

INSPECTION REPORT

ST EDWARD'S SCHOOL

Near Romsey

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116584

Headteacher: Mr L. Bartel

Reporting inspector: Ian Naylor
20906

Dates of inspection: 17 – 21 September 2001

Inspection number: 188821

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special (Residential EBD)

School category: Independent

Age range of pupils: 11 to 17 years

Gender of pupils: Male

School address: Melchet Court
Sherfield English
Near Romsey
Hampshire

Postcode: S051 6ZR

Telephone number: 01794 884271

Fax number: 01794 884762

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Dr. G. Coghlan CBE. JP

Date of previous inspection: June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20906	Ian Naylor	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Physical education.	English as an additional language; Progress; Leadership and management.
	Susan Burgess	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Parents; Attendance.
10782	Henry Moreton	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; History.	Teaching; Attitudes and behaviour.
10668	David Walker	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Art and design.	Curriculum.
3838	Aileen Webber	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Modern foreign language; Geography.	Social moral spiritual cultural; Special educational needs.
	Brian Fletcher	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Science; Music.	Finance; Staffing and accommodation; Equal Opportunities.
	Graham Todd	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Design and technology; Information and communication technology; Personal and social education.	Care.

The inspection contractor was:

*Westminster Education Consultants
Old Garden House
The Lanterns
Bridge Lane
London
SW11 3AD*

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33 Kingsway
London

WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Edward's is an independent residential special school which offers placement during term time. There are 61 boys, all resident, aged 11 to 17, who have emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). Only two are from minority ethnic groups. Pupils are referred to the school from 33 education authorities. Many boys, on admission, have very low attainment in literacy and numeracy. They have extremely challenging behaviour and a wide range of special educational needs. The school's ultimate aim is to return pupils successfully into mainstream schools. The complexity and severity of personal and social problems, together with late entry, make this a rare event. Pupils who have literacy problems in addition to their emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) are given a range of support in class across subjects. Boys are also given individual support outside the classroom, ranging from once to four times a week depending on need).

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The very good leadership and management, very high standard of the teaching, very good overall achievement and the high quality of the support provided for pupils makes this a very effective school. It provides very good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Very good teaching secures good academic and very good personal achievement.
- There is very good leadership and management.
- Residential childcare is of high quality.
- There are very good procedures to ensure pupil welfare and safety.
- The range of learning opportunities is extensive and well matched to the needs of pupils. They include excellent after-school leisure and sporting activities.
- Pupils' behaviour and enthusiasm for lessons and their interest and involvement in activities are very good. Their relationships with each other and with staff are also of high quality.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Arrangements for performance management of teachers, which are still at a very early stage of development.
- Parental representation on the governing body.
- Writing skills across the subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1996. Since then, there has been good improvement across a range of areas. Teaching and learning have improved significantly. Time spent teaching has been increased to an acceptable level. Music and French have been added to the timetable and pupils are now able to sit a much broader range of GCSE examinations. Vocational education has been extended and now supports pupils' independent learning and improves their practical skills. Work experience placements are now made for each pupil. Link courses with Southampton College of Further Education are now a regular feature of provision. Careers education has been improved. The information and communications technology curriculum has been improved and better equipment installed. There are improved schemes of work for each subject, reviewed on an annual basis. The number and range of books has been significantly increased, the role of the Special School Assistant has been completely reviewed and classroom accommodation has been improved. The range of procedures to support pupils' academic progress, personal development and welfare has been extended. There has been good improvement in the management for each subject.

STANDARDS

The table below summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	by year 9	by year 11	<i>Key</i>	
Speaking and listening	A	A	<i>Very good</i>	<i>A</i>
Reading	B	B	<i>Good</i>	<i>B</i>
Writing	C	C	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>C</i>
Mathematics	A	A	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	<i>D</i>
Science	A	A	<i>Poor</i>	<i>E</i>
Personal, social and health education	A	A		
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A		

The emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties of the pupils make it inappropriate to judge attainments against age related national expectations.

Achievement of pupils overall is now good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. Pupils make rapid progress in both key stages over time and against targets set. This is an improvement over the good situation reported at the last Inspection. The main contributing factor to this is the greater access to GCSE and other accreditation. On admission to the school, pupils have very low levels of achievement. Progress over time is very good in mathematics, information and communications technology and physical education and good in all the other subjects. There is consistently good achievement in all key stages.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and have very good attitudes. They show sustained interest in most lessons and have a particularly high regard for evening and weekend activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils work hard to moderate and reduce their unacceptable behaviour. There are many instances of very good and excellent behaviour in lessons, leisure time and when off site.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils grow rapidly in self-confidence and esteem. They have very good relationships overall with staff and generally good and often very good or excellent relationships with one another.
Attendance	Good

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 12
Quality of teaching	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.

In 49 out of the 55 lessons seen teaching was good or better. In a quarter of lessons teaching was very good or excellent. Exceptional teaching was seen from several teachers and no unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Teaching is very good in mathematics and good in English and science. It is consistently good in all other subjects, and across all year groups. Teaching in personal and social education is good throughout the school. A key feature of teaching is the very good control and management of behaviour with high but realistic expectations of pupils' participation and effort. Good planning takes into account the individual needs of pupils and as a result they all make rapid progress in their learning. Activities are interesting and stimulating. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. As a result of the high quality teaching, learning is very good and most pupils know what they have to do to succeed. Literacy skills are taught well in the learning support classes. The teaching of writing and numeracy skills is not sufficiently planned for in other subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The National Curriculum is taught across the full range of subjects. National examinations are taken in a range of subjects. There are very good opportunities for vocational and leisure activities. Careers guidance and opportunities for work experience are good. The curriculum for students in Year 12 is very good. Providing a rich range of highly relevant experiences, preparing students very effectively for college or work. The 24-hour curriculum gives many opportunities for high quality extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The atmosphere of the school, relationships between pupils and staff, the 'Thought for the Day', and the extended curriculum provide high quality opportunities for pupils to learn about themselves and their relationship with others and to reflect upon the fundamental questions of life. Spiritual opportunities are provided in assemblies and in many daily activities. Social and moral values and attitudes are strongly promoted in lessons and in the residence. There are good opportunities for cultural education, particularly in art, music and the many visits out of school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. There are strong procedures in place for all aspects of care. Residential care is of a very high quality. There are very good relationships between care staff and pupils. Teachers and care staff work very well as a team, provide positive role models and know the pupils well. They monitor behaviour and personal development very effectively. Child Protection matters are very well organized and health and safety issues are given the highest priority. The school's policy for dealing with pupils' behaviour is very effective. Pupils' progress and achievement is very carefully recorded and measured. The many sporting and leisure activities are well organised and very well received, respected and enjoyed by pupils.

The school aims to work closely with parents and contacts are good. Parental involvement is, however, limited by geographical and other factors such as the lack of representation on the governing body and the absence of any support group.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher leads staff and pupils by example and has a very good awareness of the needs of pupils. Senior managers have good structures and procedures that are carefully and thoughtfully implement. The dedicated staff work diligently to secure the best climate for learning and care for all pupils
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Very good. The governing body has effective procedures to support the headteacher and staff to fulfill the schools' aims. The lack of staff or parent governors is a potential weakness, limiting the governing body's awareness of strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Various methods are used to gauge effectiveness, such as the annual consultation day between governors and senior staff, and visits by governors to school and lessons. There are, however, too few formal structures for monitoring teaching and learning. The school has not yet introduced a scheme for performance management.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The bursar, his staff and the school office provide very efficient administration procedures. There are high quality systems for financial control and very prudent financial contingency planning. The principles of best value are applied in all aspects of the school's work.

There are sufficient number of teachers, special support assistants and care staff to meet the admission criteria for pupil referrals. There are good induction and training arrangements. Accommodation and learning resources are very good, except in science where there is no proper laboratory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff keep in touch by phone or letter. • The school succeeds where other schools have not. • Staff are fair in their views about their child's behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More involvement in the life of the school on, for example, the governing body. • Specific information about academic attainment and progress, and the types of lessons and activities provided.

The inspectors agree with the positive views of most parents. Inspection evidence also shows that the school makes a particular effort to make parents aware of all aspects of their son's academic and social achievements and the activities available.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

The emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties of the pupils make it inappropriate to judge attainments against age related national expectations. Judgements are therefore made in relation to their achievement, progress and capabilities.

1. On admission to the school, pupils have very low levels of achievement mainly due to poor school attendance in the past, low self-esteem, and emotional and behavioural difficulties. A review of pupil's work, individual education plans (IEPs), annual reviews and reports, teachers' records and evidence from lesson observations shows that the achievement of pupils is now good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. Pupils, including those with additional special educational needs make rapid progress over time and in achieving their targets. This is an improvement over the good situation reported at the last inspection, largely due to the greater access to GCSE and other examinations. The very good teaching helps most pupils to make a dramatic increase in learning by improvements in their behaviour, raising self-esteem and confidence. As a result, pupils are better able to concentrate on their academic attainments.

2. The progress made by pupils with additional special educational needs within one-to-one withdrawal sessions is at least as good as others in the class. These pupils make very good progress gaining skills and confidence in reading, spelling and handwriting. A few boys initially refuse extra withdrawal help, as they do not want to stand out as different. Others choose to have withdrawal help up to four times a week.

