

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ROWHILL SCHOOL**

Wilmington, Dartford

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 119045

Headteacher: Mr S McGuinness

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Cook  
2351

Dates of inspection: 27 – 30 March 2000

Inspection number: 190020

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Community Special School  
School category: Moderate Learning Difficulties  
Age range of pupils: 4 - 16  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Stock Lane  
Wilmington  
Dartford  
Kent

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr P Peabody

Date of previous inspection: 11 – 14 March 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Jacque Cook	Registered inspector	Music	What sort of school is it?
			The schools' results and achievements
			How well are pupils taught?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Ron Elam	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Kate Burton	Team inspector	History	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
		Modern foreign languages	
		Physical education	
Anthony Hill	Team inspector	Science	How well is the school led and managed?
		Art	
Arleen Thomas-Ramasut	Team inspector	English	
		Religious education	
		English as an additional language	
Mary Vallis	Team inspector	Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Geography	
		Personal and social education	
David Walker	Team inspector	Under fives	
		Mathematics	
		Information and communications technology	
		Special educational needs	

The inspection contractor was:

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
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	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>12</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>29</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Rowhill is a mixed, day, community special school for 135 pupils aged between 4 and 16 with moderate learning difficulties. Currently, of the 131 pupils on roll there are three times as many boys as girls. Although there are no pupils aged under five, three have only recently had their fifth birthdays. There are very few pupils from ethnic minorities and there are five for whom English is an additional language. Since the last inspection, the number of pupils with additional special educational needs has increased to 27 per cent. These include pupils experiencing speech and communication difficulties, autistic spectrum disorder and social, emotional and behavioural needs. Attainment on entry is low and a higher than average proportion of pupils than would be expected is eligible for free school meals. Pupils are predominately from the Dartford and Swanley areas but pupils also travel from Gravesend and Sevenoaks in the south and west and the London Boroughs of Bexley and Bromley.

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

Rowhill School is a good and effective school with a range of very good features. Pupils' achievements are higher than would be expected in most subjects, largely because they have positive attitudes to their work and they are taught well. The leadership and management are good and the school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress in many of their lessons. By the time they are five and seven, pupils achieve very high standards and have made very good progress.
- Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes towards their work and their social and moral development are promoted very well.
- The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. They are particularly good for the younger pupils.
- Support staff are very effective and play an important role in helping pupils do well.
- Individual education plans are used very well to set targets for pupils' learning in English, mathematics and personal and social education. Pupils consistently meet their targets.
- In art, standards of achievement are very high and pupils make very good progress.
- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior management team ensure that there is a very clear educational direction and manage the school well.
- The effective teaching of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the Social Use of Language Programme have raised standards in English and mathematics.
- The curriculum for the oldest pupils is enriched by the inclusion of work experience and college attendance.
- There are very good links with local schools and the school makes very good contributions to the wider community.

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

- There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching and lower standards in music, modern foreign language and religious education.
- Assessment procedures, other than those used with individual education plans, lack consistency and in consequence it is difficult to track progress across key stages and reports of pupils' progress are not sufficiently informative in many subjects.
- Spiritual development is weak.
- The role of subject co-ordinator in relation to the key stage managers requires clarification.
- The monitoring and promotion of attendance are not sufficiently rigorous.
- The statutory requirement to teach religious education for pupils aged 14 to 16 is not being met.
- In line with recent legislation, a formal risk assessment needs to be undertaken.
- Although new building will start soon, the accommodation for the older pupils is currently poor.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in March 1996, the high standards of teaching and learning have been improved further. The percentage of lessons where teaching and learning are of high quality has increased from 50 per cent to 68 per cent. The school development plan is now well organised, with appropriate costed targets that are evaluated. Through careful planning and setting of priorities, a new building has replaced the worst of the mobile huts and has contributed to the raising of standards for the under fives and Key Stage 1 pupils (five to seven year olds). Registration procedures now comply with requirements. The only issue not fully resolved concerns the role of subject co-ordinators. A new system of key stage managers has gone a long way to managing effectively what is taught at each key stage but there remain co-ordination difficulties for some subjects. Overall improvement is satisfactory and the school is well placed to improve further.

## 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 5	by age 11	by age 16
Speaking and listening	A	B	B
Reading	A	B	B
Writing	A	B	B
mathematics	A	B	B
Personal, social and health education	A	B	B
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A

Key	
very good	A
good	B
satisfactory	C
unsatisfactory	D
poor	E

\*IEP's are Individual Education Plans for pupils with Special Education Needs.

The school is making good progress towards targets set by the local authority and towards targets which they have set. Standards of achievement are good overall and pupils make good progress. By the time they are five and seven, pupils achieve very high standards and they make very good progress. Pupils' achievements in art are of a very high standard and each year pupils gain grades in the General Certificate of Secondary Education. Last year two pupils gained higher grades in the A\* - C range. Pupils also gain passes in English, mathematics and science in the Certificate of Achievement and in the Certificate of Educational Achievement in materials technology. A number of the pupils attending college pass the Royal Society of Arts competency key boards test. Standards are good and pupils make good progress in English, mathematics, science, design and technology including food technology, history, physical education and personal and social education. Standards are low in music and in religious education at Key Stage 3 (pupils aged 11-14).

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils usually behave well. Pupils aged five to eleven behave very well.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils have very good relationships with their teachers, classroom assistants and their peers.
Attendance	Attendance is unsatisfactory at 88.6 per cent

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are a strength of the school and help them to learn effectively. Attendance is unsatisfactory, but analysis shows a very high absence rate of 18.6 per cent for the oldest pupils, which can be legitimately explained.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5	aged 5-11	aged 11-16
Lessons seen overall	Very good	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 quality of teaching and learning is good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, history, physical education and personal and social education. The teaching and learning of art are very good and in consequence pupils achieve very high standards. In most other subjects the teaching and learning are satisfactory with the exception of music and the teaching in modern foreign languages. The teachers of pupils aged 5 to 11 are very skilled in getting the best out of the pupils they teach and many, including the subject specialists for pupils aged 11 to 16, have good subject knowledge. Support staff are a real asset and contribute strongly to the good rates of progress made by the pupils. Inadequate management of pupils' behaviour, too slow a pace and inappropriate or limited teaching strategies are the main weaknesses in the few lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory. Literacy and numeracy are taught very well through the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and through all areas of the curriculum. The very effective teaching of the Social Use of Language Programme for pupils aged 7 to 14, enhances their communication skills. Overall, the additional special educational needs of pupils are met well through appropriate teaching strategies. Pupils acquire knowledge and understanding effectively because they are taught well. They work hard, although the pace of learning of the oldest pupils is sometimes slower. In many subjects pupils' independence increases, as they become more skilled in making choices and working without direct teacher support.

In 93 per cent of the lessons the teaching is at least satisfactory and in 68 per cent the teaching is good or better. In seven per cent of lessons the teaching is unsatisfactory.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good for pupils aged under 5 to 14. Overall it is broad and balanced. For older pupils the curriculum is satisfactory and includes relevant courses, which prepares them well for when they leave school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Staff are aware of which pupils may need additional help. These pupils now require very little additional support to help them understand English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Social and moral education is a strength of the school. Cultural development permeates the curriculum and is good. Spiritual development is unsatisfactory, although examples of good practice do exist in places.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Educational and personal support for pupils is good and good behaviour is promoted very well. The monitoring of academic performance is satisfactory. The monitoring of attendance is unsatisfactory.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Parents are very supportive of the school. Links with parents are satisfactory.

The quality and range of the curriculum are good. It is a broad and well balanced curriculum except for pupils aged 14 to 16, where religious education is not taught. This does not meet statutory requirements. Currently, the girls in Year 11 do not attend college, which is unsatisfactory. The curriculum is well adapted to meet the special needs of individual pupils. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. The school cares for its pupils well and has done much to improve pupils' behaviour. Assessment and recording of pupils' progress are very effective through individual education plan targets but not well established for subjects that are not included in the plans. In consequence, it is difficult to trace pupils' progress from key stage to key stage in these subjects and some comments on reports are not sufficiently clear for parents.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher offers positive leadership and has a very clear sense of direction for the school, which is shared by the governors, deputy headteacher and the senior management team. Teachers' job descriptions are not sufficiently detailed to clarify the relationship of subject co-ordinators with the key stage management.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its responsibilities satisfactorily, although a few statutory requirements are not met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Clear targets are set. Individual education plans are effective and lessons are observed to assess and improve teaching standards. The key stage managers have a strong role in this process.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used well. Levels of staffing are good and resources are adequate to teach the curriculum in most subjects. The accommodation for the oldest pupils in the school is poor and the art and design and technology rooms are small and have insufficient storage. There is no library.

The school is well led and managed. Steps are partially in place to remedy the difficulties caused through a lack of clear co-ordination in some subjects. The school's aims and values are very well reflected throughout its work, which helps pupils to do their best. The outreach training and support service, which the school offers to local authority special and mainstream schools, is effectively managed by the deputy headteacher. Building is due to start this term, which will include improved accommodation for pupils aged 14 to 16. This project is one instance of many that demonstrate a good understanding and application of the principles of best value.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The high quality of the teaching.</li><li>• Pupils are expected to work hard and they are helped to become mature and responsible.</li><li>• They feel comfortable to approach the school if there is a problem.</li><li>• Their children enjoy school.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are not many activities outside lessons.</li><li>• Provision of homework.</li><li>• A few parents would like more information about the progress of their children.</li></ul>

The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed by parents. Transport arrangements limit activities after school and the range of clubs and activities at lunchtime are limited. However, there are many opportunities to enhance the pupils' education including visits, residential journeys and sports activities. Currently, parents request homework for their children if they wish it to be set and occasionally teachers ask pupils to take work home including reading books. Opportunities are missed for older pupils studying for examinations to work on activities at home. The school is aware that arrangements need to be standardised. The inspectors found that pupils' annual reports do not contain sufficient information about pupils' progress in a number of subjects, although targets on individual education plans are regularly met and demonstrate clear progress in the areas covered.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

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

1. It is inappropriate to judge the standards of the pupils for whom this school caters in relation to the National Curriculum or any other national benchmarks. The report does, however, report on the achievement of the pupils and on what they know, understand and can do. Judgements about achievement take account of information in their statements, annual reviews and individual education plans.
2. Although there were no pupils aged under five at the time of the inspection, the work of those who had recently turned five was examined along with their individual files and teachers' records. These children receive a very good start to their education. They settle very well in the reception class and make very good progress towards the desirable learning outcomes for children by the time they are five. This is due to high quality teaching and a very good balance in the curriculum, with appropriate emphasis on developing children's skills in language, literacy, numeracy and personal and social development. Children are attentive and most soon develop suitable skills in describing events and counting and sorting. They react well to each other and enjoy the stimulating activities provided for them.
3. Overall, pupils achieve good standards and make good progress towards their targets. However, the high standards achieved by the under fives are maintained throughout Key Stage 1 (pupils aged 5 to 7) and by the time they are seven, pupils' achievements are very good. The quality of the teaching, detailed lesson planning and attention to individual needs are contributory factors to the success of these pupils. Although by the end of other key stages, achievements and progress are good overall, pupils at Key Stage 2 (pupils aged 7 to 11) clearly do better than those at Key Stages 3 (pupils aged 11 to 14) and 4 (pupils aged 14 to 16). This is partly due to the successful adoption of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, which have raised standards and also to the impact of the consistently good standards of teaching at this key stage.
4. Standards of achievement and progress are good in English. Standards of speaking and listening have improved since the last inspection. Most pupils at all key stages listen carefully to what the teacher says and respond promptly to questions. The Social Use of Language Programme enhances speaking skills so that most pupils learn to make confident and appropriate contributions in small groups and in class. Reading skills develop well throughout the key stages and pupils make good progress throughout Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and satisfactory progress at Key Stage 4. The effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has had a positive effect on the rate of pupils' learning. By the time they are 16, all pupils in the current cohort are able to read a range of materials independently and to discuss the meaning of what they have read. Standards of handwriting are good. Early writing skills develop at Key Stage 1. Pupils learn to form correctly shaped letters with clear spacing so that presentation of work in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 is good in most cases. However, new technologies, which enable pupils with additional special needs to record their work, are underused. During Key Stage 3 most pupils write in simple sentences but are inconsistent in their use of capital letters and full stops. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils write their own accounts of events or experiences independently, with satisfactory punctuation and spelling of familiar words.
5. Overall, pupils achieve good standards and make good progress in mathematics. Pupils' achievements and progress are very good at Key Stage 1, where very good planning and teaching predominate. By age seven all pupils are able to count to 10 and most to 20. Many can count backwards with assistance. They can recognise a circle, square, rectangle and triangle and sort by either shape or colour. Pupils' achievements are good at Key Stages 2 and 3 because the quality of teaching is good at these key stages. By age 11, higher attaining pupils understand the concept of change and a few are able to calculate, mentally, change from 20 pence. Most pupils recognise all coins and know which of two is worth most. In Key

Stages 1 and 2 standards are also being raised by the effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy. By age 14, many pupils can build a multiplication table by repeated addition and know most regular two-dimensional shapes. Higher attaining pupils can add and subtract to 200 using the decomposition method. Pupils' achievements and progress are sound at the end of Key Stage 4, where they complete the mathematical modules in the Youth Award Scheme. The higher attaining pupils are entered for the Certificate of Educational Achievement in mathematics. Last year, 12 passed with three distinctions and five at merit levels.

