

INSPECTION REPORT

AMBERGATE SCHOOL

Grantham

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120746

Headteacher: Mr R. McCrossen

Reporting inspector: Mrs F. D. Gander
21265

Dates of inspection: 26th – 29th March 2001

Inspection number: 189238

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties
School category:	Community Special School
Age range of pupils:	5-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Dysart Road Grantham Lincolnshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P. Newton
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21265	Mrs F. Gander	Registered inspector	Art Information and communication technology Design and technology	How high are standards? How well are pupils or students taught? How well is the school led and managed?
8941	Mr J. Fletcher	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in Partnership with parents?
27424	Mr A. Dobbins	Team inspector	Science History Geography Music Equal opportunities	
19386	MR G.T.Watts	Team inspector	English Modern foreign languages Physical Education	
30243	Mrs A. Heakin		Mathematics Religious education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ambergate School provides education for pupils between the ages of five and sixteen who have been identified as having moderate learning difficulties. Currently, there are forty-nine pupils on roll, but, as pupils are admitted from other schools, the number fluctuates during an academic year. Forty of the pupils are between the ages of eleven and sixteen, and as a result, there is only one primary class. Most pupils live within the area that the Local Education Authority serves, but there are an increasing number of pupils coming to the school from a neighbouring education authority. All pupils have a statement of special educational need for moderate learning difficulties but many have additional social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Attainment levels on entry to the school are well below the national average. Over a quarter of the pupils have joined the school during the last five terms and over half of these are in Key Stage 3. Many of these pupils have been unsuccessful in their previous schools and have low self-esteem. The pupils are from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds, but over one third of them are entitled to free school meals. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, refugee families or traveller families. The school operates an inclusion and reintegration into mainstream education policy, and as a result, eight pupils attend mainstream education on a part time basis. During the last academic year, three pupils transferred back into mainstream education and this effects the stability of numbers. During the term before the inspection, a number of staff moved to other schools. Therefore, at the time of the inspection, the school did not have a permanent deputy headteacher and fifty percent of the teachers were temporary or supply teachers.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. Despite the instability in staffing it provides a safe, secure and caring learning environment where the efforts of staff and pupils are valued. The teaching is good, and in some classes, it is very good and results in pupils achieving well. The school's consistent approach to managing unacceptable behaviour is calm and firm, and as a result, pupils' behaviour, social and emotional well-being improves. The leadership provided by the new headteacher is good, and a great deal of dedication and hard work has gone into improving the school and achieving the targets set. It does this with funding which is below the national average, and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- There is a high percentage of good teaching.
- The curriculum and teaching of primary pupils are very good.
- The teaching of modern foreign languages is very good.
- There is very good inclusion and reintegration into mainstream education programme for pupils.
- The school provides very good care, protection and welfare for pupils.
- The links with, and the information that the school provides for parents, is very good.
- The provision of personal, social and health education is very good and has a positive impact on social development of pupils.

What could be improved

- The structure of the senior management team so that the school has the capacity to continue improving and developing.
- The stability of teaching staff so that they can assume their roles and responsibilities for co-ordinating their subjects.
- The curriculum provision for design and technology so that it meets statutory requirements and contributes to the personal development of pupils.
- The use of assessment information, from lessons and from the targets on individual educational plans, in the planning of subsequent learning objectives for pupils of different abilities.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection carried out by HMI in 1998. Due to the many changes in teaching staff during the last year, the developments and improvement to the overall educational provision has not been able to be sustained. Although the headteacher has effectively used the support of the local education authority, the lack of a deputy headteacher has severely effected the overall development of monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum provision and teaching within the school. Monitoring of pupils' progress and their achievements in numeracy has developed well, as well as the implementation of the numeracy policy. National developments in information and communication technology have helped the school to meet statutory requirements in this subject but teachers are still not using it confidently across all subjects of the curriculum. The facilities and resources for the teaching of science for older pupils have improved. When comparing the overall curriculum with the situation at the time of the first inspection in 1996, there has been good improvement made to the provision for personal, social and health education, and very good improvement in the teaching of modern foreign languages. However, the position of design and technology has declined and now does not meet statutory requirements. Attendance figures have improved very well.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Pupils in all key stages make good progress in speaking and listening and in personal, social and health education. Their achievements and the progress they make in reading, writing and in numeracy is satisfactory. In French they achieve very well due to the very good teaching. Achievement in information and communication technology is satisfactory but pupils do not achieve as well as they might in design and technology due to the subject's unsatisfactory curriculum. Constant changes in staffing have resulted in the subject areas of history, geography and music not being consistently taught and there is underachievement in these subjects. The targets on the individual plans are not personal to individual pupils and therefore do not form a secure basis for evaluating pupils' progress over time.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The majority of pupils have good attitudes to their work and are enthusiastic They take pride in their work and value the work of others.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall, behaviour is good. Currently there are three pupils who have severe emotional and behavioural difficulties and who cause disruption to some lessons. However, other pupils ignore their behaviour and outbursts. Pupils who attend other schools behave very well.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils is good. How the lack of food technology within the curriculum undermines the their progress in this area of their development. There are good relationships between pupils and staff, and relationships between pupils are satisfactory.
Attendance	This is much improved and is satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The overall quality of teaching in the lessons observed was good, and meets the needs of all the pupils. There was no unsatisfactory teaching, and it was good or better in 83 per cent of lessons. The overall good teaching is because teachers generally teach the subjects in which they have experience or expertise in, and therefore their subject knowledge is very good. Teaching is very good or excellent in 34 per cent of lessons, and it is very good overall in the primary class. Although all teachers teach all pupils, the quality of teaching is better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. This is because the behaviour of pupils at Key Stage 4 is better than Key Stage 3. The potentially very good teaching is undermined by the volatile and unpredictable behaviour of a few pupils at Key Stage 3. All teachers minimise the disruption to learning for the rest of the class by applying the school's policy of bringing in extra support, but it does have a negative effect on the lesson. The quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science is good at each key stage, and teachers also teach communication, literacy and numeracy well. The teaching of French is very good. However, while the teaching of information and communication technology is satisfactory, not all teachers are confident enough to incorporate it into all subjects. The teaching of design and technology during the past year has been unsatisfactory and has led to pupils underachieving. However, a new teaching team is in place for this subject, and teaching is overall satisfactory and good at Key Stage 4.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum at Key Stage 2 is very good as it is very relevant to the needs of the pupils. It is good at Key Stage 4 where it is also relevant to the needs of the older pupils and includes good college link courses and work experience opportunities. It is satisfactory at Key Stage 3, but does not meet statutory requirements in design and technology and in music. The school's personal, social and health education curriculum is very good and has a positive impact pupils' personal and social development. There are insufficient details in the medium term and short term planning concerning the expected learning outcomes for pupils of differing abilities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Opportunities for spiritual development through assemblies and the teaching of religious education are satisfactory. Opportunities for social and moral development are very good and have a positive impact on the improvement of pupils' behaviour and the confidence they gain. Opportunities for cultural development are good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The protection, welfare and safety of pupils are very good, and this includes the procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and behaviour. All staff provide pupils with very good educational support and guidance. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and achievement are good, but the information of pupils' achievements in lessons is not used sufficiently when planning lessons for individual pupils. The current individual educational plans do not provide enough information on pupils' progress.

The school has developed a good partnership with parents, and despite the lack of support for formal meetings, the parents are fully involved in the social and fund raising aspects of the school. The information that the school provides concerning pupils achievements and the progress they are making is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The new headteacher provides good leadership as he has a very clear idea of the strengths of the school. He is very dedicated and committed to improving and developing the school, and at the present time is well supported by an acting deputy headteacher. However, the lack of additional members of the senior management team with clear roles and responsibilities for leading developments has resulted in the headteacher having too much responsibility. This, in conjunction with a high turnover of staff, has meant that improvements and developments in the curriculum have not progressed as much as they should have. The present structure of the senior management team undermines the school's capacity to fully succeed.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The Governing Body provides satisfactory support. They meet regularly to receive reports, make decisions and pass resolutions. However, they have not ensured that statutory requirements have been met for design and technology. At this present time they are finding it difficult, with the amount of money they have at their disposal, to resolve the need to appoint a deputy headteacher, and secure a full number of teaching staff. This clouds their long-term vision for improving the quality of education.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is satisfactory, as the school has started to compare itself with similar schools, and consult with parents. However, the outcomes of development planning are not specific enough to measure accurately the success of development or evaluate the cost effectiveness of its spending.
The strategic use of resources	Resources, including financial resources, are used satisfactorily. However, it is not an efficient use of the expertise of the headteacher, or an effective use of his time, to be a regular and timetabled member of the teaching staff.

The number of teachers in the school is below the average found in similar schools, and this results in the headteacher having a substantial teaching commitment. The school has an adequate number of support staff who are used well. The school does not have appropriate accommodation for teaching food technology. The art room is too small and restricts the teaching of the curriculum, and the hall is too small for teaching physical education to older pupils. Resources are overall satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ That pupils make good progress. ▪ That pupils are expected to work hard and achieve their best. ▪ That they are well informed about the progress their children are making. ▪ That the school helps their children become more mature and responsible. ▪ That the school listens to complaints and suggestions, acts on the information, and works closely with them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The placing of pupils in the school who have extreme behavioural problems.

The team agrees with all the positive comments of the parents. They agree that there are some pupils being placed in the school who have a high level of emotional and behavioural difficulties as well as moderate learning difficulties.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The achievements of, and the progress that pupils make have improved since the first inspection in 1996, when a number of pupils in Key Stage 3 were underachieving and were not making the progress they were capable of. The findings of the monitoring inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) in 1998 found that there had been significant improvement in pupils' achievements and progress, and they were satisfactory. Overall, pupils' achievements and the progress they make at the present time are satisfactory in the majority of subjects, and in some subjects, such as French, they make very good progress. Pupils at Key Stage 2 make good progress overall and this is due to the quality of the curriculum and the very good teaching in this part of the school. However, there is underachievement at Key Stages 3 and 4 in design and technology, history and geography and is due to the incomplete curriculum. Throughout the school there are no differences between the achievements of boys and girls.

2. In English at Key Stage 2, pupils' achievements and the progress they make in speaking and listening are good. They begin to listen carefully to what is said to them, answer questions, and as a class, hold simple discussions. Progress in reading and writing is satisfactory. The higher attaining pupils read simple passages and understand what is happening in stories, although they do not always recall what has happened earlier. They are making progress with their handwriting and write simple sentences. Lower attaining pupils recognise letters and, with help, recognise some words. Their writing skills are still developing. At Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils' achievements and the progress they make are overall satisfactory. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good, and as they become more mature so does their ability to listen to others and discuss. Their reading develops satisfactorily through the use of a range of different types of books and their careers and citizenship work. Pupils' written work gradually improves as they move through the school. Some develop a neat and regular form of writing or printing, but most of the work is not neatly presented, as many pupils do not write with great care. There is scope to give this aspect more emphasis, along with the more opportunities for imaginative writing.

3. Pupils' achievement and progress in all aspects of mathematics, and in all key stages, is satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 2, they recognise a variety of two-dimensional shapes, match numbers to objects, and count in tens to a hundred. They recognise and name coins, using them to make simple calculations, such as on a visit to the museum. At the end of the key stage pupils can read simple pictograms, for example, showing the eye colour of pupils in the class. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have developed their mathematical skills satisfactorily so that they calculate and solve mathematical problems. Lower attaining pupils add and subtract numbers under ten and can order numbers up to a hundred. They build on their previous knowledge of money so that they confidently work with simple monetary problems. Higher attaining pupils have made progress in their understanding of money and are able to work out total costs of items. They understand fractions both of shape and number, use decimal notation and improve their knowledge of time, both, analogue and digital. By the end of Key Stage 4 their knowledge of fractions has improved and they are able to add four digit numbers and complete long multiplication. Pupils investigate timetables, and develop their knowledge of time and measurement as they calculate the distances and lengths of journeys. They increasingly use tally charts and bar graphs when working with data, and make good use of computer software to produce the graphs. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils make sufficient progress to gain successes in the Certificate of Achievement.