3. Achievement, measured against pupils' own individual levels of attainment when they enter the school and their progress over time is very good in mathematics, information and communications technology and physical education. It is good in all the other subjects. There is consistently good achievement in all key stages.

4. There has been a significant increase in the number of pupils gaining GCSE grades since the previous inspection. Five pupils gained five or more GCSE A-G grades in 2001 and 20 gained at least one pass at A-G grade. Pupils gained passes in English, mathematics, science, information and communications technology, religious education, art, physical education and games.

5. Pupils have also gained national accreditation success in a variety of vocational awards such as the London Chamber of Commerce Initiative (LCCI) vocational access certificate for brickwork/ painting and decorating/ and horticulture. Pupils have also taken courses provided by the National Proficiency Training Council (NPTC), in horse care. Also in Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT), taken in Year 10. Pupils also gain recognition for their achievements in school and during evening and weekend activities through the school's own achievement awards.

6. By the time they leave school, boys have an impressive collection of examination successes and other awards in their National Record of Achievement. (NRA) This was demonstrated emphatically during an annual review meeting held during the inspection. In a discussion between staff and parents, a pupil proudly showed a wonderful array of his achievements in his NRA work folders for art, and design and technology work.

7. Pupils also frequently gain very good and often spectacular success in their sport and adventurous activities. For example, two pupils are currently county judo champions. All pupils in Year 10, 11 and 12 take part in work experience with local employers and more than two-thirds completed the placement successfully.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Overall, pupils' attitudes towards individual lessons are very good. Some pupils are exceptionally well motivated, work extremely hard and make very good progress. Others accept the extra help and work well, while a few pupils are very reluctant to pay attention.

9. Since the last inspection pupils have maintained their positive response to the school's high expectations and this has significantly helped to develop overall very good attitudes and behaviour. Most pupils like to come to school, and participate in lessons and activities with a good level of interest. They enjoy the many activities on offer out of school hours. They usually maintain their concentration very well, especially when enlivened by effective teaching. They respond well to adults and, usually, to each other. They have positive attitudes to learning, which improves the longer they are in school.

10. There are many examples of the pupils' positive attitudes in most subjects where the expectations of them to achieve are suitably high. Pupils are often very good at co-operating with each other on social occasions, such as in assemblies. They were spontaneous in their applause when three boys led the singing in an assembly. Pupils respond very positively to the excellent rapport with staff and treat each other with respect.

11. The majority of pupils maintain good levels of concentration and can work well when focused on the lesson. In a few lessons, however, some pupils find it hard to concentrate and do not complete enough written work. In these lessons some pupils are not good at taking turns or listening to others. This does not, however, detract from others' learning because of the skilled management of the situation by teachers and special support assistants.

12. Pupils have very good attitudes to the residential provision. Many examples were seen of pupils co-operating and volunteering willingly to help with the many evening activities. Pupils take pride in their surroundings and join in team work regularly. In a soccer lesson, for example, they were assessed on how well they had helped each other on the field.

13. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. When they are relaxing in the residential areas of the school, it is also very good, leading to very positive relationships. There are many examples where pupils show mature and improved behaviour when outside school, such as work experience and clubs. In lessons, pupils respond positively to the expectations and demands of teachers and staff. School rules and conventions are clearly understood by pupils. The result is a positive atmosphere for learning and relaxing. All pupils are included as part of a very well cared for community, as they learn to cope confidently with their daily work and leisure.

14. There is no evidence of sustained aggressive, sexist or racist behaviour. Pupils show a good level of respect for each other and a degree of sensitivity to others' feelings and beliefs. They demonstrate an increasing awareness of how their actions affect other people.

15. Pupils have some very good opportunities for personal development when, for example, they are voted onto the school council or when undertaking national award projects, such as canoeing or judo. They are good at taking responsibility in their residential areas in a whole range of jobs, looking after themselves and each other. They take these responsibilities seriously and are conscientious in carrying them out.

16. Pupils participate well in a very good range of extra-curricular activities. These include a wide range of sporting activities. All pupils visit outdoor activity centres and other places of interest. They respond positively to the opportunities to integrate, making new friends and behave responsibly.

17. Attendance, at 91 per cent, is good. Unauthorised absence is very low. There were 26 fixed-term and 8 permanent exclusions last year. Almost all of these were for sustained non-compliance with school rules, verbal abuse or violence. Although the incidence of exclusion is higher than similar schools, pupils have a very clear understanding of the sort of behaviour the school will not tolerate. They know that they have to make a serious commitment to keeping to the rules of the school, to improving their behaviour and to applying themselves well in lessons and activities. Pupils know that temporary exclusion is an opportunity for them to reconsider their responses and actions before being allowed to return to school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS AND STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. The level of high quality of teaching has been sustained and improved since the previous inspection with an increase in the proportion of very good and excellent teaching. The quality of teaching and learning overall is very good throughout the school and is a major factor in the pupils' positive attitudes towards work and the good progress they make. Teaching was good or better in 49 out of the 55 lessons seen. It was very good or excellent in a quarter. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen.

19. There is a high quality teaching in all subjects and exceptional teaching was seen from several teachers. Teaching is very good in mathematics. It is consistently good in all other subjects and across all year groups. Teaching in personal and social education is good throughout the school and has a positive effect on the pupils' attitudes and behaviour, as well as developing appropriate social skills.

20. All teachers manage the pupils' behaviour in a systematic and effective manner, leading to gradual modification and improvement over time. This enables pupils to concentrate on their work and learn effectively. In mathematics, teachers showed high quality behaviour management and control and had high expectations of behaviour and work. Disaffected pupils are kept on task in a relaxed but productive classroom atmosphere. Pupils ultimately show a high desire to do well and to make progress. This is also a particularly strong feature in physical education, where the teacher creates a calm and relaxed atmosphere, alongside high expectations for behaviour leading to a considerable amount of learning taking place during the course of a lesson.

21. Teaching in many lessons has a brisk pace and high expectations, where the pupils' interest, concentration and sustained effort feature strongly. Teaching in music has many good qualities, as pupils are encouraged to want to take part in the activities, and take a pride in their achievements. The good musical skills demonstrated by the teacher help

pupils to develop their own techniques. As a result of the good teaching, many pupils develop an appreciation of music and some are keen to learn more. In vocational lessons, such as building work and horse care, the teachers' calm, patient approach and expertise enables pupils to work independently and purposefully.

22. The teaching in English, mathematics and science is very effective, particularly in the management and organisation of pupils and the use of resources. The use of home made audio and video materials in English, for example, is exemplary. Other examples of effective teaching were seen in history, where the teacher's own interest and enthusiasm for the subject brought facts to life. For example, in a lesson about the devastating events of the Battle of the Somme, the teacher created a strong sense of interest and enthusiasm from the pupils, who wanted to learn more.

23. The quality of teaching in careers education is good, with well-planned activities, materials and resources, including suitable work experience and college placements, ensuring pupils are well prepared for the world of work. Pupils have an increasing sense of responsibility in preparing for their futures.

24. Teachers work hard to give pupils the best opportunities for learning. They are dedicated and display patience, commitment and good humour in the process. As a result, pupils show interest in their work and understand the links between their own effort, progress and achievement. Homework is set when appropriate and there is an appropriate amount for the differing needs of pupils. This further adds to the pupils' learning and progress made over time.

25. The support provided by special support assistants in lessons is very good. Teaching in withdrawal sessions is good. Individual programmes are well planned and a range of motivating activities, including games and the use of computers, make the sessions interesting for the pupils.

26. There is very good teaching and instruction given by various members of the care and support staff during evening and weekend activities. This is characterised by very good subject knowledge, a very good rapport with pupils and excellent relationships. An excellent example was seen in judo, where the expertise of the instructor has led directly to pupils achieving well above average national standards.

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

27. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress in developing its curriculum and the quality and variety of the learning opportunities offered to its pupils and students is very good. The curriculum provides pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 with a good range of broad and balanced learning experiences. All National Curriculum subjects are taught, as well as religious education, personal social and health education, sex education and drugs education. Programmes of study and schemes of work for French and music have been improved. A new workshop for design and technology is under construction and the provision for practical and vocational studies is being improved.

28. The length of the teaching day was identified as being unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection. Teaching time has been increased and is now in line with recommendations. The curriculum now meets statutory requirements. The balance

between and within subjects has been reviewed and is now good, and an options package gives added breadth for pupils in Years 10, and 11, enabling them to follow an appropriate careers programme, work experience and college placement, adding relevance to their curriculum.

29. The curriculum for students in Year 12 is very good. It provides a very rich range of highly relevant experiences, and prepares students very effectively for either college or work. Experiences are well selected to promote the further development of key skills and there is a choice of vocational courses, work experience and access to a local further education college. Such placements help to give students a real understanding of the wider community and the world of work.

30. Opportunities for accreditation are good, with seven courses leading to GCSE examinations including English, mathematics and science. Other courses lead to vocational endorsement, such as the London Chamber of Commerce Initiative (LCCI) and the bronze level of the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN).

31. The school places a strong emphasis on personal, social and health education, (PSHE), which is taught both as a discrete subject and through the many facets of the curriculum that permeate the daily life of the pupils and students. Sex education and information regarding drug misuse are handled sensitively. The overall provision for personal, social and health education is very good and all pupils' and students' individual education plans (IEP) include targets for behavioural and social improvement. Pupils and students have good equality of opportunity and are able to enjoy access to everything the curriculum offers. There are also integration activities with local schools.