6. Pupils' achievements and progress in science are good overall. During Key Stage 1, pupils learn about different materials and understand what plants need to grow successfully. By the time pupils are 11, they have looked more closely at living things and know how worms react to light and dark. They make simple electrical circuits and understand the use of a switch to light the bulb. Throughout Key Stage 3, pupils improve their skills in investigation. They learn which substances are soluble and begin to think about what will happen. By the time they are 16, pupils record the results of their work well and improve their understanding of the natural world.
7. Pupils achieve very high standards and make very good progress in art. Each year pupils are entered for the General Certificate of Secondary Education examination and last year four pupils obtained grades, two in line with national expectations. This is because the quality of the teaching is very high and despite the lack of storage facilities and space in the art room. Achievement and progress are good in design and technology, history, physical education and personal, health and social education. They are sound in all other subjects with the exception of music, where achievement and progress are good for singing but unsatisfactory overall for the subject. Achievements are low and progress slow in religious education for pupils at Key Stage 3.
8. There are no measurable differences between the progress of boys and girls at Key Stages 1 to 3 but at Key Stage 4, girls do not study the materials aspect of design and technology or attend college. This means they do not do as well as the boys in information and communications technology which is also studied at college. Pupils with additional special educational needs and those with English as an additional language do as well as their peers in most areas of the curriculum because teachers take account of their needs when planning lessons.
9. The school is making good progress towards meeting the targets it has set for its pupils in terms of the scales that have been established for pupils both at pre-National Curriculum levels and at the levels themselves. Appropriate, achievable targets have also been set for General Certificate of Secondary Education grades for older pupils. The information available indicates that standards are improving in English and mathematics and are maintaining high levels in science over the last few years. There has been a significant increase in the number of pupils with additional special educational needs particularly at Key Stages 1 and 2. However, any variations in standards are being well met by the high quality of the teaching and the positive effect of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies for these pupils.

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

10. As identified at the previous inspection report, this is an area of strength. Evidence indicates that children aged under five have very positive attitudes to school, develop very good relationships with the staff and with their classmates and behave well. Pupils' attitudes are very good. They are happy to come to school. They smile as they are greeted by staff and are pleased to see their friends. Parents confirm that their children like school. In the majority of lessons attitudes to learning are very positive. For example, pupils watch a demonstration in food technology with interest. They are eager to answer teachers' questions and work hard. They really enjoy art lessons and take great care and pride in their work. They try so hard to improve their skills; for example, in physical education lessons when taking part in New Age Rugby training their running with the ball and passing improves noticeably. In science lessons, older pupils are highly motivated and do their best work for the Certificate of Secondary Education examination. Pupils show pleasure when they are praised and like to please staff.

They respond well to opportunities for developing self-esteem in circle time. In an occasional less successful lesson pupils sometimes become bored and are less willing to learn.

11. Behaviour around school and in the majority of lessons is good. Pupils are polite and courteous. They certainly know how to behave well and respond to the high expectations of staff. Parents also believe that discipline in the school is good. The building is free from graffiti or damage and property and belongings are well respected. On occasion the high standards of behaviour fall when staff have less effective methods for managing pupils. There are no exclusions and this is a significant improvement on the last inspection. Parents also reported that the behaviour of senior pupils outside school has greatly improved.
12. Pupils' personal development and relationships are very good indeed. Pupils are trustworthy and accept responsibility willingly. For example, an army of volunteers takes it in turn to help the caretakers prepare the hall for lunch. Others collect registers and return them to the office. Some older pupils help by serving the meal at lunchtime and organise games for younger pupils during the lunch break. They help younger pupils in class as part of the work experience scheme. Many older pupils travel to school independently arriving on time. All pupils are encouraged to help tidy up after lessons and to take responsibility, being class monitors or giving out equipment. The youngest pupils are becoming independent and are able to dress and undress, taking care of their belongings, with just a little help from staff. The oldest pupils are successful in a wide variety of work experience placements. Some pupils are also able to take initiative when appropriate, for example, when one pupil moved her chair so that her friend could see the teacher better.
13. Pupils are friendly, polite and have good social skills. They like members of staff, enjoy talking to them and show respect. They are interested in visitors to the school, in particular the oldest pupils, who demonstrate maturity and confidence when speaking to them. For example, they remembered to thank a visitor who led a 'Drive-ability' lesson for them. Pupils get on well together and co-operate well in groups; for example, some of the oldest pupils worked well in a team to prepare and serve a meal. Younger pupils play well together and show concern for each other. One parent wrote to the inspection team to tell them about the support her child has from his friends at school. Pupils celebrate each other's achievement and are really pleased when the football team does well!
14. Attendance at just under 89 per cent is unsatisfactory. It is significantly worse than the 92 per cent at the time of the previous inspection. Whilst most pupils are keen to come to school, there are not adequate procedures to encourage attendance or to analyse differences in absence levels between year groups. However, the overall level of attendance is affected by a few pupils who have exceptionally poor attendance but who the local education authority wishes to keep on the school roll. Otherwise absences are usually recorded as due to childhood illnesses and medical appointments, though some absences are due to pupils missing buses. Unauthorised absences are high at 3.5 per cent, in part reflecting the diligence with which the school records absences for which parents have not provided a reason. These absences are not always followed up sufficiently. Punctuality is satisfactory for most pupils, though delays to buses cause some lateness. Many older pupils come to school on their own, sometimes from a distance, and problems with public transport can also result in late arrivals. Registration procedures generally take place promptly.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

15. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, which confirms the views of parents who responded to the questionnaire or attended the parents' meeting. Since the last inspection the number of lessons where the teaching and learning are of a high quality, including teaching and learning that is good, very good and excellent, has increased from about 50 per cent to 68 per cent. This represents a notable improvement and more than meets the first key issue to uphold the high standards of teaching and learning. Most of the teaching and learning in the remaining lessons are satisfactory although there remain seven per cent of lessons where teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Pupils with additional special educational needs are taught well and they learn effectively in most subjects. There are very few pupils with English as an additional language. Through good levels of support in the past their needs are now

very much in line with other pupils'. However, staff consider their needs when planning lessons, for example, to ensure the subject words are understood.

16. The best teaching and learning is of the youngest pupils in the school. As well as pupils at Key Stage 1, this includes, when there are any, the under fives. In 60 per cent of the lessons the teaching and the learning are very good for these pupils and in a further 27 per cent they are good. This gives pupils a very good start to their education. The class teachers have high levels of expertise in teaching pupils of this age. They are well aware of the desirable learning outcomes for children when they reach the age of five and use them effectively to plan how they will teach. The planning of lessons takes into account the individual needs and the different levels of learning of each pupil in the class, which ensures that they make at least good progress. There is some very successful team teaching at this key stage, for example for country dancing, which uses specific strengths very effectively. In only one lesson, at this key stage, were the teaching and learning unsatisfactory. This was due to a lack of expertise in teaching young pupils on the part of a specialist subject teacher who usually teaches secondary aged pupils.
17. The quality of teaching and learning are good at Key Stage 2 and in 29 per cent of the lessons, they are very good. Class teachers teach most lessons, although the key stage manager takes opportunities to use teachers' strengths well, for example, in teaching science, technology, physical education and religious education. In addition, the subject specialists who usually teach older pupils take some or all of the classes for art, science and information communications technology. This ensures that the best use is made of expertise and pupils make good gains in knowledge and understanding of the subjects they are taught. Team teaching is also used very effectively at this key stage to teach music. One teacher plays and another leads the singing.
18. Literacy and numeracy are taught well at Key Stages 1 and 2. Teaching and support staff know about and use the techniques involved with the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Planning for these sessions is very good. The numeracy teaching plans at Key Stage 1 are very detailed and planned ahead to ensure that pupils' progress is reinforced wherever possible. Opportunities are taken to group pupils suitably. Learning support assistants take groups within classes and sometimes classes are combined to enable mixed age groups to be taught. This is very effective, allowing work to be pitched at an appropriate level, and enabling pupils to make gains faster. These groupings are particularly good for pupils with additional special educational needs, as more time is available to help individuals, for example, improve their understanding of the value of coins.
19. At Key Stages 3 and 4, the quality of teaching and learning are good overall, and very good in 26 per cent of lessons at Key Stage 3, and in 20 per cent of lessons at Key Stage 4. Subject specialists teach classes throughout these key stages. Up-to-date knowledge is very evident in the planning and teaching of some subjects, for example, in science, art and food technology. A strength of the teaching at Key Stages 2 and 3 is the adoption of the Social Use of Language Programme. The supportive teaching style, with constant encouragement and reassurance, combined with the sequential build up of skills, has a real impact on the learning of the pupils. They become more confident and articulate and learn to communicate very effectively.
20. A subject specialist teaches art very well indeed throughout the school. The work is exciting and suitably difficult, which leads to pupils acquiring new skills and techniques, gaining confidence and producing work of a high standard. Teaching and learning are also very good in mathematics at Key Stage 1, science and physical education at Key Stages 1 and 2, English at Key Stage 3 and in food technology at Key Stages 3 and 4. In all these subjects the expertise and high expectations of the teacher and the enjoyment of the pupils are important factors in helping pupils to learn successfully. Pupils enthusiastically investigate what makes animals bigger and stronger and what makes plants grow. Games including 'ducks and drakes' and 'unihoc' improve pupils' skills and co-ordination. During food technology lessons, pupils are expected to know what equipment they will need and to weigh out their own ingredients. The teacher is vigilant and intervenes only when necessary.