4. Overall achievement in science is satisfactory, but pupils make better progress in Key Stages 2 and 4 than in Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 2 there are good plans for lessons that are derived from a scheme of work, and the content of those lessons build on previous learning. This ensures that pupils make good progress and by the end of the key stage the higher attaining pupils recognise the main features of plants and animals, understand that light comes from different sources, and know that materials have different characteristics or similarities. However, at Key Stage 3 pupils' progress over time is only satisfactory. This is because there is too little detail in the medium term planning, and consequently the content of the lessons over a period of time do not link well with pupils' previous work. Pupils actually make good progress in the individual lessons but the weakness in the planning has had a detrimental impact on the progress pupils make over time and across the subject. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils understand the meaning of a fair test and make predictions, with higher attaining pupils using techniques and equipment to test these predictions. They record the results and make interpretations of the findings. When studying living things, they link animals and plants to different habitats, while lower attaining pupils classify living and non-living things. Pupils have extended their knowledge of materials and how they may change their state. Pupils understand the use of electricity, forces, motions and energy. Pupils make good progress at Key Stage 4 where the curriculum is based on external accreditation and this forms the basis for the content of lessons.

5. In information and communication technology pupils' achievement and the progress they made in lessons during the week of the inspection was satisfactory. This is the result of the improvements that have been made to the subject and the resources since the last inspection. However, there is insufficient work to show the progress pupils' make over time especially in the collection of data, control and the use of the Internet. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' achievements vary according to their motivation and concentration. The higher attaining pupils work independently and confidently using a word processing application, a mouse control and a keyboard. They confidently save their work to a disk and, with support of the teacher, are able to use the printer. The lower attaining pupils or those with poor concentration need the support and guidance of a learning support assistant so that they remain on task and complete the activity. From the lessons observed at Key Stages 3 and 4, and from discussion with pupils, it can be judged that they make satisfactory progress. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are competent in word processing, are able to change the style and size of the text, import clip art into their work, and use the Internet and multi-media CD ROMs. They use desktop publishing applications to plan advertising pamphlets in English. At Key Stage 4, pupils' use their skills when planning their work in design and technology. As well as becoming more proficient with their word processing skills, they know how to set up and enter data on a spreadsheet.

6. Pupils make very good progress in French, and achieve very well in listening, understanding and responding appropriately. By the time they leave the school, almost all pupils can hold a simple conversation in French, ask questions, and respond to questions that they are asked; the most able pupils begin conversations, and think of original and personal answers to questions. This very good progress is the result of very good teaching by an enthusiastic and motivating teacher. The pupils are acquiring a good accent due to the skills of the teacher and their educational trips to France.

7. In art pupils' achievements and the progress they make is satisfactory but is restricted by the smallness of the art room. This makes it impossible for the full range of the curriculum to be planned, and pupils' experiences, and their subsequent progress in working on three-dimensional projects and group work is limited by this lack of space. In religious education pupils' achievement is also satisfactory. Pupils extend their understanding of the importance of religious faiths; gain a satisfactory knowledge of different beliefs and the traditions associated with these beliefs. Achievement in physical education is also satisfactory and pupils make good progress in swimming and games.

8. Achievement and progress made by pupils at Key Stage 3 in individual lessons of geography, history and music are satisfactory but, similarly to science, their progress over time is weakened by the lack of detail in the medium term planning to ensure that pupils' learning is built on previous knowledge. In music, the constant changing of teachers has resulted in pupils being taught this subject by teachers with little specialist knowledge or training in the subject and this has had a negative impact on the achievements of pupils.

9. Due to the fact that there is no food technology or textiles taught within the design and technology curriculum, pupils are underachieving in this subject and their progress over time is unsatisfactory. There is also a lack of dated or annotated samples of work, or records from the last academic year on which to assess achievement or judge their progress in their work on resistant materials. However, work completed by pupils during the last term and during the week of the inspection shows that they were making satisfactory progress in lessons.

10. Due to the very good curriculum provision for personal, social and health education, which promotes self-awareness, social skills and personal organisation, pupils make good progress in this area of their development. This is further supported through the good opportunities that the pupils have to link with the local college of further education and through the work experience placements. However, the progress pupils make in their personal targets set in their individual educational plans is not always easily identified. This is because the targets being set are for the curricular areas of English, mathematics and science, and are not specific to the current needs of each pupil or firmly linked to their statement of educational need.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Within the context of the school the majority of pupils show good attitudes to learning, are happy to be at the school and are keen to be involved in learning activities. In addition to their learning difficulties many of the pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties and many have had negative experiences at mainstream schools prior to placement at Ambergate. Pupils respond positively to the safe environment, the school routines and the highly focussed personal encouragement provided by the staff. Arrival at the school in a morning is a genuinely happy time for most pupils. They enter the school smiling and exchanging greetings in a polite manner. All pupils require and demand high levels of support and attention and many find concentration over long periods challenging. In lessons many pupils show good levels of perseverance and genuine interest in subjects. For example pupils in a personal, social and health education lesson on making choices showed a real enthusiasm to discuss and explore the factors that influence decisions and choices. A group of pupils in the playground at break were so enthusiastic about the literacy lesson they had just experienced they spent almost the whole period explaining it to an inspector. Although most pupils have times when they are emotionally distracted and do not want to be involved, the interest shown and involvement in a wide range of activities is generally high.

12. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is generally good, has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection and is a positive aid to the learning process. In most lessons

pupils respond well to the close attention they receive, become involved in their work and react positively to the teaching and support staff. Interchanges between pupils and staff are generally courteous, civilised and often involve the positive use of humour. Behaviour and concentration can deteriorate in some lessons at Key Stage 3 when pupils are asked to write. In circumstances where disturbed pupils have emotional outbursts that threaten to disrupt lessons and learning, staff follow agreed procedures consistently and with skill, thereby ensuring minimum disruption for other pupils. At normal times, pupils clearly respect the behaviour code and value the orderly environment, which makes a significant contribution to their progress and learning. All staff make effective use of praise and encouragement to raise levels of confidence and self esteem. There is massive enthusiasm amongst the pupils for the "worth a mention" reward scheme. Inspectors lost count of the number of times they were proudly requested to look at the charts showing points awarded and to listen to pupils aims for getting more points and a publicly presented award. Pupils understand the sanction system. Exclusions from the school have fallen significantly over the last two years in line with the determination to only use the sanction as a last resort.

13. Behaviour around the school at breaks and lunchtimes is good. Pupils interact with each other in an orderly manner and respond positively to all adults. Inspectors found pupils very keen to discuss aspects of their studies and to exchange views and opinions on a range of subjects in a positive and mature way. Pupils do generally show regard for the facilities and fabric of the building but at moments of tension damage can occur. The current situation represents a significant improvement since the last inspection when behaviour around the site was frequently poor and there was a lack of respect for the premises. In contrast, three boys were delighted to give a guided tour of the greenhouse, explaining what they were growing and showing high regard for health and safety whilst handling equipment and plants. The school has good procedures to deal with harassment and bullying and works hard to eliminate incidents by including discussion sessions for pupils to explore the topic. No incidents were seen during the inspection.

14. Pupils' relationships with teachers, support staff and all adults in the school are good and have a positive influence on their personal development and on the standards achieved. Pupils clearly trust and respect adults in the school and turn to them readily if they need support. The consistent interpretation of the school's aims and ethos by all members of staff creates an environment where all pupils are valued and is the basis for these good relationships. Relationships between pupils are generally good but can be more volatile on occasions when pupils are disturbed or going through some personal crisis. Any animosity between pupils is quickly dealt with by staff and quickly forgotten by those involved. There are several good examples of pupils supporting each other, working collaboratively, and sharing equipment and materials in lessons. In a Key Stage 4 careers lesson pupils worked supportively with each other to produce a balanced leisure timetable, and during a hockey match in a physical education lesson higher attaining pupils encouraged team mates with less natural ability in a very positive manner.

15. The vast majority of pupils make good progress in terms of personal and social development during their time at the school. All pupils benefit from having weekly personal development and behaviour improvement targets, which they are involved in reviewing and revising at the end of each week. Records show pupils making good progress in terms of confidence, self-esteem and social maturity as they progress through the school. The school offers pupils some opportunities to contribute to the school community by taking responsibility for duties and tasks related to the day-to-day procedures and organisation. Pupils respond proudly and positively to these opportunities. For example, the meticulous care being taken by one boy in Year 9 to ensure that the date was written neatly and accurately on the board at the start of the day. The school has plans to increase the

situations where pupils can take on responsibility within the organisation and to encourage further pupils to take increasing control of their development programmes.

16. The overall attendance at Ambergate is satisfactory and contributes positively to the standards achieved and progress made. Attendance at Key Stage 2 and at Key Stage 4 is significantly better than at Key Stage 3 where a significant number of pupils have transferred to the school from other establishments. There is good evidence to show that unauthorised absence at the school has reduced significantly since September 1999 and is in line with the targets set to drastically improve attendance levels. Much of the continuing unauthorised absence is now down to individual cases, which are being handled flexibly and effectively by the school and the Educational Welfare Service. Authorised absence is relatively high and is accounted for mainly through medical appointments and the normal range of pupils' ailments. Punctuality to school is good despite being traffic dependent for the majority of pupils. Throughout the day lessons start and end on time, little time is wasted with movement around the site and pupils are quickly involved in their work programmes.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the first inspection in 1996, when a third of it was unsatisfactory or poor. It has further improved since the school was re-inspected by Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) in 1998, when ten per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. During this inspection there was no unsatisfactory teaching.

18. The overall the quality of teaching is good and this is mainly due to the decision to allow teachers to teach the subjects in which they have experience or expertise. They can concentrate on developing and teaching the subject across Key Stages 3 and 4, and in the case of art, at Key Stage 2 as well. Teaching is good or better in 83 per cent of lessons, and is very good or excellent in 34 per cent of lessons. It is very good overall in the primary class. Although all teachers teach all pupils, the quality of teaching is better at Key Stage 4 than at Key Stage 3. This is because the behaviour of pupils at Key Stage 4 is better than Key Stage 3. The potentially very good teaching is undermined by the volatile and unpredictable behaviour of a few pupils at Key Stage 3 whose social and emotional needs are greater than the school can cater for. All teachers minimise the disruption to learning for the rest of the class by applying the school's policy of bringing in extra support, but it does have a negative effect on the lesson, as teachers continually have to manage this behaviour.

19. There is very good teaching in French. Lessons are carried out with an enthusiasm and drive that motivates most pupils to listen and respond with enthusiasm. The teacher has very good knowledge of the subject and the lessons have a good pace, with quick questioning which consolidates what pupils have learned in previous lessons. Every opportunity is taken to introduce new words and to reinforce ones that the pupils have heard or learned before.

20. The teaching of art during the week of the inspection was also overall very good, but the quality of what the teacher is able to plan and carry out over a period of time is curtailed by the smallness of the art room. These very good lessons have good planning which shows enough detail so that they can be used by other teachers or support assistants should the need arise, and ensures that the quality of learning is consistent. At Key Stage 3, the motivation and self-esteem of pupils is lower and many feel failures in art. As the art lesson proceeds, the pupils become more involved in their work due to the praise and constant encouragement given by the teacher. This results in the most difficult of pupils, in terms of behaviour, achieving well. Pupils are continually reminded of their achievements in the past and this helps to raise their self-esteem in the lesson and become aware of their own

learning. There is very good balance in lessons between the teaching of techniques and skills, and the development of artistic language.

21. At Key Stage 4, the quality of teaching and learning in careers education and citizenship is very good. The is effective team teaching between a well experienced teacher and newer members of the staff. This has resulted in pupils making good progress, especially in working together in groups and developing the ability to consider and solve problems. As a result, pupils have a mature attitude in these lessons and behave well.

22. The quality of teaching in English, mathematics and science is good at each key stage, and teachers also teach communication, literacy and numeracy well. It is also good in history, physical education and in religious education. While the teaching of information and communication technology is satisfactory, not all teachers are confident enough to incorporate it into all subjects and as a result there are many missed opportunities for pupils to use their skills and knowledge. The teaching of design and technology during the past year has been unsatisfactory and has led to pupils underachieving. However, a new teaching team is in place for this subject, and teaching is overall satisfactory and good at Key Stage 4.

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

23. The curriculum is broad and relevant to the needs of all pupils, placing good emphasis on developing pupils' personal and social skills with an appropriate balance between the National Curriculum and acquiring skills for life after school. The key issues in the last inspection have been met, because the school has improved curriculum planning. The statutory requirements for information technology, religious education and the act of collective worship are now met. Effective links with other agencies such as speech therapy, music therapy, education welfare officer, careers officer and the Impaired Hearing and Vision officer contribute well in meeting the needs of pupils with additional learning difficulties.

24. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught, including a modern foreign language at Key Stage 3 and 4. Schemes of work are in place for all subjects. However the curricular provision for pupils in Key Stage 3 needs improvement, specifically in design and technology, information and communication technology, music and humanities. In these subjects not all the aspects are fully taught. The school is committed to the philosophy of the development of the whole child and so perceives the curriculum as more than the provision of academic subjects. This accounts for the strong and effective emphasis on personal development. Programmes to include sex education and solvent misuse awareness are in place being taught through topics in Key Stage 2, through science and religious education in Key Stage 3 and in modules within the Asdan programme at Key Stage 4. Subject policies have been reviewed within the last twelve months and updated to reflect new initiatives, such as horse riding, and improved links with the local college. Examination results at the end of Key Stage 4 are scrutinised and pertinent targets set to reflect the increasing success attained by the school in the Asdan Youth Awards and the Certificates of Achievement in mathematics, literacy and science.

25. The school provides a good range of opportunities for its pupils. The teachers' planning for pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3 is satisfactory and based on the National Curriculum programmes of study plus the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 4 has the additional components of community studies and careers education. The school has begun to use national schemes of work, but has not modified or developed these to match the needs of pupils with special educational needs. As a result, teachers' short term planning in Key Stage 3 and 4 is not sufficiently linked to the individual needs of pupils and to the assessments of their achievements. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been introduced to the school and though there is a satisfactory impact on pupils' learning, teachers need opportunities to develop good practice, sharing their knowledge and expertise so maximum benefit can be gained from the strategies.

26. The leadership and management of the school are committed to providing equality of access for all pupils by fully meeting their special educational needs, therefore providing unrestricted access to all of the school's provision. The requirements identified in statements of special educational need are met in full. The procedure for annually reviewing the progress pupils have made is effective in identifying new targets and in ensuring that additional specialist support is provided, for example, speech therapy or advice from specialist teachers such as those for pupils with hearing or vision impairment. However, the targets set in pupils' individual educational plans are not individual enough and therefore many pupils have the same targets and some are inappropriate. For example, targets for all pupils are the same in the areas of English, mathematics and science, and these are not always the most important needs of each pupil. As a result teachers do not pay enough attention to pupils' targets when planning lessons. Targets in pupils' individual behaviour plans are better and designed to limit the occurrence of inappropriate behaviour so that pupils with behavioural difficulties can increasingly attend to their learning.

27. The programme for including pupils in lessons in mainstream schools is very good. Currently, for seven pupils, it very beneficially extends their curricular provision beyond that available at Ambergate school. Three primary schools and three secondary schools take pupils for single lessons, for a whole day or for the greater part of the week depending on the needs of pupils. Pupils are chosen for specific reasons to take part in the programme, and parents and carers support the school very well in preparing pupils. Staff at the mainstream schools are informed of the aims of the inclusion, as well as of the learning difficulties of pupils. A learning support assistant accompanies pupils in their lessons. Each contributes to the success of the programme. For example, in the considerable gains pupils make in their personal and social development and in their achievements in nationally accredited courses leading to awards not available through the Ambergate curriculum, such as General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in art.

28. The school is fully committed to further developing the inclusion programme so as to extend its provision to best meet the needs of all pupils. The very good relationships with mainstream schools and their full commitment to the programme, and the very good leadership of Ambergate staff, help ensure that pupils gain considerable benefit from spending at least part of their week in another school. Over the last academic year, after being very well prepared through taking part in the inclusion programme, four pupils transferred full-time to mainstream schools.

29. The school's strong community links are evident. The school links with other local schools for joint ventures, such as the Earlesfield Citizenship drama workshop and participation in Grantham Millennium Youth Games. Monthly visits by the primary department to a coffee shop at a neighbouring special school helps to develop pupils' social skills and provides both sets of pupils with the opportunity to develop their own personal skills. Local

businesses support the school well by giving regular opportunities for Key Stage 4 pupils to take part in work experience and by involvement in the Partners in Reading initiative. As part of the citizenship course, Key Stage 4 pupils visit community facilities, such as the recycling centre, nursery and old people's home. There are termly evening visits to the Guildhall when pupils get the opportunity to see live theatre and socialise in a public venue. When one of the school governors was recently elected mayor, pupils in the school elected their own Mayor and Mayoress for the day, and the two pupils were able to share this special day by being part of the mayor's cavalcade through the town. Pupils make weekly visits to the leisure centre where they participate in a variety of sports activities with pupils from other local schools. Pupils also visit the local college to follow vocational courses such as pottery, bricklaying or hairdressing. In addition to contributing to progress in these subjects, the arrangement provides an effective link that enables pupils to make good progress in their personal development.

30. The school provides a satisfactory range of activities and visits that enrich the curriculum. These include annual trips to France when pupils travel to Calais and visit the hypermarket and restaurants, increasing their knowledge of the French language, as well as French culture. Younger pupils visit the local high school for the annual 'Teddy Bears Picnic' and make regular visits to local shops, hotel and garden centre to help their understanding of money and develop their skills in social interactions. There is an annual residential visit to Frontier Activity Centre, photographic evidence shows pupils abseiling, rock climbing and trying archery. Discussion with pupils indicates this is a much-valued experience and contributes well to pupils' social and physical development. There are visits from a theatre company, and twice-yearly visits from an orchestra, all adding an extra dimension to the school provision. Community police officers and church leaders make regular visits and give an added perspective to the existing school curriculum. Members of the local community give good support to the school as they attend the French coffee mornings organised by pupils in Key Stage 4. Visits to places such as The Dome and the Houses of Parliament further enhance the curriculum. The horse riding sessions provide a very good opportunity for pupils to experience first hand the enjoyment of the pastime and the opportunity to care for an animal.

31. There is very good curriculum provision for personal, social and health education. It is firmly embedded in the whole school curriculum. The policy and scheme of work are both in place and promote self-awareness, social skills and personal organisation. The head teacher co-ordinates the subject and the present topic of Healthy Eating is taught in weekly assemblies as well as class lessons. At the midweek assembly during the inspection, pupils recognised healthy foods, and understood that a balanced diet was important, that it was important to drink water and to take opportunities to swim, walk or use the leisure centre. Pupils have great fun tasting selections of fruit and vegetables. The advantage of carrying out this work in assembly is that pupils of all ages are together, and gives different dynamics to the lesson. Older pupils in Year 11 lead by example in trying the new food, by supporting the head teacher in preparing for the assembly and by being good role models of behaviour for the younger pupils. Teaching of personal, social and health education is excellent in Key Stage 2. This was seen when the teacher used 'Dipsi' the puppet very effectively to involve pupils in making choices and decisions. These pupils show respect for the contributions to discussion made by all members of the class.

32. From Year 10 onwards, personal, social and health education is supplemented by careers education lessons, citizenship and careers guidance. The quality of teaching is very good. Pupils are encouraged to work together in groups to consider hypothetical problems and possible solutions. Pupils have a mature attitude in these lessons; they behave well and make very good progress in their understanding of the requirements of personal skills such as making appointments and travelling independently. Pupils carefully maintain very

informative folders of work, which include digital photographs and personal notebooks. The provision for work experience is very good; pupils have two ten-day placements, one in Year 10 and another in Year 11. Initially pupils have a two-day taster to see if the placement will be appropriate before returning to complete the full ten days. Local stores are very helpful in providing places and pupils are careful to write back and thank the companies and tell them how beneficial they had found the experience to be. Combined with a very good programme of work experience, and a variety of college placements, the careers programme provides a very good work-related curriculum that prepares pupils for the next stage of education and for later life.

33. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when social development was satisfactory, moral and cultural development were unsatisfactory, and spiritual development judged to be poor. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory and the growing importance of religious education within the school makes a valuable contribution to this improvement. Assemblies are well-planned and structured giving pupils good opportunities to reflect on world events and personal experiences and to celebrate festivals such as Easter, Chinese New Year and Divali. Pupils express feelings and emotions in their artwork that is displayed so other pupils can appreciate the work and reflect on those feelings. At lunchtimes a pupil leads the school in a prayer of thanksgiving so reinforcing the increasing importance given by the school to the spiritual dimensions of pupils' development. In a very well prepared whole school assembly based on the theme of water, pupils become aware that there is one pot of water for the whole world and that there are some things such as the creation of the world that we do not really understand but accept. The assembly made a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual awareness as well as developing listening skills and confidence.

34. The school provides a strong moral framework for all its pupils. All adults in the school present as good role models of how to conduct themselves and behave appropriately, encouraging courtesy and consideration of others. The visit of a theatre group encourages pupils to consider matters of principle and to be able to make appropriate decisions when faced with moral dilemmas. This work is well supported for pupils in Key Stage 4 when they discuss their responses to difficult situations in their module of work on 'Supporting the Police'. Pupils are learning to take more responsibility for their school. They have ownership of the Code of Conduct for Ambergate because they have been involved in deciding what is acceptable behaviour that will allow teaching and learning to take place without disruption. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' moral development as they counsel pupils when they have difficulties. Worth a Mention stickers are good motivators and pupils share their successes with the school at a weekly assembly.

35. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The visits to France, camping and the residential trip provide good opportunities for pupils to enjoy each other's company and learn to consider each other's needs. Pupils work harmoniously in lessons, for example Key Stage 2 pupils play mathematical board games and Key Stage 3 pupils work co-operatively when they create music and dance with the music therapist. When Key Stage 2 pupils visit the local museum they are aware that members of the public are also enjoying the visit and pupils behave courteously and with consideration. Pupils in this key stage are very keen to introduce themselves to visitors; this is a very useful skill as one parent called school to report that her child had been able to tell shop managers exactly who he was and his address when he lost contact with his mother. The Ambergate School French café provides very good opportunities for pupils to interact with each other and with visitors. The school provides further opportunities for social development as they organise school discos, the most recent being the St Valentines Disco, an obvious success with pupils who enjoy the photographs on display.

36. Provision for cultural development is good. In religious education pupils are able to learn about, and gain an understanding of, the importance of faith to people of different beliefs. The school celebrates a range of festivals from a variety of world religions. The French café raises an awareness of other European cultures and the visit of the Black Umfrosi African musicians allows pupils to experience a wider cultural difference as well as socialise with pupils from neighbouring schools who join in the daylong workshop. History lessons provide a perspective on British culture throughout the years. Studies of European history as well as country studies of places such as Italy or Kenya add to pupils' cultural development. Visits such as the visit to the Guildhall to see the workings of a theatre give an insight into a different lifestyle and type of employment. Key Stage 2 pupils develop their knowledge of different lifestyles as they visit East Midlands Airport to increase their awareness of travel and also visit a local hotel to see how many rooms there are and how much they cost. When they visit local craft centres or Tudor houses to appreciate what life was like in those times, pupils also develop their social skills and learn to behave acceptably in public places. The very good opportunities for work experience prepare pupils well for the world of work. Pupils in Key Stage 3 enjoy the music therapy sessions; these encourage pupils to enjoy making music as well as raising self-esteem and improving communication skills.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. Since the last inspection the school's procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare and support have improved. The school now provides very effective personal support and guidance for pupils, which has a positive impact on the standards they achieve and the progress they make. Within the context of the school, pupils are happy, respond well to the personal attention received and there is good evidence to show that the vast majority are enjoying and benefiting from their time at Ambergate. Teaching and support staff effectively and consistently support and help pupils, and this is reflected through the ethos of the school. The well being of the pupils is uppermost in the minds of all staff at all times. Procedures to deal with child protection issues are very good and meet statutory requirements. The school is vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities. The school works effectively with a range of specialist support agencies, notifying them of any concerns staff have about pupils.

38. The school has appropriate procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety. In recent times investment in alarm systems, perimeter fencing and close circuit television cameras has reduced the level of vandalism and the incidence of health and safety hazards. The headteacher and the site manager are conscientious in ensuring that health risks are quickly eliminated and that the buildings and site are safe for pupils. There are regular evacuation practices and appropriate records of fire prevention and electrical equipment inspections. Appropriate first aid supplies are available around the site and first aiders hold up to date accreditation. The school has clear procedures relating to medicines on site and staff take great care to ensure that pupils follow their medical regimes and that records are accurately maintained. For example, there is very close monitoring of the blood sugar levels for one diabetic pupil. In the majority of lessons observed during the inspection good care was taken to ensure pupils' safety. In a physical education lesson where pupils were playing hockey with proper wooden sticks for the first time they were given very clear instructions on how to use them and staff were quick to correct any misuse. However, in a practical design and technology lesson pupils were using a range of tools without eye protection. Good accident and incident records are kept.

