

INSPECTION REPORT

FIVE SPRINGS SCHOOL

Northwell Drive Luton LU3 3SP

LEA area: Luton

Unique reference number: 109744

Headteacher: Helena Hardie

Reporting inspector: Alan Lemon
20165

Dates of inspection: 07.02.2000 – 11.02.2000

Inspection number: 190377
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Day special for moderate learning difficulties

School category: Community special

Age range of pupils: 5 - 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Northwell Drive
Luton

Postcode: LU3 3SP

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Gulfranz Ahmed

Date of previous inspection: 11.11.96

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|---------------------|----------------------|--|--|
| Alan Lemon | Registered inspector | Art Religious Education | What sort of school is it? The schools results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? |
| David Heath | Lay inspector | | Attendance How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| Glyn Essex | Team inspector | English, Modern Foreign Languages, Physical Education English as an additional language | The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources |
| Christine Humphreys | Team inspector | Science, Design and Technology, Music Special Educational Needs | Spiritual, moral, social and cultural |
| Jennifer Taylor | Team inspector | Mathematics, Information and communication technology, Personal, social and health education | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development |
| Liz Mildner | Team inspector | Geography, History Equal opportunities | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Assessment |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Five Springs School is a community school of average size for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, covering an age range of five to 16 years. There are 118 pupils on roll comprising 44 girls and 74 boys. There are 17 pupils of primary school age all currently in Key Stage 2 and 101 secondary aged pupils. A high percentage of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school is ethnically mixed. The majority are white and one third of pupils have other ethnicity, mainly of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origins. Twenty-nine pupils have English as an additional language their main languages being, either Urdu, Bengali, Punjabi, or Gujarati. All the pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Increasingly, the school is admitting pupils with more complex special educational needs such as severe learning difficulties, autism and challenging behaviour. There is provision for deaf and profoundly deaf pupils who are integrated fully into the school. Because of pupils' special educational needs their levels of attainment when they are admitted are well below the age related expectation. The school is currently preparing to become a generic special school for secondary aged pupils in September 2000.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Five Springs is a good school. What most pupils achieve is good. By the time they leave most have gained some form of national accreditation. Higher attaining pupils are able to achieve good GCSE results. Pupils are taught well and they enjoy learning. When enthused, they readily tackle difficult tasks and work confidently on their own. They have good access to a broad and balanced curriculum and get satisfactory provision to improve their literacy and numeracy. Pupils are looked after satisfactorily. Parents and carers are kept informed and encouraged to get involved with the school. By good leadership and management the school has dealt effectively with the substantial weaknesses confirmed by the previous inspection. The school has improved, particularly with regard to teaching, against a background of changing and sometimes unpredictable circumstances. The standards pupils achieve have improved and the school now provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Its strong leadership and management creates a positive environment for learning and uses its financial resources well to make the school move forward at a good pace.
- Through effective teaching it helps pupils achieve well and make good progress.
- It provides effective support for all of its pupils and prepares pupils well for leaving school by providing good careers education and opportunities for external accreditation.
- It achieves good GCSE results in English, mathematics, science.
- It achieves very good GCSE results in art by the end of Key Stage 4
- It provides very well for deaf pupils and makes good provision for pupils with English as an additional language
- It promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development very well

What could be improved

- The assessment of pupils' academic progress and personal development
- Setting whole school targets to further raise standards
- Meeting statutory requirements in information and communications technology, physical education at Key Stage 3 and religious education at Key Stage 4.
- The use of ICT to support work across the curriculum and to support individual pupils special educational needs across the curriculum
- The systematic induction of new and temporary teachers

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved well since the last inspection and is now in a strong position to continue its development towards its new designation as a generic special school for secondary aged pupils. Teaching has improved because of the good appointments made of subject specialists. There has also been a determined monitoring of teaching quality about which teachers have been positive and co-operative. The issues for action from the last inspection concerning teaching have been addressed successfully. While teaching in the primary department is now satisfactory its improvement has been slower than elsewhere because of some long-term staff absences. The appointment of an English specialist as subject co-ordinator has led to implementing diagnostic procedures for assessing pupils' reading. Also, the introduction of the National Literacy Framework is contributing satisfactorily to primary pupils learning to read and write.

