learning resources across the school are generally good. In science and design and technology they are very good. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in information and communication technology resources, which are now good, and used effectively across both key stages.

64. Good improvement has been made in leadership and management from the previous inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. The school and the governing body should:

- ensure whole school performance targets are set;
(*Paragraphs: 58, 72*)
- ensure the governing body reports fully to parents in their annual report;
(*Paragraphs: 54, 59*)
- ensure that all reports to parents meet the standard of best practice already established in school;
(*Paragraphs: 54, 107, 117, 136*)
- ensure all subjects have written schemes of work, linked to National Curriculum programmes of study;
(*Paragraphs: 29, 40, 57, 107, 117, 123, 128, 141*)
- further develop formal monitoring and evaluation of teaching;
(*Paragraph: 57*)
- upgrade accommodation for physical education.
(*Paragraph: 63, 136*)

66. In addition to the key issues above, the following less important area for development should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- * ensure pupils receive more formal feedback on their academic work which would encourage and support them;
(*Paragraphs: 79, 88, 106, 123*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	64
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	52

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	31	36	8	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	38
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

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

Nationally Accredited Achievement: 1999

	A	B	C	D	E	F	U	No of pupils entered	% above C	% above G
Mathematics			1	2	2	1		6	17	100
English			2	1	3			6	33	100
Written			1	3				6		
Spoken		2	1	3				6		
Science (Double Awards)		2	3	2				6	83	100
Geography				1	1	1	2	5	0	100
History		2	1	2	1			6	50	100
French	1			2				3	33	100
Art			1		1	2		4	20	100
CDT			2	1				3	66	100
Photography			1	1				2	50	100
Physical Education					2			2	0	100

Number of pupils entered: 6. Examinations entered: 48. Results above grade C: 19.
Percentage with five or more of any grade 100%.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	36
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	4	1
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: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4
Average class size	6

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	867263.00
Total expenditure	906173.00
Expenditure per pupil	23846.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	47621.00
Balance carried forward to next year	8711.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate:

Number of questionnaires sent out	38
Number of questionnaires returned	14

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	22	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	71	29	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	43	0	0	14
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	71	29	0	0	0
The teaching is good.	79	14	0	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	71	29	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	100	0	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	86	7	0	0	7
The school works closely with parents.	71	15	7	0	7
The school is well led and managed.	100	0	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	79	14	0	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	100	0	0	0	0

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

ENGLISH

67. On entry, pupils in Year 7 are underachieving in all areas of the subject. Most markedly, they lack confidence in their imaginative work and extended writing. By the end of Key Stage 4, many demonstrate sophisticated verbal skills and intelligent writing, indicating good achievement and progress. Reading levels are good and reflect diverse reading. GCSE results are good.

68. Pupils in both key stages make good progress in their work. Speaking and listening is a particular strength in Key Stage 4 and is very good.

69. In Key Stage 3, pupils are first assessed to identify individual learning targets, then carefully supported through modular topics. Behavioural improvement is considered the prerequisite of any other improvement, but an emphasis is also given to improving literacy through reinforcement exercises, and this shows clear results. Some pupils in Key Stage 3 were able to go beyond an exact recounting of the plot of Macbeth to discussing themes and even Shakespearean stage conventions, such as the lack of scenery and male actors playing all roles.

70. Good progress is made by the end of Key Stage 4. Most pupils are able to discuss literary themes and support their ideas from texts and plays. Pupils have opportunities to edit and redraft their work on personal computers in the resource area, and information and communication technology competency is universally displayed. Imaginative work, which was an area of relative weakness in early Key Stage 3 pupils, has become a strength. Pupils write extended stories and are prepared to develop whimsical ideas, such as The Charge of the Light Brigade from the point of view of a horse. A work experience diary about a placement in a hospital showed empathy for the subject matter, and appropriate permissions had been obtained to name staff. The combination of an understanding of journalistic conventions together with a high degree of creativity is impressive. Course-work deadlines are understood by pupils, who see them as an impetus to pace of work rather than as an imposition.

71. Since the last inspection, baseline assessment has been introduced. This helps make good the lack of detailed information accompanying new pupils. Ongoing assessment could usefully be more detailed and recorded in an agreed and accessible format. There is good evidence of literacy skills being well used in other subjects. Particularly English, history, geography and French. The small size of the school would make cross-curricular literacy work relatively easy to implement if learning targets generated in English were published for all teachers in a common format. The school has recognised this and taken steps to develop such a format, though it is in the earliest stages of development.