21. Teaching and learning are good overall in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and in design and technology, history, physical education and personal and social education. They are sound in geography, information and communications technology, music and religious education. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in French.
22. There is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching and learning at each key stage. The main weaknesses which affect the quality of pupils' learning often stem from slow pace or uninteresting work that leads to restless behaviour. For example, at Key Stage 3, in a French lesson, pupils became restless because the pace of the lesson slowed through too much explanation and whole-class teaching. In a religious education lesson, the teacher did not intervene quickly and firmly enough to curb pupils calling out and laughing inappropriately. Unsatisfactory teaching at Key Stage 2 in geography stems from work not being set at appropriate levels for all the pupils in the class: in consequence, some pupils find the work too easy and for others it is too difficult. Work is not difficult enough in information and communications technology at this key stage. Pupils do not load programs or save their work. When supporting English by getting the pupils to use the word processor to present a poem, it is produced in prose format, which undermines the previous learning on setting out poetry. While much of the practical work in design and technology using materials is of an appropriate standard, the teacher does not insist on a similar high standard of written and drawing work to support the design. In consequence, the folders of the Year 11 pupils do not demonstrate their skills effectively.
23. Learning support staff play a very effective role in helping pupils learn. Teachers' careful planning ensures that they are deployed well and they have high levels of expertise. They know exactly what is required of them. They teach groups of pupils, particularly for literacy and numeracy lessons, and work alongside a teacher or teachers with classes in, for example, music and physical education in the junior part of the school. They record assessments, organise pupils working on their spellings using the computers, test spellings and listen to pupils read at Key Stage 3. This multi-faceted role ensures that no time is wasted and pupils get through a lot of work. Learning support staff are subject based at Key Stages 3 and 4 and most have additional good technical skills, supporting pupils and ensuring that resources and equipment are to hand for practical subjects including design and technology (food and materials), science and information and communications technology. A number of pupils have specific learning support staff working with them on an individual basis. This is effective in keeping these pupils involved in activities and helping to ensure that their behaviour is satisfactory.
24. Expectations of what pupils will learn are very high for the youngest pupils and high for others in most lessons. At Key Stage 1, teachers ensure that pupils are constantly taking part in an activity. They ask probing questions to encourage pupils to attempt more difficult things. For example, when comparing lengths of play dough 'worms', pupils eventually make decisions about the longest and the shortest when they are very close in size. They set them out in order. Older pupils are expected to weigh varying quantities of ingredients without necessarily having the correct weights for the scales. They rise to the challenge well and weigh the coconut first, then change the weights and add the flour. Apart from in one or two lessons, pupils are helped to maintain their high standards of behaviour, particularly at Key Stages 1 and 2. Praise and encouragement are used very effectively by staff and the target system used by teachers of pupils at Key Stage 3, helps pupils to be aware of how well they are doing in their work and their behaviour. The quality of teachers' planning is very good at Key Stages 1 and 2, good at Key Stage 3 and sound at Key Stage 4. This has an important impact on what pupils learn and how they learn it and is reflected in the standards of achievement at each key stage. The drop in quality of planning is partly due to the lack of adequate schemes of work for some subjects to show what pupils will learn from one key stage to the next. This in turn is linked to the uncertainties surrounding the roles of some co-ordinators.
25. Homework is not set consistently. Reading books go home with some pupils and occasionally homework is set for the whole class. In history in Year 5, many pupils had completed family trees at home as an exciting part of their history project. For a number of pupils, arrangements have been made between their parents and the school to have homework set and this works well. However, while some parents specifically commented that they preferred their children not to have homework, a number were concerned. Pupils taking examination courses in



English and mathematics do not have a great deal of time to study these subjects in the final year of their schooling and time is not supplemented by regular homework tasks.

26. The assessment of pupils' progress is very mixed in quality. Overall, it is better at Key Stages 1 and 2 and in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, than for the older pupils and most other subjects. Assessment of progress towards targets on individual education plans is carried out well and many staff use very good questioning techniques to establish what pupils have learned. In a number of cases, the assessment system is inadequate and often not recorded except in terms of the topics taught in the lessons. This provides insufficient information.

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

27. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is relevant to the needs of the pupils. The quality and range of opportunities for learning are good in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. The emphasis is appropriately placed on the core subjects with a special attention to developing communication skills well. There are good opportunities in all subjects for pupils to improve their speaking and listening abilities. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been well adapted to the needs of individuals and are enhancing the curriculum and improving pupils' achievements in English and mathematics.
28. The curriculum for pupils at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. It provides good opportunities for all pupils to obtain external accreditation. These include the Certificate of Achievement in English, mathematics and science, Certificates of Educational Achievement in materials technology, the Royal Society of Arts competency key boards test and the vocational Award Scheme and Accreditation Network Youth Award Scheme. A small number of pupils are entered for General Certificate of Secondary Education examinations in art. In addition, pupils study a range of subjects and complete National Records of Achievement. The amount of curriculum time given to English and mathematics is small but opportunities exist to support these areas through other subjects and through college courses. Statutory requirements for religious education in Key Stage 4 are not met and this is unsatisfactory. Careers education and opportunities for work experience are good. Pupils are prepared for work well by school staff and the Careers Service. They look at job vacancies, visit employers and prepare job application forms. Pupils spend regular time on extended work experience during the final year. Many of the pupils find their own work experience placements, which include work in garden centres, shops and kennels. Some work experience leads on to permanent employment.
29. All other statutory requirements for the curriculum are met. Subject planning to ensure that pupils' learning builds on what they have learned before is good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. However, in some subjects, including music, information and communications technology and geography it is a weakness. This is largely due to a lack of clarity about the roles of subject co-ordinators and key stage managers. Adequate schemes of work showing the progress from one key stage to another are not in place.
30. Individual education plans, which are thorough and relate well to statements of special educational needs and annual reviews, are used to measure and monitor progress in the core subjects effectively. These also include targets for personal development. They are used well as the basis for planning the curriculum for individuals. An increasing number of pupils with communication difficulties are helped through the Social Use of Language Programme as well as by speech therapy. Pupils with significant problems of fine motor control would benefit from more access to technological aids to assist them with recording their work.
31. The school generally makes good efforts to ensure that all pupils are able to study the same subjects. Boys considerably outnumber girls and both sexes have equal opportunities except at Key Stage 4. The two girls in Year 11 do not study the design and technology curriculum because of previous timetabling arrangements. They enrolled on a catering course, which was subsequently abandoned by the college. It has not been possible to make appropriate alternative arrangements on a similar course elsewhere this year. Boys benefit from a

construction and an information and communications technology course. This situation is unsatisfactory.

32. The provision for social and moral development is very good and are strengths of the school. This represents a notable improvement since the last inspection, when such development was merely good. The personal, health and social education scheme of work is good. The subject underpins the school's social development programme and has improved considerably since the last inspection. It is a particular strength at Key Stage 1. Good co-ordination and the use of up-to-date resources complement the good teaching. Circle time is used well so that pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 respond positively to opportunities to explore their emotions and sensitive issues in safety. Sex education and education on drug misuse are well supported through science lessons and the use of outside speakers. The school nurse, who is based at the school, makes a positive contribution to whole-class teaching and provides individuals with information and support where necessary. Learning about healthy eating is addressed during the very good food technology lessons in Key Stages 3 and 4. Other lifeskills are promoted through initiatives such as 'Drive-ability', when Year 11 pupils are introduced, by a safety instructor, to aspects of driving such as stopping distances and reaction time. Pupils are given a wide range of opportunities to learn socially appropriate behaviours and are consistently rewarded for their efforts and achievements. The good behaviour policy is consistently applied and provides positive support for personal development. School and classroom rules are reinforced through regular reminders and through the behaviour targets, which are set for individual pupils. The Social Use of Language Programme improves the social skills of many pupils and especially those with additional special needs. Older pupils are able to help each other prepare lunch and to entertain visitors which they do with evident pride and pleasure. The many sporting activities which the school provides enables pupils to become team members, to follow the rules and learn to be good sports. Teachers, learning support assistants and ancillary staff all treat the pupils with respect and provide very good role models. They are encouraging and supportive in all circumstances.
33. Pupils of all ages are made very aware of the difference between right and wrong. Self-evaluation of behaviour is encouraged and pupils exhibit a well-developed sense of fairness. Reception and Key Stage 1 pupils are able to identify the good person in the Bible story of The Good Samaritan and give reasons. Senior pupils are able to discuss the characters and actions of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth with good understanding. They appreciate that choices in life are influenced by many different factors and are able to offer opinions about the choice which Macbeth made. Pupils are provided with good opportunities in history to learn to empathise with those less fortunate than themselves when they consider the lives of children in Victorian times and they actively support poor children in other countries through fund raising. In their science lessons, pupils show a developing awareness of the importance of protecting the environment.
34. Cultural development is now good. This is also an improvement since the last inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory. The formal curriculum and additional activities provide many opportunities for pupils to learn the different ways in which people express themselves. In art, pupils look at the work of artists of the European tradition as well as of African, Aboriginal and Middle Eastern traditions and use these as stimuli for their own art work. They visit galleries and places of interest in London, which enhance their general knowledge. They have opportunities to see plays and musicals performed by college students and theatre in education groups. The school celebrates all the major Christian festivals and those of other religions and cultures such as the Hindu festival of Divali and Chinese New Year. Pupils learn about local traditions in the annual carnival when they dress up and take part in the parade and festivities. They listen to the music of different composers in some assemblies and to the traditional music of different countries when they participate in country dancing. Throughout the school, pupils are exposed to poetry, which they thoroughly enjoy. They make good efforts in writing their own poems based on the work of others. Appreciation of literature begins early in school and develops through favourite children's stories up to Shakespeare during Key Stage 4. Pupils have positive attitudes to books and stories.
35. Spiritual development is unsatisfactory. The last inspection noted the same lack of opportunities for pupils to reflect, develop self-awareness and appreciate the wonders of the

world around them. Daily assemblies vary in the quality of the experience they provide for pupils and not all assemblies include collective worship. Several good assemblies stimulated and held the pupils' interest in the theme of the day and fostered high levels of pupil participation. An appropriate recurring theme, to which pupils of all ages responded well, was the love of mothers and carers. These assemblies included a brief and, sometimes, rather rushed time for collective worship but not for reflection. Overall, there are too few planned opportunities for quiet reflection and the development of awe and wonder. A few examples were seen in an art and a religious education lesson in the Key Stage 1 sensory stimulation room and in one assembly.

36. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. A small number of parents rightly think however, that there are few regular opportunities for clubs and activities. These are limited by transport arrangements. The volunteer service 'Youth in Action' provides one after school club and one lunchtime football practice. Where the school does well is in supporting many aspects of the curriculum through visits and residential opportunities, which are challenging and promote self-awareness. There are good links with the community. During the annual school camp under canvas, visits are made to Dungeness Power Station and the Romney and Hythe railway. Key Stage 3 pupils visit the Arethusa Centre in Chatham for an outdoor and indoor adventure week. Pupils cruise along the French coast. This year pupils will meet with their German partner school in France and meet staff from their Swedish partner school. Sport is supported through participation in rugby and netball tournaments. Specialist coaching is given in football, cricket and New Age Rugby. There are visits to museums, theatres, farms and music festivals, which enhance learning experiences and broaden horizons.
37. Relationships with other schools and colleges in the area are very good. The expertise of the staff at Rowhill is much appreciated by mainstream schools who benefit from training, teaching and advice about a range of special needs including communication difficulties. Joint training of staff is sometimes undertaken. Rowhill liaises well with local colleges and makes good use of them. The number of pupils who have opportunities for inclusion, either part-time or eventually full-time, into mainstream education is a weakness, however. Pupils from Rowhill are well received by pupils and staff at local schools but only a very small minority of pupils have access to this opportunity.

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

38. As at the previous inspection, the teachers and other staff continue to show appropriate concern for the needs of the pupils. Parents are pleased with the level of support in the school, seeing it as a caring community where staff are approachable. Generally, the school has satisfactory procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of the pupils. The arrangements for child protection are very good, with the headteacher as the designated officer. The school follows local procedures and the staff have received appropriate training. The provision for first aid is also very good, with two medical rooms. Several staff have had full training and all others in the classroom have received emergency training. In addition, staff have a good understanding of the medical needs of pupils. Records are kept of any treatment and letters sent home to parents as appropriate. The health and safety policy is generally satisfactory and the teachers ensure that pupils are made aware of health and safety issues during lessons such as science, physical education and design and technology. The pupils' understanding of dangers outside school is enhanced by talks by visitors, for example, from Railtrack and the police. However, though the staff representative records the result of touring the site each term, she has not received any training in health and safety issues. The school policy does not refer to risk assessment and one has not been carried out recently as is required by the relevant legislation.
39. Overall, the assessment, monitoring and support of pupils' academic performance and progress are satisfactory, though there is inadequate co-ordination within the school of the whole assessment process. In some of the subject areas other than English, mathematics and science, the assessment of pupils' progress is inadequate. The school's assessment procedures for new pupils are good, both for those pupils arriving at under five years old and for those arriving higher up the school. During Key Stage 1, procedures are very good for monitoring and recording progress for all areas of pupils' development. This is also the case

for Key Stage 2, though procedures become weaker as the focus of the pupils' work becomes more subject based. Individual education plans are of good quality and are directly related to the needs of pupils. They are updated regularly and targets are changed as they are achieved. Daily records are kept in both Key Stages 1 and 2, with comments from both teachers and learning support assistants. Throughout Key Stages 3 and 4, progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is recorded well, but assessment is variable and less systematic in other subjects. This inconsistent approach results in procedures being ineffective. Different checklists are used for different subjects but they are often not completed or are not dated. This limits their ability to guide teachers when planning work for many of the subjects of the curriculum, particularly from key stage to key stage. The range of accredited courses is good. Pupils leave school with recognised qualifications and a record of achievement of which they are justifiably proud. The yearly school reports inform parents well about the core subjects of English and mathematics and the topics their children have studied. However, in some subjects, they have little reference to what the pupil can do and often have vague statements such as 'steady progress'. Annual reviews of statements of special educational needs and the individual education plans are arranged appropriately and take into account the views of parents well.