32. Literacy and numeracy at Years 7, 8, and 9 are being developed across all subjects of the curriculum. Literacy is at a more advanced stage than numeracy. Although examples of numeracy were seen in science, geography and design and technology, these aspects are not yet included in planning. Information and communication technology (ICT) is well planned, promoted, and used throughout the school. Pupils are obviously familiar with computers and generally use them well. The library provides a useful resource for the pupils.

33. The 24-hour curriculum, or extended day, gives many opportunities for extra-curricular activities, which are very good. Pupils and students are given very good opportunities to take part in an impressive range of activities, including information and communication technology, leisure, sports, cookery, music, the creative and visual arts and other community experiences. Pupils can, for example, choose between evening activities which include judo, fishing, sailing, motorbiking, horse riding, canoeing, mountain biking, and football, Pupils also participate in residential visits and there is an excellent expeditions programme. The variety of programmes for the extended day helps pupils to grow in their personal, social and creative skills, develop independence, build relationships, and learn to share and develop both physically and mentally.

34. The provision for careers education and guidance is good. Parents, pupils and students meet the careers officer, who attends all transitional reviews, giving advice and guidance on the range of opportunities available to pupils remaining at the school post-16 or when they leave school. The careers programme is comprehensive and, together with the PSHE programme, prepares pupils well. A college link enables pupils to experience a different environment in a supportive way and take advantage of a range of vocational opportunities.

35. Links with the local community are good and play an important part in the learning opportunities of the pupils, particularly the social aspects. There are good contacts with partner institutions. The connection with a local college of further education is now well established and the range of opportunities offered has increased. Pupils benefit from a variety of vocational courses and participate in the various group events organised by the Area Special Schools Sports Association.

36. The individual programmes for literacy are well planned and enable special support assistants to work within a structured and flexible context. There is good use of ICT for individual programmes, which is motivating for the pupils. Individual education plans have a useful and clear format, with literacy, numeracy and behavioural targets. These are planned and reviewed by all teachers working together and this means that communication about pupils' individual needs and targets is well understood by all staff.

37. The opportunities provided by the school for cultivating pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good overall. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development (SMSC) is very good and their cultural development is good. The school has shown very good improvement in this area. The atmosphere of the school is one of a caring community with respect shown for all pupils and staff. The sense of being part of a team and the good-natured humour displayed between staff sets an example to the boys and encourages an easy banter between pupils and staff and a sense of everyone belonging to a caring community.

38. Opportunities for SMSC development are strengths of the school. The daily act of collective worship in the chapel incorporates a 'Thought for the Day' providing an excellent contribution to all aspects of the pupils' personal development. Pupils have the chance to reflect on moral issues and their own values and beliefs as well as those of others. Pupils are challenged to think about whether their or others' view the world from a standpoint of 'half empty' or 'half full'. They are asked to reflect on people who, through no fault of their own, are homeless, or who are starving in other parts of the world.

39. The school's Roman Catholic context brings a quiet background of spirituality to the way everything is approached within the school for those of all faiths. A regular liturgy is provided in the chapel and boys can choose to attend. The personal, social and health education programme also gives opportunities for reflections. Pupils discussed the implications of the United States World Trade Centre disaster, which had occurred in the week before the inspection. Religious education lessons give the pupils the chance to learn about and discuss the beliefs of other faiths.

40. The pupils are also given very good opportunities to extend their moral development. In lessons, at meal times, in the residential provision and the extended curriculum, there are numerous occasions when the boys can reflect on their behaviour, the consequences of their actions and their relationships with others.

41. Staff work together to ensure that pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and realise that relationships with them as people is separated from any outbursts of unacceptable behaviour that may occur. Pupils feel respected and so learn to respect the staff, who provide excellent role models for them.

42. The opportunities for the development of social skills are very good. Many subjects take particular care to organise pupils within lessons so that they can learn to work together better. Meal times are civilised occasions when boys learn good manners and how to converse in a mature way. The excellent social activities provided by the extended curriculum mean that boys can learn the importance of team building, raising self-esteem and building confidence.

43. Pupils learn to take responsibility for their behaviour and to become more independent. Many opportunities are provided within the PSHE programme, vocational courses, work experience and college links that give pupils the chance to learn how to conduct themselves appropriately within the wider community. Pupils organise a 'Rainbow Day' when pupils with disabilities visit the school. There is a school's council and representatives make suggestions for improvements and these are discussed and acted on.

44. The opportunities for pupils to extend their cultural development are good. They learn about their own culture in music and art in school. With a strong emphasis on sporting and physical activities, some opportunities are missed in evening activities and there are few chances for drama. However, the school does arrange for all pupils to go to the theatre. All the boys study a modern foreign language and learn about the French culture. They also speak French with other teachers around the school. In geography they learn about the cultures of other countries, such as Italy and Japan. In judo they also learn about another culture and use the correct Japanese terminology for the holds they are learning.

45. In religious education they find out about other cultures, faiths, beliefs and value systems. There are, however, few displays of multi-cultural interests around the school. The festival days of other cultures are not given whole school celebration and this means opportunities are missed to ensure that the boys have a wider understanding of the multi-cultural society in which they live.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

46. Provision for the support and guidance of pupils is very good. As a result, the good progress pupils make in their social and personal development is a very positive feature of the school's work. Teachers and care staff work very well as a team, provide positive role models and know the pupils well. Staff meetings, including teachers and care staff, are held each morning and afternoon. These ensure that all relevant information is effectively shared. There is a good level of supervision at all times. Members of staff are sensitive to the many issues that may affect behaviour and progress. The atmosphere is relaxed and friendly.

47. Teaching and care staff monitor behaviour and personal development very effectively. Pupils know that they are held responsible for their own actions and that participation in certain activities and expeditions depends on the number of points they have earned. Handbooks for new pupils set out in detail the school's expectations in terms of behaviour. The sanctions and rewards system is clearly explained. Mentors from the same year group help new pupils to settle in. Every encouragement is offered to those boys who want to give up smoking. However, many boys arrive at the school with an established habit and the arrangement of the school day takes account of this.

48. Very good procedures for child protection are underpinned by a detailed policy giving clear guidance. All members of staff have received appropriate training. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour, including those needing restraint procedures, are recorded in the daily log. These entries enable any individual's behaviour patterns to be monitored and, where necessary, appropriate action to be taken. Bullying, both verbal and physical, is actively and consistently discouraged. The anti-bullying policy and procedures have been reviewed recently. These set out clear guidelines for dealing effectively with both bully and victim.

49. Health and safety issues are given a high priority and the bursar has recently carried out a detailed risk assessment of the very extensive school site. Security is about to be improved by the installation of a sophisticated CCTV system. Two governors regularly inspect health and safety aspects of both teaching and residential provision. The programme for expeditions is extremely well evaluated for potential risks, and parents and pupils have access to a well prepared document about all aspects of it.

50. The school has very good arrangements for the health, welfare and safety of its pupils. Regular inspections by staff, coupled with detailed record keeping, ensure that the school provides a safe and secure environment for the pupils. Members of staff are well versed in the assessment of risks and the school operates very good procedures for dealing with and recording accidents and incidents. Medical support is very good. A number of staff have obtained first aid training. There is a nursing team of two and a nurse practitioner, all under the regular supervision of a local doctor.

51. The school's policy for dealing with pupils' behaviour is very effective. Very good behaviour attitudes are a feature of the school. There are policies and procedures to deal with every aspect of behaviour. The senior management team is very aware of the need to maintain good behaviour and all staff and some members of the governing body are trained in 'Team Teach' techniques for behaviour management and restraint. The staff is aware of the particular needs of all pupils. To meet these needs they have become counsellors, using 'Reality Therapy,' where the emphasis is given to pupils taking responsibility for their own choices and actions and learning to deal with the consequences. Behavioural difficulties are dealt with extremely well by staff, and pupils feel able to discuss their problems with them. The net result is a caring community where pupils learn to grow safely and to discover new things about themselves as young adults.

52. During the inspection week it was observed that staff dealt with incidents presented by challenging behaviour in a professional and efficient manner. Members of the care staff are involved in setting individual care and behaviour plans. These plans are well thought out and they are effective because they are carefully discussed and agreed with parents and pupils. Pupils' responses to these are impressive.

53. There is a very clear understanding by all staff of the expectations of behaviour from boys. This is communicated carefully to the boys and to parents on admission, so that when exclusion is necessary it is seen by all as a fair method of maintaining standards of behaviour and supporting teaching and care staff in their work.

54. The school has achieved great improvement in the assessment of pupils' academic progress and personal development since the last inspection. There is a very effective admissions procedure; a panel of care staff selects, analyses referrals and recommends interviews. A period of assessment begins and pupils are offered places in due course. The school then carries out a very efficient assessment of basic achievement and builds up pupils' profiles. This profile is used to ensure the pupils are correctly placed at the school.

55. The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' levels of achievement and personal development. At the end of each lesson, teachers and support staff record details for every pupil. Assessment of pupils' reading and spelling are recorded regularly. This information is collated to provide detail for all professionals as well as for pupils and their parents. All staff give attention to pupils' achievements.