The implementation of most school policies is satisfactory. The emergence of a more cohesive and motivated staff group means a greater willingness to put policy into practice. However, it is unsatisfactory that a whole school policy for assessment is not yet implemented fully and that there remains a mixed picture of assessment across the curriculum. In line with this, pupils' individual education plans still often contain such broad targets that assessment is difficult. The support for pupils for whose English is an additional language has greatly improved following the appointment of a part-time specialist teacher and a bi-lingual classroom support assistant. Staff awareness of the needs of these pupils was raised through training given by experts. The school has made good improvements to learning resources in information and communications technology, geography and religious education. The library has been developed well and new accommodation for design and technology and science are good improvements.

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 | by age | by age | |
|--|--------|--------|--------|--|
| | 11 | 14 | 16 | |
| speaking and listening | B | B | B | |
| reading | C | B | B | |
| writing | C | B | C | |
| mathematics | B | B | B | |
| personal, social and health education | B | B | B | |
| other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs* | D | D | D | |

| Key | |
|----------------|---|
| very good | A |
| Good | B |
| satisfactory | C |
| unsatisfactory | D |
| poor | E |

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

Achievements in English are good overall. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils acquire basic literacy skills and by the end of Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils mostly achieve passes in GCSE English. There is good progress in mathematics at all key stages. Pupils have consolidated basic number skills by the end of Key Stage 3 and the higher attaining pupils go on to achieve GCSE passes in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 4. In Science, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are achieving well. Their progress by the end of Key Stages 3 is satisfactory and by the end of Key Stage 4 it is good. Most pupils entered for GCSE gain passes. In design and technology, achievements are satisfactory by the end of Key Stage 2 but improve to be good by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4. However, all pupils' achievements in information and communications technology are unsatisfactory. In geography, all pupils are progressing well and in history they are achieving satisfactorily by the end of Key Stages 2 and 3. While pupils achievements in art are too low by the end of Key Stage 2, by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 because of the specialist teaching all pupils make very good progress. A few higher attaining pupils make excellent progress. Most Year 11 pupils pass the GCSE art examination. In 1998 the majority gained A*-C grades with mainly A and A* grades. In 1999 nearly half of those entered gained the

higher grades. In personal, social and health education pupils' achievement is good by the end of all key stages. Achievements are good in French by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4. They are satisfactory in music by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4. In physical education, pupils' achieve satisfactorily in games although in other aspects of physical education these are unsatisfactory. In religious education pupils' achievements are satisfactory by the end of Key Stages 2 and 3 but by the end of Key Stage 4 their progress is unsatisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Pupils' attitudes are good. The large majority enjoy learning and respond positively to teaching that is challenging. They show enthusiasm for what the school has to offer and readily participate in the activities outside of lessons. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. It is good during the lunchtime meal and in lessons where work is interesting and the teacher's management of the classroom is effective. A few pupils are unable to behave properly and cause disruptions in lessons through fractious exchanges with others. |
| Personal development and relationships | Personal development and relationships are good. |
| Attendance | Pupils' attendance is satisfactory. |

The large majority is interested in doing work in lessons and will respond enthusiastically during discussions and questioning. Most pupils are confident and willing to work independently or as small co-operative groups. They are rarely defeated by difficult problems, gladly giving or receiving help.

The very large majority behave well; while several pupils are challenging as a consequence of their special educational needs they respond positively most of the time to the range of positive support the school gives them. The number of fixed term exclusions is high and this is exacerbated by the practice of sending pupils home informally.

When given the opportunity, pupils are keen to help in lessons. They are positive about contributing to the day-to-day organisation of the school. The large majority of pupils form and sustain good relationships, taking an interest in and a concern for each other. Many pupils are capable of working independently and are adept at working as pairs or groups. By the time they are ready to leave they can confidently manage every-day expectations.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | aged 5-11 | aged 11-16 |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Lessons seen overall | 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.

