

INSPECTION REPORT

OWLSWICK SCHOOL

Kingston, Lewes

LEA area: East Sussex

Unique reference number: 114660

Co-proprietors: Mr & Mrs A Harper

Reporting inspector: Ms M Last
17171

Dates of inspection: 30th – 31st January, 2001

Inspection number: 189969

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	10 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Newhaven Road Kingston Nr Lewes East Sussex
Postcode:	BN7 3NF
Telephone number:	01273 473078
Fax number:	01273 473721
Appropriate authority:	Mr A K Harper
Date of previous inspection:	October, 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17171	Mrs M Last	Registered inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Geography History Music Equal opportunities Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils' taught? What should the school do to improve further?
12289	Ms S Burgess	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2512	Mr B Emery	Team inspector	English Art and design Modern foreign languages Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
14596	Mr A Fiddian-Green	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Religious education	Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? The quality of residential provision

The inspection contractor was:

Bench Marque Ltd

National Westminster Bank Chambers
Victoria Street
Burnham on Sea
Somerset
TA8 1AN
Tel: 01278 795022

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
RESIDENTIAL	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Owlswick is an independent residential home and school recognised and approved by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) for up to eleven boys and girls with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) or moderate learning difficulties (MLD). The school is open all year and takes pupils countrywide but most come from Greater London and the south. At the time of inspection, eight boys were on roll, an additional boy lives at Owlswick but attends a local secondary school. All the pupils have statements of special educational needs that are related to their severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. Because many of the pupils have negative experiences of previous educational placements, they display an initial reluctance to settle down and to work as their emotional difficulties often prevent them from doing their best. As a result the attainment of the pupils is well below national expectations. This inspection therefore reports on how well the pupils work in relation to their prior achievements and towards tasks set for them in lessons and for homework. No pupils have English as an additional language.

Pupils are mainly taught in two classes. Throughout the report they will be referred to as 'older pupils' (aged from 13 to 16) and 'younger pupils' (aged from 8 to 13).

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Owlswick is a happy, effective and supportive school that provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. The staff take a genuine interest in the pupils' well-being and learning. They are generous in the time they devote to them. The school operates as a large, family unit, where pupils are encouraged to recognise their difficulties and improve their behaviour. The younger pupils frequently display very challenging behaviour. However, the mature and positive attitudes of the oldest pupils in the school are a testament to the good opportunities provided for pupils to grow into successful, responsible adults. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The fully committed and supportive staff provide a very good family atmosphere in which all pupils are highly valued and encouraged to learn
- The school provides very good residential facilities with high quality care, support, guidance and extra-curricular activities
- The school successfully promotes the pupils' positive attitudes and, as they get older, their increased maturity and improved behaviour
- The school provides an appropriate range of learning opportunities including access to accredited qualifications which enable pupils to achieve well by the time they are sixteen
- The proprietors' direction of the school very strongly reflects its Christian aims and values of enabling pupils to develop skills of toleration, co-operation and study

What could be improved

- The systems for identifying the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning
- The consistency and quality of behaviour management in lessons, particularly in relation to younger pupils
- The use of assessment information in planning pupils' learning targets
- The quality of long and medium-term curriculum planning

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 progress since its last inspection in 1996 when almost a quarter of teaching was unsatisfactory and not all subjects of the National Curriculum were taught. The quality of teaching is now satisfactory in half of lessons and good in almost all others. The curriculum now includes all required subjects, although current arrangements for information and communication technology are not fully satisfactory. Teachers have attended appropriate training courses and have begun to introduce improved procedures for assessing pupils' progress. However, the school has not effectively addressed the key issue from the previous inspection to monitor and evaluate the teaching and the curriculum. The school therefore remains unable to clearly identify its own strengths and weaknesses in these areas. The most significant improvement has been the addition of a purpose built specialist teaching block for art and design, design and technology and physical education. These well-resourced rooms have clearly improved the facilities available to the pupils and their access to these aspects of the curriculum.

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	A	very good	A
reading	C	B	good	B
writing	C	B	satisfactory	C
mathematics	C	B	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	C	B	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C	C		

Whilst pupils' achievements are below national expectations, by the time they are 16 they successfully work towards certificated qualifications such as the Youth Award Scheme which two pupils achieved at bronze/silver level last year. Pupils also study at GCSE level as part of the work they undertake in school and at the local college. All pupils have learning targets in their individual educational plans but because these targets are often too broad the pupils are not always able to move towards them in small achievable steps. Overall pupils make at least satisfactory progress throughout the school. Older pupils mainly make good progress but the distracting nature of some younger pupils' challenging behaviour occasionally limits their ability to learn.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good: pupils show positive attitudes to their work and generally want to do well.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory: despite some unsettled behaviour by younger pupils, behaviour across the school overall is satisfactory. The behaviour of older pupils is frequently good because they have learnt to take responsibility for their own actions and understand the importance of behaving well.
Personal development and relationships	Good: as they get older pupils display a mature and sensible attitude to school and learning. They cheerfully take responsibility for tasks around the house and help pupils younger than themselves.
Attendance	Not applicable

Pupils enter the school with a range of challenging behaviours and some take a while to settle down and comply with the expectations of the school. However, the success of the school's system for monitoring and rewarding good behaviour is illustrated by the improvement in pupils' behaviour by the age of sixteen.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Half of the lessons seen are satisfactory and almost all of the other half are good with only one being unsatisfactory. The greatest strength of the teaching is the teachers' sensitivity to and understanding of the pupils' emotional difficulties and the determination that they will continue to work. Teaching in English is good and helps pupils with their work in other subjects. In mathematics and science teaching is satisfactory and pupils make good progress towards accredited qualifications by the time they leave the school. Teaching is also good in design and technology where pupils develop good practical skills in making articles for everyday use. In a minority of lessons teachers find difficulty in controlling the distracting behaviour of some younger pupils with the result that these pupils sometimes learn less than they should in lessons. Teachers pay relevant attention to improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and as a result of well planned activities within lessons, pupils learn well and extend their use of literacy and numeracy. However, teachers do not always take sufficient opportunities to teach the technical aspects of reading or to plan for supporting such skills in every lesson. Teachers do not promote the use of computers as a tool for learning in all subjects of the curriculum and this limits the pupils' abilities to search for information or to express their thoughts and findings in different formats and ways.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory: all subjects are now taught and provide pupils with a satisfactory range of learning activities during the week.

	Schemes of work lack detail about what should be taught in some subjects including the use of information and communication technology.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good: the school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop their personal and social skills. A spiritual focus successfully underpins the work of the school and pupils develop a clear understanding of cultural issues. However, the arrangements for promoting pupils' awareness of issues within a multicultural society are less effective.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good: the school makes good arrangements for caring and supporting its pupils within the school day and during evenings and weekends with staff who are genuinely interested in the pupils. Child protection procedures are satisfactory but staff training is not regularly provided.

The curriculum provides a good range of activities within a well-balanced weekly timetable. All National Curriculum subjects are offered but some planning documents are not sufficiently detailed to help teachers plan the medium and long-term content of their subjects. Assessment has improved since the last inspection but is not consistently used in conjunction with individual education plans to identify individual steps for pupils' learning. The school provides a very good standard of care for its pupils and they live and work in a supportive environment where staff are always happy to talk with them.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good: The proprietors give good direction to the work of the school and effectively promote its Christian aims and values. They succeed in creating a positive environment where all staff and pupils feel valued and work well as a team.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	N/A
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory: the arrangements for identifying the strengths and weaknesses in teaching are unsatisfactory, as are the formal strategies for the induction of staff new to the school. This weakness was reported at the last inspection and still requires attention.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory: the school has improved its range of resources, and, with the exception of computers, uses them effectively in classes to promote pupils' learning. The school's plans to improve information and communication technology are well conceived.