56. Mentoring of pupils, monitoring by staff and very good recording procedures ensure that every achievement is recognised. The records are used to inform targets, both academic and personal. Annual reviews are very thorough. They look at targets set at the previous review and use this information to inform objectives for the coming year. There is a clear link between these and the pupil's individual education plan. Each pupil has a care file to record his progress and this is maintained by care staff, who are involved with pupils from their first application to join the school. These staff are deeply involved in any progress a pupil makes. They record and monitor behaviour, set targets and maintain contact with home. Much of this work continues even when pupils are excluded from school.

57. There have been improvements since the last inspection in the monitoring of pupil progress and the writing of individual education plans. These are now good. The information provided to parents through the annual review process is detailed and helpful, giving a clear picture of the pupils' progress against specific and measurable targets. This enables the school to measure and report in detail on pupil achievement. Information from internal reviews and annual reviews is carefully used to plan ahead to enable pupils to have access to accredited courses, GCSE and the various courses based on vocational skills.

58. There are strong links between the review process and staff planning. Behaviour support plans and other plans for the development of pupils' social and independence skills are very effectively monitored. Records of Achievement and general school displays provide very good evidence of pupils' all-round development during their time in the school.

59. The educational and personal support for pupils is very good across the whole school day. The school offers 24-hour care and education of a high quality. The systems to maintain this support are very well established. Staff and pupils know exactly what is expected from them. The result is a school that assesses every need of its pupils and develops programmes to meet individual needs and improve performance and personal development.

60. Residential provision is very good. In discussions with inspectors, pupils state they feel well looked after, and safe in the school. They talk freely about their life there. They say they like the way that they are expected to take more responsibility, as they grow older. They like the high expectations and the ability to take exams, or to go to college. Relationships in the residential areas are very good. The extra curricular aspects are very well received and respected.

61. Residential provision matches statements and improvements are being carried out at all times. Childcare and other staff liaise very well and appropriate care plans are all in place. There is a suitable number of night staff to ensure supervision and welfare overnight. Registration procedures are efficiently organised by teaching and residential staff. Close supervision ensures that pupils are punctual to lessons and activities. There are good arrangements for encouraging attendance.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

62. Pupils come from a wide geographical area and parents often have difficulties in travelling to school. There is no parents' representative on the governing body. Both these factors limit parents' involvement with the work of the school although all are required to attend their son's initial interview. Some parents would like to be able to meet other families more often but, as there is no friends association, the opportunities for this are largely restricted to two events a year.

63. The pre-inspection meeting with the registered inspector and the questionnaires returned by parents reflect strong support for the school. Parents praise the school's success with their sons in 'turning around' what had become very negative attitudes both to school and to life in general. There was general appreciation of the positive relationships that care workers build up with families. All those at the meeting would like to see their sons offered a more gradual transition to adult life by formally extending placements at St. Edward's to Years 12 and 13.

64. There is strong support for events held at the school, such as the annual Christmas carol service and open day. The school provides minibuss transport to these events for parents who would not otherwise be able to attend. Almost all parents attend their son's annual review.

65. The information provided for parents is good and has improved since the last inspection. At the admissions interview, the school's rules, expectations and arrangements for child protection are fully explained. Annual review reports clearly describe attainment and progress and contain targets for improvement. In the event of an extra review being called, a current performance indicator is provided instead of a full report. Pupils' work and other achievements are also available for parents to see and discuss at review meetings. The results of national tests taken by pupils are sent out to parents. A weakness is that annual reports to parents, although very informative about social development, behaviour and work covered in lessons, do not always give precise enough information about specific gains in attainment.

66. The school handbook is attractively presented in a question and answer format. A lively illustrated newsletter goes out to parents each term and those at the meeting were particularly impressed with the amount of information they received by phone and letters. They appreciate the fact that staff contact them with good news as well as when there is cause for concern.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

67. The standard of leadership and management, which was good at the last inspection, has been sustained and improved upon. All the key issues from the last report have been addressed and resolved satisfactorily. There has been a good level of improvement overall. There is now high quality management of the school by the headteacher and senior members of staff. The senior management team work in harmony to promote high standards of pupil behaviour and achievement.

68. The headteacher leads the staff by his own very good example in teaching and in his communication and interpersonal skills across all sections of the school, particularly with the pupils. This example helps to bind all staff together into one team, whether they are teachers, instructors, special support assistants, care staff, night men or ancillary staff. They all share the school stated aims and together they achieve an excellent climate for learning where teaching and care are both very good.

69. There is very clear delegation of responsibility across the various departments of the school and very good documentation of all key functions, including policies and procedures to give guidance to the staff team in their duties. A good example, is the way that the head of English has overall responsibility for the withdrawal of pupils from classes for learning support, whilst the day-to day running of the Learning support Class is delegated to the special support assistants, who do a very good job. Subject leaders all have a clear view of their responsibilities and are diligent in supporting their subjects across the school. Similarly, care staff understand their responsibilities within the residential provision and carry them out very well.

70. The governing body is well organised and meets all its statutory duties. It gives very good support to the headteacher and staff and it meets each month to receive detailed reports from the headteacher about all aspects of the school. It has sub-committees including those for finance, property and exclusions. These carry out a wide range of supportive and decision-making activities.

71. A committee of the governors gives very careful consideration to all requests for exclusion referred to it by the headteacher. The aim of governors and staff - to retain all pupils in school, is upheld, except in the most extreme of cases. The result of this policy is seen in the high quality of teaching and learning, and the very good behaviour of most pupils.

72. Governors have some good procedures for measuring provision in the school and understanding its strengths and weaknesses well. Individual governors visit school regularly to talk to staff and pupils. There is, for example, a link governor for the curriculum who visits lessons to evaluate whether lesson planning for teaching reflects what is written in schemes of work and other curriculum documentation. A weakness is that the governors miss opportunities to gain a parental perspective by not having any parents as governors.

73. The governing body receives regular verbal and written reports from staff with particular responsibilities. Direct consultation with the headteacher and senior staff takes place at the annual consultation day, where a broad range of school matters is discussed. Evaluation of the previous year's action leads to planning for the next year across all departments of the school and key decisions are made for the future. Since the last report very effective measures have been taken which have led to improvement across a broad range of the school's activities over and above those outlined at that time.

74. The school development plan (SDP) is a carefully prepared series of documents, with targets for action. These are collated annually at the Consultation Day between senior staff and governors. It contains the education development plan, the care development plan, and a plan for buildings and environment. These look at current trends and priorities and also project forward over two to three years. There are targets, with the action identified to achieve these, deadlines and references to where targets have been attained. There is, however, no apparent link between the SDP and the school's spending plan and no indication of how much it will cost to meet the targets it sets.

75. The school sets satisfactory whole school targets for pupil achievement. For example, a target of 100 per cent pass rate in GCSE in English mathematics and science was achieved in both 2000 and 2001. However, further targets could be set in other areas where there is a comparative weakness, such as in writing.

76. There are various formal and informal methods for measuring the effectiveness of teaching, including lesson observations by the headteacher and senior staff, scrutiny of subject planning documentation, records and assessments of pupils. The headteacher accepts that a new system of appraisal for staff is overdue and has made the initial consultation between staff and governors for the introduction of a more rigorous scheme based on the procedures set out by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) on performance management. As an independent school governors are not legally bound to follow this structure, but they recognise that the principle of best practice, as seen across other similar special schools would be to embrace this scheme.

77. On a year by year basis, the school balances its budget well. The school's priorities for development are carefully set out and linked to the budget plan. The priorities carefully reflect the educational and social needs of the pupils. For example, the first priority is to ensure that in management, teaching and care, optimum levels of staffing are achieved and maintained. In challenging times, the headteacher and the governing body have made excellent progress in ensuring that this priority is met.

78. Long term planning is less well defined. There is a substantial contingency fund available that is derived from trusts, donations and investments. The school is rightly prudent in the disbursement of this fund but has not fully set the priorities for its use. Governors meet monthly to receive full details of the current financial position. This enables them to review all expenditure and to plan for the immediate and long-term future.

79. The school's financial procedures are very clear and set the tone for good financial management. Financial records are detailed, accessible and accurate. Day to day financial control is sound and efficient. The bursar and his assistant are meticulous in maintaining records of expenditure. The most recent audit by independent auditors found that the finances are soundly managed. The very efficient school office provides very good administration and support. Teaching and learning is very well supported by the administrative and care staff who work diligently to ensure that the school runs smoothly and efficiently.

80. Teachers are suitably qualified by training and experience for the age group and subject that they teach. They are well deployed across the curriculum. There is a good balance of experienced and more recently qualified staff. One teacher is receiving initial teacher training at the school. Newly qualified teachers and recent appointments to the school are given very good induction support and in-service training. Care staff are also well qualified and experienced. There is a good programme of in-service training for all staff. The qualifications for the teaching of individual special educational needs are good. Special support assistants are well experienced and they give invaluable support to the teachers and the pupils. St. Edward's staff have participated in research by universities relating to good practice in similar types of school.

81. Learning resources are very good across all subjects. They are skillfully used to enhance learning. Library provision has improved since the previous inspection and there is now a very good range of books to which the students have good access.