40. The procedures for monitoring and supporting the personal development of the pupils are good. The individual education plans include various aspects such as attention, relationships or independence, and the assessment of progress includes grades for these areas. Most staff have a good understanding of the needs of all the pupils. In particular, the subject teachers at Key Stages 3 and 4 have a list of all the pupils they teach with their individual targets. The targets are reviewed regularly and changed when they are achieved.
41. The procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour are very good. The extensive behaviour policy has structured rewards and sanctions appropriate to the pupils in each key stage. Class and school rules are on display and the teachers and headteacher refer to behaviour in personal, social and health education lessons, assemblies and other occasions if the need arises. The teachers make good and appropriate use of the merit and house points systems and the pupils respond well to the opportunities to gain certificates and items from the 'treasure chest'. The inspectors saw good instances in lessons of teachers ensuring that the pupils understood how to behave. Nevertheless, in some classes the teachers did not, for example, always insist on the pupils putting their hands up and they were allowed to continue to call out. Although the parents could not recall any instances of bullying or racism, pupils are clear that on the rare occasions when there are difficulties, the school takes speedy and appropriate action. The pupils who show any sustained difficulty with behaviour are monitored and supported well with special reports and the targets on individual education plans.

42. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory. The school has improved its procedures since the last inspection to ensure that registers are completed consistently and the staff have a good understanding of the home situation of pupils. There are usually good notes made in the registers of any letters sent home after unexplained absences. Nevertheless, lack of parental response is not always followed up. Attendance is unsatisfactory but no targets have been set for improvement and there is no regular monitoring of attendance levels in each class or key stage. The education welfare officer visits the school every week or so, but visits to parents of absentee children occur too infrequently.

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

43. Since the previous inspection the school has maintained its links with parents. In their responses to the questionnaire and at the meeting with the inspectors, parents showed that they are pleased with all that the school does. They consider that the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. It helps them become mature and responsible and parents feel able to approach the school with questions or if they have a problem. Some parents were concerned about the range of activities outside lessons but the inspection team considered that, while the provision of clubs and activities at lunchtime is limited, there are many opportunities from visits, residential journeys and sports activities to enhance the pupils' education. Doubts were expressed about the amount of homework but the inspectors concluded that the school's approach is generally satisfactory, though further guidance could be provided, particularly for older pupils. A few parents also felt that they were not well informed about the progress of their children, though the great majority were satisfied with the amount of information provided. The inspectors generally supported this latter view, though the reports at the end of year do not give sufficient information.
44. The school has established satisfactory links with the parents and overall these contacts make an appropriate contribution to the progress the pupils make. Regular letters are sent home by the headteacher providing general administrative information. The key stage co-ordinators also write to parents, though there is limited information about what work the pupils will be doing in class. Formal meetings between the parents and the teachers take place several times during the year. For example, new parents visit in September and all parents are invited during the autumn and summer terms and for the annual review of statements of special educational needs. In addition, parents are invited to come to events such as performances and sports days. The teachers telephone if there are any concerns and merit certificates and cards recognising positive effort and behaviour are sent home. The home/school contact book is well liked by parents in the lower part of the school. Annual reports on pupils' progress are sent home in the summer term. However, these are unsatisfactory as, for many of the subjects, they give little information on what the pupils know and can do, concentrating on attitudes and work covered.
45. Parents' involvement with the school makes a satisfactory contribution to its work and to the attainment of the pupils. The wide area that the pupils come from means parents have to travel a distance to get to the school. Nevertheless some parents help in the school and the Friends' Association is supportive in arranging fund raising events and coffee mornings. The extent of any guidance on how parents can help at home, such as with reading or supporting behaviour, varies with the key stage. The school is very willing to talk to parents about the best way of supporting their children and to set up a specific homework partnership if appropriate. The parents' comments on the annual reviews show that some do provide support at home. Nevertheless, parents are not regularly informed that they should approach the school if they have any concerns.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The headteacher provides strong leadership and a clear sense of educational direction for the school. Governors and senior staff share his vision and are beginning to work well together to improve standards throughout the school. The school's aims and values are very well reflected in its work. In a second attempt to respond to weaknesses found at the last inspection, a radical new senior management structure has recently been formed and is beginning to have a positive impact on the development of the school curriculum. However, this structure, which brings subject co-ordination within a key stage management structure, is not fully understood, nor do all department staff use it effectively. The progress of curriculum development is variable as a result. The lack of clarity surrounding the new structure is creating uncertainty amongst some teaching staff. This will need to be resolved if the school is to make effective progress towards its vision of a fully co-ordinated, high quality curriculum intended to raise the standards of attainment and quality of learning. The job descriptions for teaching staff are simple divisions of responsibility; they lack the clarity of structure needed to bring the staff together as a co-ordinated working team. The school development plan reflects a good choice of priorities for development. It is drawn up in five separate sections, four of which cover the key stage planning from subject areas. The key document is the whole-school plan, which records cross-curricular and cross-key stage planning, along with other general areas of planning, such as building, training, health and safety and so on. Plans are costed, time targeted and responsibility for monitoring is assigned to staff. The structure and process of planning are very recent and have yet to be monitored, but evidence from the inspection suggests that while it is working well at the senior management level, the picture is patchy at the level of subject departments.
47. The school has responded effectively to the local authority initiative on 'inclusion'. It has set up a good quality outreach service, managed by the deputy headteacher, which is making contacts with local special and mainstream schools. This is providing a very good training service for teachers and support staff, as well as a direct support for pupils with special educational needs in the mainstream schools. It also broadens the understanding and experience of those Rowhill teachers who are currently working on the outreach project. Although some successful social inclusion has been organised, the service is not yet fully effective in integrating pupils from Rowhill who are on an inclusion programme with a local secondary school.
48. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities satisfactorily. It is kept well informed by the headteacher and senior staff, through regular meetings and visits to the school. The chair of governors visits the school several times a term and is given a clear breakdown of what has been happening at the school, before discussion with the headteacher. Appropriate meetings of governors are held, at which a wide range of current concerns and items of importance are discussed. Governors have been asked to take an interest in particular year groups, thus focusing their contact and improving their monitoring and reporting role. An appropriate structure of sub-committees distributes their work effectively and maintains a focus on their statutory responsibilities, which they substantially meet. The exceptions are the teaching of religious education for pupils aged 14 to 16 and some omissions from the governors' report to parents and the school prospectus. They have a clear view of the strengths and weakness of the school and are developing their role in monitoring the quality of provision. They take advantage of a range of training opportunities, which supports their monitoring role.
49. The professional appraisal of staff has been put on hold while new national arrangements are put into place. The interim plans for the senior management team to monitor teaching termly are underway. A professional discussion of the teacher's performance and the re-setting of targets follow lesson observations. These are proving helpful to teaching and support staff in improving the standards of their work. All staff are offered in-service training which is often linked to priorities on the development plan, for example, training in teaching the National Numeracy Strategy. Learning support assistants and caretaking staff receive local authority training in lifting and handling. Secretarial and financial staff are offered appropriate local authority courses. The training undertaken by support staff is of a very good quality and has resulted in a very well-qualified and experienced support team, whose work is valued by staff and pupils alike. The local consortium of special schools manages a very good induction

scheme for newly qualified and newly appointed teachers. This requires these teachers to spend time in each of the consortium schools, as well as in local mainstream schools. The programme is monitored and accredited by the local university, which issues a certificate on completion. This may be upgraded to an advanced diploma in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs, through further study and experience. Teaching staff, already established at the school, have declared an interest in following this programme. They also take advantage of the good range of in-service training opportunities available to them through the school's standards fund.

50. The school budget is managed very well by the financial assistant. Accurate, high quality records are kept of income and expenditure. These are used by governors and senior staff to inform financial planning. Regular budget updates are provided under separate headings. These ensure that spending is closely monitored and information passed to relevant staff to enable them to manage their resources prudently. The careful management of finances, monitored by the governors, has enabled the school to provide for a major building project to replace the mobile units used by older pupils. There is a clear understanding and good application of the principle of good value. For example, a caretaker and deputy caretaker are employed, rather than cleaning staff. This has proved far more cost effective and ensures a clean and well-maintained environment, which encourages pupils to take a pride in their school. School administration is efficient and satisfactory use is made of new technology in its systems and throughout the school. There are a few staff, however, who have yet to use it as an appropriate tool in their planning and their teaching.
51. The number, qualifications and experience of both teaching and support staff are well matched to the needs of the pupils and the demands of the curriculum. There have been significant improvements in the numbers and qualifications of learning support assistants since the last inspection. Nine of those currently in post attended a very informative year long course, which was accredited, by the local university. There is an appropriate range of visiting specialists to support the wide range of special educational needs at the school, although the amount of speech and therapy support provided is becoming insufficient to cover the growing numbers of pupils requiring it.
52. Overall, the accommodation is unsatisfactory. Pupils and staff make good use of the facilities available and the staff have put up attractive displays in many areas around the school. A strong sense of community is apparent in the absence of litter and damage. Nevertheless, the mobile classrooms used by older pupils and for specialist music lessons are in poor condition, leak, and are cold, distracting pupils from their work. They will not be suitable for another winter if the planned building of replacement classrooms is not completed by then. The art and design and technology areas are cramped, with poor storage space. The lack of a library limits opportunities to encourage pupils to learn research skills and the lack of carpeting in some classrooms results in pupils having to sit on cold floors during some teaching sessions. There is no specific play area with suitably sized climbing equipment for children aged under five and the younger pupils. Pupils cannot use existing outside play equipment because it is in a dangerous condition.
53. The resources for learning are satisfactory in most subject areas. They are unsatisfactory for music and geography, for which there is a lack of teaching aids and materials suitable for meeting the range of needs and attainment. Religious education lacks appropriate artefacts for teaching the world's major faiths. There are good resources for food technology, but resources for the teaching of control technology are unsatisfactory. Resources for the teaching of information and communications technology are satisfactory overall, but the provision of appropriate peripherals and software is unsatisfactory in several subject areas, such as art, music and design and technology.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. The governors, headteacher and staff of the school should:-
- Improve the quality of the teaching where teaching is unsatisfactory and, particularly, raise standards in music, modern foreign languages and religious education by:
    - ensuring coherent schemes of work are written in music and religious education;
    - helping staff to develop appropriate skills for teaching the full age range where necessary and for maintaining good behaviour;
    - monitoring the planning and teaching of lessons to ensure that work is set at appropriate levels of difficulty and that there is sufficient to do to maintain pace and pupils' interest.  
(Paragraphs 7, 15, 21, 22, 46, 97, 99, 100, 102, 103, 109)
  - Establish clear assessment and recording procedures for all subjects to enable progress to be traced from key stage to key stage and to ensure that the information is used to make more informative comments on annual reports of pupils' progress.  
(Paragraphs 26, 39, 44, 86, 89, 100, 103, 110)
  - Increase opportunities for promoting spiritual development by:
    - identifying in each subject when spiritual development can take place, through exploring the schemes of work;
    - ensuring that sufficient opportunities are available for all pupils and checking that they are being taken.  
(Paragraph 35)
  - Clarify the role of subject co-ordinator in the school by establishing clear job descriptions that show the inter-relationship between co-ordinators and key stage managers.  
(Paragraphs 24, 29, 46, 86, 97, 103, 110)
  - Improve attendance of the pupils by setting targets for improvement and regular monitoring of attendance levels in each key stage.  
(Paragraphs 14, 42)
  - Meet statutory requirements to teach religious education at Key Stage 4 and ensure that a full health and safety risk assessment is carried out in the near future.  
(Paragraphs 28, 38, 107)
  - Take interim steps to improve the quality of the accommodation for pupils at Key Stage 4.  
(Paragraph 52)
55. The governors, in drawing up their action plan, may wish to consider the following points relating to minor weaknesses identified in the report:-
- Development of a homework policy, particularly for older pupils. (Paragraphs 25, 43)
  - Make good the omissions from governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus. (Paragraph 48)
  - A Play area suitable for younger pupils. (Paragraphs 52, 62)
  - Increasing the opportunities for pupils from Rowhill to attend other local schools for some lessons. (Paragraphs 37, 47)
  - Ensuring that during Key Stage 4, both girls and boys attend college. (Paragraph 31)
  - Ensure that all staff use new technology appropriately to enhance their planning and teaching. (Paragraphs 50, 53)
  - Some shortfalls in resources in a few subject areas. (Paragraphs 53, 86, 89, 96, 103, 110)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	96
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	58