The proprietors have good relationships with all the staff and ensure that the school meets its Christian aims of tolerance and understanding. The staff team work well together and promote high moral standards. There are sufficient numbers of staff to match the numbers and needs of the pupils although some are unqualified teachers. The opportunity to work in the high quality new accommodation for practical lessons in design and technology and physical education motivates pupils very well so that they work hard and are enthusiastic

about their learning. Financial matters are managed well and the school spends its money wisely giving good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

No parents were able to attend the pre inspection meeting but one parent was consulted by telephone and was fulsome in her praise of the school. Many parents have difficulty travelling long distances to the school but there is always a good attendance at the Christmas play and other celebrations. The proprietors make good efforts to keep parents informed about the progress made by each pupil and are always available if parents are able to telephone or call in. Four questionnaires were returned and each indicates high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

1. Pupils are mainly taught in two classes. Throughout the report they will be referred to as 'older pupils' (aged from 13 to 16) and 'younger pupils' (aged from 8 to 13).

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

2. Pupils' standards of attainments are below national expectations mainly because their severely negative experiences in other placements affect their ability to learn and they therefore fall behind in their work and achievements. All pupils have statements of special educational need which reflect these emotional and behavioural difficulties and the pupils' additional general learning difficulties. Comparison with the standards of pupils in other schools is therefore inappropriate and judgments regarding pupils' achievements reflect what they know, understand and can do in relation to their previous achievement. Where possible judgements are also made in respect of the pupils' targets as written on their individual educational plans.
3. Pupils' levels of achievement throughout the school are satisfactory overall and often good within the range of learning opportunities provided. Their achievements in terms of personal development and their ability to improve their behaviour and concentration are good and a major factor in the school's success. Their improved attitudes to work help pupils' progress towards qualifications such as Youth Awards and Certificates of Achievement by their final year at school. The achievements of younger pupils, whilst still satisfactory, are sometimes compromised by their unsettled behaviour.
4. These standards of achievement represent an improvement since the last inspection particularly in mathematics and design and technology. The improvements are a direct result of extending the curriculum to meet the pupils' needs more effectively and the provision of new purpose-built accommodation. Nevertheless, despite plans to improve the opportunities available to them, pupils do not currently make enough progress in the use of computers as tools for learning in all subjects of the curriculum.
5. By the time they are 15 years of age pupils express their thoughts in writing and read for pleasure. For example, older pupils read daily newspapers and can discuss with maturity what they have read. They complete their mathematics homework with little help and are able to make informed choices about the work they include in their Youth Award Portfolios. By the time they are 16 they gain bronze or bronze/silver awards.
6. It is not possible to make a judgement on pupils' gains in learning in physical education, music, French, history or art and design as these subjects were not taught during inspection. However, examination of pupils' work and teachers' planning and records indicate that the pupils' achievements in these subjects are at least satisfactory and sometimes good. In literacy and numeracy pupils make satisfactory gains in learning particularly in speaking and learning. Older pupils speak with confidence to visitors and are able to explain the processes leading to their finished work. The school records show that pupils make satisfactory progress towards the aims set in their annual reviews. However, the current targets set for individual pupils are frequently too broad and do not enable teachers to address specific steps of learning within lessons. It is not always possible to judge, therefore, how pupils are consistently moving towards achieving such broad targets.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Within the context of the school, the pupils' behaviour is satisfactory and very often good. They show good attitudes to learning, and to the school as a whole. The good influence that the school is having is clearly seen in the calmer and more mature approach of the older pupils who have, of course, been there longer. All pupils seem happy to be at the school and are willing to be involved in all the various activities provided, in lessons and at other less formal times of the day. All pupils have experienced difficulties in their lives before placement at Owlswick, and they respond positively to the safe and caring environment, the school routines and the personal encouragement provided by the staff. All pupils require high levels of support and attention at times: they can find concentration over long periods challenging. In lessons many, nevertheless, show good levels of perseverance and interest in their work. For example, older pupils spent time producing some good circuit diagrams in science and were able to use them when soldering the components together. Others, including younger pupils, work well in the more practical situation of the technology room, and concentrate well on finishing their work. There are times when some are unable to sit still and concentrate, but in general they do well and are keen to join in most activities.
8. Behaviour in lessons and around the school during the inspection time was at least satisfactory, and often good. Older pupils are undoubtedly better at concentrating for longer periods of time in lessons, but all ages of pupils behave well in the evenings and during the morning routine before school starts. There is some inconsistency among staff in managing pupils, especially with the younger pupils who, when not subject to clear boundaries, continue to challenge the teacher.
9. Pupils are very accomplished at making good conversation with adults, and in general there are very good relationships between staff and pupils as well as among pupils themselves. One of the older pupils was proud to show inspectors round the school and the boarding part of the house, explaining everything well. No incidents of poor behaviour were seen during the inspection, although there are recorded cases of these in the incident records.
10. The school makes good use of a points system to acknowledge and reward good, acceptable behaviour. This system is well established within the school and where it is applied consistently, pupils respond positively and want to do well so that their points score can be celebrated at the end of the day. However, some staff are more lenient than others and, in a small minority of cases, allow themselves to be influenced by the pupils, sometimes reviewing their former decisions. In these occasional cases the aims and strategies of the school are not wholly supported and the pupils do not receive their just rewards or sanctions.
11. Pupils clearly trust and respect the adults in the school and turn to them readily when they need support. Staff in general use humour whenever they can and pupils respond in the same way. Several pupils were keen to tell jokes and ask 'knock, knock, who's there' questions. There are many times when pupils share good humour, help by doing jobs together, and sometimes simply relax comfortably in one another's company, especially in the quiet time just before going to bed.
12. The small family nature of the school enables staff to ensure that pupils are taught punctuality and that they respect each other. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to develop independence and take responsibility for their own actions through a good