82. The accommodation and grounds of this historic building are very good. They are spacious, well maintained, comfortable and well adapted to the needs of the school. Residential accommodation is good, homely and well maintained. There is a rolling programme for refurbishment and redecoration. A few classrooms are quite small and do not facilitate easy movement of pupils. Although a great deal of work has been done to provide discrete accommodation for science and design and technology, neither room is yet fully equipped. The music room, the swimming pool and the newly equipped room for food technology provide very good working environments. There is a pleasant, well organised and well resourced room for learning support work. The accommodation for vocational training courses is extensive and that for horse riding is very good.

83. The school makes very good use of the new technology. It is in the process of establishing a new telephone exchange and a school information technology network, which will include the residential accommodation, and a Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system. Good use is made of computers in the school office.

84. Governors apply the principle of best value to all school expenditure. For example, they received six tenders for the new CCTV system. There is satisfactory consultation with staff, parents and pupils. Governors seek value for money and ensure that all expenditure is in the best interests of the pupils.

85. Taking into account pupils' educational background; attainment on entry; very good achievement and progress; very good attitudes and behaviour; the high quality of teaching; and comparisons, with other similar schools, of costs per pupil; the school provides very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

86. To sustain the high quality of teaching and achievement the following should be considered by the senior management team and the governing body when drawing up their action plan for improvement:

- Introduce a system of performance management for teachers by setting individual objectives linked to improvement in teaching and learning and increased attainment by pupils.
(*Paragraph; 77*)
- Ensure that the views of parents are represented by having parent governors on the governing body.
(*Paragraphs; 63,73*)
- Improve writing skills across the subjects by:
(*Paragraph; 92*)
 - * Planning for writing skills within all subject schemes of work and in lesson plans.
 - * Introducing whole school targets to raise standards across the subjects in writing.
 - * Increasing the use of word-processing in all subjects.
- Minor issues

To improve provision further the following minor issues should also be considered:

 - * Improve the accuracy of information in annual reports by giving clear indicators of achievement and progress across all subjects.
 - * Provide more withdrawal support for numeracy, particularly in Years 7 to 9.
 - * Make clear within the school development plan what the costs are for each of the areas under development, and link these to the whole school-spending plan.
 - * Make laboratory opportunities available in science, for those pupils who need more extensive facilities for investigation and experimentation at Years 10 and 11.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	41

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	10	33	6	0	0	0
Percentage	9	19	61	11	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	61
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	48
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	8.2	School data	0.8

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	11	13	NA	13

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	0	5	20
	Girls	NA	NA	NA
	Total	0	5	20
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	NA	69%	NA
	National	NA	NA	NA

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied.	School	13	38

GCSE Examination Results Summer 2001 Year 11

PUPIL	GCSE ENGLISH	GCSE MATHS	GCSE SCIENCE	GCSE RE	GCSE ART	GCSE ART SHORT	GCSE PE	GCSE IT
1	FF	G	G	F	D			
2	UU							
3	FF	E	F	F				
4	ED	C	D	E	D		D	E
5	FG	F	F					
6	FF	E	F					
7	EG	E	D				D	
8	EG	E	F	G				F
9	UG							
10	FD	E	E	F		C	E	G
11	EC	D	D	E			D	G
12	FG	F	F				E	
13	GU	E	E			D		G

GCSE Examination Results Summer 2001 Year 10

8 pupils gained passes D-G.

Other Examinations entered

London Chamber of Commerce Initiative (LCCI)

Construction: 9 Passes

Catering: 1 Pass

National Proficiency Training Council (NPTC)

Horsecare: 5 Certificates

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	56
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	26	8
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 – Y12

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.1
Average class size	8

Education support staff:

Y7 – Y12

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	201

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	2,026,306.00
Total expenditure	2,040,520.00
Expenditure per pupil	37,100
Balance brought forward from previous year	840,177.00
Balance carried forward to next year	825,963.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

61
19

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	7	11	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	12	7	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	7	11	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	2	5	3	1	5
The teaching is good.	11	6	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	11	4	2	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	15	3	0	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	15	4	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	14	2	2	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	17	2	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	16	3	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	3	0	0	0

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

ENGLISH

87. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' achievements and progress are good at each key stage. This is largely due to the sustained good quality of teaching. Several improvements have been made to the curriculum, including more pupils taking GCSE. The subject leader has worked hard to develop a satisfactory scheme of work and to enhance the subject's resources. These now include a wide range of literature, videos, audiotapes and other materials, carefully chosen to match the pupils' understanding. The library has been refurbished to a high standard. It now has a satisfactory stock of books and is fully operational largely because of the efforts of the team of committed special support assistants.

88. The provision to support literacy skills is good. The head of English has overall responsibility for learning support, which is delegated to the special support assistants who provide high quality support to individual pupils in the withdrawal classroom.

89. In Years 7, 8, and 9, pupils are gaining increasing fluency and confidence in reading and understanding patterns in spelling. They read, for example, Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* and R. L. Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, poetry and personal reading books with interest. There are suitable links with other subjects and non-fiction is used carefully in, for example, reading about the Battle of the Somme in 1916. Pupils learn to develop their speaking and listening skills by presenting a factual talk about a hobby or interest, and sometimes reciting speeches from well-known plays. They study the text of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, discussing the characters and plot.

90. The achievement of Year 11 pupils in national examinations is good, particularly given the low level of achievement of pupils when they enter the school. Pupils follow an appropriate syllabus including GCSE and the Certificate of Achievement in Literacy. Pupils read *Romeo and Juliet*, understanding characterization and learn to analyse poetry by Tennyson. They write on a range of issues and for different purposes. They write critically about John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. Pupils also learn to write formal letters and how to fill in application forms. They make very good use of information and communication technology to draft and re-draft their work and practice their word processing skills in most lessons. The oldest pupils work on narrative, including the media and newspaper articles, as a basis for expressing their own views and opinions.

91. Pupils make good progress in their speaking and listening as there are many additional opportunities for these skills to be developed in other subjects, such as French, music, physical education and personal and social education. Pupils are required to read in many situations so that they can practice regularly and as a result they make satisfactory progress in their reading as they move through the school.

92. Weaknesses remain in the quality of writing as pupils struggle to produce written work that approaches national averages. In addition, the quality of their handwriting and presentation is often weak. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their writing overall, but there is a lack of consistent approach or strategy in developing writing skills in subjects across the curriculum.

93. Pupils are interested and enthusiastic in lessons. Their behaviour is generally good and positive attitudes support learning, which helps them to concentrate and to work hard. However, many are not as keen when it comes to written activities.

94. Teaching is good overall and leads to good learning by pupils. Of the five lessons seen, one was excellent, one very good, two good and one satisfactory. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and as a result pupils taken an active part in their lessons. Teachers use rewards and sanctions consistently and this helps pupils to develop a sense of purpose. Relationships are firmly established and there are relaxed and easy responses from the pupils. There is a secure environment in which pupils are aware of the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. Teachers' subject knowledge is detailed and thorough and the planning uses assessment well and seeks to improve a wide range of interesting and appropriate activities to further the pupils' skills and knowledge of language and literature. Teaching generally enhances the cultural experiences of pupils through a study of literature and organised trips to theatres.

MATHEMATICS

95. The management of mathematics is very good and there has been good improvement made to planning for the curriculum since the last inspection. The main strengths are the quality of the teaching, the pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships, the leadership of the subject and the shared commitment by all concerned for improvement. Relative weaknesses in a generally strong subject are the range of support offered to the lowest achievers and the frequent lack of a summary and evaluation session at the end of lessons.

96. Standards of achievement and progress in mathematics are very good throughout the school. By Year 9, higher attaining pupils understand congruence and complementary and supplementary angles. They name the four main types of angles and use known number facts to calculate an unknown angle. Lower attaining pupils use a ruler, compass and pencil well to draw regular shapes and create geometrical patterns, although accuracy would be improved by the use of harder pencils. They can name two-dimensional figures, such as hexagon and octagon and understand what a net is.

97. By Year 11, the majority of pupils are working towards GCSE examinations. They recognise the different graphical forms that may be used to illustrate information. They can collect data and process it using tally lists, frequency tables, mode and median and finally represent the findings in a pictogram, bar graph, pie chart, frequency diagram or line graph, including line of 'best fit' where appropriate. They convert between fraction, decimal and percentage accurately and multiply to two decimal places. Lower attaining pupils practise multiplication and division and knowledge of addition and subtraction so that they may accurately calculate the cost of purchases and receive the correct change.

98. Teaching and learning is very good overall, which represents a good improvement since the last inspection. Of the seven lessons seen, two were good and five were very good. Teaching is very good at both key stages. In the best lessons teachers are enthusiastic, using their secure mathematical knowledge to the benefit of the pupils. There is a lively, prompt start with a well-planned and executed mental exercise to focus the pupils on the day's tasks. Pupils respond well to their successes, which encourages them to work well in the main part of the lesson. There are very good relationships between pupils and adults and pupils display very good attitudes to their tasks. Pupils are managed well, all the necessary resources are readily available and changes of activity are well

timed. As a result, pupils are highly motivated and pupils participate fully in their work. Learning is not, however, regularly reinforced at the end of the lesson through a summary and evaluation session, although pupils are praised and rewarded for behaviour and effort. In all lessons there is very good teamwork between teachers and support staff.