39. The school has very good procedures in place for monitoring and promoting attendance. Any unauthorised absence is followed up conscientiously and there is good evidence of the school working effectively with the educational welfare service to improve overall attendance levels. A new software package is enabling the school to monitor easily

the attendance patterns for individual pupils, for groups of pupils and for the whole school. The concerted effort to improve attendance levels includes the award of prizes for full or near full termly and yearly attendance and a very flexible approach with pupils who refuse to come to school to gradually encourage them into school.

40. Since the last inspection many new initiatives and systems have been introduced to help improve the standards of behaviour in the school. The procedures now in place, for both monitoring and promoting good behaviour, are very good and having a significant effect on overall standards. Pupils were involved in agreeing the new behaviour code and discussion with them shows they understand and respect the expectations. Individual pupil behaviour is discussed daily at briefing meetings and if there are causes for concern individual behaviour improvement plans are agreed with the pupil. Monitoring of behaviour against specific targets is effectively and consistently carried out in each lesson and at breaks. Pupils are effectively encouraged to achieve their behaviour targets by providing rewards. For example, a girl in the primary class was allowed to play with her favourite skipping rope at breaks providing targets had been achieved in the preceding lesson. The prospect of this reward is a massive incentive to the girl who is making a real effort in lessons. There is a new whole school reward scheme that pupils of all ages respond to very enthusiastically. The records from reward schemes provide good information to aid the monitoring of behaviour. There is a new and appropriately escalating sanction system that is being used effectively to reduce the total number of exclusions. The school has good procedures in place to deal with bullying and is effective in restricting all forms of oppressive behaviour.

41. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal and social development are good. There are clear targets for pupils' personal development and progress against these is regularly recorded as a result of observation, input from specialists and following the daily discussions between teaching and support staff. The school is effectively supporting pupils' personal development by encouraging them to take responsibility within the school and for themselves. There are plans to increase the opportunities for pupils to take responsibilities by introducing a form of school council and by starting a best friend/buddy scheme between different age pupils. There are good examples of pupils taking responsibility for classroom duties, school routines and in the dining hall at lunchtime. The school provides some very good opportunities for pupils to enhance their personal and social skills through the citizenship and community education programmes, through the inclusion programmes with mainstream schools and the college, through work experience and through interaction with the wider society on trips and residential visits. One weakness in the school provision is the lack of food technology within the design and technology curriculum, which denies pupils the opportunity to develop essential life skills.

42. The procedures recently adopted to record the attainment of pupils in the subjects, recognise the progress they are making, and to help in planning future lessons, are good. They include measures such as 'P' levels for all subjects and a commercial scheme for recognising the small steps pupils are making in their learning. Both are designed to provide direct help in planning teaching and learning. Also included are standardised tests of literacy and numeracy. These provide information for setting pupils into classes at Key Stage 3; for recognising the gains that are made over the period of a half year or year; and for recognising the effectiveness of the school in its work. At this time, the procedures for recording the attainment of pupils work well. In most subjects, with the exception of information and communication technology and design and technology, they are supported by teachers' annotation of completed work and by the use of photographic evidence. At Key Stage 2, assessment information is used well in planning future lessons. This is not the case for the other key stages. Other than in English and mathematics, the link between the learning objectives in the medium term planning for subjects and the expected learning outcomes for pupils of different abilities are not obvious. Therefore there is not enough detail or information

for teachers, especially supply teachers, to use when planning lessons, or for identifying pupils who are finding certain aspects of the learning difficult. The impact of this can be seen mostly at Key Stage 3, where the planning documents do not provide a sufficiently precise or comprehensive base from which the good assessment procedures can be used to recognise the progress pupils make over the duration of a term, year or key stage.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. The school has worked hard in recent years to develop its partnership with parents and carers. The very good links, which now exist, contribute positively to pupils' learning and development. Despite the school having a geographically large catchment area, a close and interactive relationship exists with the vast majority of parents. Responses to the inspection questionnaire and feedback to the school show that parents and carers are happy with their children's progress, very supportive of the staff and very grateful for the individual help and care that is provided for their children. One parent indicated minor concern over the standard of behaviour in the school. The inspection found the standard of behaviour to be good overall, given the level of emotional and learning difficulties that many pupils experience. The level of support for the school is reflected in the high attendance figures at both formal and social events. At the time of the last inspection attendance at formal annual reviews was low but now more than eight out of ten parents and carers do attend the reviews. Family evenings are effective, and popular events have strengthened the partnership relationship. It is particularly notable that parents and carers are increasingly using the school and its staff for advice and guidance on how best to help their child's personal development and preparation for adult life.

44. Communication with parents is good. The school operates an open door policy, actively encourages dialogue and ensures that views and opinions are taken into account. A particularly effective initiative, which ensures parental involvement and which is very much appreciated by parents, involves teaching staff ringing home every fortnight to report and seek views on progress and development. The school is also quick to involve parents and carers whenever there is cause for concern about behaviour or progress. Formal reporting of progress is effectively managed through the annual review, the annual report and at parents' evenings. At annual reviews parents and pupils are fully involved in agreeing targets for individual education and development programmes. The annual report for parents is better than at the last inspection and now provides a good record of what pupils have learned. The school has plans to improve further these reports by ensuring that advice on what needs to be done to improve is consistently provided in all curriculum areas. Parents take good advantage of the opportunities to see pupil's work and share in the celebration of achievement when awards are presented at special evenings. The school holds very popular careers evenings and there are plans to encourage more involvement in academic learning at home through hosting sessions on programmes of study and teaching methods for some curriculum areas. The strength of the partnership with parents has been built effectively by focusing on the specific behavioural and learning difficulties of the pupils. The school is now actively planning to build on these positive relationships to encourage more parental involvement in the academic learning programmes.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory and have continued to improve. Since the last inspection a new headteacher has been appointed, who is very aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, and has a clear vision of how the school needs to develop. He provides good leadership, and in the two years since he was appointed he has successfully improved the schools' policy and handling of behaviour, the personal, social and health education provision, the provision for information and communication technology and the school's links with other schools for the inclusion and re-integration of pupils.

46. However, during the last year there have been frequent changes of staff, including the long-term absence and subsequent leaving of the newly appointed deputy headteacher. This has resulted in fifty per cent of the teachers being temporary or supply teachers, and an acting deputy headteacher. The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher have worked successfully as a team and supported new teachers so that they understand the needs of the pupils and the behaviour policy of the school. This has resulted in good behaviour from the majority of pupils and uninterrupted learning. However, co-ordination of the curriculum, monitoring and improvements have come to a stand still while the school seeks to appoint permanent members of staff.

47. The school has a very low level of funding and this reduces the options that are open to senior staff and governors in the spending of the money. The budgeting is now clearer and more structured than it was at the time of the previous inspection, but the low level of funding in comparison to the national average for similar schools means that the governors continually consider different ways of remaining solvent. As a result of a cost cutting exercise by the governing body, the number of teachers in the school was reduced by one, and this puts the school below the national average for similar schools in terms of numbers of teachers. Staffing levels are therefore unsatisfactory, as there are not enough teachers to meet the needs of the curriculum. This has not improved since the last inspection. One result of this is a graduated trainee teacher having responsibility for too many subjects and not enough time to develop them effectively. In addition, and a much more serious consequence, the headteacher is spending half his time teaching physical education. This is effective in terms of balancing the budget, but is not an efficient way of deploying his skills or time in relation to management salary costs. As a result of this decision, the improvements and developments to the school, in terms of curriculum development, monitoring the standards achieved and the quality of teaching and learning, and the formal mentoring of new staff, have had to be put on hold. This has resulted in a school, which at the moment is not moving forward as quickly as it should. This decision has also curtailed the headteacher's availability to attend meetings, such as head teacher's meetings and training. There is a need to appoint another member of staff in order to release the headteacher from this role.

48. In addition to this, the governing body are considering ways in which to reduce the budget further by not appointing a permanent deputy headteacher. Due to the workload of the headteacher, the amount of new members of teaching staff, the changing needs of the pupils and the amount of improvements and developments still needed in the school, it is vital that appointing additional members strengthen that senior management team. These members need to have a range of management skills and expertise that complement those of the headteacher, and have specific roles and responsibilities within the school so that it can move forward and keep up with developments.

49. The support the governing body gives to the school is satisfactory. They regularly receive reports from the headteacher, but have not ensured that all the statutory requirements have been met. For example, they have not ensured that pupils have their full entitlement to design and technology. Their decision following the last inspection to close the food technology room was short sighted and has resulted in pupils underachieving in this area of the curriculum. However, their decision to endorse the development of information and communication technology spending has resulted in a much improved curricular area. The school has improved the membership of its governing body since the last inspection, and most members attend regularly. However, they have not nominated governors with a specific responsibility for numeracy and literacy, which schools were recommended to do with the introduction of these two national strategies.

50. Performance management systems are in place, and targets have been set for the headteacher. Many of these have already been achieved. However, some targets set by the governors, such as increasing the number of pupils admitted to the school, are driven by the governors desire to generate more funds. These targets are not effective in raising standards in the school or improving the quality of the educational provision for the pupils already in the school.

51. An outside finance officer working with the headteacher soundly explores the possibilities and implications of the long term financial planning. The day-to-day, month by month finances are very ably looked after by the headteacher working closely with the very capable support of the school secretary. A recent independent audit of the school showed very good compliance with all of the regulations, with only two minor matters being noted. One of these includes a list of pecuniary interests of the governing body and is currently being dealt with.

52. Although financial planning is satisfactory and is linked to the school's priorities for development, the outcomes of each development are not specific enough to measure the success of the development. In addition the governors do not evaluate how effective the spending of large amounts of money has been. Major expenditure on computers, for instance, has not been evaluated to see if the computers are being used throughout the curriculum, or if all pupils are using them effectively, or if they have led to a rise in standards across the school. The headteacher does, however, make sound efforts to compare how well this school is doing with other schools, both in terms of standards of pupils' achievements, and in cost effectiveness. Teachers, pupils and parents are consulted about possible directions that the school might be taking, and the school seeks to make sure it is giving good value for money to its pupils and parents, as well as ensuring that it gets good value for money in what it purchases.

53. When grants are received for specific purposes they are used satisfactorily, although at the moment, the school is holding back two sets of training money because many of the staff are temporary, It is wiser to wait until the staff benefiting from the training will be more permanent members of staff. Satisfactory use is made of the new computer-related technology: in the office, the secretary and headteacher make very good use of the systems for organising the finances, staffing, and pupil matters; teachers are increasingly using computers to lay out their termly plans, lesson plans, and wall displays; and there is increasing use of the technology with the pupils themselves.

54. The accommodation is overall unsatisfactory. Although the school buildings are in good repair are very clean and well organised, the school is short of adequate rooms for teaching the whole curriculum to pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4. There is no food technology room, the art room is totally inadequate and the resources for music have to be stored away

from the room where it is taught. All this has a negative impact on the progress pupils make. In addition should the school suddenly find itself with additional pupils at Key Stage 1 or 2, then there is insufficient room for another primary class. The hall is also used to teach physical education as well as holding assemblies and mealtimes. It too small for pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4. Science accommodation, at the time of the last inspection was unsatisfactory and although the school has gone some way to address this by placing it in the design and technology room, it is still unsatisfactory.

55. Although the school appears to use all its space efficiently, the building is on two levels and on the second level are a number of rooms that are not used by the school. Historically these have been re-let back to the Local Education Authority for the Learning Support Service for a small fee and is currently no more than a large store for LEA resources. This is not an efficient use of the space as it could be of more benefit to the pupils and teachers in the school. Resources are overall satisfactory. They are good in information and communication technology, but need improving in history, geography and science so that they have a positive impact on the progress pupils make.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. The headteacher and Governors the of the school need to:

- 1) Strengthen the structure of the senior management team and the school's capacity to continue improving and developing by:
 - appointing a deputy headteacher whose expertise and skills complement those of the headteacher;
 - appointing additional members to the senior management team;
 - developing clear roles and responsibilities for specific school management, monitoring, and development for each member of the team;

Paragraph: 48

2) Increase, and establish a stable teaching staff so that:

- the headteacher can concentrate on improving the school;
- curriculum co-ordinators can assume their responsibilities for developing their subject areas;
- the graduate trainee teacher has fewer subjects to co-ordinate.