choice of activities, evening programmes and outings, as well as personal care and attention to their own hygiene. Mealtimes are very good with a strong family atmosphere to them, Grace is said and all pupils have learnt to wait until everyone is served before they say the grace and begin to eat. Pupils understand how their behaviour and actions impact on others, and staff reinforce these skills often, such as quietening any loud talk at a meal so that all can make themselves heard.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection when almost one in every four lessons was unsatisfactory. Teaching is now satisfactory in five out of every ten lessons and good in a further four out of ten. In only one lesson was teaching unsatisfactory.
14. Teaching is good overall in English and design and technology. It is satisfactory overall in mathematics, science, geography, personal and social development and religious education. (No lessons were seen in history, information and communication technology, modern foreign languages, music, physical education and art and design.)
15. The majority of good teaching occurs with the older pupils aged 13 to 16 years. Teachers understand these pupils well and gain their interest in lessons by making their activities relevant to pupils' understanding, such as in a geography lesson where the teacher used a tangerine to represent the world, cutting it in half to demonstrate the hemispheres, latitude and, subsequently, longitude. Teachers pay particular emphasis to developing these pupils' ability to work individually and plan their own work. For example in an English lesson, the teacher extended their essay writing skills very effectively by encouraging them to review their use of planning, drafting and redrafting to improve their work. These older pupils showed good effort and motivation because they were able to choose their preferred topic and therefore write from their own interests. As a result they produced good samples of extended writing on such subjects as 'My Family', 'the Indian Earthquake' and 'Manchester United Lose Cup-tie' – a range of titles which catered for all tastes.
16. The quality of teaching for younger pupils is less effective when teachers do not consistently employ satisfactory strategies for managing the pupils' behaviour. As a result, the pupils do less work than they should within the lesson distracting both teacher and pupils with their behaviour. Several pupils are fairly new to the school and, due to their previous experiences, have poor educational attitudes. They have not yet developed a sense of responsibility for their own behaviour. For example, when reviewing the rules of capital letters and basic punctuation, the teacher gave all pupils the same work despite differences in their ability and one completed the work quickly and easily whilst another struggled. The difference in their abilities was clear to the pupils, they argued and ceased to work, causing the teacher to waste time by continually seeking to control their behaviour.
17. Currently the school deals with such difficulties by drafting in another member of staff, usually one of the proprietors, to work with the most disruptive pupil. While this system provides appropriate and immediate help to individual pupils, it is only successful in the short term. It is not effective in developing the subject teachers' own skills or future control of the classes.
18. In practical lessons, such as design and technology, staff provide 'hands on' tasks which equip pupils with good skills for everyday life. For example, two pupils made

good progress in learning to stitch buttons and labels onto fabric by making a glove puppet with buttons for eyes and their name tapes for mouths. The pupil consequently understood the need to label their clothes securely; they discussed and enjoyed this work and also benefited from the informal conversation with the adults during their sewing time. All adults make good use of such informal opportunities to engage pupils in conversation encouraging them to share their thoughts and ideas. This good practice effectively promotes pupils' communication skills and boosts their self-esteem and confidence.

19. Similarly in the design and technology workshop, the teacher provided practical advice to pupils making tissue box holders. He used his well established craft skills very effectively to help the pupils improve their painting skills by asking them to ensure the 'brush marks all go upwards'. Where unqualified teachers are skilled in practical skills, but less used to teaching pupils to plan and evaluate their work, the headteacher incorporates these elements into other related subjects such as art and design. Given the challenge faced by the school in covering the range of the curriculum with such a small number of pupils, this strategy works well by effectively enhancing the pupils' learning experience and enabling them to appreciate the link between subjects.
20. All staff pay appropriate attention to developing the pupils' use of literacy and numeracy in all subjects of the curriculum and during their free time. Teachers encourage pupils to enjoy books and reading by providing good role models when reading stories aloud. They also encourage pupils to read other printed materials such as instructions on packets or worksheets. However, little teaching of the skills of learning to read were seen during the inspection and although staff have acknowledged the principles of the literacy and numeracy hours the recommended methods are not systematically used, particularly in developing the younger pupils' skills where they need help with the mechanics of reading. Additionally, there are currently few opportunities for pupils to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills through the use of computers; although the school has invested heavily in new equipment these are not regularly used as tools for learning or to present information in a variety of ways. However, the school has plans to address this issue through imminent staff training.
21. Teachers are genuinely interested in the pupils, their interests and their needs. They offer good support to those pupils who find their emotional problems difficult to handle. Teachers ensure that they praise pupils for both effort and achievement offering praise in lessons and adding supportive comments to pupils' work. Older pupils sometimes judge their own achievements by completing self-assessment forms. Higher attaining pupils show that they understand what they have learnt by writing such comments as 'I used my knowledge of electricity to build a working circuit'. Lower attaining pupils review their work in terms of 'good' and 'bad'. This system is effective in encouraging pupils to be realistic about their achievements.
22. The school recognises the need to meet the individual needs of each pupil. They know the pupils well and support them individually but informally, for example offering help and support when necessary and targeting their questions to the ability levels of the pupils. Although each pupil has an individual education plan with targets identified for core subjects and behaviour, the school has yet to identify the small steps of learning which enable pupils consistently to progress towards achieving these targets. As a result, teachers are not required specifically to address the pupils' individual education plans within lessons, although they have a general overview of their content.

23. The school organises its teaching coverage as well as it can given the constraints of the small pupil numbers, the wide age range and the differences in abilities. However the lack of formal systems for monitoring teaching and learning by the proprietors or the senior teacher, prevents the school from identifying its strengths and weaknesses. Whilst the current system of providing extra support in response to difficulties in the classroom is partly effective on an ad hoc basis, it does not promote improved skills in teaching or in the management of pupils' behaviour. Teachers do not yet benefit from a formal professional dialogue about their teaching and the school does not yet provide sufficient time for teachers to undertake monitoring and administration tasks. Whilst the standards of teaching are satisfactory overall and have improved since the last inspection, systems for monitoring, feedback to teachers and raising standards further remain unsatisfactory.

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

24. The school offers an appropriate, twenty-four hour, fifty-two week curriculum, which is appropriate to the needs of the pupils and promotes their personal and educational development so that by the time they leave school they have gained in confidence, maturity and skills. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory and relevant to the range of ability and special needs of the pupils. The school successfully interprets the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education, meeting its legal requirements by providing a broad range of relevant and appropriate learning experiences. All subjects of the National Curriculum are included, together with religious education, and the school also teaches courses on sex education and personal, social and health development. Although information and communication technology is taught, the pupils currently make too little use of the computers as tools for learning and research across all other subjects of the curriculum. There are now more opportunities to take external examinations leading to nationally recognised certificates; the foremost amongst these are the Certificate of Achievement and the silver and bronze levels of the Youth Award Scheme. Higher attaining pupils also now study for GCSE as part of their weekly attendance at a local college of further education. This range of subjects and certification represents a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, with all subjects that were listed last time as being insufficient, now being taught appropriately. There are, however, some weaknesses, particularly in the long and medium-term planning of the subjects in the curriculum because schemes of work are not sufficiently detailed or developed in many subjects, but especially in the core subjects of mathematics and science.
25. The programme for personal and social development is good, and pupils are taught such things as how to wash their laundry, and cook for 'survival' if they need to look after themselves. Many aspects of this development are taught in the less formal times of the residential provision, and help considerably to boost pupils' self-confidence as well as their ability to take responsibility for themselves.
26. The planned time for each subject is broadly satisfactory, fitting into the school's general life. French, for example, is taught in modules to coincide with trips to France, while homework for all subjects is carefully planned each week, and the time allocation is good.
27. Pupils have a satisfactory range of learning experiences that reflect the school's aims and values. For example, in design and technology, pupils make things that can be used in everyday situations, such as the tissue box holder that several pupils are

making at present. Literacy and numeracy are both included in the curriculum and teachers give help to pupils as required, for example in mathematics, if a pupil is unsure about fractions, the teacher concentrates on these until the pupil feels more secure. However, strategies for teaching reading techniques are not consistently or formally planned into lessons and opportunities to target the specific steps of pupils' learning are sometimes lost.