99. Staff are good role models and special support assistants make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning. They know the pupils very well and they often use this knowledge to prevent difficult situations arising, thus avoiding confrontations or problems in class. Many of the wide range of activities presented require pupils to work together and to think about the needs of others. As a result, mathematics contributes well to the moral and social development of pupils.

100. Pupils use basic numeracy and graphical representation in science, they use measures and scale in design and technology, grid references are used in geography and there is a little counting in French. Computers are used to complete some mathematics assignments, which use information technology rather than textbooks as the medium of communication. The use of mathematics, however, is not often specifically designed into the overall planning for other subjects. There is insufficient planning and teaching in basic numeracy skills for the lowest achieving pupils, particularly at Key Stage 3 and only limited use of withdrawal for learning support that has proved so successful for literacy.

101. The development of the subject since the last inspection has been well led and managed. Teachers are being supported effectively with the introduction of the numeracy strategy at Key Stage 3. Teachers keep detailed records of pupils' attainment, behaviour and effort and use this information when planning future work. Over time a secure picture of individual progress is created. Pupils are enabled to sit the GCSE both at the end of Year 11 and, if appropriate, in Year 10. The success that pupils achieve in these examinations is a good measure of the success of the department.

SCIENCE

102. There has been good improvement in the curriculum and its delivery since the last inspection. These include more teaching time and pupils now have more access to a good range of scientific activities in a well-equipped classroom. The learning of some higher attaining pupils is hindered, however, as the classroom is not a fully equipped laboratory. This restricts more extensive access to the experimentation and investigation often required in examination work.

103. The science department is well managed and lessons well planned. All lessons are linked to a broader understanding of the world and to the positive contribution that science can make to every day life and people's well being. Science is taught well by teachers who have a good command of the subject and who can relate their teaching to other areas of the curriculum such as physical education and design and technology. This helps pupils to gain a broad understanding of scientific principles and how they can be applied in problem solving.

104. By Year 9, achievement and progress are very good. National tests are effectively used to assess progress and to plan future work, building on strengths and remedying weaknesses. By Year 11 achievement and progress remain very good. Since the previous inspection, the GCSE examination has been successfully introduced and the results at Year 11 for the past three years are very creditable when account is taken of pupils' educational background and their attainment when they enter the school. The results indicate that there is a marked improvement in scientific knowledge and understanding in

the senior school. This is particularly marked for pupils who have been at the school since Year 7. Generally, pupils make very good progress in science and most achieve very well. In a lesson about heart rate and lung capacity it was shown that both may be adversely affected by smoking and students were left to draw their own conclusions. Pupils enjoy taking an active part in their learning. One group exercised vigorously, measuring pulse rates before and after exercise. They then discussed and recorded their results. In another lesson, pupils conducted an experiment to find out what conditions cause rusting. This led to a discussion on how to prevent cars rusting and the dangers this can create for road safety.

105. Teaching and learning are good overall. One lesson was excellent and the others good. Teachers are knowledgeable and wherever possible relate the teaching to actual events. This approach captures and sustains interest, often from pupils who are reluctant when it comes to writing things down. Teachers manage their classes well and pay careful attention to individual needs. They are firm but friendly, insisting on high standards of work and behaviour. Pupils who misbehave, are always offered an immediate way to adjust to what is acceptable and this sets an excellent tone for co-operative working. Class management is based upon mutual respect. Pupils have often to be pressed to respond to questions, but all answers are valued and used to good effect. The main strength of the best teaching seen, which has very good and sometimes excellent features, is the value placed upon the students' responses. Teachers make skilful use of resources, which are in good supply and also deploy special support assistants very effectively. They have satisfactory recording and assessment systems.

106. Weaker areas of teaching are that teachers tend to do too much for the pupils and consequently there is too little opportunity for independent work. Similarly, although the quality of oral work is good, pupils do not read and write sufficiently to become confident in answering examination questions. As at the last inspection. pupils have too few opportunities to use computers and their ICT skills are not well developed. Some progress has been made but there is still much more to do. Assessment is satisfactory although it does not yield sufficient information to assist in the planning of *individual* work programmes. Too little emphasis is placed upon homework.

ART AND DESIGN

107. The curriculum for art and design is good. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the variety of media available to the pupils. The main strengths are the quality of the teaching, the pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships and the resources and physical facilities available to the pupils. Weaknesses are the availability and use of information and communication technology and the use of a review session so that pupils may be helped to recognise the strengths of their participation in the subject and the progress they are making.

108. Standards of achievement and progress in art are good throughout the school and some older higher attaining pupils reach national standards. It is clear from the colourful and well presented displays of art that pupils enjoy the subject. A particularly striking piece is a large sculpture in the entrance hall of *Christ Redeemer*, modelled on the statue above Rio de Janeiro. By Year 9, pupils are becoming confident in the use of paint, mixing and blending to produce the colour and shade they wish to use. They produce pencil drawings of still life, with good likeness to the subject and effective use of shading within carefully drawn lines. They make three-dimensional sculptured figures, applying synthetic clay to their wire figures. By Year 11, pupils use paint, pencil and paper with skill and care to draw

and paint. They work with confidence in two and three-dimensional media, creating sketches and preparing work for the GCSE, which is displayed to advantage in the gallery and about the school.

109. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good at both key stages. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils' needs and abilities in planning activities and tasks that are interesting and enjoyable and motivate pupils to learn. Relationships are very good, with teachers encouraging pupils by giving careful guidance and assistance. Praise is used well to develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Teachers' proficient demonstrations of techniques and processes help pupils to learn new skills and improve their work.

110. Teachers use the work of other artists to inspire pupils in the use of colour and paint. A variety of self-portraits, including those of Van Gogh, Rembrandt and Picasso, were shown to the pupils to enable them to develop their work on the study of the face. The special support assistants, who know the pupils well, are deployed effectively. They ensure that materials are easily accessible and that pupils are clear about what they have to do. Pupils enjoy art and the range of opportunities available to them for creative and practical activities. An artist in residence was used imaginatively to stimulate the pupils' interest in woodcarving. Resources are used well. The use of writing skills could be further developed.

111. The subject is well led and there is a clear agenda for further development. The whole school scheme of work has been revised consistent with the new National Curriculum. The art room, pottery and sculpture studio, and gallery provide good specialist accommodation, which has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and achievements. It is planned to extend further the range of two and three-dimensional work and a new kiln will enable ceramics to be re-introduced to the curriculum. Art and design makes a very good contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

112. The curriculum provision for design and technology is good. There has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the last inspection and it now covers the whole range of technology, including some food technology. The school has a new design and technology suite. This was not completely fitted out during the inspection, but the plans and resources are such that it will be of high quality when completed. This suite is a great asset to the whole school in that design and testing and manufacture may be carried out in adjoining areas. There is sufficient space for machines and the design element is backed up with new computers and software. The subject is very well led and managed. The development of accredited courses is in hand. The department team is united and efficient

113. There was no food technology offered on the timetable at the time of the last inspection, and although there is now a food technology base, the lack of a qualified member of staff means that it is still not currently offered on the timetable and pupils are not able to follow accredited courses. However, it is being offered as an extra-curricular activity.

114. Learning is universally good and pupils work hard and are well motivated to succeed. Pupils of all ages in the cookery option are able to work independently. They have their own work bay and use their mathematical skills to help with measuring and

weighing. They follow health and safety routines carefully and use recipes to make food for their friends. Pupils in Year 7 use computer programs to assist in their design projects. They save files and print their work. Pupils in Year 9 acquire skills in textiles, dyeing and printing and understanding how to use a sewing machine. Other pupils in the same year group investigate differences in the design of cars and then design their own. They understand why design and testing are important features of manufacture and have carried out work to test design in planes. They know how to use the correct technical language, and understand words such as prototype and aerodynamic.

115. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 know how to use computer-aided design software and produce complicated designs, adding text and colour. They discuss how their designs have worked with staff. Some older pupils in Year 11 are able to analyse aspects of building work and design areas for themselves and set up their own projects. Pupils in these year groups will be taking part in nationally and locally accredited courses. There is consistently good behaviour. Older pupils set good role models when they work independently. They look after tools and expensive equipment very well. The newest pupils in Year 7 behave well, they may need individual help but wait patiently until the teacher or support assistant is ready to listen. In Years 9 to 11, pupils maintain high standards of work and behaviour. All pupils are helpful and almost every one tries their best.

116. Teaching is always good. Teachers understand all aspects of their subjects, which enables pupils to feel confident and to respond to the challenge of work. Teachers and support staff explain their topics well so that pupils are able to begin working immediately at a good pace. Every member of staff helps with the very basic skills in the subject to ensure that pupils learn to use machines safely. Staff give clear guidance to pupils and good support for the more complex aspects of the work. As a result, pupils receive the fullest possible information on their projects. Teachers use a variety of teaching strategies and this widens opportunities for pupils to learn. Teachers have high expectations of participation and behaviour. They also insist on the high quality of finished work. This is reflected in the way that pupils are able to present their work. Teachers share interests in information technology with pupils, and use this to enhance their work. Recording and assessment are good and assist teachers in their planning.

GEOGRAPHY

117. The curriculum for geography is good, as it was at the last inspection. The subject leader gives good leadership and management. Methods and approaches are used that make the work interesting and relevant, based on the National Curriculum. There is an emphasis on worksheets, but the activities are varied and help pupils make good progress in their learning, knowledge and skills and gain confidence in their work. At present pupils are taught geography in Years 7, 8 and 9 but not in Years 10 and 11.