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	32	35	25	7	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	130
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	53

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4/5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	7.5	School data	3.5

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

## ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year - 11

### Task and test results

English - all pupils working towards Level 1

Mathematics – all pupils working towards Level 1

### Teacher assessment

English – all pupils working towards Level 1

Mathematics – all pupils working towards Level 1

Science – all pupils working towards Level 1

## ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year - 13

### **Task and test results**

No pupils entered for tests as all working below Level 3

### **Teacher assessment**

	Working towards Level 1	Level 1	Level 2
English	50	36	14
Mathematics	50	43	7
Science	64	29	7

## ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year - 10

### **Test results**

	Achieving below Level 3 in English and mathematics and Level 4 in science	Level 3	Level 4	Pupils Absent
English	100	0	0	0
Reading	50	50	0	0
Writing	10	50	20	20
Mathematics	100	0	0	0
Science	100	0	0	0

### **Teacher assessment**

	Working toward Level 1	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
English	0	10	80	10
Mathematics	0	0	50	50
Science	0	0	0	100

## ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4***

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year – 16

### **General Certificate of Secondary Education**

Art and Design – 2 grade C, 1 grade D and 1 grade E

### **Certificate of Achievement (Southern Examining Group)**

	Distinction	Merit	Pass	Working towards
English	6	9	1	0
Mathematics	3	5	4	2
Science	6	5	3	0

### **Certificate of Educational Achievement (Western Joint Education Council)**

Materials Technology – 6 passed, 1 with merit.

### **Royal Society of Arts**

Competency Key Boards Test – 6 passed, 2 with distinction

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	122
Any other minority ethnic group	4

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.7
Average class size	11.8

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	612

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	678,181
Total expenditure	645,456
Expenditure per pupil	4,966
Balance brought forward from previous year	26,529
Balance carried forward to next year	59,254

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	130
Number of questionnaires returned	38

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	30	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	37	5	5	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	45	5	5	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	30	32	8	8
The teaching is good.	74	26	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	29	16	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	18	0	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	34	8	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	53	37	8	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	58	39	3	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	32	0	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	29	10	3	16

### Other issues raised by parents

- A few parents commented that it was not always easy to know what progress had been made from the end of year report.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

56. At the time of the inspection, there were no children aged under five. Evidence from samples of work, teachers' records, annual reviews and observation of pupils recently turned five indicate that these pupils achieve high standards. They make very good progress towards meeting the desirable outcomes for learning by the time children are five which provides a very good start to their education.
57. Children enjoy a variety of activities to support their very good language development. Many are admitted to the school with speech and language difficulties and immature speech levels. They learn to concentrate well and respond enthusiastically to questions, for example, about pictures in the big book, making satisfactory observations. There are stimulating and imaginative role-play areas to develop the children's spoken language further. They listen to one another and wait patiently for responses. By the time they are five their achievement and their progress in language and literacy are very good. Children enjoy books and know that print carries meaning. They like having books read to them and make good attempts at re-telling well-known stories such as *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. They listen to instructions and follow directions. Some pupils chose their own books and their appreciation grows as they identify pictures. Pupils are developing writing skills and improving their grip and control of pencils, crayons and paintbrushes.
58. Mathematical understanding and numeracy are promoted very successfully through carefully planned and structured class teaching and in working in a more focused way in groups. Opportunities are taken at the start of the day, using registration and the calendar to reinforce the application of mathematics. Children work well independently in activities using construction kits. The use of a range of activities matches the work well to the children's needs. They use simple mathematical language, such as 'biggest' and 'smallest'. They can name circles and squares and rectangles. Some are able to count to five.
59. Children develop social skills very well. By the time they are five, they behave considerately towards other children and relate well to their teachers and other well-known adults, waiting patiently for their turn. Children's attitude to learning is very good. They appear confident and enjoy telling you about their work. Most are able to work independently for short periods and some become engrossed for long spells, but all respond well to encouragement and a few words of praise. Children with additional needs also respond very well to the attention they receive from all adults who enable them to participate in the activities provided.
60. Creative development is encouraged very well. Paint, modelling materials and printing develop an awareness of colour and shape, which is used well to support mathematical development. There are very good opportunities for children to express their ideas and communicate their feelings. They listen well to music and rhymes and songs are used to reinforce language, mathematics and social development. They play creatively in the home corner, which is currently focused on hospitals. Pupils are given many opportunities for physical development through music and movement and outdoor play. They dance and march in time to music and really enjoy moving to music. Children are given many opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. They explore materials using construction resources to make cars and bridges. Their use of tools improves as they cut, stick and join different materials. They learn about growing things. Children take turns as shopkeeper and customer and can distinguish from amongst toys which are pets and which are farm animals. They are introduced to information and communications technology and enjoy using it for pre-reading and mathematical programs. They can control the mouse and move shapes to form a simple picture.

61. Evidence shows that teaching and learning are very good. Lesson planning is very detailed and linked closely with individual education plan targets, which ensures that each child is making very good progress. Teachers' knowledge of the lesson objectives and the individual needs of the pupils is very high, enabling the children to gain positively from each and every activity planned for them. All activities are planned jointly with the learning support assistants, so that each knows exactly his or her role at a given time and can substitute should the need arise. Assessments are made continually through out the day and noted on the recording sheet which is kept easily to hand in the classroom.
62. There is a very detailed scheme of work and structured assessment system seamlessly covering the desirable learning outcomes and National Curriculum programmes of study for children up to age seven. This enables the teachers and learning support assistants to very effectively target the needs of this group of children. There is a good variety of suitable resources, including information and communications technology, and a developing sensory room. The indoor accommodation is good, but there is no independent outdoor play area.

## **ENGLISH**

63. Overall, achievement in English is good at all key stages and pupils make good progress. Standards of achievement are good in speaking and listening at all key stages. Well-planned lessons and the use of a variety of teaching strategies at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 encourage pupils to concentrate for extended periods. They are encouraged to listen by the skilful questioning which enables them to answer questions correctly and increases their self-confidence. During Key Stage 1, pupils are encouraged to talk about pictures in the storybooks which they share every day. By the time they are seven, most can make simple predictions about what will happen next and the higher attaining pupils can retell a story in their own words. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils speaking and listening skills continue to develop well. The Social Use of Language Programme improves pupils' confidence and ability to express themselves, as well as improving the self-esteem of pupils with specific speech and language difficulties. For example, in a role-play of a restaurant, less confident pupils were able to take the parts of customers and waiting staff and make themselves clearly understood. Pupils listen well to the contributions of other pupils, praising their success and waiting their own turn to speak. The majority of pupils at Key Stage 3 are able to make themselves clearly understood and join in conversations appropriately. They are sociable with visitors and keen to talk. A minority of pupils are set specific targets if they interrupt the teachers and other pupils. This process improves their listening skills successfully and encourages them to evaluate their progress. During Key Stage 4, pupils develop mature attitudes to learning and answer questions thoughtfully. Year 10 pupils have good recall of the plot of Macbeth and some are able to comment on the characters and the events using direct quotes to illustrate their answers. They make relevant contributions to lessons but lack practice in asking questions; for example, in a session on ' Drive-ability' by a visiting speaker the pupils listened carefully and followed instructions but did not ask any questions. The speaker was thanked formally by one of the pupils on behalf of the group.
64. Pupils' achievements in reading are good and writing skills are developing satisfactorily during Key Stage 1. They acquire a range of pre-reading skills, which they apply well in their big book story sessions. Pupils recognise and name the main characters and say what they are doing. They are aware that the spoken word is represented in written form and know to turn pages to see what happens next. By the time they are seven, pupils make predictions and some higher attaining pupils are able to retell the story in their own words. They can match familiar words and sequence pictures in correct order to tell a story. Their early writing skills are developing and they can draw, trace, paint and cut and stick. All pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 have benefited from the effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy.
65. During Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in reading and writing. By the age of 11, most pupils are able to recognise and read an increasing number of familiar words in their reading scheme. They know initial letter sounds and try to sound out less common words, but most find this difficult without support. A few pupils read accurately and are beginning to use appropriate expression in their voices. Pupils are able to comment on the content of their books and some can recount the main points. They can explain what is happening in a picture of a bare tree in winter

and some can suggest reasons, as well as make accurate predictions about what will happen next. With the teacher's help, they can compose sentences with a satisfactory range of vocabulary for their class poem about a dragon. Handwriting is good. Pupils form their letters carefully and understand that spacing is important. Most pupils can write words with help and several can write independently. A few are beginning to construct simple sentences correctly using capital letters and full stops.

66. Pupils continue to maintain good standards of achievement and make good progress throughout Key Stage 3 in reading and writing. The majority of pupils read simple texts and write independently. Most use an increasing range of strategies to help their reading such as using picture clues and sounding out new words. A minority of pupils read fluently with expression. Most pupils can read the instructions in a recipe for making cakes and, with varying levels of support, can sequence them correctly. Handwriting and presentation are good. Pupils write carefully and read back what they have written. Most spell familiar words correctly and some are successful with more complex and less familiar words. Many pupils write in sentences but the use of capital letters and full stops is inconsistent.
67. Many opportunities are provided in other subjects at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 for pupils to improve their literacy skills. They often are expected to talk about their work and listen to others. For example, pupils talk about healthy eating in a personal and social education lesson and explain the difference between vertebrates and invertebrates in science. Teachers constantly use correct subject-specific vocabulary and encourage pupils to incorporate new words into their own vocabularies. A range of reading and writing tasks includes reading the names of places on maps and labelling maps correctly. Dates are written in full and words for songs are read from card or an overhead projector. Pupils re-tell stories in history and write prayers in religious education.
68. Throughout Key Stage 4, pupils' achievements are good and they make satisfactory progress in reading and writing. All pupils are able to record their work independently. Handwriting and presentation are good and spelling and punctuation are satisfactory in most cases. Some Year 10 pupils are able to write extended stories, which are well structured and show good use of imagination. Pupils read for pleasure and achieve satisfactory standards of accuracy and fluency. Year 11 pupils have opportunities to apply their reading and writing skills to preparation for the world of work through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network programme. They write their own work experience diaries and reports, learn to fill in a variety of forms and write simple letters of application. Their standards are sound but pupils could achieve more with better planning and use of time. Good speaking and listening skills are developed effectively when they go to college or participate in work experience and need to communicate with people they do not know as well as their teachers.
69. Teaching and learning are good at Key Stages 1 and 2, very good at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at Key Stage 4. All the teachers have good subject knowledge and employ a suitable range of teaching strategies. Teachers appreciate the need to reinforce basic literacy skills across the curriculum and opportunities are provided in most lessons for pupils to record their learning. The literacy hour has been skilfully incorporated to good effect in Key Stages 1 and 2 and is being gradually introduced at Key Stage 3. Teachers plan the literacy hours effectively so that pupils are interested and achieve the aims of each lesson. Individual and group work is set at an appropriate level to enable pupils to succeed. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and behaviour is good. Learning support assistants are deployed well to provide the optimum amount of support for pupils to make progress, however small the steps. They make an invaluable contribution to the pupils' learning. Pupils are consistently praised and rewarded for effort and achievement which encourages them to do their best. Assessment and recording of pupils' progress through their individual learning plans are good at Key Stages 1 and 2 and very good at Key Stage 3, where the teacher and the learning support assistant use a well-designed and efficient system to track individuals' progress. Information is then used to plan further work on the existing targets or to set new learning targets. At this key stage, the pace is noticeably brisk. Pupils are moved from one activity to another, their attention is maintained throughout the lesson and they learn well. At Key Stage 4, questions are used well by the teacher to help pupils recall their knowledge. Appropriate prompting extends their answers well. This encourages pupils, for example, to use

appropriate Shakespearean quotations. However, longer term planning is underdeveloped and assessment and recording are less rigorous than in other parts of the school. The pace of the lessons lack urgency and some tasks are allowed to drift, so that time is wasted which slows progress.