Paragraphs: 46,47,91,109,111.

3) Meet statutory requirements in the design and technology by providing and teaching food technology and textiles in the curriculum.

Paragraphs: 1,9,24,41,49,83,86.

4) Improve the quality of the medium term curriculum planning at Key Stage 3 so that teachers use the assessment of the learning outcomes of each lesson when planning the next stage of learning for pupils.

Paragraphs: 4,8,24,25,42,73,76,84,85,88,90,100,109

5) Improve the quality of the targets in the individual education plans so that they link more closely to the individual needs of pupils and can be used by all teachers in planning and teaching.

Paragraphs: 10,25,26,42,63,76.

57. In addition the headteacher and the governors should give consideration to the following minor issues when compiling the next school development plan:

- The inadequacy of the accommodation for food technology, art, and music. (7,54,78)
- The quality of the success criteria in the school development plan and ways in which to evaluate the cost effectiveness of their spending. (52)
- The development and use of information and communication technology across all subjects. (5,22,75,82,95,98,99,111)
- Extend the opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 to develop their writing skills. (2, 58,60)
- Increase the amount of resources for the teaching of science, history and geography. (55,77,90,95)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	50
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	73

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	27	52	17	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	49
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	17

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	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.6

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y1 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.4
Average class size	8.1

Education support staff: Y1 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	177

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	199-2000
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	£
Total income	371891
Total expenditure	385695
Expenditure per pupil	5590
Balance brought forward from previous year	18304
Balance carried forward to next year	4500

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	46
Number of questionnaires returned	9

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

There were fewer than ten returns to the questionnaire and only one parent attended the parent's meeting. The majority of returns indicated that parents were very satisfied with the quality of education that the school provides. They felt that their children were making good progress, were expected to work, and became more mature and responsible. A concern was raised at the parent's meeting about the number of pupils with disruptive and poor behaviour who were being placed in the school and the effect that this might have on other pupils.

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

ENGLISH

58. Improvement in English since the last inspection has been good. The teaching at that time varied across the school and it is now good throughout the school. Pupils' learning and achievements have improved, especially in Key Stage 2, where the Literacy Strategy is fully in place now. Although pupils' behaviour has improved significantly, the number of pupils with social and emotional difficulties has risen and there is still a minority of pupils in Key Stage 3 whose behaviour adversely affects their work.

59. Pupils' achievements, and the progress they make in speaking and listening, are good at Key Stage 2. They listen carefully to what is said to them, to comply with requests and instructions, both in class lessons, and, for example, in gymnastics and swimming lessons. They answer questions, recall the information given by the teacher, and as a class, hold discussions. Progress in reading and writing is satisfactory. The higher attaining pupils read simple passages from storybooks, and understand what is happening in them, although they do not remember what happened a few pages earlier. Lower attaining pupils recognise some letters and can find them on a computer keyboard. They hold books the right way up, and with help recognise some words. Their writing is ill-formed and in some cases it is difficult to read. Higher attaining pupils have much better handwriting, and they use their writing in different subjects such as geography and science, as well as writing diaries. There is scope to widen the range of types of writing to be attempted.

60. In Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils' achievements and progress are satisfactory. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good, and their skills in the other aspects of English are satisfactory. Through both key stages pupils become more sensible and mature in their discussions, listening carefully to what is said to them, and becoming more able to make their own contributions to discussions in different subjects, as well in English lessons. They talk about the characters and events in books they read, consider why people act as they do in the books, and predict what might happen. They discuss their work experience placements, for instance, as well as their diaries, poems they are reading in class, and letters they have written. Pupils' reading develops soundly through a range of different types of books, including novels, plays, poetry, reference books for several subjects and their careers and citizenship work. Many pupils throughout the school take books home to read as part of their learning. The higher attaining pupils are reading with some expression by the time they leave the school, although they struggle with many words. They enjoy their reading, for instance, the humorous story about a dragon that the Year 11 pupils are presently reading. They remember many things that have happened in the stories they have read, and they know where to find information in the library, and, in some cases, from computers.

61. Pupils' written work gradually improves as they move through the school. Whilst some pupils develop a neat and regular form of writing or printing, most of the work is not neatly presented, and many pupils do not write with great care. There is scope to give this aspect more emphasis. There is also scope to widen the breadth of what pupils write about; they write letters, diaries, shopping lists and comprehension exercises, but more opportunities for imaginative writing could be valuably created. Through their writing, pupils learn the basics of grammar and punctuation satisfactorily, and their spelling is generally good in some specific work and in tests, but tends to become inconsistent in other work. By the time they leave the school, many pupils are able to hold sensible conversations, read letters and information leaflets, and write clear simple letters – all skills that will help them in their future leisure and working lives.

62. The teaching and learning of English are good throughout the school, although the learning by some pupils, especially in Key Stage 3, is not as good as the teaching because of their severe behavioural difficulties. All lessons during the inspection were good, except one, which was very good. Teachers and learning support assistants work well together to encourage and reassure pupils. This results in pupils feeling more confident and proud of their achievements. In Key Stage 2, the teaching is following a well-structured approach that follows the National Literacy Strategy closely within individual lessons. This has a good effect on pupils' learning, and on their longer term achievements. In Key Stage 3 there are well structured and targeted lessons, which owe their main targets to the Literacy Strategy. The structure of the strategy is not embedded within individual lessons, but the teaching, over the period of a week, does incorporate appropriate styles and levels of work. This is appropriate to the needs of the pupils, who would find it difficult to cope with several changes of aim within a single lesson. The teaching in Key Stage 4 includes a mixture of approaches, such as traditional whole class reading of a novel, writing for a range of particular purposes, literature appreciation, and grammar and spelling lessons. Much of the teaching towards the top of the school is aimed at practical situations in work experience, careers, citizenship and social awareness lessons.

63. Particular strengths in teaching revolve around good planning and structure to lessons, with a good focus, so that pupils know where a lesson is heading, and what is expected of them. Teachers have good knowledge and they enjoy positive relationships with pupils, enabling most lessons to proceed smoothly. Lessons are run at a good pace, with high expectations for pupils' attention, behaviour and effort. Most pupils respond well to this approach, concentrate on their work, and try hard to do well. Teachers often make good use of a range of resources such as videos, "big books", class readers and specially designed work sheets. Some lessons had only a very brief introduction and review, when more could have been made of both ends of the lessons to clarify what was going to be happening, and to reinforce what pupils had actually learned.

64. The leadership and management of English are good. There is good liaison between the three English teachers, and they are well qualified and experienced. The Literacy Strategy is in place in Key Stage 2, and is becoming more so in Key Stage 3. The range of work that is planned for and taught, is mainly good. The progress that pupils make in the different aspects of the subject is very well observed and recorded, and very good use is made of the information to "fine-tune" what is to be taught in the future. The individual targets that are set up for all pupils are not always necessary. Although many of them are good targets, they often reflect what the whole of a group will be doing the next term, and this is already well built in to the termly planning. There is a need for teachers to focus on a very few high priority targets for the pupils who really need them. Plans to introduce a very specific assessment system are good, and have already been used in the lower school. There are also good plans to develop the integration links with other schools through their English lessons, to take advantage of further training opportunities for all staff, to subscribe to some magazines to help the older pupils with their general reading; and to continue the development of the Literacy Strategy in Key Stage 3. The resources and accommodation are good, with a well-stocked library, reading room and in-class resource banks. Through good whole-school coordination, pupils' English skills are well supported in many lessons throughout the school, and when the pupils are out in public, or in social settings.

MATHEMATICS

65. Pupils' progress and their standards of achievement have improved since the last inspection. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. This is an improvement on the last inspection when it was found that progress in Key Stage 4 was unsatisfactory and poor in Key Stage 3. With the exception of one lesson where teaching was satisfactory, all teaching is good. The issues raised in the last report have been addressed, a policy has been written, continuity between lessons is clear and investigative work for the older pupils is challenging.

66. Pupils make good progress throughout the school and progress overall is good at the end of all key stages. In Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress. They recognise a variety of two-dimensional shapes, such as squares, rectangles and triangles. They match digits to the number of objects in an illustration, and count in tens to a hundred. Pupils recognise and name coins, using them to make simple calculations. They have a good understanding of night and day and of significant times of the day. During a visit to the local museum to look at Roman artefacts, pupils made good progress in understanding the use and value of money as they each budgeted 50p and selected and purchased items from the museum shop, carefully checking their change. At the end of the key stage, pupils can read simple pictograms for example showing the eye colour of pupils in the class.

67. In Key Stage 3 pupils make satisfactory progress. They cover a range of topics applicable to the programmes of study. Pupils develop their mathematical skills, making satisfactory progress in their ability to calculate and solve mathematical problems. Lower attaining pupils add and subtract numbers under ten and can order numbers up to a hundred. They build on their previous knowledge of money and are aware for example that 303 pence is recorded as £3.03. Higher attaining pupils consolidate their knowledge of money as they select three or four second hand goods from a newspaper advert and find the total cost. Pupils gain a clear understanding of the significance of fractions as they match the halves of a variety of shapes and then apply their new understanding of fractions to halving numbers. Pupils are aware that halving and doubling are related calculations. Higher attaining pupils round numbers up or down to the nearest ten and estimate the answers to the addition of two digit numbers. By the end of the key stage, pupils apply the four rules of number and use decimal notation. They make satisfactory improvement in their knowledge of time, developing skills in matching analogue and digital times as well as making a daily schedule showing times of getting up, meals and bedtimes. Pupils list the various activities they do on Saturdays, sequence them in order of times and calculate the cost of the activities. Pupils increase their skills in data handling as they read accurately from bar charts showing, for example, the different amounts raised by stalls at a jumble sale.

68. During Key Stage 4 pupils make satisfactory progress. Their knowledge of fractions is increased and the application of the four rules of number includes addition of four digit numbers and long multiplication. Pupils investigate timetables and develop their knowledge of time and measurement as they calculate the distances and lengths of journeys between Exeter and Bristol or Manchester and Stirling. They consolidate well their use of number as they examine the quantity, materials and unit price of building supplies and calculate a total price. Pupils increase their understanding of statistics as they produce a variety of clearly labelled tally charts and bar graphs, for example on hair colour. They make good use of computer software to produce the graphs. Pupils know the need to measure accurately. They observe the differences between rulers and tape measures and can decide which is most appropriate for a given task. Pupils in this key stage recall how to calculate the perimeter of regular and compound shapes and use this knowledge well to assist in calculating the area of a rectangle or square. By the end of Key Stage 4, a consistently increasing number of pupils gain successes in the Welsh Board Certificate of Achievement

69. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good overall. Where teaching is good, the lessons offer a high level of challenge and pupils focus positively on the activities presented by their teachers. Where teaching is lively and confident, for example when Key Stage 3 pupils learn to round up and round down numbers, pupils respond well as they feel reassured about their own skills and abilities to do the work, so they make good progress. Teachers use a variety of strategies to motivate pupils and pupils respond particularly well to games and competitions. For example, in Key Stage 3 there is an enthusiastic response to the challenge of estimating the number of sweets in a bottle, the pupil with the most accurate estimation will win the bottle. In Key Stage 2, pupils enjoy a variety of appropriate board games to reinforce their counting skills. When teachers give clear explanations of activities, pupils are able to start work with a minimum of fuss and feel confident in their abilities to complete the task. When work is well planned and is appropriate for the pupils in the class, pupils remain on task and persevere with their work. A good example of this is when lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 3 work on the addition and subtraction of three digit numbers and remember to put the decimal point in the correct place as they set the calculations out vertically. In Key Stage 2, the teacher carefully questions pupils about their understanding of coins. Pupils enjoy demonstrating their new knowledge and at the same time they consolidate their learning well. Throughout the school, teachers demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject. In Key Stage 4 at the beginning of the lesson, the teacher makes sure the pupils review previous knowledge, and at the end, uses the plenary well to recap on the new learning and to prepare pupils for the next lesson. This is a very effective method of making sure pupils become aware of their own learning and of the progress they are making. The attention of the learning support assistants is focused very effectively on pupils' individual needs. Teachers and assistants work well together to encourage and reassure pupils. This results in pupils feeling more confident and secure when they attempt potentially difficult work.