28. All pupils have very good opportunities to extend their experiences outside school. Using strong links with local communities, they enjoy leisure facilities, join clubs and activities such as air cadets or youth club, and attend a local church. The relationships formed with the church community carry through to school life with many people visiting the school and supporting the pupils when they take part in school presentations such as the carol concert each year. One pupil is currently attending a local secondary school, and there are facilities for older pupils to take courses at nearby further education colleges. The provision for careers education is good and the local careers adviser visits the school to help older pupils. Work experience is arranged where appropriate.
29. Overall, the school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies and religious education lessons provide satisfactory opportunities to appreciate the natural world and to consider some of life's deeper questions. For example in religious education, pupils were seen studying the consequences of wrongdoing, relating this to the bible stories of Eden, but also making reference to everyday situations in their own experiences. Pupils are given very good opportunities to develop moral awareness and all staff reinforce respect and good behaviour at all times. Social opportunities are very good and numerous – residential trips away to Disneyland, for example, provide pupils with the chance to travel and experience other countries as well as getting on with each other.
30. The school provides satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of their own culture through visits and work in lessons, however, there are currently insufficient opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding of multicultural issues. Whilst pupils have the chance to listen to live music when opportunities arise, go to the pantomime near Christmas time, and follow art and music courses at school there are insufficient opportunities to experience and understand the multicultural diversity that life in Britain presents.
31. In general, the school has made satisfactory improvements in the curriculum since the last inspection. These are principally to do with the coverage of the subjects of the National Curriculum, but also in the careers and activities that take place outside school time. The full twenty-four hour curriculum continues to provide very well for pupils, and opportunities within the personal and social development programme also represent an improvement: these are illustrated by the work pupils incorporate into their Youth Award portfolios demonstrating their personal achievements.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. Provision for the support and guidance of pupils is very good. The school's emphasis on Christian family life ensures that each pupil feels valued as an individual. Accordingly, the good progress pupils make in their social and personal development is a very positive feature of the school's work. A visiting psychotherapist helps individual pupils to understand their own feelings and emotions so that they are able to

manage them more effectively. Those parents who expressed an opinion felt that the school is helping their sons to become more mature and responsible.

33. The whole staff work very well as a team, provide positive role models and know the pupils well. There is a good level of unobtrusive supervision at all times and staff are sensitive to the many issues that may affect behaviour and progress. For some pupils, the residential provision is their first experience of a consistently caring, stable and supportive environment. The atmosphere is relaxed and friendly, with staff and pupils all on first name terms. Mealtimes are a particularly enjoyable part of the day when everyone eats together. Pupils enjoy a nutritious choice of food and there is always provision for vegetarians or those who would prefer a reduced-calorie meal.
34. The staff monitor behaviour and personal development effectively within the care setting and during the meetings at the end of each school day. Adults exchange both written and verbal information when teaching and care teams hand over responsibilities. Bullying, both verbal and physical, is actively, consistently and successfully discouraged. New pupils' welcome packs set out in detail the school's expectations in terms of behaviour and the sanctions and rewards system is clearly explained. The end of day meeting is also a valuable opportunity for pupils to reflect positively on their own efforts and achievements or those of others. Participation in certain evening activities depends on the number of points achieved and as a result, pupils are aware of the fact that they are responsible for their own actions.
35. All staff are knowledgeable and aware of child protection matters, and there is a detailed policy. Any cause for concern is raised at the monthly staff meetings. However, the school has yet to ensure that all staff receive appropriate training on a regular basis. The health and safety policy is as yet only in draft form. Although staff are vigilant on a day-to-day basis, their procedures are not currently enshrined into a formally agreed and monitored strategy.
36. All major subject areas have assessment procedures outlined as part of the subject policy document. However, as at the time of the last inspection, little evidence exists to show that teachers use the information obtained from assessment to inform their long or short-term curriculum and lesson planning. Individual education plans and care plans are in place and follow a sound, general format but again there is little evidence that the information obtained is acted upon in a sustained and rigorous way. Marking of pupils' work is good and teachers provide verbal feedback which, being supportive but considered and challenging, helps pupils to understand how well they are progressing. Results of national tests (SATs) and a range other tests are well known to teachers and to some extent inform the teachers' work in lessons. This aspect of the curriculum is not yet fully developed or consistent across all subjects to ensure that pupils follow individual pathways suitably matched to their needs. Good arrangements are in place to establish a baseline of pupils' abilities and performance on admission.
37. Although some improvements have been made in the assessment and recording of pupil performance, it is now a clear requirement in all subject areas. In some subjects, for example physical education, it is a strength in that pupils know how well they are doing. However, the results of assessment are not yet fully linked to the work planned by the teachers in all subjects.
38. The school has recently received the social services inspection report which is currently in draft form and the proprietors are currently planning to implement the findings of the finalised, agreed version.

39. The school works well to prepare pupils for the next stage of their lives and is successful in promoting the pupils' positive attitudes to the world of work through the range of activities available. The careers advisor arranges a good range of work experience placements such as a local garden centre, hotel, computer engineers and double-glazing manufacturer. In their last year at school, pupils are taught to live more independently. Two pupils are currently so housed and they clean their flat, shop for food, cook their own meals and learn to manage money. Where appropriate, pupils are well supported in a return to mainstream education. One resident pupil who has progressed well in his studies is now placed at a local secondary school where he is achieving well. Two other older pupils attend a local college for two days a week as preparation for further study when they leave Owlswick.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. Because the pupils come from a wide geographical area and parents and carers often have difficulties in travelling, their involvement with the school is very limited. None came to the pre-inspection meeting with the registered inspector. However, one parent unable to attend said on the telephone that she was very happy with her child's placement and that she had noticed an improvement in all aspects of his work and behaviour. The four questionnaires returned all reflected a high level of support for the school. Each felt that their child was making good progress and that, as parents or carers, they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.
41. There is good support for the school's annual Christmas concert and supper but only a few parents or carers come to annual review meetings. Where family links are weakest, the school arranges a pupil to be befriended by an interested individual, usually a member of the local Baptist Church congregation.
42. The information provided for parents and carers is generally good. The prospectus is clear and concise and the welcome packs for new pupils contain all the necessary practical information. Letters go home before pupils are taken on residential holidays. There is a good level of informal day-to-day telephone contact. Annual reports, although detailed and informative, are not always clearly written and many contain too much educational jargon. In general, however, parents and carers feel that they are kept well informed about how their child is getting on.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. The two co-proprietors give good direction to the work of the school. They have a clear and explicit view of what guides the school's aims and values. These are published in the prospectus and are evident in all of the school's work, for example, by providing a secure, caring and safe environment informed by Christian values and beliefs. All pupils and adults at the school are valued and there is a clear sense of purpose. Pupils speak highly of the two co-proprietors and all other staff. The very secure environment in which pupils live and learn has a positive impact on their personal development. All staff are clear about their responsibilities and the introduction of two care teams headed by team leaders is an example of satisfactory delegation.
44. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching was identified as a weakness at the time of the last inspection and it remains unsatisfactory. No regular, rigorous procedures are

in place where senior members of staff can observe and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. However, monitoring of the curriculum has improved since the last inspection. Arrangements to monitor pupils' behaviour particularly outside of classrooms is sound. However, the absence of effective procedures to monitor the quality of teaching and learning means that no strategies are in place to appraise and manage the performance of staff other than those informal discussions resulting from the co-proprietors' close links with the small number of staff.