72. Teaching in Key Stage 3 is good. Pupils are given careful encouragement and a staged introduction to more imaginative writing. Literacy skills are emphasised and practised in most lessons. The pace of lessons is brisk. A lesson in which the teacher enacted a role to engage the pupils with a novel elicited rapt attention and encouraged pupils of widely differing attainment to emulate her dramatic reading of the class book. Teaching in Key Stage 4 is good. Effective discussion promotes clear conceptual understanding by pupils into written work that almost matches it for fluency. Questioning of pupils in this key stage reflected good subject knowledge and prompted sophisticated response in discussion. Attitudes and behaviour are generally very good and often excellent. Boys enter a department that stresses high expectations within a businesslike environment, which gives them a strong motivation to learn. Relationships are excellent and area strength of the department. It is a feature of lessons that pupils expect to collaborate in their work. Pupils finding work more difficult than others are accepted well and supported by their peers in class. It is the mutual respect between the entire group of staff and pupils that allows good progress in both key stages and has particularly marked benefits for advances in literacy. During class reading, tolerance of slower readers was excellent; they felt under no pressure to match more competent peers immediately and their consequent gain in confidence was clear.

73. Theatre trips and visits from peripatetic companies, and from the author of a book studied, all contribute to pupils' imaginative work.

74. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is effected through modular work which is used well in Years 7, 8 and 9. This uses work from the appropriate programme of study and is particularly strong in linking to pupils' personal development, and their work in history and geography. At Key Stage 4, pupils work towards GCSE examinations.

75. The two English teachers have non-contact time each week to meet. One specialises in Years 7 and 8, the other in Years 10 and 11, while they share the work in Year 9. Lesson planning is conducted on the basis of individual learning plans for each child. A termly meeting with the deputy head includes a curriculum review. Formal planning and recording is being developed in greater detail in a standardised way without necessarily losing the valuable informal contact that the small scale of the department allows.

76. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. In addition to the improvement in teaching, information and communication technology is now employed to facilitate work, particularly in Key Stage 4, where it has clear benefits for enhancing creativity through drafting and re-drafting. The scheme by which younger pupils select a book each year, first to read then, secondly, to stock the library is a sound one. However, routine use of this room may be inhibited by its rather gloomy aspect and relatively restricted book stock. Theatre visits and visits from peripatetic companies have assisted in developing a more creative atmosphere. Some parents attend the pupils' pantomime, despite the distances many have to travel. However, regular drama is not timetabled and could profitably be added, not least to take advantage of the school grounds and buildings.

77. Homework is not set formally, but opportunities for extended work in the school's additional curriculum and care staff liaison are very good, used well, and support what is, in fact, an extensive homework programme.

78. Great care is taken to protect the self-esteem of pupils when assessing work, but many pupils would find more substantial written pointers to improvement in marking a valuable reference. Relationships amongst staff and pupils are excellent and would allow more informative marking to be carried-out with minimal risk of deterring pupils. An effective area being developed is peer tuition, paired reading. Older pupils are paired with younger pupils and offer help and support to improve the younger pupil's reading. This works well. Younger pupils enjoy these sessions and their reading improves. It also has the additional effect of building up the self-esteem of the older pupil.

79. Pupils with additional special educational needs make good progress. A single pupil in Key Stage 3 has English as an additional language and is making sound progress.

MATHEMATICS

80. The achievement and progress that pupils make in mathematics is good at both key stages.

81. When pupils start at the school, their achievement is below national averages. Many pupils also have a negative view of their ability in the subject, but this changes as they move through the school and become increasingly more positive and confident of their mathematical skills. By the end of Key Stage 3, their achievements are in line with national averages, and this continues until the end of Key Stage 4 when all pupils take General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations. Some take the examination early and then have the opportunity to take related subjects, such as statistics or to start work on A/S Level work.

82. The youngest pupils make good progress in their skills and attitude to the subject, and this provides a firm foundation for their future achievements. By the end of Key Stage 3, they continue to make good progress. They understand the difference between qualitative, discrete and continuous hypotheses in their work on data handling. They apply their number skills well. For example, they measure angles and work out the surface area in their investigation into the relationship between the shape of a kite they have made and its success in flying. By the end of Key Stage 4, they continue to make good progress as they follow a GCSE course. They understand about rotational symmetry, congruent triangles, equivalence of fractions, decimals, power roots and reciprocals. Some pupils work towards re-taking the examination to gain a higher grade.