70. A panel of key stage representatives meets twice a term to monitor English across the school but the role of the co-ordinator is unclear and consequently the subject lacks strong leadership. Recording of pupils' progress across the key stages is at an early stage of development and portfolios of pupils' work are not yet collected to demonstrate progress made. There is a satisfactory range of readers, reading books, tapes and videos in the school to support classroom learning but there is no central school library. This limits pupils' opportunities and hinders potential progress, particularly for the older pupils. New technologies are underused in enabling pupils with additional special needs to record their work.
71. Pupils at Key Stages 2 and 3 for whom English is an additional language are provided with appropriate levels of support. Teachers are aware of their pupils' needs and learning support assistants work closely with the pupils to ensure that they understand and are able to respond. Currently there are no pupils in school at an early stage of language acquisition. The pupils achieve similar standards and rates of progress as their peers.

## **MATHEMATICS**

72. Pupils' achievements and progress in mathematics are good, overall. In lessons, pupils' progress and achievement range between very good and satisfactory, reflecting the quality of the teaching. Pupils make good progress throughout Key Stage 1 and by age seven their achievements are very good. All pupils are able to count to 10 and most to 20. Many can count backwards using the help offered by the number line on the wall. They all learn the difference between long and short. They develop a clear understanding of 'on', 'under' and 'behind' and will place a doll appropriately when asked. Pupils recognise, and name accurately, a circle, square, rectangle and triangle and sort by either shape or colour. When the challenge of the activity is increased by requiring the pupils to select from a number of assorted coloured shapes one that differed in either shape or colour, but not in both, all can succeed. A few are able to express clearly what they have done, 'I have changed shape but not colour'. By age eleven, pupils' achievements are good and they continue to make good progress. Higher attaining pupils understand the concept of change and two are able to calculate, mentally, that if one has 20 pence and spends 12 pence one would receive 8 pence change. Most pupils recognise all coins and know which of two is worth most. Lower attaining pupils are not entirely sure of all coins, but get there with supportive hints. By age 14 pupils' achievement and rate of progress continue to be good. Many pupils can build a multiplication table by repeated addition and know most regular two-dimensional shapes. Higher attaining pupils can add and subtract to 200 using the decomposition method. Lower attaining pupils are beginning to multiply using repeated addition and recognise reflective symmetry in regular shapes. By age sixteen, pupils' achievements and the progress they make drop from good to satisfactory, overall. This is largely due to the pattern of lessons on the timetable particularly for Year 11. Most pupils can add a café bill to £3.00, though lower attaining pupils need some support. Higher attaining pupils understand how 'counting squares' and rounding up and down 'part squares' enables them to estimate the area of a shape. They begin to use calculators to add and multiply. A few recognise that multiplication is repeated addition. Pupils can suggest the purpose of a room by comparing size and position on a scale plan. One pupil learns that four squares represent one square metre and that two divisions represent 1 metre in a scale drawing. They complete the mathematical modules in the Youth Award Scheme and the higher attaining pupils are studying for the Certificate of Educational Achievement in mathematics. Last year those that entered passed, many with higher awards.
73. Mathematics is taught well through other subjects of the curriculum. In science, pupils measure volume (200ml) and temperature and construct graphs. They cost recipes from given information in food technology and make appropriate proportional adjustments for additional guests. Results of a traffic survey in geography are displayed as graphs, some generated by computer. Time is spent exploring geometric shapes in art. Opportunities are constantly being sought to practise counting skills. Pupils count to ten in French and count the number of sit-



ups and press-ups during circuit training in physical education. During many registration sessions, pupils count those present and then calculate the number absent. Even in assemblies the number of pupils with merit certificates is noted and pupils are asked to identify prime numbers.

74. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. In 21 per cent of lessons, the teaching and learning are very good, they are good in 65 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in the remainder. Teaching and learning are very good at Key Stage 1, good in Key Stages 2 and 3 and satisfactory in Key Stage 4. Teachers' knowledge of mathematics is at least satisfactory and, combined with the very good knowledge that both they and the learning support assistants have of the pupils in the class, enables a wide range of appropriate learning opportunities to be used. Pupils are keen to learn. They have a good rapport with their teachers and work in a supportive atmosphere, which helps them to do their best. Planning is in line with the National Numeracy Strategy in the classes for primary aged pupils and, at its best, it carefully details objectives and activities which leads to the achievement, over time, of particular individual education plan targets. Teachers have high expectations of both work rate and behaviour, which, together with the good and timely use of praise and encouragement, enables lessons to move along well, with no time wasted. In consequence, pupils settle quickly to their lessons and enjoy the stimulus of the short mental session that begins the mathematics lessons in the younger classes. Continual challenge is offered by the introduction of increasingly demanding exercises through carefully structured small steps. Much of the teaching is oral, with the pupils having to respond after completing the necessary calculation, using supporting apparatus such as coins when adding money and working out change. Teachers are frequently making assessments of individuals' learning and these are well recorded, with each target showing the stage which the pupil has reached and which supports the increasing challenge of the tasks that are set. In response to high standards demanded by teachers, as pupils move through the school they take greater pride in the presentation of their work and most files of older pupils are well maintained. A weakness, especially for the higher attaining older pupils, who are likely to be entered for the Certificate of Achievement or General Certificate of Secondary Education, is the absence of a regular, structured homework routine.
75. Leadership of mathematics is satisfactory and there has been a satisfactory improvement in mathematics since the last inspection. For example, in-service training has been used well to include successfully the National Numeracy Strategy and a daily numeracy lesson at Key Stages 1 and 2. The introduction of recording sheets showing small steps in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 is helpful. This records achievement and enables the monitoring of progress. Details of the next target for the individual education plan are also indicated. At Key Stage 3, there is a separate scheme of work, supported by a published scheme and a daily mathematics lesson. Further accreditation has been introduced at Key Stage 4. There are also improved resources for learning. However, further development is essential. In particular, a detailed, whole-school scheme of work, which may incorporate the present key stage schemes, is needed to build on work from one key stage to the next more effectively. In addition, as recognised by the school, the extension of the small steps recording scheme and a more even distribution of teaching time for mathematics in Key Stage 4 are needed.

## **SCIENCE**

76. The department has improved on its position since the last inspection, when achievement was reported as 'satisfactory to good'. Pupils' achievements and progress in lessons and work seen are now good overall. During Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' achievement and progress are very good. Good pace is maintained in lessons and pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Although at 16 pupils are no longer entered for the General Certificate of Secondary Education examination, they are entered for the nationally accredited Certificate of Achievement and achieve good results. In the 1999 examinations six pupils were awarded distinctions and five gained credits. Standard attainment task results at age 14 have improved steadily over the past three years.
77. Pupils make good gains in knowledge from their lessons. During Key Stage 1, pupils are able to explore a range of materials, solids and liquids, to investigate how they react to squeezing, bending, tearing and stretching. From well-planned projects they learn how plants need water

and light to grow. Higher attaining pupils know that the camel stores water in its hump to enable it to travel across the waterless desert. By the time they are eleven, pupils can name the main parts of a dog and can relate them to the parts of other animals. They make simple circuits and know that a bulb needs electricity to light it and that a switch is used to complete the circuit and light the bulb. They investigate a wormery in both light and dark conditions, to observe the tunnelling activities of worms. Pupils at Key Stage 3 know, by prediction and experiment, that sand will not dissolve in hot or cold water. When challenged by the teacher, higher attaining pupils know that sand can be melted at high temperatures to form glass. By the time they are 16, pupils can conduct a fair test and write up their investigations neatly and accurately. The teacher's high expectations of preparation and investigation ensure that pupils develop the skills to record test results clearly in both written and graphical forms. Pupils can identify the pollen grains in a flower head, knowing that they are the male seeds from the stamen, which travel down the stigma to the ovule of the flower. They are aware of the importance of bees to this process of fertilisation. Pupils with additional special educational needs are well known to teachers and they make similar good and very good progress in lessons.

78. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. They are very good at Key Stages 1 and 2. All lessons make good provision for the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers make very good use of question and answer sessions to check on learning, and they expect and get high standards of written presentation from the pupils. The emphasis placed on investigation work is science, ensures that pupils have plenty of practice in measuring volume, temperature and proportion, as well as presenting results in graphical form. Older pupils are able to use the computer to construct graphs from their experiments. Experiments are set up very well, assisted by the very good support from learning support assistants. Teachers know the pupils well and their good relationships with them ensure that they retain their interest in lessons. This is particularly noticeable at Key Stages 1 and 2, where lessons are carefully structured to maintain the pace of learning. At Key Stages 3 and 4, the lessons are lengthy and at times pace and challenge are not maintained. Pupils are managed very well at all key stages; the resulting good behaviour ensures that lessons are not disrupted and progress is maintained.
79. The subject is led by an experienced and knowledgeable co-ordinator, who uses the very good specialist accommodation to plan and teach effective lessons at Key Stages 3 and 4, using the good resources available to her. She is moving the department effectively towards the new target setting system of assessment, using a local authority 'small steps' system as an interim arrangement. At Key Stages 1 and 2, very enthusiastic and committed teachers, ably assisted by their learning support staff, teach science well. Through very good planning and management, teachers are able to capture the younger pupils' interest and imagination in the investigation of their world. The department has responded well to the last inspection report. Both the quality of teaching and the standards of achievement have improved.

## **ART**

80. The quality of teaching and learning are very good overall and enable pupils to achieve high standards and a few successfully enter for the General Certificate of Secondary Education examination in art and design. Pupils benefit from well-planned and prepared lessons, which enable them to explore the work of a good range of well-known painters and sculptors, using a wide variety of art and design media, including photography, ceramics and computer aided art. Pupils make very good progress at all key stages. During Key Stage 1, the pupils listen with interest to a well-known and very well told folk tale, which inspires them to develop their constructions based on the story. They develop cutting and sticking skills, attaching straws or paper tiles to the roof of their cardboard model, colouring them brightly and effectively. They make simple tree forms from wire and tissue. Higher attaining pupils are able to neatly twist pipe cleaners around the wire to embellish the trees. By the time they are 11, pupils have developed skills in screen printing in overlaid colours using torn paper strips as a mask. They learn about artists such as Matisse, Mondrian, Cezanne and Picasso and use colour confidently in working in their different styles. They impress clay templates using tools and stamps they choose for themselves, forming a simple abstract animal shape ready for firing and glazing. By the end of Key Stage 3, sketchbooks show that their understanding of

perspective and their use of colour are not effectively developed, although they undertake some imaginative work in studying movement and their portrait studies show good observational skills. Pupils entered for the General Certificate of Secondary Education examination at the end of Key Stage 4 use the scanner to complete a stamp project. They show a very high standard of photo-scanned work, progressing from an over-exposed portrait, which they take and print themselves, to computer manipulation in the analytical cubist style. Their work reveals a thoughtful and creative approach to the subject. This is encouraged through very effective teaching, which enables them to explore their own ideas freely and expressively.