45. A good education plan is in place which identifies a range of appropriate priorities for development, and the proposed action taken to meet the targets set is good. For example, the recent completion of a purpose-built art studio and design and technology workshop have provided additional accommodation of excellent quality which is effectively used to promote pupils' interest and learning in these areas.
46. The good direction given to staff by the two co-proprietors impacts positively on all staff resulting in a strong sense of teamwork and commitment to success. However arrangements for the successful induction of new staff are unsatisfactory. The school lacks provision for new teachers to work alongside experienced teachers, for example relying on support being available on request. This process is largely ineffective and new teachers, particularly if they working with the younger, more volatile pupils, are at a disadvantage.
47. Financial control and planning is of good quality. Accounts are monitored and advice taken from a financial/accounting consultancy company. More rigorous arrangements are required to undertake risk assessments which are currently very informal and identified as an area of weakness by a recent social services review.
48. The resources the school has at its disposal are generally appropriate to the pupils needs. The proprietors ensure that they spend money carefully and wisely. Staff, including care staff, are well matched to their work through their qualifications or skills, and experience. The accommodation, both residential and educational, is good and shows a very significant improvement since the last inspection

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49. In order that the school should continue to improve and to ensure that all of its pupils make the best possible progress the proprietors and staff should:

a) Raise standards of teaching and learning, particularly management of behaviour in lessons by:

- i. identifying criteria by which the quality of teaching and learning is to be judged; (*para refs: 23, 44*)
- ii. arranging for teaching to be observed formally and use the resulting outcomes to inform staff training needs and to raise standards; and (*para refs: 20, 21, 23, 44, 46*)
- iii. ensuring that staff are provided with sufficient non-teaching time to undertake professional development and curriculum development activities. (*para refs: 23, 44, 46*)
- iv.

b) Improve the quality of behaviour management by:

- i. ensuring that the current system for managing behaviour is implemented consistently across the school; and (*para refs: 3, 7, 8, 16, 17*)
- ii. ensuring that the younger pupils understand and comply with the school's agreed standards of behaviour in classes. (*para refs: 7, 8, 16, 17*)

c) Make better use of the information gathered from assessment procedures by:

- i. continuing to develop the use of assessment to identify the gains pupils have made in all subjects and identify future learning needs; (*para refs: 22, 35, 37*)
- ii. writing targets that are specific, clear and measurable and set out in small steps which identify what pupils should be learning; (*para refs: 6, 22, 27, 35, 67*)
- iii. checking the pupils' progress towards such targets at regular, short-term intervals; and (*para refs: 6, 22, 27, 35, 37, 67, 71*)
- iv. involving pupils in identifying their progress towards the targets. (*para refs: 6, 71*)

d) Continue to improve the schemes of work for subjects in the light of the latest National Curriculum guidance by:

- i. identifying consistent procedures throughout the school which help teachers to plan what they will teach in each subject over the long and the medium-term; and (*para refs: 23, 24, 27, 35, 37, 76, 80, 99, 102*)
- ii. nominating specific staff to monitor the effectiveness of subject planning using an agreed whole school strategy. (*para refs: 23, 24, 27, 70, 80, 99, 102*)

50. The following less significant issues appear in the report in the places indicated by paragraph numbers. The proprietors should consider these minor issues when drawing up their action plan in response to the report:

- they should ensure regular updating of child protection training for all adults who work at the school; (*para ref: 35*)
- they should formally record the results of regular and comprehensive risk assessments; (*para ref: 47*)
- they should fully implement the final negotiated version of the recent social services report; (*para refs: 47, 56*)
- they should introduce procedures to ensure that the school is kept updated on national developments in special education; and (*para ref: 44*)
- they should ensure that arrangements for teaching information and communication technology are put into place swiftly. (*para refs: 4, 95, 96, 97*)

RESIDENTIAL

51. The residential provision is very good, and is a strength of the school. It has a significant impact upon the good, and often very good, social and personal development of the pupils. The high standards reported by the previous inspection have been very well maintained and remain a strength of the school. There is a good number of staff to support the pupils, they take a genuine interest in the pupils and they give very good quality care and support.

52. Pupils join in the ordinary household jobs such as clearing tables and washing up, and they do this willingly, seeing it simply as a normal part of belonging to the community. Staff take care that pupils accept the responsibility of seeing to their own personal hygiene, with such tasks as showering and hair washing. They have a hand in selecting and buying their own clothes, and they are able to personalise their own rooms. They choose from the available activities in the evenings, and with two mini-buses, there are ample opportunities for excursions out to join local clubs or visit leisure facilities. For example, during the inspection three older pupils went to play in a round of the local table tennis competition, and on aggregate, they still have a chance to win.

53. In the house there is a family atmosphere at all meals, and pupils are self-confident and very able to hold conversations with visitors. This atmosphere successfully promotes the development of good behaviour and cordial relationships. Grace is said

before all meals. Lunch is taken in the main dining room with teachers and care staff present, and is a little more formal. Breakfast and supper are eaten in the large warm kitchen and are 'house' meals with lively chatter and good-natured banter. Good manners are always re-inforced by staff, and pupils are fully aware that they are expected to behave well at all times.

54. Care staff effectively monitor the needs of the pupils in terms of helping them to manage their own behaviour. Care plans are based upon pupils' individual needs, and staff are fully aware of the strategies needed for managing these needs. Care staff contribute to annual reviews, and there are 'hand-over' times each day when teaching and day staff exchange any information with the evening and morning care staff. All staff make good, and consistent use of praise and encouragement, but devise suitable sanctions if the need arises. All incidents are carefully recorded.
55. In every communal room there are collections of photographs showing parties and outings, and pupils and staff are still talking with great affection about the last Christmas party, when a large number of people fitted into the dining room for the festivities. With almost twenty-five people, it was, by all accounts, one to remember.
56. The local social services team makes annual visits and reports, and their recommendations are very carefully listed. Some of the recommendations from the draft report are currently outstanding, but the school recognises this and is planning its response to the final agreed requirements.
57. The life of pupils in the boarding situation is so much part of the whole school life that any details of projects, such as fund raising for World Vision, are to be found both in the house and in the classrooms. There are many certificates and letters of thanks for past fundraising efforts. These projects add a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
58. Pupils are advised about complaints' procedures and there is a telephone for them to use if necessary. Staffing levels are good in the residential provision, with three care staff always on duty in the evenings, and one sleeping in, with a leader also on call. There is no requirement at present for waking staff at night, but there is always someone available should they be needed. Pupils are provided with very good meals, and their medical and health needs are suitably attended to. The quality of care is such that pupils feel secure and valued during their time at the school.
59. Residential accommodation is good. Pupils either have their own rooms or there is an effort made to provide privacy with curtains. Two of the older pupils have their own accommodation that is, in effect, a small flat. They have their own rooms but also share a sitting area and a bathroom.
60. The communal areas are comfortable and provide sufficient space for pupils to live together in a happy and secure environment, also learning to be part of a family and taking some responsibility for themselves.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	20
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	0	45	50	5	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	8
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A

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	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	N/A	School data	N/A

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	1
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	
Any other minority ethnic group	

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	n/a	n/a
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: Y6 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	3.4
Average class size	4.6

Education support staff: Y6 – Y11

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

There are also 3 unqualified teachers who do not fit into above categories.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	385,478
Total expenditure	225,328
Expenditure per pupil	25,026
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	141,551