83. Teaching and learning are very good at both key stages. Learning objectives of lessons are clear and shared with the pupils. This means they are aware of the aims of the lesson and how they are doing. Instructions are given clearly and demonstrated to pupils practically. Activities organised for them to apply their skills, such as making models, playing mathematical games and using the World Wide Web, are very motivating and show pupils that mathematics can be fun. This also helps them to re-evaluate their view of the subject and of their ability to consolidate and apply what they know to new problems. The

relationships between teachers, support assistants and pupils are excellent, and help pupils to re-assess their view that they 'can't do maths' and to feel confident to ask for help when they are unsure. Many pupils start at the school with a negative view of their mathematical ability and of the subject. They quickly gain a very good attitude towards mathematics and begin to apply their skills to solving problems and undertaking investigations. They become clear of what they are learning and how well they are getting on and this helps to motivate them further. They then find working towards the Certificate of Achievement and GCSE a challenge within their reach rather than a frustration.

84. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection. For example, information and communication technology is now well used. Opportunities for applying mathematics in practical situations are now very good. Progress in lessons is consistently good whereas before it was variable. There is now a policy statement and programmes of study refer to the National Curriculum. Work on data handling has improved from satisfactory to good. There are also opportunities for collaborative working, particularly with the youngest pupils. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject have improved from good to very good.

85. The leadership and management of mathematics are very good. The co-ordinator has specific time allocated to co-ordinate with other members of staff. There is good teamwork between the teacher of the youngest pupils and the co-ordinator. The co-ordinator has only been in post for a year but has effectively introduced many improvements. The policy document is clear and explains the underlying philosophy of the department very well, including 'Making Maths Fun', providing success in accredited courses, and changing their view of 'I can't do maths'. The curriculum is good. It is organised around the Certificate of Achievement for younger pupils, and General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) with appropriate schemes of work. Assessment is good. This is shared effectively with the pupils and it informs well what is to be learnt next. Relationships and the climate for learning in lessons are excellent. The higher attaining pupils are given the opportunity to take examinations early and undertake other courses, such as statistics, with additional one-to-one support.

86. The additional activities provided by the department are very stimulating. They provide opportunities for pupils to use their creativity and imagination and apply this to mathematical ideas and problems. For example, younger pupils make models using mathematical skills. They also play mathematical games. Older pupils take part in Fantasy situations such as 'Fantasy Formula One', 'Fantasy Shares' and 'Fantasy creatures from the Internet'. They are given a fantasy, such as owning shares on the stock market, and carry out a simulation of the money they would gain or lose. Some pupils become so interested in this work that they read around the subject in the Financial Times. They make up 'Pokemath' creatures and print out their characters from the Internet, making up characteristics that describe mathematical concepts. Pupils have made several educational visits to such places as the Stadium of Light at Sunderland, where they have opportunities to explore and use their mathematics skills in a practical way.

87. A very good balance is achieved between gaining skills and accreditation, applying skills to investigations and practical problems, and the fun of the subject. Pupils also play mathematical computer games, which motivates them all and enables them to apply their learning. It also encourages high attaining pupils to want to learn about higher skills. The verbal feedback given to pupils about their work is good. This could be extended further to include more detailed written feedback on why the work they have done is good, and also give an example of how it could be even better.

SCIENCE

88. Pupils' achievement in science is good in Key Stage 3 and very good in Key Stage 4. Pupils progress well through both key stages reaching standards of attainment in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 3, and achieving high grades in GCSE examinations at the end of Key Stage 4.

89. Standards have improved since the last inspection. In particular, pupils make good progress in setting hypotheses, planning experiments, and accounting for outcomes in terms of the effects of variables. They record this in an appropriate manner.

90. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils understand the impact of positive and negative charges, and the forces of attraction and repulsion. They make an electromagnet and test its strength when subject to a range of variables. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils understand the digestive processes and the role of enzymes. They carry out experiments to test the effects of vigorous exercise on heart rate, and account for the differences in the performance of individuals taking part.

91. Teaching in science is very good overall. Teachers have very good subject knowledge. They set clear objectives, and use questioning to build upon and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Practical sessions are set up which help pupils acquire scientific skills. Teachers relate well to pupils and promote confidence, independence, learning and achievement. Pupils' behaviour is always at least good and often very good. It is excellent in Key Stage 4, when pupils show a strong commitment to completing course work and gaining GCSE grades that are as high as possible. They listen well to each other and the teacher, work hard and take responsibility for their own learning.

92. The science curriculum is well organised and meets requirements. Since the last inspection, improvements have been made to include better use of the environment and the use of information technology to record data. Resources are very good, and teachers and pupils use them effectively. Teachers in the department work well together and have produced extensive materials to support pupils' learning at both key stages.