118. Information communication technology (ICT) was reported as being underdeveloped in the subject at the last inspection. Currently, pupils use computers, although there are plans to extend this further. The pupils' experience could be further extended by the use of short extracts from videos relevant to the areas being studied. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 complete similar work as part of a two-year cycle of work. This enables other pupils to join groups at different times of the year. This could be improved by making the work for Years 7 and 8 different from that in Year 9, although covering similar knowledge and skills to allow for changes in pupil groups. Procedures to assess what pupils know, understand and can

do within the subject are provided by simple end of term tests. These could be developed further to enable that future work to be planned to match pupils' differing abilities more closely. Extension work is provided for more able pupils in some lessons. The general use of writing skills could be further developed.

119. Many pupils arrive at the school with a negative view of their ability and interest in geography. The school helps them to change this attitude by gaining map skills and an understanding and knowledge of places in the world and their location in relation to the British Isles, the European Union and other countries in the world. This in turn helps their confidence and interest in studying further. For example, by Year 9, they can find a town in the British Isles from a grid reference and write a grid reference for different towns. They label countries and oceans, such as Japan, North America and the Indian Ocean, using an atlas for reference. Pupils study Italy and this is closely matched to their interests when, for example, they find Italian towns from an atlas that have football teams and mark them on an outline map. Pupils with additional learning difficulties are supported by special support assistants and complete the same work as the others pupils.

120. Teaching, which is provided by the subject leader, is good overall. Pupils' interests are used well and this means that most pupils concentrate on the work and discuss it in a relaxed way. Relationships with the teacher are positive and pupils' behaviour is managed by providing firm boundaries within a positive approach. The good use of humour and an informal approach motivate the pupils and keep most of them involved throughout lessons. A few pupils call out and whistle and move their tables around and they are helped to calm down by removing themselves from the classroom for a while. Pupils learn to use a map to find places and to gain an understanding of where places are in relation to other countries. They enjoying showing what they have learnt by showing visitors their books and using illustrations of maps showing towns that they have put onto acetate sheets for the overhead projector.

121. The curriculum creates a good balance between National Curriculum requirements and the needs of the pupils. Assessment is satisfactory and helps teachers to plan ahead. Resources and the accommodation are well organised and provide an environment that is conducive to learning. The surrounding grounds are used for map skills and there are plans to extend this further to areas outside the school.

HISTORY

122. Pupils' achievements and progress are good. History is only taught to pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. Since the last inspection, there has been continued and good improvement and previous strengths have been sustained. Procedures for monitoring standards and evaluation are satisfactorily developed. The subject is managed effectively and there are suitable plans for the future.

123. By Year 9, pupils sequence events from the past with increasing accuracy, recognizing differences between real and fictional characters in history. They compare similarities and differences between the past and present, noting changes over time and between the centuries. Pupils have some understanding and awareness of local history, in particular the school's own rich history as a listed building of long standing.

124. Teaching is good overall and the teacher's enthusiasm, skills and interest in the subject add considerably to the pupils' knowledge. The teaching is highly effective in managing pupils' behaviour and setting appropriately high expectations for them

academically and socially. As a result, pupils arrive expecting to work hard, and most settle quickly to work. The teacher makes good use of his own knowledge, giving pupils good quality experiences to further their understanding of chronology and conditions that existed at different times. An exceptional example of this, is the lesson on the First World War where pupils learn about the actions of the Northumberland Regiment of the British Army on the first day of the Battle of the Somme. Pupils use their mathematical skills to reach the alarming conclusion that of the 800 men in the regiment, scarcely more than 30 survived the first day unscathed. The teacher's use of local maps and the school field to re-create the battlefield is inspired and successfully illustrates to pupils how difficult it was to cross a relatively small piece of enemy held land during the battle.

125. Pupils develop positive attitudes towards learning because of the good quality teaching. They work well when discussing events and often demonstrate a high degree of co-operation, showing good levels of concentration in their studies. There are often good links made between art and history, using a variety of books for research purposes. The teacher has a good knowledge of the pupils' levels of understanding and uses recording and assessment well to ensure the work is well matched to their range of needs.

126. Pupils are able to reflect on their own progress in history when supported by the learning support assistants. This adds further information to the assessment procedures. The use of writing skills could be further developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

127. The subject is now a strength of the school. This shows huge improvement since the previous inspection when it was a key issue. It is very well managed by a subject leader with the vision to constantly improve pupils' learning. Resources and accommodation are excellent and very well maintained. Staff have received good training.

128. There has been good improvement particularly in the use of computers across the subjects. For instance, in design and technology, pupils use computers to draw very complicated models and modify them; they use spreadsheets in mathematics; and they use a CD-ROM in French.

129. There are computers in all classrooms throughout the school with internet access for pupils, who will have their own e-mail addresses. Pupils use digital cameras, scanners and software upgrades to enhance presentation of their work and projects. Pupils in Year 9 follow accredited courses in word processing, spreadsheets and databases through Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT) courses. Those in Years 10 and 11 take GCSE.

130. The school provides access to computers after normal school hours through a computer club where the pupils learn about web site design, computer language work and the internet. The school is aware of the need to continue to develop expertise. The use of Power Point for presentation by staff of work and activities is seen as one of the next steps. The subject leader has identified in the subject development plan the need to increase the range of computer languages, but has placed continuing emphasis on keyboard skills to give pupils greater access to existing software.

131. Achievement is very good across the school. Pupils enjoying their success. In Years 7 and 8 pupils are growing more confident in their use of keyboards. They can all word process, copy type and use information on data base forms. They can use shift and caps lock, bold and underline to copy instructions. Every pupil in these year groups is able to use a mouse and enter text. They all understand how to save their work, use the checks on spelling and grammar and print their work.

132. Pupils in Year 9 use their previous knowledge to develop spreadsheets and test their own knowledge for their accredited work. These pupils know how to change fonts and know the difference between upper and lower case. In Year 11, pupils are able to work on their own, correcting their assignments as part of course work. They work with confidence, minimising pages, checking e-mails and open windows. Pupils used digital cameras and learn to store basic information on disc.

133. Teaching and learning is very good in Years 7, 8 and 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. In the very good lessons teachers provide very suitable resources that match the ability and interest of the pupils. This enables pupils to learn confidently. Teachers have a very good understanding of their subject and of the needs of all pupils. Pupils appreciate this and listen carefully to instructions. This knowledge and understanding enables teachers to plan very carefully and produce challenging work that is suited to individual pupils. Pupils' behaviour is very good and sometimes exemplary and they work well. They enjoy the challenge and try hard to do well.

134. Teaching and learning take place in a good learning environment which helps pupils to make good progress. Teachers mark work and use this information to assess pupils' development and ensure consistent progress is maintained. Teachers explain tasks clearly so that pupils are able to work at their own speed and sustain effort. When pupils need extra help, the special support staff enable everyone is able to take part. The teachers ensure that every pupil is able to use new technology, making the subject more interesting and accessible. Pupils are encouraged to use personal computers to complete course work, enhancing their basic keyboard skills. Teachers provide a wide range of software and this ensures new tasks and approaches are always available for pupils. Assessment is used very well to help with future lesson planning.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (French)

135. The curriculum for a modern foreign language is good, as is the improvement since the last inspection when the school had only just started to offer French. Whilst not a language specialist, the subject leader provides very good leadership and management and has written a good curriculum. The subject is well resourced, with motivating activities that enable all pupils to make good progress. Information and communication technology is used very well to support the pupils' learning in every lesson. The subject leader has provided a good system for assessment by sub-dividing National Curriculum levels so that she is able to report on small amounts of progress that have been achieved. She has made a good decision to emphasise pupils' speaking and listening skills.

136. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 have limited time for French, but despite this make good progress, gaining confidence in speaking French with a good accent. The school has recently arranged for pupils in Year 9 to have a full session a week which enables them to make even better progress. French is offered as an option for pupils to work towards a nationally accredited course. No pupils have chosen to do this during the current academic year.

137. When the pupils start at the school many of them have had little success with a foreign language and their knowledge and skills are limited and their attitudes negative. Within a very short time of starting at the school, this attitude is changed and the show confidence, being prepared to speak up in front of the class answering greetings in French. For example they can reply to 'Comment Ca va?' ('How are you?') with simple French phrases. By Year 9, pupils can count up to 20, say common phrases and ask for fruit, vegetables or cakes within a simple role-play. For example they say 'Je M'appelle' (My name is) and 'Deux pommes s'il vous plait' (Two apples please). They gain confidence as the teacher provides a friendly and relaxed atmosphere making the work fun.

138. The subject leader takes all the lessons and her teaching is consistently good. She makes the lessons lively, motivating and enjoyable, so that pupils are involved in all aspects of the work. They are eager, behave well, listen and join in enthusiastically. This

helps to raise their self-esteem and they confidently join in, acting out role-plays in French. There is a clear expectation of what the pupils should do and how they should behave through a consistent routine within which varied activities are provided. In each lesson, pupils learn by taking part in a role-play, working in pairs on the computer, watching a short video of people speaking in French, singing songs, playing games or using puzzles to reinforce the vocabulary they are working on. This means that pupils know what the routine of the lesson is, and it provides variety as well as repetition to help their learning. There is a good emphasis on speaking and listening, supported by some English and French writing.