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

ENGLISH

61. Pupils' achievements in English across all key stages are satisfactory. Pupils achieve particularly well in speaking and reading, writing is sometimes weak and pupils' listening is compromised on occasion by inattention. All pupils arrive at the school with poor educational attitudes and a high level of underachievement in the basic skills of reading and writing and this is most clearly evident with the youngest pupils.
62. By age eleven years, the few pupils enrolled are beginning to benefit from being at the school and are making steady progress in reading and speaking. Their writing skills are under-developed but sound teaching which is sympathetic to their previous educational experience means that they begin to make steady progress in their writing too. They are beginning to understand basic rules of punctuation, for example in one lesson pupils were able to accurately correct an unpunctuated text using capital letters, full stops and question marks appropriately. A higher attaining pupil in this lesson was able to write a short essay which was correctly punctuated. Pupils read for pleasure from a wide range of different sources and although they sometimes find the material difficult, particularly the lower attaining pupils, they persevere and are willing to read aloud. Spelling is weak, but there is significant evidence of steady improvement. The sound teaching in English lessons means that pupils are beginning to appreciate the importance of reading literature and pupils' interest is sustained by the teacher's skilful use of a range of reading materials carefully matched to pupils' needs. Pupils' reading levels are tested on entry and the school's analysis of results shows steady improvement.
63. By the age of 14 years, pupils' reading and speaking skills are consolidated and they begin to improve their writing and listening skills. They are less distracted by inappropriate behaviour and gain more confidence as a result of the teacher's support and guidance and the application of carefully considered tasks. As a way of improving pupils' handwriting, teachers encourage them to take an interest in calligraphy and one pupil in a lesson on constructing an essay produced beautiful script. Pupils have a good range of opportunities to write for different purposes and audiences, and their books and displays around the school indicate that they make sound progress. The higher attaining pupils read newspapers, including broadsheets, and use reading as a means of keeping up with news and sport. The teaching encourages pupils to use reading as access to a wide range of interests, and books are given as prizes and birthday and Christmas presents. Skilful teaching gives pupils an awareness of the importance of punctuation and drafting. In one lesson the teacher indicated successfully to pupils how their original text could be improved by better use of punctuation or different sentence structure.
64. By the age of 16 years, pupils achieve well in speaking, listening and reading and in many aspects of writing. They have benefited from their years at the school and adopt a mature attitude to the importance of English. They speak fluently about their work and the higher attaining pupils can discuss with confidence certain books or authors. These higher attaining pupils read set texts from the Certificate of Achievement and GCSE papers which give them some insight into unfamiliar vocabulary, deeper analysis of the meaning behind the text and an understanding of how writing style can influence the impact of a story or report.

65. Since the last inspection pupils have made good progress in their appreciation and understanding of the wide range and use of the written and spoken word and are beginning to appreciate literature for its own sake.
66. The sound, and often good, progress which pupils make – particularly the older pupils – is the result of their increased maturity and confidence that the teaching promotes. Teaching is generally satisfactory and often, with older pupils, it is good. Pupils respond well to their interest in literature which teachers promote and, this in turn improves their work, particularly their reading and listening and allows them to demonstrate a mature and well behaved demeanour. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Curriculum and interpret it successfully to take account of the pupils' attitudes and ability. Teachers' expectations, both in terms of learning outcomes and behaviour, are high and they manage pupils well, particularly the older pupils. For example, in a class of older pupils considering the importance of drafting and planning a piece of writing, the teacher insisted on the plan, draft, redraft, proof-read process even though the pupils' wish was to simply write their story. Skilful teaching indicated how the process would result in better quality writing and the pupils acknowledged it would do so.
67. Despite these successes, teachers do not yet promote sufficient and routine use of computers as an aid to learning in the classroom. The school has an increased number of machines but they are not yet effectively used for pupils to undertake, for example, individual research or to consistently present their work in the best possible way. Another major area for development is the definition of, and specific work towards, targets within pupils' individual education plans. Currently such targets are written termly in somewhat broad terms so that they do not clearly identify relevant or small enough steps of learning for each pupil. They are not addressed specifically in lessons and, although teachers know their pupils very well, they do not routinely help them towards their targets.
68. The subject is well managed with a clear focus on improvement including where appropriate access to an accredited qualification. With the exception of individual education plan targets, assessment arrangements are sound and resources for the subject are good including a library and quiet areas where pupils can go to read in a peaceful and comfortable environment.

MATHEMATICS

69. Although pupils' overall attainment in mathematics is below national expectations, all make at least satisfactory gains in learning in relation to their abilities and most older pupils achieve well. Where younger pupils have yet to develop their skills of concentration the content of the work they cover in lessons is sometimes limited. When teachers plan interesting, motivating activities, pupils respond well and try hard particularly when the teacher sets clear and high expectations of work and behaviour. This most often happens in lessons for older pupils where the teacher is very secure in his knowledge of the subject and responds rapidly to any difficulties or queries arising. For example, in a lesson on area and perimeter, when one pupil had some difficulty identifying the length of some sides, the teacher quickly provided a simpler example accompanied by tips on how to calculate the area. As the pupils complete the task, he then moved them up to the complexity of the previous example which they completed successfully.

70. By the time they reach the age of 15 years, the pupils understand the importance and use of mathematical skills in their lives and therefore try hard to do well and make good gains. They enjoy the challenge of gentle competition and also are generous in the help they give each other. Their mathematical skills, particularly those of calculation, are well developed so that they routinely add, subtract, multiply or divide with accuracy, often without using pen or paper. Younger pupils, however, achieve less well. The teacher does not set, or insist upon, clearly understood expectations of behaviour and the more volatile pupils continually strive to challenge the school's classroom rules. As a result their behaviour is unsatisfactory and limits their concentration. These younger pupils are not mature enough to respond positively to competition and subsequently attempt to outdo each other, for example in mental mathematics. Their unsettled attitudes distract one another, draw the teacher off task and limit the amount of work covered.
71. Teaching is satisfactory in two lessons and good in one. Where teaching is good the teacher has a good knowledge of pupils, refines and adjusts his methods to address each pupil's difficulty. As a result pupils receive support specifically targetted at their tasks and therefore deepen their understanding. However, where teaching is no more than satisfactory the teacher does not provide specifically targetted tasks which challenge the pupils' thinking. As a result the pupils find the work easy, become disinterested, their behaviour deteriorates and some teaching time is lost while the teacher deals with the behavioural issues.
72. Whilst each pupil has a mathematics target identified on his individual education plan, the school has not yet established an effective system for ensuring that these are addressed in lessons. As the current targets on individual education plans are frequently too broad, teachers have difficulty in illustrating how they systematically cover them in lessons.
73. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection but weaknesses still remain in some planning to meet the individual needs of the pupils. The school's systems for assessment have been extended and improved and the school is now able to demonstrate pupils' increasing achievements in formal tests. Nevertheless, such information is not routinely used to help teachers decide how each individual pupil's needs will be met during lessons.
74. Whilst the curriculum is still based upon published materials the school now refers to two separate schemes and two teachers have attended training on the National Numeracy Strategy. The school has imminent plans to extend the link between information and communication technology and mathematics so that the new computers are used regularly in all subjects.
75. Arrangements for pupils to study for national qualifications are now good. Older pupils now work towards a Certificate of Achievement in mathematics and higher attaining pupils can extend their study towards GCSE through part-time study at the local college.
76. Teachers do not plan in sufficient details for long-term work in their subjects as the quality of the scheme of work does not provide sufficient detail or structure. The teaching of mathematics and effectiveness of the curriculum is not monitored effectively. The teacher responsible has no time designated for these purposes. As a result the school has made insufficient progress in this aspect of the subject since the last inspection. Resources and materials have, however, been improved and are used effectively to support pupils' work.