70. Teachers' management of behaviour is good. Where pupils have difficulty in maintaining levels of concentration teachers introduce a variety of activities that allow those pupils to refocus and continue making progress in their learning. A good example of this was when lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 3 were becoming distracted as they were working on addition of two and three digit sequences, the teacher introduced the idea of the numbers representing the goals scored by national football teams. This restored the enthusiasm and pupils continued to make good progress in the lesson. The relationships between pupils and support assistants are a strong feature of the lessons, and contribute well to pupils being able to stay on task and persevere with the work. When they are given the opportunity to work co-operatively, pupils in Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 willingly check each other's work or share resources. Pupils in Key Stage 3 find it difficult and take time to decide who they will work with and how to take turns. This was evident when pupils in Key Stage 3 were measuring each other and recording these measurements for use in the next lesson. This was a challenge for the class but pupils did successfully achieve the lesson objectives and additionally they improved their ability to co-operate.

71. The school's medium term planning for mathematics is satisfactory. Subject teachers carry out the teaching and effective use is made of the curriculum map to make sure that all pupils study an appropriately broad and balanced range of mathematical skills. Initial assessment of pupils' abilities is good and teachers make good ongoing assessments of pupils' learning during the lessons. However, short term planning requires refining to make better use made of the good assessment information, and ensure that planning objectives reflect the needs of the individual pupils. The links between assessment, pupils' personal targets and teachers planning are inconsistent and are areas for further development. In other lessons, such as French and in assemblies, teachers constantly reinforce numeracy skills and enable pupils to consolidate the skills they have learned in lessons.

72. Due to the staffing issues faced by the school, the co-ordinators with responsibility for mathematics are temporary members of staff and have only recently taken on this responsibility. They have worked hard to identify areas for development based on assessments of pupils' skills, and have constructed an action plan that will help to improve pupils' levels of achievement. As yet the action plan is only partially implemented and there has been insufficient time for any evaluation of the impact on pupils' learning. An immediate plan is to audit the textbooks, increase the mathematical resources to support teaching and to build up a useful collection of extension materials for staff to use. Future plans appropriately include examining the effectiveness of marking and developing strategies to monitor pupils' work.

SCIENCE

73. Pupils' achievement is overall satisfactory and this represents satisfactory improvement since the last inspection (1996). In all key stages the quality of teaching has improved and is now good. This is good improvement since the inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (1998), and is due to the expertise of the temporary teacher who has joined the school this term. The lack of a specialist teaching facility for science and the limited range and quantity of resource support was noted in the last inspection report (1996) and identified as a key issue in the most recent report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate (1998). For pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4, this has improved slightly but science still shares a room with another subject and this continues to limit the standards pupils achieve and the progress they make over the full range of the subject.

74. Although achievement is overall satisfactory, there are variations between the key stages in the progress that pupils make over a period of time. At Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress as the teaching is good and there have been no changes to the staffing in this class, and the activities in the lessons build on previous learning. However, at Key Stage 3, pupils' progress over time is unsatisfactory because the planning for the subject is not developed enough to ensure that the content being taught is based on the pupils' prior knowledge and understanding. The progress pupils make in Key Stage 4 is better as the lesson planning is based on an accredited scheme of work so that it ensures that pupils' learning is based on what has taught gone before.

75. However, in the lessons observed during the week of the inspection pupils were making good progress, and is the result of well planned lessons with clear objectives that are now being taught by teachers with good specialist knowledge of the subject and of the learning difficulties of the pupils. At Key Stage 3 the higher attaining pupils recognise the main features of plants and animals, understand that light comes from different sources, and know that materials have different characteristics or similarities. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils understand the meaning of a fair test and make predictions, with higher attaining pupils using investigation techniques and equipment to test these predictions. They record the results in a variety of ways, make interpretations of the findings and discussing them. When studying living things, they know that animals and plants are found in specific habitats, while lower attaining pupils classify living and non-living things into different groups. Pupils have extended their knowledge of materials, studied how materials change when heated or cooled. Pupils understand the use of electricity, forces, motions and energy. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have made sufficient progress to gain a Certificate of Educational Achievement of the Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society Examination Group (OCR).

76. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed is good at all key stages. The subject benefits from being taught at Key Stages 3 and 4 by a temporary teacher whose initial training is in science. This teacher has been in the school for one term and is making an impact on the progress that pupils make. This teacher, along with the teacher who teaches the pupils at Key Stage 2 has good relationships with their pupils, and this has a positive impact on learning, as very few behaviour difficulties emerge. Teachers plan the lessons so that there are a variety of activities, including discussion, investigation and written work. Pupils become confident as learners, to make suggestions and to ask questions when they feel unsure. Teachers use their learning support assistants very well to ensure that lower attaining pupils make progress in their learning. At Key Stage 2, the lesson planning is good and derived from the scheme of work, and the new learning objectives for the lesson are based on what pupils know understand and can do. The teacher has different but appropriate expectations of individual pupils, and this ensures that all pupils achieve well, both in lessons and over time. However, this is not so evident in the planning at Key Stage 3 as the teacher has less experience of teaching a group of pupils with differing needs. As a result, the planning does not show what these pupils will be expected to achieve. Overall, teachers do not make enough effort to use information and communication technology to assist them to learn, for example, for research or to record results and data.

77. The curriculum is overall satisfactory but is better at Key Stage 2 where it has been developed and taught for a number of years by a permanent teacher. Across the whole school it meets statutory requirements and all aspects are taught. This is an improvement from the last inspection when the range of programmes of study was not appropriate for older pupils. However, the medium term planning contains too little detail to help teachers plan individual lessons. New lessons tend not to link well with work completed in the past and the good progress pupils make in their lessons is not reflected in what they know and understand over the full range of the subject. Pupils' individual educational plans include learning targets for science, but these do not assist in planning learning because too often the targets are imprecise and not easily measurable. However, the school has developed procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and this is an improvement since the last inspection.

78. The co-ordinator has been recently appointed, but is a temporary teacher and has only had the responsibility since the beginning of the term. Consequently, she has not been able to take over all the responsibilities for leading, monitoring and evaluating work in science, for example, the link between the curriculum and the resources to support teaching and learning is not well established, and in some areas the resources are limited, such as for teaching physical processes.

ART AND DESIGN

79. Satisfactory improvements made to this subject since it was last inspected in 1996. A new initiative has been introduced where one teacher now teaches art across the school, and as a result, the continuity of planning and coverage of the curriculum has improved. Effective links have been made with the local high school and as a result, one pupil is currently studying the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in art. However, the accommodation for teaching art has not improved. This restricts the planning of the curriculum for pupils at Key Stage 3, and does not allow the school to provide Key Stage 4 pupils with an external accredited course.

80. Overall pupils' achievements and the progress they make are satisfactory, although pupils in Key Stage 2 achieve more and make better progress than those at Key Stage 3. This is because the teacher who teaches art to all pupils is also the class teacher for the Key Stage 2 class and therefore there are more opportunities for pupils to complete their art during other lessons. Whereas pupils at Key Stage 3 have only one session of art in a week and do not have opportunities to work on it at other times, such as after school or at lunchtimes. At Key Stage 2, displays of pupils' work show that they make good observational drawings of fruit, make relief rubbings, and make string prints. There are good examples of watercolour paintings of animals, such as chickens, and paintings of trees loaded with blossoms and completed in the style and in the colours used by Monet. The subject is linked well with design and technology and many of the artefacts that pupils have designed and made, such as Roman pottery, are decorated.

81. At Key Stage 3, pupils' achievements vary, due to the wide range of ability and attitudes vary. The higher attaining pupils use materials creatively to produce three-dimensional sculptures. This study is well connected with pupils' development and understanding of language. For example, their models made from wire, modroc, and paper mache are literal translations of word labels, such as 'Horse Fly', or 'Milkman'. Lower attaining pupils achieve well but need a lot of support and guidance on how to complete the procedures and do not have the ability to work independently and creatively. Sketchbooks show that pupils have very immature drawing and painting skills and techniques, but during the lesson on constructing a picture, made from tissue and representing the colours used by Monet, they achieved well. By the end of the lesson pupils have chosen colours and designed the layout for the picture, deciding where water, flowers and detail will go. They show that they have made good progress in their use of words, such as 'landscape' and 'reflection'. Although there are no examples of pupils' ability to use information and communication technology in art, many have developed the necessary skills to use art applications from their use of computers at home, and the school does not use and build on these skills.

82. The quality of teaching and learning in this subject is good overall, and on the week of the inspection it was very good in some lessons at Key Stage 3. The teacher has an initial training in art and therefore has a good understanding of the subject, the techniques required and the materials that can be used creatively. The planning for lessons is good and shows enough detail so that they can be used by other teachers or support assistants should the need arise. This ensures that the quality of learning is consistent. Although no art lessons were observed at Key Stage 2, the quality of the artwork displayed in classroom is of high quality and shows that teaching and learning is very good. There are high expectations for pupils' achievements, especially at Key Stage 2, where pupils are more responsive and are more eager and confident to try new techniques. At Key Stage 3, it is more difficult for the teacher to motivate the pupils as many feel that they are failures in art. However, the teacher does motivate the pupils very well by using a lot of praise and by providing constant encouragement and ideas. During the lessons seen, this resulted in the most difficult of pupils, in terms of behaviour, achieving well and producing three-dimensional models of animals from wire and 'modroc'. Pupils are continually reminded of their past achievements and this helps to raise their self-esteem in the lesson and become aware of their own learning. There is very good balance in lessons between the teaching of techniques and skills, and the use of artistic language. However, the weakness in the teaching lies in the lack of use of information and communication technology to support learning in lessons.

83. The school has improved and updated the curriculum, and along with this, is re-designing its assessment procedures so that pupils' achievements and the progress are more easily analysed. Although the content meets statutory requirements, there are very few opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology as another technique or for research. This is a result of the art room being too small to hold a computer and a lack of confidence by the teacher. The present art room is too small for all areas of the curriculum to be covered. There is no room for pupils to move about and select their own materials, complete large pieces of three-dimensional work, work with clay or textiles, or to work together on projects. Activities have to be planned so that pupils can work at them around two tables, and any group work has to take place outside. There is no water in the room and very little storage space for materials. Use has been made of visits to galleries but the present budget allowance for the subject is insufficient to cover developments, such as using outside artists to demonstrate and lead specific workshops for pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84. Design and technology has not improved since the last inspection. During this inspection there were a number of examples of pupils working with resistant materials, but following the last inspection it was decided to close the food technology room and therefore pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 are not taught this area of the curriculum, nor is there evidence that they work with textiles. The subject therefore does not meet statutory requirements.

85. Due to this incomplete curriculum, and the lack of dated or annotated samples of work, or records from the last academic year on which to assess achievement or judge progress over a period of time, achievement is unsatisfactory. However, work completed by pupils during the last term and during the week of the inspection shows that they were making satisfactory progress in lessons. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use different objects and materials, to make artefacts connected with the topics they are studying. For example, the use card and tissue paper to make artificial tulips and daffodils, and design and decorate imitation Roman and Greek pottery. They copy simple shapes, and build simple structures from construction kits. At Key Stage 3, pupils know when and how to use a range of small hand tools, such as coping saws and sanding blocks. They use these independently when completing the video shelves that they have designed. During this term they have progressed from gluing components together to making joints and using screws. At Key Stage 4, all pupils have completed a design for their Certificate of Achievement external accreditation, and using hand tools and power tools to complete their chosen pieces. They are aware of safety, such as using a vice to hold objects while working on them, can select the necessary tools for the job, and with help using their skills of measurement well. However, some pupils find reading the instructions, for example, on a tin of paint, more difficult and ask for help.

86. Overall, teaching during the week of the inspection was satisfactory. It is very good at Key Stage 4 where a temporary teacher who is trained in the subject and has a very high level of expertise, teaches. However, the lessons mainly focus on work with resistant materials and this, in conjunction with the lack of evidence of what pupils can achieve, does not provide evidence of the quality of teaching in other aspects of the subject. Lessons have good introductions, which inform pupils what they are going to do, or hope to achieve. However, the planning does not take account of the different abilities of pupils, as all the learning outcomes for all pupils are the same. There is insufficient detail in lesson planning to show how the needs of individual pupils, for example, in literacy, measurement or behaviour are going to be met. At Key Stage 4, the teacher discusses clearly, with each pupil, the next stage of their project and uses questioning very well to assess their understanding. This results in pupils being confident that they can work independently and only ask for help when it is needed. The temporary teacher's expectations of pupils' achievements are high and are

linked to an externally accredited course. Pupils therefore have made good progress this term and have produced good quality items, such as shelves and bird boxes, which are all very individual. This demonstrates that pupils have the ability to achieve well, but in the last year they have been underachieving. There are good relationships with pupils, which lead to a calm working atmosphere. In addition there is very good teamwork between the teachers and the learning support assistant, and this also contributes to the progress pupils make in lessons.