81. The quality of the teaching and learning are very good. A strength of teaching lies in the excellent demonstrations of the teacher's own skills, by, for example, showing how to apply colour in the pointilliste style or how to analyse and rebuild a portrait in the cubist style. Pupils respond to the teacher's high expectations and work hard to develop their own studies. They enjoy art lessons and the very good relationships with the teacher and learning support assistant, which ensure a pleasant, industrious ethos in which pupils can work freely to build their knowledge and skills. They learn the language of art and are beginning to annotate their work at Key Stage 4, which supports the school's provision for literacy well. Very good records of pupils' attainment and progress are kept, which enable the pupils to evaluate their own work against previous standards.
82. The department is led with enthusiasm and a clear commitment to work with and get the best out of pupils who have special educational needs. The high standards, and the good teamwork between teacher and learning support assistant, ensure that the department is a strength of the school. The co-ordinator makes good use of the under-powered computer and works hard to keep this successful subject going in conditions that restrict the size and range of art work which can be undertaken. This is because the accommodation is cramped and the storage is poor.
83. The department has made a very good response to the previous inspection report. The quality of teaching and standards of learning have improved markedly and lessons are characterised by high expectations of both behaviour and work. The scheme of work for Key Stages 1 and 2 are now very good. Only the accommodation and storage remain unsatisfactory.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

84. Standards of achievement and pupils' progress are good overall. Standards are slightly lower than those seen during the previous inspection, where 'outstanding' features were observed in two-thirds of lessons. It was not possible to observe lessons at Key Stage 1; however, evidence from pupils' work and photographs indicates that pupils' achievements and progress are satisfactory and at times, good. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils use construction kits such as Lego to help the development of manual and language skills. They select from a range of materials such as wooden blocks and plasticine to design and build model bridges. By the time they are eleven, pupils' achievements are good, aided by high levels of concentration and co-operation. Pupils understand an 'in and out' mechanism and make good progress in using techniques, for example, to construct and assemble models with the use of split pins. The progress and independence of higher attaining pupils are constrained by a lack of resources. During Key Stage 3, pupils' achievements are satisfactory in materials technology and pupils do well in food technology. They weigh and measure with increasing accuracy, and use a number of methods, for example, to combine ingredients to make a variety of cakes. They learn to compare recipes and to evaluate what they have made. Pupils use a range of tools such as saws, chisels and a glue gun effectively as they design and assemble rain gauges using simple circuits. They learn to design and make items for specific purposes, for example, a safe and brightly coloured pull along toy for a child. By the time pupils are 16, their achievements and progress are satisfactory in the materials part of design and technology and very good in food technology. The majority of pupils in Year 11 are prepared for the Certificate of Educational Achievement materials examination. In 1999 six pupils passed the examination, one with merit. Pupils can explain the difference between conductors and insulators and synthetic and natural materials and they name tools accurately when discussing their work. Skills are developed appropriately. They cut and combine

materials more confidently when making products such as moving vehicles, rain sensors or cranes. Project folders showing design and evaluation are untidy, however, and the presentation of written work is below that seen in other subjects. The small number of girls in Year 11 do not have the similar opportunities as the boys because they do not attend materials technology lessons. This is because, owing to timetable arrangements, they did not study the subject in Year 10. Pupils clearly enjoy food technology. They improve their understanding of a healthy diet and develop their preparation and cooking skills. They select and cost ingredients, adapt recipes then prepare, serve and share a nutritious meal. These skills contribute significantly to the good personal development of pupils.

85. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning are good. All teachers plan well to deploy the competent learning support assistants. This helps to establish a calm working environment in which skills can be learned and good work celebrated. Evidence from records and examples of pupils' work indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory at Key Stage 1. During Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching and learning are good. Enthusiasm and very clear subject knowledge are conveyed to the pupils, which encourages them to work hard and therefore make good progress. The teaching of food technology at Key Stages 3 and 4 is very good. Insistence on high standards and attention to detail combined with planning interesting and relevant tasks all contribute to pupils learning very well and making progress better than would be expected. Teaching and learning of the materials element are less consistent, but are satisfactory overall. The teacher has good subject knowledge. Praise and encouragement are used effectively to help pupils do things for themselves. However, at times teaching is unsatisfactory. Questioning is not sufficiently focused and higher attaining pupils contribute most of the answers. Pupils' work shows that their designs are not evaluated sufficiently and, in contrast with other subjects, there is no insistence on high quality presentation.
86. The co-ordination of design and technology is impaired by lack of regular joint planning between those with responsibilities for the subject and all those who teach it. There is a lack of clarity between the roles of the co-ordinator and key stage co-ordinators. In consequence, progress between key stages is not sufficiently clear. Recording of attainment is satisfactory but the information given in annual reports is unsatisfactory. Topics covered are recorded but not pupils' knowledge and understanding. Some inadequacy of resources at Key Stage 2 impedes pupils' progress and poor storage facilities hinder their ability to develop independence in selection and preparation of materials and equipment. There are similar storage difficulties in the materials workshop, which is only suitable for small groups of pupils. The range of materials used is narrowed through the absence of specific equipment for working with metal. However, accommodation and resources for food technology are much improved since the last inspection and contribute well to the good progress being made.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

87. Standards of achievement in geography are satisfactory at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. Geography is not taught in Key Stage 4 except through the European Awareness and Environment modules of the Award Scheme and Development Accreditation Network Youth Award Scheme, where standards are satisfactory. Standards are broadly in line with the findings of the previous inspection. No lessons were observed at Key Stage 1 but scrutiny of work, photographic evidence and discussion show that pupils understand the difference between hot and cold places and understand the geography of the school. During Key Stage 2, pupils look at maps and can identify their own home on local maps. They make a survey of the local area and are beginning to use symbols to represent different types of shops. By the age of 11 they understand that maps are of differing scales and learn to locate family birthplaces in this country and abroad. There are not enough maps and globes to reinforce learning in every class. During Key Stage 3, pupils learn to identify lines of latitude and longitude and are beginning to understand co-ordinates. They can refer to maps for information and can compare different towns such as holiday resorts and ports. By the end of the key stage they are developing an understanding of erosion and how rivers shape the land but textbooks that are too difficult do not help learning. Throughout Key Stage 4, pupils benefit from practical activities. They complete traffic surveys and relate them to protecting the environment. They consult maps when following the course of rivers and identify ingredients from a range of countries.
88. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory at all key stages. Teachers plan interesting tasks for younger pupils and link the work well with other subjects. Icebergs are studied to help distinguish between hot and cold countries and are represented well during art lessons. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is inconsistent: some teaching is good and some unsatisfactory. Where it is good the teacher has high but realistic expectations of what pupils can achieve and plans resources and adult support well. Where teaching is unsatisfactory there is little opportunity for independence and the activities lack challenge. For example, pupils cut out the same road signs, stick them to a prepared plan and colour the roads grey. During Key Stage 3, thorough planning and a brisk approach help to move lessons on at a lively pace. Teachers' expectations that work will be presented well are met. Good teaching in food technology during Key Stage 4 supports geography well as pupils work co-operatively to prepare meals from a range of countries to increase European awareness.
89. The co-ordinator of geography is new, enthusiastic and has not yet had training for this role. The previous inspection noted that the co-ordinator did not have time to carry out her role and this situation persists. Her assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject throughout the school is accurate. Resources are insufficient. There are too few globes and maps of varying scales and the reading age and content level of the textbooks used at Key Stage 3 are well beyond the majority of pupils. Information and communications technology is insufficiently used to support the subject. A tick list of topics covered provides inadequate evidence of progress and in consequence, annual reports to parents do not describe what pupils know, understand and can do. Despite these deficiencies, standards remain similar to the last inspection. There is insufficient planning for progress and continuity of skills and understanding across the key stages. However, increasing links with similar schools in Germany and Sweden make a very positive contribution to the subject. Pupils from Rowhill and Germany will meet in France later this year. Other residential visits also support the subject well and good use is made of the local area as a resource for learning.

## **HISTORY**

90. During the week of the inspection it was possible to observe only a few lessons. Judgements are also based on scrutiny of pupils' work and classroom displays as well as discussions with pupils and staff. Standards of achievement at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 are good. History is not taught at Key Stage 4. Pupils have a good understanding of past times and some of the people who lived long ago. The youngest pupils bring to school photographs of when they were babies and think about how they have changed. They learn about Florence Nightingale and play nurses in the hospital corner in the classroom. By the time they are 11, pupils know

about the Vikings. They draw longships and role-play rowing across the oceans to Britain and digging for treasure like archaeologists. By the time they are 14, pupils can compare their lives to those of Victorian children and imagine what it must have been like to be a chimney sweep or factory worker.

91. Teaching and learning are good in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about the subject. They present it in interesting and relevant ways. For example, the youngest pupils learning about Florence Nightingale are encouraged to talk about their own experiences in hospital. Handling a good range of resources, including some borrowed from the school nurse, helps pupils to understand what nurses do now and how they used to work years ago. Older pupils are helped to learn about Roman soldiers and compare them to modern soldiers by carrying model packs and talking about how people made journeys before there were maps. Teachers take time to set up fascinating displays of historical artefacts that really bring the subject alive for pupils and reinforce the learning that takes place in lessons. They choose methods that actively involve pupils in role-play or discussion. Video material is used effectively to show pupils how things have changed. Progress is therefore good at all three key stages as pupils' understanding of past events increases.
92. The curriculum is well planned and includes topics that pupils can relate to and find interesting. There is a good range of resources, including historical artefacts. Assessment is developing, good photographic records of pupils' experiences are being collected at Key Stage 1 and other strategies are being considered for older pupils. The co-ordinator supports colleagues well and effectively promotes the subject. High standards in teaching and learning identified in the last report have been maintained.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY**

93. Only four discrete lessons of information and communications technology were observed during the inspection, at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. However, conversations with pupils, analysis of their work and teachers' planning and records shows that achievement and progress by the substantial majority of pupils are satisfactory. Young pupils learn how to use a mouse and operate simple programs. In Year 6 pupils show some skills in using a word processor. They copy from previously written text, choose a font and decide what should be in bold and plain text. They understand the use of the shift key and space bar. They also appreciate the text wrap facility and that it is unnecessary to use the return key near the end of a line. Pupils use a draw and paint program, selecting spray, line or brush and colour options creatively. By Year 9, most pupils are able to change font, size, and colour easily using the drop down menus, though lower attaining pupils still need a high level of support. They understand how to save their work using 'save as' to hard disk and how to close down the computer. There is a very wide range of keyboard skill: one pupil types very quickly, but others are very slow, having to search the keyboard for each letter in turn. Pupils in Year 11 attend a link course to a local college of further education and a few of the higher attaining pupils make good progress. Last year, six pupils gained passes in the Royal Society of Arts competency key boards test, with one of the pupils being awarded a distinction. They develop some more advanced skills by age sixteen. One pupil showed a detailed presentation he had compiled of his week at school for eventual display in the school's web site.
94. Information and communications technology is used effectively in other subjects. The 'Wellington Square' CD-ROM, helps to develop reading. A series of programs that help pupils learn to spell are used well to encourage them to improve. The emphasis is on letter names and sounds. Numeracy programs in mathematics are effective in capturing pupils' interest and learning because the activity is fun. In science lessons pupils use the word processor and present findings using a bar chart facility. Two pupils in Year 11 use a scanner resizing techniques to produce a collage as part of their General Certificate of Secondary Education art portfolios while a third used a paint program to experiment in art.
95. Pupils enjoy using computers; they respond well to their teachers and work co-operatively together. They are able to concentrate for surprisingly long periods, their behaviour is usually good and they can be trusted to use the computers sensibly.

96. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the small number of lessons observed during the inspection teaching and learning was satisfactory in 75 per cent and unsatisfactory in the remainder. When pupils use computers in lessons they invariably do well. Teachers are confident when teaching information and communications technology and are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. However, the quality of the machines and programs in the computer suite is inconsistent. There are insufficient resources to teach control technology. Not all pupils gain the same experiences. In the lessons where teaching is satisfactory the planned tasks are appropriate, but pupils are required to spend too much time on routine keyboard skills, rather than the objectives on which the lesson is based. Teachers have sound expectations of behaviour and make satisfactory assessment of the work completed, though little is printed, so that self-evaluation by pupils is not undertaken. In the early years and Key Stage 1, class teachers are now using a digital camera very successfully for recording pupils' progress. During sessions where teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, there is insufficient joint planning between teachers, so that objectives are inconsistent and expectations of the pupils' skills too low. For example, opening programs, saving work and closing down computers are frequently done for pupils, though these skills are sometimes observed when pupils are using computers to support their learning in other subjects.
97. Information and communications technology is currently a major focus for the school and is a developing subject. There is a substantial improvement about to be undertaken in the performance of the equipment in the computer room as the National Grid for Learning is introduced. From the evidence of the small sample of lessons observed, teaching has improved since the last inspection, although there is still an occasional lesson where teaching is unsatisfactory. However, overall, there has been insufficient improvement. There is no whole-school detailed scheme of work or uniform structure for assessing pupils' skills so that progressive development may be assured. Nor is there evidence that the monitoring of the use of information and communications technology in other subjects has been undertaken. The link is not made between what they learn in discrete lessons and what they learn using the computer as a learning tool in class.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

98. During the week of the inspection it was possible to observe only a few lessons in French. Judgements are therefore also based on a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils. Standards of achievement in modern foreign languages are satisfactory in relation to the pupils' prior attainment. The subject was only reintroduced into the curriculum at Key Stage 3 last September and pupils can now say a few phrases and respond to questions about themselves in French. This is largely due to their overall positive attitude to learning. Pupils are confident when trying to speak another language and are learning to count and follow directions. They listen carefully in order to repeat new vocabulary correctly. They are pleased with their language skills and like to demonstrate their abilities at register time when they respond and give greetings in other languages.
99. Overall, teaching and learning in French are unsatisfactory. Teachers are not confident and enthusiastic about the subject. They do not plan in sufficient detail and do not include a suitable variety of activities for the length of the lesson. Therefore, pupils sometimes become bored and restless. Some become silly and noisy and interfere with the learning of others. Teachers are not sufficiently skilled at dealing with this poor behaviour. There are also not enough opportunities for pupils to listen to native speakers or to use computers in French lessons. However video materials included in the course are appropriate and used effectively by teachers. Pupils watch these programmes with interest and become familiar with how the language is presented. They join in with the phrases they know and are making satisfactory progress over time.
100. The course is well chosen and suitable for the needs of the pupils. There are sufficient resources for this course. Assessment is underdeveloped and does not yet record what pupils

know, understand and can do in this subject. Owing to staff changes, the teaching of French is not as strong as identified at the last inspection.

## MUSIC

101. Music is taught at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. Overall standards of achievement in music are unsatisfactory. Although, as at the last inspection, pupils sing well, their progress in other areas of music is slow at all key stages, because they are not systematically taught. In consequence, the subject has not maintained the good standards which were reported on previously. During Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils have singing lessons together. They develop successfully a repertoire of songs, some with a religious theme. Most learn tunes easily and many join in with enthusiasm. They quickly learn to copy the actions of the songs by watching staff and older pupils. They are delighted when selected to play one of the six little ducks and wobble beautifully at the appropriate time. Since September, the music specialist has also taught Key Stage 1 pupils once a fortnight. They practise their singing and take turns to play drums and maracas. By the time they are seven, they can sing a number of songs from memory and are beginning to develop a sense of rhythm. During Key Stage 2, pupils increase the number of songs they know by heart. Most sing tunefully and perform actions in time to words and music, for example, remembering to leave words out in the right places in 'The Three Cornered Hat'. During a short session at the end of one afternoon, pupils from Key Stages 1 and 2 performed a dramatic story using percussion instruments to represent noises. This was only the second time they had done this and although they needed a great deal of direction they performed well. By the time they are 11, they know a good range of songs but have limited experience in playing instruments or in listening to, or composing, music. Throughout Key Stage 3, the music specialist teaches pupils. By the time they are 14, pupils have learned more songs including, 'Billy Boy', 'Dance to your Daddy' and 'When the Saints go Marching in'. Most can recognise their name when the teacher taps it out, for example, on a drum. They learn about Spirituals and Jazz and by the time they are 14, can play simple tunes on the keyboard. About fifteen pupils recently performed the theme music to *Titanic*, using keyboards. Their knowledge of variety and range in music is narrow and insufficient time is spent in developing their composing and appraising skills.
102. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but range from good to unsatisfactory. Good examples of teaching seen at Key Stages 1 and 2 involved all the pupils in singing and learning new songs. Teachers teach the words carefully, which gives the pupils confidence to join in. Praise is used effectively and pupils are congratulated for singing well, which encourages them further. No time is wasted and equipment is to hand. Accompaniment on the keyboard is of a good standard and teachers taking the session together are effective. Other staff provide very good role models for the pupils to copy as they sing and perform the actions with them. The music specialist usually teaches older pupils and lacks the expertise to teach pupils under the age of seven. The room they are taught in is used for secondary aged pupils and the furniture is too big. Many of the young pupils cannot read the words of the songs on the cards. Too little time is given to 'hands on' experience with instruments and ground rules for starting and stopping are not established. In addition, the lesson is over long and some pupils become restless and difficult to manage. The emphasis on singing is continued throughout Key Stage 3 but not enough work is done on composition and listening and appraising pupils' own work and the work of musicians. Pupils develop only a limited awareness of the music of other countries or cultures. The teacher has evident subject knowledge and makes good use of playing the guitar. An element of fun is introduced through using the imaginary 'remote control' to indicate which pupil should play, which gains the interest of many pupils. The pace of lessons is maintained throughout the singing but slows as pupils set up instruments and take turns to perform. Planning of lessons does not take sufficient account of the range of ability. This is partly because the assessment of progress is narrow and does not give sufficient information. The additional special needs of some pupils are not being sufficiently considered; for example, not enough attention is being given to how to deploy support staff effectively to ensure that those with autistic spectrum disorders or difficulties with co-ordination get the most out of lessons. The co-ordinator is aware that additional aids need to be purchased to support the learning of a small but increasing number of pupils.



103. The overall co-ordination of the subject is weak and the subject co-ordinators' role lacks clarity. There is no coherent scheme of work for music for all three key stages and expertise is not shared between the teachers who teach the pupils at Key Stage 1. Progress from one class to the next is not well thought through. Whilst there are collections of instruments at each key stage, some of good quality, no overall audit has been undertaken to enable the best use to be made of them. In consequence there are sometimes insufficiencies or narrow ranges of resources used. There are no effective means of recording what pupils know, understand and can do, which is evident in the subject reports. The curriculum is too narrow and insufficient attention is paid to the, now less stringent, National Curriculum requirements.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

104. Standards of achievement are very good at Key Stages 1 and 2; they are good at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at Key Stage 4. Pupils throughout the school often attain levels higher than would be expected. By the time pupils are seven, they can walk, march and skip in time to the music. They are familiar with a good number of country-dances and demonstrate enjoyment as they participate. By the time they are 11, pupils can run with a rugby ball and pass to others. Higher attaining pupils understand the rules of the game and can tackle safely and touch down in order to score a try. By the time they are 14, pupils know the importance of keeping fit. They measure the improvement in their own fitness in circuit training lessons and compete fairly in team games. By the time they are 16, pupils are beginning to make decisions about the use of their own leisure time and enjoy swimming at the leisure centre.
105. Teaching and learning are very good at Key Stages 1 and 2, where there is a high level of expertise and enthusiasm. Classroom assistants work really well with teachers to ensure that all pupils participate as fully as possible. All adults actively take part, dancing or running with the pupils, encouraging and praising them for their efforts. As a result, all the pupils, regardless of their ability or disability, really enjoy the lessons and make progress. Exciting opportunities, such as working with a rugby coach, are arranged and this helps to increase motivation and develop the pupils' skills. A further example is the additional support pupils get from working with students from a local sixth form. In a game of ducks and geese, the pupils delighted in choosing and racing against these students. Teaching and learning are good at Key Stage 3, where planning is a particularly good feature. A carousel of a wide variety of activities is organised and over the year pupils have an opportunity to sample each one. Good use is made of off-site as well as on-site resources. Pupils gain from the experience of working with others in leisure centres and particularly enjoy using the trampoline. At Key Stage 4, where teaching and learning are satisfactory, there is an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' interest in leisure pursuits. Teaching is not as successful at this key stage owing to teachers' lack of good subject expertise. Lessons are not planned in such detail and skills are not practised and developed as well as they are lower down the school.
106. The curriculum for physical education is well planned, particularly so at Key Stage 2, and includes all components of the National Curriculum. Very good use is made of visiting specialists to extend the teaching of activities such as tennis, cricket and rugby and this really helps to raise standards. There is a detailed list of fixtures providing pupils with excellent opportunities to take part in sport with others and the school currently holds the cup for Key Stage 2 New Age Rugby. Residential trips such as the one to Arethusa further enrich the curriculum by teaching pupils skills such as archery, climbing and orienteering. A recent highlight that some pupils enjoyed was the opportunity to spend the day with Kevin Keegan. Pupils still talk about the exciting day and during warm-up sessions use some of the exercises that the England football manager taught them. The co-ordinator is an excellent source of expertise and advice for other members of staff. Her commitment to equal opportunities ensures that all pupils make progress and participate fully in the rich curriculum that is offered.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

107. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactory standards and progress. The school is not meeting its statutory obligations to teach religious education at Key Stage 4. Consequently, no judgement could be made about standards or progress at this key stage.

108. During Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in learning the difference between right and wrong and in beginning to develop a knowledge of Bible stories. By the time they are seven, they can identify the good person in the story of the Good Samaritan and explain why they think he was good. They know the name of the Bible and understand that the birth of Jesus is celebrated at Christmas. Pupils are helpful and caring towards each other. Key Stage 2 pupils continue to make good progress in learning about the Christian way of life. They are able to describe the appearance of the Angel Gabriel to Mary, the story of the Nativity and the death of Jesus. They can remember many details, which they talk about with interest and enthusiasm. By the end of the key stage, pupils understand the concept of prayer as talking to God and they have developed clear personal views about God. During Key Stage 3, pupils make slow progress in improving their understanding of religions other than Christianity. They know that the Bible is the holy book of the Christian religion and understand why it is divided into Old and New Testaments. By the time they are 14, pupils can name several stories from the Old Testament and have good knowledge of the events leading up to the birth and death of Christ. They understand the significance of the bread and wine in the Communion service. However, they have little knowledge of Buddhism and Sikhism, which are the other major world faiths they study. They do learn the importance of showing respect for people's beliefs, but do not always demonstrate this respect during the lessons, when behaviour is sometimes inappropriate.
109. Teaching and learning are good at Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers use effective methods to help pupils understand. For example, pupils act out the story of The Good Samaritan using their own names. Relationships are good between pupils and between pupils and adults, who present very good role models which reinforce the message of lessons. During a Key Stage 2 lesson on people who love and care for us, teachers and learning support assistants helped the pupils to think of ways in which they could show their mothers and carers that they loved them. They shared with the pupils what they would do on Mothers' Day. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory at Key Stage 3. The teacher has very good subject knowledge of Christianity but unsatisfactory classroom management techniques, which leads to some inappropriate behaviour from the pupils. Work set is not always at a level that matches the pupils' reading abilities, and in consequence, they require high levels of adult support to complete the tasks. Pupils' inappropriate behaviour is not sufficiently firmly dealt with, which slows learning.
110. The subject is well led at Key Stage 1 and 2 by the co-ordinator, who has been a member of the County Working Party to develop the new Agreed County Syllabus. She has good subject knowledge and works closely with colleagues across the two key stages to ensure that the Agreed Syllabus is implemented. The co-ordinator prepares lessons for some colleagues and checks medium-term planning but she does not monitor teaching or pupils' work. Links with Key Stage 3 are more informal because the role of the subject co-ordinator is unclear and in consequence pupils do not do as well as they should. There is a lack of artefacts to support teaching and opportunities for pupils to visit different places of worship are very limited. Annual reports to parents do not state clearly what pupils know, understand and can do because the assessment of learning is underdeveloped. There is a caring ethos in the school, which is reinforced by the message of many religious education lessons.