ART

93. The school makes good provision for art, and pupils make good progress as a result. Pupils begin Key Stage 3 with limited confidence and technique, a situation that has often been made worse by lengthy gaps in education before arrival. They are encouraged to work in different media and given a high degree of independence in choice of projects. The sense of ownership of their artwork is therefore very strong. Pupils at Key Stage 4 are prepared to undertake large scale paintings. Very good discussions take place and pupils then model in clay in an attempt to match texture to subject matter. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 is above national expectations. Progress throughout is good.

94. Attitudes in lessons are very good. On entering the rooms, pupils go quickly to ongoing work and settle immediately without prompting. They readily take advice and treat the teacher as a valued director and consultant. Some initial response in Key Stage 3 lacks confidence, but older pupils are mature and assured in the choices they make. Behaviour is exemplary. Co-operation between pupils is natural and frequent.

95. The teaching of art is good. The teacher has good subject knowledge as well as detailed knowledge of pupils' special needs. There are clear aims communicated at the beginning of lessons. Pupils are motivated and well managed. There is good planning, resources well organised, easily accessible, and used well. There is good use of questioning and further discussion to check for understanding. The art room is arranged to provide instant stimulus for a very wide range of media, and themes and resources are all deployed conveniently. The pottery room is necessarily more sparsely furnished and provides a useful contrast of environment. Planning is sound and reflects the opportunities afforded to consult colleagues and moderators via GCSE standardisation meetings. National Curriculum programmes are fully reflected in what is covered at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, the one-year option for examination is selected for its benefit of allowing more extensive preparatory work. As a direct result of good teaching, attitudes and behaviour in lessons are very good. On entering the rooms, pupils go quickly to ongoing work and settle immediately without prompting. They readily take advice and treat the teacher as a valued director and consultant. Some initial response in Key Stage 3 lacks confidence, but older pupils are mature and assured in the choices they make. Co-operation between pupils is natural and frequent.

96. The organisation of the art room and the immediate surroundings of the school offer striking opportunities for inspirational artwork and the teacher exploits this situation. This is reflected in artwork in all media. Gallery and other educational visits make explicit links to the work of professional artists. Cross-curricular connections with outdoor education add significantly to these opportunities.

97. Photography is offered within the extended curriculum and prints are displayed in the school. The variety of locations and climates visited in the course of the year offers clear photo-journalistic opportunities for all pupils. Those entered for GCSE compose pictures with clear artistic merit.

98. With the school as a whole, the art programme is valued additionally for the therapeutic contribution it makes to the personal, social, moral and cultural development of the pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99. Standards have improved in design and technology since the last inspection. Pupils' achievement is good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. Pupils progress well through the key stages, reaching standards in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 3 and achieving high grades in GCSE by the end of Key Stage 4. There is still an emphasis on developing capability through making items, but, increasingly as pupils move through the school, this is matched by a preparedness to complete assignments that require them to develop a design brief involving the use of ongoing analysis and product development.

100. At Key Stage 3, pupils shape and form a range of materials including wood, plastic and metal, using a range of hand and electric, large and small tools. This they do safely and without the need for a prompt from the teacher. Pupils evaluate products and are prepared to carry out modifications to improve upon original attempts. At Key Stage 4, pupils work on projects related to GCSE course work. They develop design briefs which include the use of computer aided design. Products developed are subject to constant review, and modifications are made as necessary.

101. The teaching of design and technology has improved since the last inspection and is now good, with some very good teaching at Key Stage 4 where the approach used is very effective in promoting pupil learning. Lessons have clear targets, which are shared with the pupils. Explanations are clear and are supported by practical demonstrations. Pupils are encouraged to use their prior learning to answer their own questions. Expectations of pupil performance and behaviour are high. Pupils' behaviour is good overall, with some excellent behaviour at Key Stage 4, where pupils are very at ease in the workshop and keen to do well at GCSE level. They readily ask for help and advice, and take pride in the work they produce.

102. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection. Programmes of study are now fully in place and GCSE has been introduced. The accommodation and resources are very good. Health and safety issues raised at the last inspection have been addressed fully.