87. The subject is currently being well co-ordinated by a temporary teacher who has had a long association with the school, and has taken over the responsibility this term. The co-ordinator is a trained design and technology specialist and has brought to the school a vision of how the subject could be developed. She has raised achievement through external accreditation at Key Stage 4, and has made progress in sorting and purchasing resources for pupils to use, such as, small hand tools and new wood. However, there is a lack of mouldable materials and textiles, and no resources for food technology. There are planned developments for the curriculum and assessment, but these do not include food technology. The lack of this aspect of the curriculum has a detrimental effect on the personal development of pupils. They are not being given enough opportunities to solve problems, make decisions, work with food, plan and evaluate different foods, or through the subject develop independence skills for life after school. The school has a good design and technology room that is shared with science. It is well equipped with power tools and computers, and has ample storage room.

GEOGRAPHY

88. There has been satisfactory improvement in geography since the last inspection. The key issue relating to geography in the last inspection report (1996) has been partly met. Pupils' achievement and progress has improved significantly since the last inspection when standards were judged to be poor. A new co-ordinator has been given the responsibility. However, the planning of the curriculum for pupils at Key Stage 3 still does not ensure continuity and progression in their learning over the duration of the key stage.

89. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. They make satisfactory progress in individual lessons but similarly to science at Key Stage 3, the progress they make over a period of time is undermined by the quality of the medium term planning. Pupils, when they enter school at Key Stage 2 they know very little about geography. Over their time at school, and by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 4 they understand different weather conditions, how rain is formed and how areas of different pressure create wind and storms. They know how geographical characteristics are formed, such as a valley or a volcano. They are able to read maps and use six figure grid references to locate a point on a map, and this allows them, for example to identify the easiest route for walking from one point to another. They have an understanding of some of the forces behind urbanisation and of how increasing populations can affect the quality of life. They have made sufficient progress so that for the first time pupils at Key Stage 4 are to be entered this year for the Certificate of Educational Achievement in humanities.

90. The teaching is good at all key stages and is having a good impact on the quality of learning and the progress pupils make in lessons. Individual lessons are planned well with clear objectives, and pupils are made aware of these objectives at the beginning of the lesson. This helps pupils to focus on what they are going to do. The expectations both teachers have for learning and behaviour are good, and the learning support assistants are used very well in helping those pupils who have literacy or concentration difficulties. This ensures that pupils respond well and take a full and active interest in their work. Teachers use the display areas very well to help to reinforce pupils' learning.

91. The curriculum is overall satisfactory. It is good at Key Stage 2, but is too limited at Key Stage 3, especially in the areas of fieldwork and the study of countries other than their own. The medium term planning for pupils at Key Stage 3, like those for science, are not comprehensive enough to provide good support for teaching or to secure an ordered progress in learning. There are too few pieces of annotated or dated work kept as evidence of progress over time and as evidence of curriculum coverage. This makes it difficult for teachers to monitor pupils' progress. There is a lack of a range of resources to support the teaching of the curriculum, for example, the library has too few specialist books and there is too little multi-media software. This disadvantages both teachers and pupils, and it has a detrimental impact on achievement.

92. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and committed, but is part of a graduate teacher-training scheme and as such, does not have the specialist knowledge of co-ordinating subjects or the skills needed for monitoring academic progress of pupils. In addition, this co-ordinator has too much responsibility, as she is also responsible for four other subjects and as such, does not have sufficient time to give to all subjects.

HISTORY

93. Since the last inspection there has been satisfactory improvement in the standards pupils achieve and the progress they make in history. The key issue relating to history in the last inspection report (1996) has been partly met. Pupils' achievement and progress has improved significantly since the last inspection when standards were judge to be poor. There is now a new co-ordinator in place who is beginning to develop the subject. However, the planning of the curriculum for pupils at Key Stage 3 still does not ensure continuity and progression in their learning over the duration of the key stage.

94. Pupils' achievement and the progress are overall satisfactory and in some lessons on the week of the inspection they made good progress. At Key Stage 2, pupils' achieve well and make good progress, and this is the result of good quality teaching. Once again at Key Stage 3 there is a weakness in the medium term planning, and, as a result pupils do not make as much progress over a period of time as they do in individual lessons. At Key Stage 2, pupils, while on a visit to the local museum draw what they see, know that the Roman artefacts in the display cases are old and that many have had to be re-built. At Key Stage 3, pupils understand that the gathering of evidence from different sources, such as looking pictures, books and artefacts, is part of understanding how things happened in the past. With the support of the teacher they use this well when studying the Civil War and the trial of Charles the First. They understand that the King was accused of treason and stood trial, and that this was unusual. At Key Stage 4 a Certificate of Achievement has been introduced which combines the history with geography to give pupils an award in humanities. In the history element of this they are making satisfactory achievement and progress. Continuing with the theme of looking for primary and secondary evidence, the pupils make considerable gains from talking to their elderly relatives about the food available to them during World War II. They understand that this period of history caused particular hardship and tensions.

95. The quality of teaching is good at all key stages. Lessons are well prepared with clear objectives and are often challenging. For example, teachers ask questions that require pupils to think about their answers, requiring them to make a judgement about a topic, such as, 'Was the diet available during World War II healthier than is today's.' This questioning is used well by both teachers to adjust the direction of the lesson so that all pupils achieve and make progress. Teachers bring the past alive through role-play or by dressing in the clothes of the past, and this strategy provides pupils with a good understanding of how to compare past with present. Pupils enjoy this active aspect of their lessons, and especially enjoy being

'History Detectives', and looking for evidence of events. Lessons at Key Stage 3 and 4 include the very good use of homework, which encourages pupils to become independent learners, but there is insufficient use made of information and communication technology for research.

96. The curriculum is overall satisfactory. It is good at Key Stage 2, but the medium term planning for pupils at Key Stage 3, like those for science and geography, are not comprehensive enough to provide good support for teaching or to secure an ordered progress in learning. There are too few pieces of annotated or dated work kept as evidence of progress over time and as evidence of curriculum coverage. This makes it difficult for teachers to monitor pupils' progress. The co-ordinator has been recently appointed. Even given her commitment and enthusiasm, all of the responsibilities associated with leading, monitoring and evaluating the work in the subject are not being met at this time. Resources are limited, there are too few artefacts, and there are too few specialist books in the library to help pupils gain investigative skills. Too little use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning and research skills. This disadvantages both teachers and pupils, and it has a detrimental impact on achievement

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

97. There has been good improvement made to this subject since it was last inspected in 1996, when it was judged that pupils achievements and the progress they made was very poor. This was because there were too few opportunities provided for using computers and management of the subject was weak. Since that time, the governors have allocated funding for new resources and this has been supplemented by national funding for the National Grid for Learning and National Opportunities Funding for training of teachers. All classrooms now have at least one computer and the school has a specific room for information and communication technology, as well as ample computers in the library area. Improvements have been made to the timetable and the subject is now taught as a discrete subject to all pupils. These improvements have had a positive impact on the achievements of pupils. However, the school does not keep pieces of work to show the progress pupils' make over time and has not identified the range of skills that pupils have already acquired through their use of computers at home.

98. Pupils' achievement and progress in lessons during the week of the inspection was satisfactory. At Key Stage 2, pupils are making progress and their achievements vary according to their motivation and concentration. The higher attaining pupils work independently using a word processing application to present a piece of text. They use the mouse and keyboard confidently, locate the space bar and back space key and understand how they can use them along with the arrow keys to edit text. These pupils are confident enough to save their work to a disk, and, with support of the teacher, are able to use the printer. The lower attaining pupils, or those with poor concentration, need the support and guidance of a learning support assistant so that they remain on task and complete the activity. With help, they complete the same tasks but need reminding of what to do next. There is insufficient evidence of pupils' ability to use information and communication technology for the collection of data, research or the use of the Internet. All pupils can label the main parts on a computer, such as monitor and keyboard.

99. There is insufficient work kept as evidence of pupils' achievements and the progress they make at Key Stages 3 and 4. However, from lessons observed and from discussion with pupils, it can be judged that they make satisfactory progress. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are competent in word processing, are able to change the style and size of the text, import clip art into their work, use the internet and multi-media CD ROMs to search for information, for example, on topics on animals, or on topics connected with history. They use desktop publishing applications, for example to plan advertising pamphlets in English. However, there is no evidence of their ability to use data bases or handle information in geography or mathematics, or control movements through the use of Logo applications. At Key Stage 4, pupils use their skills when planning their work in design and technology. As well as becoming more proficient with their word processing skills, they know how to set up and enter data on a spreadsheet.

100. The quality of teaching and learning in this subject is satisfactory overall. In the lessons observed it varied and depended on the knowledge of the subject by teacher concerned and the confidence in using it within in all lessons. Because half of the teachers are new to the school they have not benefited from the in-service training that has gone on in the last two years, are unsure of the skills that pupils have, and this leads to an inconsistency in their expectations of pupils in different lessons. There are good examples of teachers using the pupils' skills, for example, one teacher who teaches English at Key Stages 3 and 4 uses pupils' skills and understanding of desktop publishing well to produce an advertising leaflet, and this results in pupils who are eager to learn and complete the tasks. This is also the case in design and technology at Key Stage 4, where the teacher is effectively using pupils' skills to complete the external accredited coursework. However, other teachers do not make sufficient use of these skills in lessons. On the occasions that it is used, because teachers do not know the pupils well and the assessment information is not well recorded, they underestimate the pupils' capabilities. This results in pupils' not wanting to complete the tasks as they feel they are too easy. At Key Stage 2, pupils are taught by a variety of teachers, and during lessons when they are working at the computer they are supported by learning support assistants. Here pupils are given good support and they increase their ability to use the keyboard and mouse accurately.

101. Due to the staffing changes the subject has been without a permanent co-ordinator. A temporary teacher is currently overseeing it, and in the short time she has been at the school has started to improve and develop the subject. The policy has been updated and a national scheme of work has been introduced, but the school's use of this planning does not provide enough information about the expected learning outcomes for pupils of different abilities. Because the scheme is a national accepted one, it is broad and balanced, but there is no clear indication that all areas of it, such as control, data handling and monitoring are taught. Assessment procedures are being redesigned to take account of the new scheme of work, but do not yet provide enough information for teachers to take account of when planning lessons and experiences. There is insufficient evidence kept to show pupils' progress.

102. The school has used its specific funding well to provide a good range of computers, which are all linked to the Internet, and to also provide a discrete information and technology room. The decision to place computers in the classrooms as well as in the designated room is a good one, and provides the potential for pupils to make use of information and communication technology in all lessons. There are sufficient resources and there are plans to continue developing the range of software programs to be used. The school has received its National Opportunities Funding Grant for in-service training and has carried out an audit of staff expertise. However, as teachers have left it has become out of date. The senior management team have appropriately decided to wait until they have appointed permanent staff before they carry out another audit and start the in-service training of teaching staff.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

103. There has been a very good improvement since the last inspection. At that time the teaching was poor, and pupils' progress was slow, with many examples of poor behaviour. The teaching now is very good, as is the pupils' learning and progress. Pupils' behaviour has improved from being badly behaved to mostly well behaved and very positive. This subject is now a strength of the school.

104. At Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. As they progress through both key stages, they listen to conversation and instructions in French and gain good skills in understanding it and responding appropriately. They introduce themselves, ask for directions, pay for a bus ride, get a meal in a cafe, and say what foods and sports they like. They build up a good range of spoken vocabulary that can be used across a variety of situations, and they are developing the confidence to use it. By the time they leave the school, almost all pupils can hold a simple conversation in French, ask questions, and respond to questions that they are asked. The higher attaining pupils begin conversations, and think of original and personal answers to questions. They are developing a good appreciation of everyday French life and the general culture of France.