SCIENCE

77. No actual lessons were seen during the inspection, but science homework was observed, previous work was seen, and there were discussions with pupils as they evaluated their own work. Inspectors scrutinised teachers' plans and records and, from this evidence, it is clear that pupils' achievement and progress are both satisfactory across all the ages in the school.
78. The focus of recent work has been electricity, and pupils have learnt to be careful of the dangers of mains electricity. Older pupils have successfully drawn and made circuits, using batteries and sometimes adding resistors. They know how to solder parts to a circuit board. They have become acquainted with the principles of Ohm's Law, and some have studied electro-magnets. One pupil has drawn the workings of a loudspeaker, showing its use of magnetism. Most pupils can rewire an electrical three-pin plug safely. They understand conductors and insulators and younger pupils have listed objects and materials that are either good conductors or poor ones. For example, they have investigated a coin, a glass rod and a pencil. Pupils aged 13 have studied sound, drawn diagrams of the human ear and have good knowledge of how the human hearing system operates. Others have studied types of rocks such as sedimentary and igneous, and how rocks are affected by the weather, and particularly by ice. They understand about the earth's crust and know something about natural resources such as gas and oil. In the majority of the samples of pupils' work there were studies about liquids, solids and gases, with some of these classified, such as mercury, helium, and plastics.
79. The indications from pupils' work and discussions are that teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils are given work that is appropriate for their prior attainments, and several of them are working towards a national certificate. Pupils learn satisfactorily because there are very small numbers in the classes and in effect they have individual tuition. When they have completed a piece of work, usually during the homework time, pupils write a short evaluation of what they have learnt and the outcomes of their study. This reflective activity encourages them to think clearly about their learning, and it also enables them to focus on any work that they have not understood completely.
80. The overall planning for science, while generally satisfactory, has some weaknesses. The requirements of the National Curriculum are broadly followed, but are more directed by the demands of the possible future certificate examination than fully addressing the four attainment targets in the science curriculum. For example, there is insufficient structured, experimental science, with pupils making predictions, conducting an experiment, and recording their findings in a regular and scientific way. They have yet to devise a format and use it for every experiment. The school has made satisfactory improvement in science since the last inspection but this lack of rigour in addressing the attainment targets was also commented upon in the last report. Whilst the targets are mostly addressed over a period of time, showing improvement since the last report, there are insufficient long and medium-term plans which specifically ensure that all four areas of the subject are addressed.
81. In general, pupils enjoy science; the older pupils talked enthusiastically about their circuit work and understood how such circuits could be used in everyday life. They applied themselves well to the science homework and understood what they were doing. They are prepared to use their own initiative and can get on well with their homework, after they have followed the work in the lesson. Younger pupils have used

magnets and iron filings to plot fields of force, and they understand that two magnetic poles alike will repel each other, while opposites attract.

82. The school currently has no system for identifying the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning in science. However, teachers keep satisfactory records of what the pupils have achieved even though they are not used consistently to plan the next steps of learning. Overall, science has the school's usual practical approach to learning, and pupils are taught things that will be useful to them in later life, such as how to deal with electricity and wire a plug, as well as the more theoretical aspects of the subject which therefore makes a satisfactory contribution to their overall experience.

ART AND DESIGN

83. Due to timetable arrangements it was not possible to see art lessons during the course of the inspection. However, scrutiny of work, discussions with pupils and staff and visits to the art studio indicate that attainment in the subject of higher attaining pupils are almost in line with national expectations and pupils' achievement is good.
84. Pupils produce work that shows an increasing appreciation of, and ability to, work with colour and shape. Three-dimensional work is evident as well as work influenced by famous artists and crafts people. All of the work in pupils' folders and on display is of good, sometimes outstanding quality and shows that they can make good use of colour in their own compositions. The new, purpose built art studio is an excellent facility. It is bright, light and very well equipped for a wide range of activity within the art curriculum. The subject is very well managed by a subject specialist, and pupils speak very positively about art and design. There have been major improvements in the subject since the time of the last inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

85. Pupils' achievement and progress are good across the age range of pupils in the school. Some are attaining at near the nationally expected level for their age, in the particular aspects of practical work seen during the inspection. It was possible to see four lessons, but observation of completed work and discussions with pupils and staff also contributed to inspectors' findings. There are many examples of pupils' previous work in and around the school. For example, some very good flowers made of wood shavings with a spoke-shave, and colourfully dyed, are on display, as are some spirals made of pieces of wood, held by a central fixing, twisted on the axis and hung up to turn in the wind. These are very effective, interesting and well made artefacts that inspire pupils to take an interest in the subject and try hard to do well.
86. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils learn how to measure, cut and shape medium density fibre (MDF) and most are proficient in the use of the scroll saw as well as a handsaw. They learn how to sand and finish their work and then paint it. Evaluation tends to take place as they work. The teacher checks, and asks them how they might improve the work. He also advises them, giving them tips and demonstrating techniques. The overriding, and very good outcome, is that pupils experience success, which is a major aim of the school for all its pupils.
87. The school's acknowledged approach to this aspect of technology is essentially practical, and the teacher looks for suitable objects for pupils to make. He makes his

own versions first, modifying them to suit pupils' capabilities. In this way most pupils across all ages are engaged in making the same sort of object at one time. Some pupils also work in the kitchen, either individually or in pairs, preparing and making simple food such as cutting sandwiches, or preparing something on toast. They work in a welcoming, friendly environment, and the 'survival' cooking is taught in this way, to prepare pupils for the time when they might be looking after themselves in their own accommodation. Once again, there is a practical approach designed to equip pupils with basic life skills. The school successfully interprets the demands of the National Curriculum to suit the needs of the pupils, the accommodation and the number of staff employed. Pupils gain much from this individual teaching where the atmosphere is relaxed, informal but sufficiently instructive to enable them to develop their practical skills.

88. The organisation of design and technology lessons concentrates largely on woodworking. Pupils work in pairs, and this enables individual tuition for each pupil. This organisation is good, resulting in a partnership between the teacher and each pair of pupils, and eliminating the behavioural problems pupils may sometimes demonstrate. Because the teacher has taken time to build very good relationships and make his expectations of high standards very clear, there is seldom any difficulty in the control of the pupils. The teacher is constantly looking out for new ideas that he can modify to suit the pupils' woodworking capabilities and the resources he has. Much of the materials used are found by the teacher, and are donated by the firms he contacts. The accommodation is new and is a very good improvement since the last inspection when the accommodation was unsatisfactory. The workshop is well equipped with power and hand tools, and there is appropriate regard to health and safety, such as the wearing of goggles and masks when using the scroll saw to cut MDF. Electrical cut-outs are fitted. The accommodation is kept in a neat and tidy condition, and pupils are taught that they must put tools away after use.
89. This aspect of technology is adding much to pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. Above all, they enjoy their woodwork, behave very well in lessons and are proud to show off what they have made.

HUMANITIES (geography and history)

90. It was not possible to observe history lessons during the inspection however, the scrutiny of pupils' work and curriculum documentation, show that pupils study a range of topics and deepen their understanding of historical events. For example, pupils aged eleven correctly answer written questions on the industrial revolution, whilst older pupils demonstrate good understanding of the procedures and conditions in the coal mining industry.
91. Two lessons were observed in geography. The younger pupils identify features of Australia such as Ayres Rock and the Great Barrier Reef. The teacher gained the interest of the pupils by her good use of simple resources. For example, she used a tangerine to demonstrate 'hemispheres', cutting it in half to illustrate her explanation. Despite very detailed planning the younger pupils' behaviour and concentration is erratic and overall the behaviour is unsatisfactory because they do not consistently respond to the teachers' instructions.
92. After a slow start, despite the reluctance to recall what they have studied in the previous lesson, the older pupils settle down to work. They show a real interest in discussion and answer questions sensibly showing that they understand.