GEOGRAPHY

103. Pupils' achievements in geography are satisfactory at both key stages. When they start at the school, many pupils have a negative view of the subject and their attainment is below national averages. They make satisfactory progress so that, by the end of Key Stage 3, their attainment is in line with pupils in mainstream schools and they begin to become more positive about the work. For example, they understand that a flood plain is a dynamic system and that rivers can move. They learn relevant subject vocabulary, such as meander, deposit, erode and oxbow lake. By the end of Key Stage 4, they continue to make satisfactory progress and to achieve national standards. They complete the work for geography General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in one year, though this inevitably restricts the amount of work they can cover and the grades they can gain. They know how hurricanes and cyclones are formed, and draw diagrams to show this process.

104. Teaching and learning of geography is good at both key stages. Teachers' subject and personal knowledge of areas being studied is very good. The work is brought alive with humour and anecdotes from teachers' own experience, with an acceptance of pupils' knowledge and comments, which motivates and interests them. Unusual resources, such as a necklace made from ostrich eggshell, stimulate pupils' interest. Younger pupils are involved in interesting activities, such as making models of land formation, making a display of where labels come from on a world map, and taking part in a quiz on the origins of coffee, tea and cocoa. The atmosphere created in the classroom is positive, allowing pupils to use their imagination and think creatively. Where pupils are given worksheets to complete, the pace of lessons is slowed and pupils sometimes lose opportunities to continue learning from teachers in an interactive way. The planning of lessons is brief and the range of activities for older pupils is not very broad. Many pupils start at the school with an unfavourable view of the subject. The quality of the teaching impacts upon pupils and their attitudes, behaviour and personal relationships in lessons are good. They use their imagination well, and apply this as to why things happen as they do. They form questions in their minds about aspects of what they are learning, and are interested in finding out the answers. They feel that their knowledge around the subject is accepted and respected and so they feel involved in the work. They have very good relationships with teachers, and this helps to capture their interest, supported by the anecdotes and stories they hear.

105. There has been a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is nearly always good. Pupils' written work, including longer pieces of work, is now well supported. However, there is still little use of information and communication technology and marking is still not very detailed.

106. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. For Key Stage 3 pupils, it is organised around modules of work that follow their interests. This helps pupils to feel fully involved in the work and to be motivated by what they are learning. However, the schemes of work do not provide sufficient detail of the activities to be undertaken by the pupils. For Key Stage 4 pupils, it is planned around the GCSE syllabus. The assessment, and reporting to parents of what pupils know, understand and can do in geography is unsatisfactory and does not always form the basis of what the pupils should learn next. The structure of the GCSE syllabus provides a framework for assessment at Key Stage 4 and this is satisfactory. There is good use of some unusual resources that have a personal interest to the pupils, for example there are photographs taken by friends of the teacher of places they are studying. The co-ordinator provides good support in lessons for other teachers and is therefore aware of work that is being covered.

HISTORY

107. Standards on entry are below national expectations, but by the end of Key Stage 3 they are in line. They increase significantly by the end of Key Stage 4, where pupils' attainment is above national expectations, with pupils achieving B to E grades at GCSE. Achievement and progress is satisfactory during Key Stage 3, increasing dramatically by the end of Key Stage 3, and at Key Stage 4 it is good.

108. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils know about the life of Anne Frank and understand the persecution that she suffered and the conditions that brought this about. They know about the life of the South African tribesmen and how this was changed by the gradual migration of white European settlers across southern Africa. Pupils develop skills of historical investigation so that they use source books and the Internet confidently to glean information. They reinforce their understanding and knowledge of medieval society through educational visits out of school to places of historical interest and importance.

109. By the end of Key Stage 4, they have made a wide study of modern history, and understand the cause of both World Wars and the effects of these wars on the lives of ordinary people. They know and understand about the development of American society in the Twentieth Century, and understand about significant events such as Prohibition. They successfully complete their course work and take the GCSE examination in Year 10.

110. Teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers have very good subject knowledge which, combined with a very good knowledge of pupils' aptitudes and individual needs, is used effectively to restore their confidence in their own ability. Good use of humour and firm control of pupils' behaviour, with sound expectations of their performance, further promote and support their interest, learning and ultimately their achievements. The teachers' own experiences and enthusiasm help to capture pupils' interest and imagination. This was seen particularly in lessons on South Africa, when personal experience of living in the country made the teacher able to provide useful anecdotes and facts about life there to illustrate his teaching.

111. Pupils are often reluctant learners in Years 7 and 8, and find it difficult to overcome their previous misconceptions of history. Learning is satisfactory at Key Stage 3, but it increases rapidly in quality to become very good in Year 10. The thoughtful and sensitive approach to teaching overcomes many of the inhibitions of pupils and they gain quickly in confidence and motivation as they move into Year 9. They begin to evaluate their own work and know what they have to do to succeed in their examination course work. They increase in their capacity to concentrate and produce more extensive pieces of written work. The increase in learning is sustained and brings success in GCSE coursework and examinations.