105. The subject is taught by one teacher, and in some classes there is the support of a learning support assistant. The teaching is very good, and during the inspection, it ranged from good to excellent. Lessons are very well planned and structured, and they are carried out with an enthusiasm and drive, which motivates most pupils to listen and respond with equal enthusiasm. The teacher has very good knowledge of the subject, and has a good accent that is being passed on to the pupils. The lessons run at a great pace, swiftly switching from one imaginary situation to another, consolidating the things that pupils have learned in previous lessons, and going on to several new teaching points in each lesson. Every opportunity is taken to introduce new words and to reinforce ones that the pupils have heard or learned before. This extends pupils' listening skills very well, as they have to listen closely to understand what is being said, and to think about their answers.

106. The lessons also support numeracy skills very well, with the teacher creating many opportunities for counting, telling the time and using money. Almost all pupils are very well involved in the learning. A few, however, do not join in very actively, and more attempts could be made to bring them into the lessons without breaking the pace and dynamism of the occasions. Overall, however, the teaching and learning are exceptionally good. Learning is sometimes further enhanced by special occasions, such as a French café breakfast. It involve visitors from outside the school and provided a very good extension for pupils' learning, with pupils introducing themselves, asking everyone questions, offering food and drinks. This was a very good French-speaking session, as well as being a very good cultural opportunity, and a very good opportunity for putting social skills into practice. Older pupils' learning is also very well enhanced by a trip to France each year, during which they go shopping, ask for directions, and eat and drink in a café and a restaurant.

107. The leadership and management of this subject are good. The co-ordinator is well qualified and has taken part in recent in-service training. The scheme of work is good, and is fully relevant to the needs of the pupils. The assessment of pupils' progress is good and it is used well to guide the teacher's future lessons. The resources are adequate, but could be enhanced with items, such as videos, pictures, posters, French artefacts, and everyday signs and notices that would be seen in France. The co-ordinator has plans to develop the use of computers in this subject; and there are early plans to develop some reading and writing aspects for the higher attaining pupils.

MUSIC

108. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, especially in the pupils' attitudes to the subject and the behaviour in lessons. However, the school finds it difficult to recruit teachers with expertise in this subject and, as a result music has suffered from a constant change of teaching staff.

109. Music is taught to pupils at Key Stages 2 and 3 and in the lessons on the week of the inspection their achievement and progress was satisfactory. At Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in their understanding of using notation to perform music. They sing rhyming songs, accompanied by actions and are beginning to understand about pitch and volume, and name and recognise different instruments. They are aware of different types of music, such as folk music, and music from the 'Carnival of Animals' and 'Peter and the Wolf'.

110. The progress that pupils make over a period of time at Key Stage 3 is overall satisfactory, but there is insufficient emphasis on composing and writing music. They sing well enough to perform carols at the town's theatre, and have performed songs from different genre, for example folk, jazz and 12 bar blues. However, they cannot read or write a rhythm or tune using simple standard notation, although higher attaining pupils do know the different names of the notes. Their knowledge of musical vocabulary is very limited. Consequently, they have difficulty in using appropriate terminology to explain why they like a particular piece of music, and difficulty in comparing and contrasting different types of music. Their progress has been disrupted by changes in staff and has resulted in pupils being taught by teachers who have little specialist knowledge or training in the subject. As a consequence, there is very little completed work. The school has recently introduced guitar sessions in which pupils are making satisfactory progress. At Key Stage 3, the subject has been enhanced by the introduction of music therapy to meet the special educational needs of specific pupils. In these sessions pupils listen and perform using different musical instruments.

111. A new teacher, who also co-ordinates the subject has been appointed and on the week of the inspection teaching was overall satisfactory. The lessons are planned well, with a variety of activities that pupils enjoy, and this is evident through their good attitudes and behaviour. At Key Stage 2 the teaching is good and results in pupils making good progress in their understanding of, and ability to, reproduce musical sounds found in Africa. The choice of activities, and the approach by the teachers, makes the content of the lesson exciting and this results in pupils being very enthusiastic and trying their best.

112. The curriculum is overall satisfactory, but there is a lack of emphasis on composing and appraising. However, it is beneficially extended by regular visits by musicians for example, from Zimbabwe, local folk singers and at Christmas time the band of the local division of the Salvation Army. The co-ordinator of the subject has been recently appointed. She has a good knowledge of the requirements of the National Curriculum, is enthusiastic about raising the profile of the subject within the school but has no specialist training in teaching music. The responsibilities for leading, monitoring and evaluating work in the subject are presently being met in part only. Resources are satisfactory. However, the absence of a specialist teaching room requires that instruments be brought from storage and returned after each lesson. This can result in a reduction in the lesson time for teaching and learning. Information and communication technology is not used to explore, develop and revise musical ideas.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

113. There has been satisfactory improvement in this subject since the last inspection, particularly with regard to good long-term planning, the full coverage of all aspects now, and the structure of individual lessons.

114. Pupils' achievements and the progress they make are satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils make good progress in swimming and games. From the youngest pupils to the oldest, pupils gain skills in all of the expected aspects of physical education, and they have valuable experiences of other physical pursuits such as white water rafting, abseiling, climbing, sailing and ice-skating. In games, pupils learn the tactics and rules of games such as football, rounders and basketball, as well as how to hit or kick the ball, catch or trap it, and pass to team-mates. Older pupils take part in competitive games against other schools. Their gymnastic skills begin well at Key Stage 2 with balancing, putting a series of movements together, doing forward and backward rolls, landing well, and listening to instructions, and complying with them safely. Through the school, pupils develop these skills soundly, and they take part in athletics sessions, including a sports day with throwing the javelin, shot putt, running and jumping events. Pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3 take part in swimming, and they do well, gaining good confidence to the point where the more able ones swim several lengths in different styles, dive in, do surface dives and retrieve objects from the bottom of the pool. The school's cross-country sessions are a regular feature of the late winter weeks, including inter-school competitions, and dance lessons are regularly held during the winters, with pupils learning barn dancing steps as well as modern dance routines and themed movement to music. Older pupils also take part in circuit training, performing sit-ups, step-ups, weight lifts, shuttle runs and a variety of jumps with agility and stamina, as well as good style where required.

115. The teaching and learning in physical education are good, and in some lessons teaching is very good. One lesson during the inspection was spoiled a little because the teacher had to leave three times to help to deal with the behaviour of pupils in another class, but the lesson continued soundly under the competent leadership of a support assistant. One teacher conducted all of the teaching during the inspection, although another teacher does take some lessons with the younger pupils. The planning, organisation and structure of the lessons are good, with lessons beginning with a good warm-up activity that gets pupils into the right mood for the lesson. They are keen and eager for the most part, and listen attentively to what the teacher says, as well as being warmed up physically. The main period in each lesson is a good series of challenging and increasingly difficult activities, such as putting a sequence of rolls, jumps and balances together, or controlling a hockey ball. The teacher's good subject knowledge, focus on coaching skills, and challenge to pupils is very motivating, and pupils are generally keen to do well. They try hard, watch each other doing demonstrations, learn from each other, and play alongside each other, as well as against each other in competitive games. The teacher enjoys good relationships with pupils, and controls behaviour well, giving pupils a clear challenge and high expectations for their behaviour. Sometimes, pupils do not respond well, and they may choose to not take part in lessons, or to act in a silly fashion, but these are minority occasions. It could be beneficial to the swimming lessons to conduct them with a little more variety in each lesson, perhaps with a game, race or other group activity at the start and/or end of lessons.

115. There is good leadership and management of the subject. The headteacher, who is very well qualified and experienced in this subject is overseeing developments. This is temporary pending the appointment of a permanent member of staff. All aspects of the required syllabus are in place, with all options being offered at each key stage, and not just the three or four that are expected. There is good co-ordination of planning throughout the school. The resources for games and gymnastics are good, and there are sufficient hard play and grassed area for pupils outside, although the hall is rather small for lessons for older pupils. Good use is made of a local swimming pool, and this is being extended to other

activities, such as, climbing. Pupils have opportunities to take part in a residential course to an outdoor activity centre, go camping, and take part in sports workshops run by visiting training coaches. There are clear plans to continue the development of assessment of pupils' progress; to develop links with local mainstream schools for lessons as well as matches; and to introduce external accreditation for the older pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

116. Since the last inspection the school has made satisfactory progress in developing the provision for religious education. Teaching is consistently good throughout the school. At the time of the last inspection the teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4 was criticised as lacking in pace and challenge, with low expectations of work and behaviour. This is no longer the case. Since the last inspection the school has adopted the new Locally Agreed Syllabus and the subject now meets statutory requirements.

117. Achievement is overall satisfactory. Throughout the school pupils extend their understanding of the importance of religious faiths. They gain a satisfactory knowledge of different beliefs and the traditions associated with these beliefs. Achievement at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory with pupils making good progress in their lessons. In Key Stage 2 the emphasis is on discussion and this means there is little recorded evidence of pupils' learning. During the week of inspection, pupils showed a good understanding of 'special things' and appreciated that people often have special books that are significant to them. They have their own special storybooks that they particularly enjoy and understand that they should treat books with respect. Their understanding develops further as pupils listen well to their teacher explaining that the Bible is important to Christians and the Torah is important to people of the Jewish faith. Younger pupils have great fun making a scroll about Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Pupils listen well to the adults and show a growing appreciation of the importance of religion in peoples' lives.

118. At Key Stage 3, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils study Christianity as well as other world faiths. They gain a broad understanding of the major festivals celebrated within Christianity, including that Lent is a preparation for Easter and Advent is preparation for Christmas. Pupils are familiar with the use of Advent candles and calendars in the time before Christmas. In this key stage pupils gain a good understanding of the significance of Christmas as they maintain Advent diaries from the point of view of different characters such as Joseph or the innkeeper. Pupils' knowledge of other religions develops as they learn about the various naming ceremonies associated with different faiths, and see the relationships between the Festivals of Light – Divali, Hanukkah and Christmas. At the time of the Chinese New Year, pupils identify their own year of birth, such as the Year of the Dragon, and investigate their 'Chinese personalities'. Pupils understand of the significance of special days through their making of cards to celebrate Divali, Hanukkah and Baisakhi. In addition to learning about world faiths, pupils consider themselves and their relationships. They understand that they are pupils, sons, grandsons all at the same time and increase their self-esteem as they gain an realisation of their own value to other people. Pupils consider events in their own lives and thoughtfully write their personal prayers of thanks.

119. In Key Stage 4 pupils follow a programme of work that is accredited as part of the Asdan Youth Award Scheme. They continue to increase their awareness of other faiths, for example, the significance of the Trinity to Christians. As they learn about the history of slavery and the changes brought about in America during the 1950s, pupils carefully consider moral issues, such as civil rights. They develop research skills through their work on individual topics, such as drug awareness, and make good progress in their understanding of the relevance of truth to faith base groups such as the Salvation Army. Good links are made with

English through the study of the Diary of Anne Frank. Pupils are able to discuss racial prejudice and show an understanding of the emotions of the diarist.

120. Teaching and learning overall is good. In Key Stage 2 the lessons are taken by the primary class teacher and in Key Stages 3 and 4 the subject co-ordinator takes the lessons. Lessons are well planned in line with the syllabus. In the lessons where there is good teaching there is careful planning, and good questioning techniques are used so that pupils are encouraged to think carefully about the significance of religious faith and the effect religion has on peoples' lives. Displays around the school acknowledge Shrove Tuesday, St Patrick's Day and Purim, and underline the prominence that the school now gives to religious education. The teacher makes good use of video materials to provide a realistic background and to encourage Key Stage 3 pupils to empathise with the emotions of people, such as those associated with Jesus prior to the Last Supper. The teacher in Key Stage 2 makes good use of prayer books, so that pupils feel the soft leather covers, examine the gold edged pages and agree these must be very special books. The good quality assemblies reinforce teaching. Regular opportunities are taken to extend pupils' awareness of those who are less fortunate, for example, people living in countries of drought, and for pupils to reflect on these issues.

121. The subject is co-ordinated by a recently appointed and committed member of staff. She has very good subject knowledge and is enthusiastic about raising the profile of the subject within the school. Analysis of pupils' work shows that in a short time all pupils have gained an insight into other faiths. There is an action plan that includes extending the opportunities for visits to places of worship and increasing the availability of resources. These are limited at the moment, but the school has identified a need to increase the artefacts so that pupils will gain a better understanding of religious rituals associated with world religions. A range of contacts is also being built up so that pupils can benefit from regular visitors to school who will help them gain an insight and understanding of the differences and similarities between people of different faiths.