93. Teaching is satisfactory in one lesson and good in another. Where pupils are willing to take responsibility for their own behaviour, they understand the need to concentrate, but where younger pupils are noisier the teacher has difficulty in maintaining the pace of the lesson as she concentrates on controlling their behaviour.
94. The school has improved resources for history and geography since the last inspection. Older pupils are able to work towards certification by building aspects of history and geography into their Youth Award portfolios. However schemes of work and pupils' assessment do not consistently lead to clear steps of learning for all pupils and the school does not yet have a system for identifying strengths and weaknesses in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

95. Since the last inspection the school has invested heavily in new computers, which have only recently been installed. There are imminent plans to use this new equipment on a regular basis and to broaden the pupils' use of information and communication technology. At the time of inspection, however, little use was made of information and communication technology and no lessons were taught during the inspection. However, evidence from pupils' work and displays around the school show that several pupils can use word processing skills to redraft and present their work in an attractive manner. Older pupils can use a spreadsheet to present their timetables on a grid and make basic use of a database to enter, sort and interpret data.
96. Younger pupils still experience difficulty in mastering the computer controls and have not yet gained sufficient skills to work independently. However, they are interested in information and communication technology, talk with enthusiasm about their work and are keen to do more.
97. Despite the investment in the subject neither teaching or care staff are currently equipped with sufficient skills to meet the pupils' needs effectively. However, there are imminent plans for the part-time co-ordinator and external consultant to bring the new equipment into use and to provide staff training. These plans are appropriate to enable the school to raise standards and ensure that the pupils use the good range of equipment as tools for learning in other subjects of the curriculum.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

98. French does not form part of a regular curriculum. However in each year all pupils study a module covering basic vocabulary such as money, greetings and items of food and drink. Pupils broaden their experience of speaking, listening, reading and writing French at levels appropriate to their needs with higher attaining pupils being challenged by increased opportunities for written work. Scrutiny of the teacher's planning and the worksheets and other resources used by the pupils show that the modular scheme is successfully raising pupils' achievements albeit at a preliminary level.
99. The content of this module has been extended since last inspection and, being well suited to the experience and abilities of the students, is satisfactory. However, should

pupils' attainment levels rise in the future, the current arrangement would no longer be satisfactory in relation to National Curriculum requirements.

MUSIC

100. Since the last inspection the school has improved provision for music by employing a part-time qualified music teacher. Whilst it was not possible to observe music lessons during the inspection, scrutiny of planning documents and pupils' music folders show that lesson content is satisfactory in developing pupils' technical skills in, for example, notation, time, signatures and musical terms.
101. The youngest, lower attaining pupils can name notes on the lines and spaces on the staff. Older pupils use the printed version of a popular song to identify the meaning of technical terms and signs such as 'piano' and 'forte'. Despite this work it is clear that pupils' achievements are well below national expectations.
102. The current documentation for music does not currently constitute a satisfactory scheme of work that identifies how pupils' skills and knowledge will be addressed in relation to the National Curriculum requirements. Nevertheless, it is clear that all pupils are developing their understanding of the subject and school life is enhanced by the inclusion of recorded music in other subjects. The school provides opportunities for pupils to receive individual instrumental tuition if they so wish, although none currently do so. Pupils occasionally attend concerts and theatrical performances in the local area.
103. Overall provision for music is improving but is not yet fully satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

104. Due to timetabling arrangements no physical education was seen during the course of the inspection. It is not possible therefore to make secure judgements about pupils' attainments and achievement or the quality of teaching in the subject.
105. However, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of displays around the school, including photographs and awards, indicate that standards in the subject are good. Documentation shows that pupils undertake a wide range of appropriate activities. These include a health-related fitness programme, swimming, outdoor pursuits and community sports, for example the school competes in a local table tennis league. The subject policy indicates that a determined effort has been made to interpret the National Curriculum appropriately despite the lack of some key requirements, for example, the inability to field full teams for competitive games. Good use is made of facilities off-site including visits to leisure centres, water sports centres and dry ski slopes. Records are kept by pupils of their performance in health-related activities such as in fitness classes. These self-assessments enable the pupils to record their improvement in a range of aerobic type tasks, for example cycling, rowing and treadmill. The very wide range of work pupils undertake and their enthusiasm for it indicates that the subject plays a key role in the personal development of pupils and successfully helps them address their behaviour and emotional difficulties.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

106. It was possible to see two lessons, inspect pupils' work, and see the planning for the subject, as well as talk to some of the pupils. From this evidence, the indications are that while pupils' attainment is below the expected average, achievement and progress are satisfactory across all the ages in the school. Pupils know and can retell some bible stories, and they have studied the creation. Younger pupils were seen working on material about the effect of wrongdoing in everyday life, and they were following the picture language that the bible uses for this, namely the fall from paradise. Pupils have studied the Ten Commandments, and discussed rights and responsibilities. They understand the difference between their rights, such as education, and their wishes such as wanting a radio or a bicycle. When they study other world religions, they define some terms, such as 'halal', the food that Muslims consider acceptable. They have examined the beliefs behind the Five Pillars of Islam, and also thought about Christianity in action with such people as Martin Luther King. Pupils sometimes use a computer to present their work, and when they do, it is neat and well set out. One or two pupils draft their work in pen first and then use word processing for the finished piece, but the use of computers is not promoted in all relevant cases.
107. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and enable pupils to understand what they are studying. For example, older pupils were seen engaged in a discussion concerning a Golden Rule – treating others as you wish them to treat you. They thought of times in school when they felt that they had been judged unfairly, perhaps by a teacher, or by one of their peers. They thought and wrote about this, and examined how they would manage their anger over the incident. One said he would punch a pillow, and others recalled that there used to be a punch bag in school for just this purpose, to 'let off steam'. Yet another said he tended to keep his annoyance to himself and become quiet. There is a good relationship between teachers and pupils, and discussion is frequently entered into. Teachers generally try to relate religious education to pupils' everyday lives such as when the younger ones were talking about good and evil. "Results follow actions, and rewards follow good actions," said the teacher, emphasising the school's reward system as an example.
108. The planning for the subject is good, and covers a good range of topics, including three world religions. There is appropriate regard for the local authority's agreed provision for religious education. Assessment of what pupils understand and can do is satisfactory, and teachers keep satisfactory records.
109. Pupils behave well in religious education and are mostly willing to join in discussions and give their own views and opinions. For example, older pupils talked about trust, stealing, and 'where am I going'. And, when talking about how they might personally be known as someone who would promote peace, one observed that 'most peacemakers are well known', indicating that it might be easier for them.
110. Comparison with the last inspection is difficult because only one lesson was seen. Progress was thought to be satisfactory and the fact that all pupils were taught in one lesson was criticised. This has improved and pupils learn in their own, separate classes now.
111. Overall, religious education reflects the aims and values of the school well and pupils are given appropriate opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They consider the nature of the human person, study rules and their application, and learn about the customs and beliefs of the three world religions they study. In the past, they have visited a synagogue and heard a talk from a rabbi. This part of the programme has received less emphasis recently, thereby lessening the wider and positive impact of pupils' learning that such visits give.