112. There have been satisfactory improvements in teaching and in pupils' achievements since the last inspection. Requirements of the National Curriculum are met. However, there remains a weakness in the management of the subject because of the absence of a formal scheme of work. Reporting of pupils' progress and achievement in their annual reports is also unsatisfactory because, although reports indicate the progress in attitude and behaviour, they do not routinely give indications of academic progress. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The history room has an impressive mural, made by pupils and staff, which dominates the wall, depicting historical events. Cultural and social development are satisfactorily promoted by educational visits to places of historical interest, such as a Second World War prisoner of war camp and medieval castles.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

113. The achievement and progress that pupils make in information and communication technology (ICT) is good across both key stages.

114. Teaching, learning and progress have improved since the last report. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils show good understanding and knowledge of information and communication technology language. They load programmes, click right or left with the mouse, identify icons, and drag and drop where they need them. They write programmes for the Lego vehicle, download from the computer to the vehicle, run the programme, monitor and evaluate, then decide how and where to modify the programme so that it performs as they want it to. They have very good control over the vehicle. Pupils advance to using the vehicle with a light sensor, programme and run. They can fine-tune the tolerance of the sensor to pick up different degrees of light.

115. During Key Stage 4, pupils make good use of desktop publishing, word processing, drawing programmes. In design and technology, they use a computer aided design programme very effectively. They use spreadsheets and databases confidently. For example, one pupil used the Internet to search for data held at the World Bank, downloaded the data, and is using it as his data base for his statistics GCSE project.

116. Teaching and learning are consistently good. Pupils are well managed, relationships are very good, and this enables pupils to make good progress. There are high expectations of work and behaviour, and pupils respond positively to this. They behave well and reach high standards of work, comparable to national norms. Praise and encouragement are used well. Marking is generally verbal feedback, which the pupils appreciate. Humour is used well to motivate pupils and to defuse situations before they become incidents. Teachers have secure knowledge, both of the subject and of pupils' special needs, but a formal scheme of work is lacking. Reports to parents lack detail of what pupils achieve, can do and understand. Pupils have good attitudes to information and communication technology. They work co-operatively and often collaborate on projects, such as writing programmes for the Lego vehicle.

117. Information and communication technology is used well to support other subjects. Pupils use word processing to enhance the presentation of their work. They are confident and competent to use information and communication technology to access the Internet and reach information they need for other subjects. Some simply use the Internet for pleasure, searching and gaining knowledge of many subjects. Accommodation and resources have improved greatly since the last report, and information and communication technology now has a suite of six computers.

118. Information and communication technology makes a good contribution to the pupils' social and moral development.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

FRENCH

119. The standard and quality of teaching in French is consistently good, with pupils at Key Stage 4 achieving 100 per cent pass rate in the General Certificate of Education last year. One pupil achieved a grade A pass and two achieved grade D. Pupils from Year 9 are now pursuing the National Examination Assessment Board (NEAB) Certificate of Achievement in French.

120. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils participate enthusiastically in role-play, hold simple conversations about the weather and give each other directions. This achievement is positively encouraged by the teacher's very good use of the target language throughout lessons. There is good evidence in pupil's exercise books and worksheets that the teacher caters for individual needs through extension work for higher achievers, who improve their writing skills in short sentences about their likes and dislikes. They develop their written and spoken vocabulary on colours, counting, football results, telephone calls, sports and hobbies.

121. During Key Stage 4, pupils follow the GCSE syllabus. They work hard and draw on earlier learning in their spoken French, and consolidate their work in written exercises. Pupils confidently discuss which are healthy and unhealthy food and drinks. The very good teaching and attention to their individual needs in the classroom ensure that all pupils have a secure understanding. Ongoing assessment is built into the modular curriculum. Pupils have good opportunities for homework and extra study in the evenings as the GCSE examinations approach. French is a high priority on the school development plan for this year.

122. The good standards of the last inspection have been maintained. The standard of teaching continues to be at least good and occasionally very good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are consistently good and often very good. They are well motivated and show sustained effort, with good levels of concentration. The very good relationships between staff and pupils continue to have a positive impact on learning. Lessons are effectively planned and structured. High quality teaching promotes pupils' confidence and encourages good literacy skills of speaking and listening, and numeracy skills through counting and topics such as time and distances. Throughout lessons, pupils respond very well, speaking French confidently, always trying to improve their accent and pronunciation. Although the course taught follows the module, it lacks a formal scheme of work. Marking is generally verbal, with praise and encouragement used well, but could be improved by written comments commending the work and indicating how it could be improved further.