139. The teacher has a qualification to work with children with specific learning difficulties and she uses this to provide appropriate multi-sensory approach to all the work, enabling all the pupils, including those with additional learning difficulties, to learn well. This gives all pupils confidence and means they are very positive about their learning. On a very few occasions pupils' behaviour is inappropriate, such as swinging back on their chairs and lifting up tables. Teaching could be improved even more if the pupils were taught some simple class instructions in French, which the teacher could use to check this behaviour. Other instructions in French, perhaps including simple signs and gestures, could also be used, such as 'listen', 'watch', 'say after me', 'say with me', 'and speak one at a time'.

MUSIC

140. There has been very good improvement in provision. Music is now firmly established in the school curriculum and is in a much stronger position than at the time of the previous inspection. All pupils in Key Stage 3 have one music lesson a week. A growing number of pupils are opting to continue the study of music in Years 10 and 11. A short GCSE course is being developed. The subject is taught well and enthusiastically. The main objective of the music programme is performance. During the inspection week, many individual and group performances were heard. All pupils greatly enjoy musical performance and several are reaching good standards. There is good achievement and progress made by pupils overall. There are opportunities for listening to and appraising a wide variety of musical form, from pop to the classics. Resources are very good and a wide range of instruments is available. Computer programs are in use by pupils and computer skills are developing well. Overall, the quality of provision in music is good.

141. Since the previous inspection, a music room has been designated and equipped and provides an excellent base for musical activity. Pupils are allowed good access and most use the room sensibly and well. Indeed, a number of new works, including words and music, have been composed, rehearsed and recorded there. Pupils regularly perform at Thought for the Day, which gets the day off to a good start. Pupils listen and sing well. A performance by three senior boys of *Tears in Heaven* was particularly moving. Pupils are taken out on visits to festivals and concerts. A carol service is held each year and is well attended by parents who are impressed by what their sons have learned about music. Pupils take part in *Rainbow Day* and provide musical drama to entertain disabled children.

142. The music teacher, with the full support of the staff, initiated these developments. Pupils in both key stages achieve well and progress is good. Pupils are aware of simple musical notation. They know the names of notes and recognise time signatures. They explain the difference between waltz and march time. They beat out the rhythm of their names. Pupils recognise and name the instruments of the orchestra and they know how music is used to create mood and mystery. The response by pupils is mostly good, and from those who compose and play their own tunes it is especially good. However, at times

some pupils find it hard to contain their excitement. A videotape of music composed or played by pupils is very good.

143. Teaching is good. High standards of work and behaviour are expected. Pupils are well managed through mutual respect. The teacher is very patient and makes excellent use of humour. Lessons are planned well, although the time given to teaching and supervised individual activity is not always balanced appropriately. As a result, the pupils sometimes run out of ideas before the end of the lesson. Pupils speak up quite well in class but need to write down what they know and can do more frequently, so that they can see the progress they are making. The teacher and the special support assistants work very closely together and this helps the pupils to learn more.

144. The music curriculum is well led and organised and fully reflects that which is expected nationally. A wide range of activities and public performances enhance the curriculum. The environment in which music is taught encourages enjoyment, participation and learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

145. There is very good provision for physical education. The facilities and range of activities provided is even more extensive than at the last inspection. There has been good improvement in the development of the curriculum with dance for Years 7-9, which is now part of a good scheme of work. A particular success has been the introduction of GCSE physical education.

146. The head of education currently undertakes the leadership of the subject until the appointment of a new head of physical education/sport. It is anticipated that schemes of work will be reviewed in line with the latest guidance in Curriculum 2000, once the post has been filled. Good attention is given to promoting speaking and listening skills. The aims, to enhance self-esteem, self-confidence and develop social skills, are very successfully achieved. Very good facilities and good resources make an important contribution to pupils' success in physical education.

147. Achievement is very good. There have been consistently good results in GCSE physical education over the past three years. This year five pupils gained passes at D or E grade. Progress over time and in lessons is also very good. There is outstanding achievement by many pupils in adventure activities such as the 100 mile canoeing expedition and in the evening and weekend extra-curricular activities such as judo, where several pupils have achieved county championship status.

148. By Year 9, pupils know about the importance of warm-up and cool-down activities in sport. They recall well what they have learnt in a previous lesson and know about a variety of exercises to achieve readiness for rigorous physical exercise. They take turns to lead the group during these sessions. Learning is good. Pupils know that practice improves skills. In a games lesson on soccer skills, they learned how to mark another player, turn and sprint to intercept the ball. In the multi-gym, pupils learn the various types of muscle exercises using weights and understanding the importance of attention to safety. Most pupils attain a standard that is broadly in line with national averages.

149. By Year 11, pupils play successfully in five-a-side soccer matches. They understand the rules and work as part of team to practice skills such as dribbling, passing and positional play. They know and use activities to warm up and cool down after exercise. Pupils evaluate their own performances and those of others.

Pupils respond very positively to lessons and are keen to participate. Relationships are good between pupils, and those with staff are exceptional. Co-operation with staff is very good. There is generally an atmosphere of hard-work, concentration, and a will to succeed. Boys compete against each other well, usually without recrimination if their team is unsuccessful. Most show thorough enjoyment in the activities.

150. Teaching was very good in half of lessons seen and good in the other half. Teachers have a consistently high expectation of participation and behaviour. This, linked to very good subject knowledge, a range of relevant and interesting activities and good relationships with pupils, ensures that there is very good management and control of behaviour. Good involvement by pupils in leading activities, and in analysing their own performance, helps to reinforce and give them responsibility for their own learning. There is also good attention to recording, assessment and homework to promote and recognise achievement.

Personal, Social and Health Education.

151. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. There is a policy in place and the scheme of work is developing well. It is well mapped out and is relevant to the pupils' needs. The scheme uses a modular approach relating to a number of aspects, including personal safety, health and hygiene, sex education and drug awareness and misuse.

152. The department is new with a very well informed co-ordinator managing the curriculum. The new co-ordinator but brings a wealth of knowledge and understanding to the school. The rest of the school staff all share parts of the delivery of the subject in a variety of ways. For instance, good behaviour, personal integrity and social responsibility are addressed in Thought for the Day and followed up across the day.

153. Care staff and classroom support staff play a critical part in the whole school delivery of this subject. During the course of the year themes are addressed. Bullying, racial prejudice and discrimination are dealt with in lessons and in the residential parts of school. During the inspection, the topics covered included health and drug abuse.

154. Assessment and evaluation are recognised by the co-ordinator as areas for development. The school's own assessment procedures are used effectively. As part of the assessment and evaluation procedure pupils are actively involved in developing their own self-evaluation.

155. Pupils' personal, social and health education is well supported throughout the curriculum. Pupils use drama and mime to illustrate topics in assembly. In design and technology Year 11 pupils are encouraged to become independent and reliable and aware of the needs of others.

156. Teaching is always satisfactory and sometimes very good. The teacher has high expectations and many activities to motivate and interest the pupils. Support staff are crucial to the delivery of difficult aspects. Very good planning and preparation keep pupils on task and interested. Pupils are keen and willing to learn. When teachers are aware, confident and interesting, their reward is pupil responses of the highest order. Good teaching, with clear explanations leads pupils to want to learn and be challenged.

157. The school promotes the subject as a vehicle to enable pupils to realise their full potential. This is continued in college placements, work experience and careers work. The subject has a new classroom base. The accommodation is at times cold and noisy. Resources are adequate. The co-ordinator is aware of the need for improvements in these areas, as well as on the use of information and communication technology and in displays to celebrate pupil achievement. Personal, social and health education is taught as a discrete subject and is planned to permeate the whole ethos and work of the school.

Vocational Training

158. The department for vocational training is very well led and organised. Accommodation and resources are very good. There has been good improvement in provision since the previous inspection. The curriculum for students in Years 10 to 12 is very good and closely linked to design and technology. It provides a very wide range of highly relevant experiences, and helps prepare students very effectively for the next stage at either college or in work. Experiences are well selected to promote the further development of key skills in a choice of vocational courses. These are closely linked to work experience placements and the link course at the local further education college. There is appropriate accreditation such as the London Chamber of Commerce, the National Proficiency Training Council and the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN).

159. Achievement and progress is very good. Pupils gain passes in nationally accredited courses. They learn skills in painting and decorating, building work, horticulture, horse care/stable management, and catering, amongst others. These skills include catching, feeding, grooming and riding horses; preparing surfaces for painting; recycling of materials, and harvesting and weeding in the school's vegetable plot. They work well with a good deal of independence and effort and are well motivated to succeed. They understand the need to wear appropriate clothing and understand about safety in the workplace. Attitudes and behaviour are consistently very good. Pupils know what they have to do to get a job done and accept a great deal of responsibility for their own learning.

160. Teaching is good overall. Lessons are well planned, and activities and tasks carefully matched to pupils' individual skills and interests. In an excellent very well planned lesson in painting and decorating, tasks were explained well, health and safety factors emphasized. The calm authoritative manner and expertise of the teacher commanded the respect of students and inspired their confidence. In a very good lesson on horse care, the teacher's knowledge and assured direction gave pupils the confidence to work safely with horses and helped raise their self-esteem. Staff have a very good rapport and relationships with students, and management of behaviour is very good.