123. The room in which French is taught is pleasant and comfortable, with posters pictures and pupils' work attractively displayed. Some of the posters and pictures on display are donated by pupils and their families, brought back from their holidays in France. Other artefacts, such as French money, biscuits, sweets and everyday objects help to set the atmosphere in class. Resources are good, well organised, easily accessible and used well. Literacy skills of speaking and listening, and numeracy skills of counting, time and measurement, are positively enhanced during lessons. French makes a positive contribution to pupils' social, moral and cultural development.

MUSIC

124. A well-qualified and enthusiastic part-time teacher teaches music to all pupils in Key Stage 3 and one pupil in Key Stage 4.

125. Achievement in Key Stage 3 is at least satisfactory and sometimes good, with a major emphasis placed on pupils enjoying their music making. All pupils in the key stage receive a group-based keyboard lesson. They follow individual programmes of work based on the Ken Baker keyboard series. They set up keyboards confidently, sight read and play, showing sound technical skills, appropriate rhythm and expression. Their progress is linked to a four level internally accredited system. A Ken Baker certificate is awarded at level 4, signed by the author, who is a friend of the school. One pupil received his certificate in assembly during the week of the inspection. This pupil was able to accurately play the theme music from The Titanic with electronic accompaniment, a piece he was practising for the end of term music and words concert.

126. Teaching is consistently good. Expert intervention is sensitively provided in keyboard lessons. The individual programmes of study provide for pupils' abilities effectively. Good use is made of demonstration. Subject content is made interesting in more formal lessons. For example, groups in Key Stage 3 were looking at the evolution of musical notation. This was supported by video material, from which pupils clearly understood why notation is necessary. This was well taught, using the concept of notation as a new language or secret code. The teacher enjoyed good relationships with the pupils. Pupils generally display good attitudes and behaviour in lessons, and good use is made of available time, though this is limited.

127. Whilst teaching and learning relate largely to the requirements of the National Curriculum, and there is a written policy statement, there are no formal schemes of work except for keyboard teaching. This makes it difficult to ensure continuity and progression. At the moment, the only formal recording of attainment is via the internal accreditation system and brief summative termly reports. Accommodation for the teaching of music is satisfactory, as are resources, but the subject would benefit from the purchase of a range of further instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. Standards on entry are below national expectations, but they quickly rise to come into line with average expectations by the end of Key Stage 3. By the end of Key Stage 4, standards are above national expectations and are good. Achievement and progress are satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4.

129. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection in the quality of teaching and in pupils' achievements. There is now excellent provision for outdoor education.

130. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 swim 25 metre lengths of a pool using a variety of strokes. They practice holding their breath under water, building stamina for distance swimming, and reach a satisfactory standard of swimming competence. During outdoor education, pupils in Year 9 complete a series of team-building exercises extremely successfully, demonstrating the ability to work together co-operatively using verbal and non-verbal communication.

131. In Years 9, 10, and 11, pupils play badminton, volley ball and squash competently, know the rules, and play competitively. They show very good basic skills in 5-a-side soccer. They make good gains in swimming, kayaking, long distance walking, youth hostelling and climbing, as is shown by their achievement certificates. Many complete GCSE course work and some achieve grades up to B.

132. Teaching is very good at each key stage, and it is excellent in outdoor education. Teachers have expert subject knowledge for a wide variety of sporting activities, and many staff have exceptionally high standard qualifications. They also have an excellent level of knowledge and understanding of pupils' emotional and intellectual abilities. This enables teachers to give the best possible support to pupils' learning and extend the opportunities available. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, participation and performance, which enable them to provide effective management of pupils. Teachers co-operate with one another very well and often team-teach. An excellent example of many of these qualities was seen in an outdoor pursuits lesson on team-building that had a very high level of success in motivating pupils, introducing new skills and re-directing inappropriate behaviour. Pupils are challenged and well motivated by the activities provided, which are very relevant to their needs. These are explained and presented in a stimulating and interesting manner, with clear instruction given as to how to carry out the activity, including what is expected in terms of behaviour and performance. Good evaluation and assessment is made of pupils' achievements, and this is used to further modify the curriculum programme.

133. The very good teaching has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. These are very good or excellent in swimming and squash lessons held offsite in public places, and pupils' responses are generally very positive. There are numerous examples of pupils showing tolerance of and co-operation and politeness to one another and adults. Learning is good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. Learning is very good particularly at Years 9, 10 and 11, when pupils participate in a wide range of outdoor activities in which they achieve very high levels of success, particularly in the development of their social skills and self-esteem. Pupils know what they have to do to succeed. They work very hard and sustain effort and concentration often over long periods. They make very good gains in their skills across a wide range of familiar and also new activities. There is a good awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses, and they can evaluate their own performance and that of others. Pupils' attitude to physical education increases significantly between the key stages and becomes very good and frequently excellent.

134. The subject is well managed and monitored. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and the range of learning opportunities since the previous inspection. The excellent outdoor education programme is well documented. However, there is still not a comprehensive scheme of work that includes the National Curriculum programme of study, although the design of the curriculum and the coverage provided embrace much of the National Curriculum requirements and embody its principles. It is focussed, correctly, around the special needs of pupils, so that it embraces a range of

areas that help to promote their self-development, awareness and self-esteem. This is done deliberately to meet the stated school aims to promote pupils' social and emotional development, to motivate pupils in their learning and help them to build social skills, confidence and self-esteem that will transfer to their approach to other subjects. The curriculum meets all these aims very successfully.

135. The gymnasium is unsatisfactory for many aspects of physical education such as gymnastics or dance, and prevents access to these areas of the curriculum. Excellent use is made of the local and wider community to augment the range of facilities available to pupils. Very good links are made with the extra-curricular activities programme through sports offered, such as motor-cross. Although assessment is satisfactory, recording and reporting of attainment need further improvement.

136. Very good support is given to pupils' social and cultural development, particularly through the outdoor education programme and by visits to venues for outdoor pursuits.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

137. Religious education is not shown as a subject on the timetable, but is taught through core time and personal social development because previously, pupils have demonstrated poor attitudes to the subject name.

138. Achievement is good. Pupils generally respond well to lessons and show an increase in knowledge. In Key Stage 3, pupils are able to accurately prepare a Jewish Passover meal and relate the Jewish Passover to Christian traditions. Accurate language is used in all studies. Pupils also begin to understand symbolism, for example that parsley dipped in salt water is a sign of life and spring in the Jewish religion.

139. The quality of teaching in religious education is very good, and it was excellent in one lesson observed. The teacher's subject knowledge is very good, which leads to interesting lesson content. The teacher has high expectations for pupils to attain at least in line with their abilities. Good use of questioning encourages pupils to explain their answers. Lessons are brisk and there are well-timed changes of activities, which keep pupils interested. Humour is sensibly employed. For example, the deputy head entered in one lesson and mentioned Allah, but pupils quickly pointed out that he was in the wrong religion. Classroom management is good, and the teacher enjoys very good relationships with the pupils.

140. The subject is well managed, although it lacks detailed schemes of work. Resources for the subject are very good. For example, the Jewish Passover meal was created with completely authentic ingredients. Staff are encouraged to raise social, moral and religious issues wherever possible with students, within the culture of a strong Society of Friends' ethos.

RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

141. The quality of residential provision is very good. It is fully integrated with and shares the ethos of the school. Educational care plans are developed jointly by the pupil, his key worker and tutor. Targets are conveyed to parents. Care and school staff are fully involved in the annual review process, which promotes pupils' emotional, social and educational development.

142. The residential accommodation is very good. Since the last inspection, all rooms have been redecorated, a medical room has been opened and the refurbishment of toilet areas is almost complete. Work undertaken is to a high standard. The accommodation is located in three age-related units. Pupils have the opportunity of single rooms, though some choose to share. Pupils are consulted regarding the decoration of their rooms, which they are encouraged to personalise.

143. Care staff have daily hand-over meetings. These ensure that staff maintain their already detailed knowledge of each pupil. Care staff ensure that each pupil's medical and health needs are met. The arrangements for the administration of medication are very good. All pupils are appropriately on the roll of a general practitioner at a local health centre.

144. The relations between staff and pupils are excellent, and based upon mutual respect. A wide range of appropriate activities is provided for pupils at the end of the school day. They can choose which, if any, of these activities they wish to take part in.

145. The contribution of ancillary staff to the care of pupils is very good. They relate well to pupils and provide support in a number of areas. At meal times, a most popular activity, pupils choose from a very good range of healthy and nutritious food. Facilities are kept clean and well maintained.

146. At present there is no independent-living unit, but this is planned for development and should open in September.

147. The residential provision is well led and managed, and contributes positively to the very good value for money provided by the school as a whole.