Teaching is good at all key stages. Where teachers' subject knowledge is strong this enables challenging work leading to good quality learning. In art at Key Stages 3 and 4 it results in many high GCSE grades. Good teaching engages pupils in stimulating discussion and gets them very involved with issues. In English, for example, pupil's talk about what they are reading and in personal, social and health education the oldest pupils discuss drugs intelligently. Pupils are expected to work imaginatively and in a variety of ways, for example, in whole class activities or in collaborative groups. In a Year 9 religious education lesson, pupils search reference books to find out for themselves about Martin Luther King. Teachers and classroom assistants have good relationships with pupils and generally manage them effectively. Pupils with hearing impairments or English

as an additional language receive expert support in lessons, which helps well in their learning.

In the small proportion of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory or poor, teachers' limited knowledge of what they are teaching and of the pupils they teach means the quality of learning is diminished. In English, for example, teaching literacy to lower attaining pupils in Year 11 is not well-informed and these pupils are not given appropriate reading material. In the case of mathematics the inexperience of some teachers leads to a lack of challenge and pace. Occasionally, facts are not explained with lucidity in science. Teachers do not have the knowledge and skills in information and communications technology to teach the full curriculum.

The skills of communication are taught satisfactorily; literacy is taught satisfactorily in Key Stage 2 and well at Key Stages 3 and 4. Numeracy is taught well throughout the school.

In 90 per cent of lessons observed teaching was satisfactory or better; it was good or better in 57 per cent of lessons and in 21 per cent it was very good. In 10 per cent of lessons teaching was unsatisfactory or poor.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The curriculum is satisfactorily broad and balanced at Key Stages 2 and 3; Breadth and balance is good at Key Stage 4; accreditation provides pupils with choice and they are prepared well for leaving school. Careers education is good. The provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is very good in Key Stage 2 and good in Key Stages 3 and 4; very good provision is made for deaf pupils. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | The provision for the significant proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is good. They receive effective help in many lessons from a specialist teacher and a bilingual classroom support assistant |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Provision is good. Opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development are very good; Social development is satisfactory but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their initiative or take responsibility. Pupils' cultural development is provided for well. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school cares for its pupils satisfactorily; deaf pupils and those with English as an additional language are supported effectively; good behaviour is promoted well; the school has good provision for dealing with bullying; |

The curriculum does not meet statutory requirement in respect of information and communications technology at all key stages; physical education at Key Stage 3 and religious education at Key Stage 4.

The school maintains regular contact with parents through its weekly news publication and encourages them to attend annual reviews; the information supplied to parents is satisfactory

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher and key staff provide good leadership and management; |
| How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities | The governors are fulfilling their responsibilities satisfactorily; they have made a good start to establishing a relationship with the headteacher and school |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The school monitors and evaluates the work of teachers well; its analysis of standards is not yet developed fully; overall the evaluation of its performance is satisfactory |
| The strategic use of resources | Financial planning is good; the use grants for the school are planned carefully and fully accounted for. The school takes good steps to ensure it spends its money wisely and obtains best value. Financial resources are very well accounted for. |

The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are good. The governors fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is satisfactory; the school is good at monitoring and developing teaching but not effective in monitoring curriculum provision.

The number of teachers and other staff is good. The school's accommodation is good and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. The range and quantity of learning resources are good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School is approachable • The school expects my child to achieve his or her best • My child likes school • The teaching is good • The school provides regular information | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons • The right amount of homework • The standards of behaviour • The strategies for pupils personal development • Pupils' academic progress |

Inspectors agree with all of the positive views expressed by parents and carers. Concerns about progress are largely unfounded. Pupils' academic progress is judged by inspectors to be good and progress has improved since the last inspection. Concerns about personal development are not confirmed by the inspection judgements. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. There is a reasonable number of opportunities for them to take responsibility and initiative throughout the school day. While there is some concern about pupils' behaviour, inspectors found it to be good. The amount of homework pupils get is satisfactory. Because all pupils have to be transported home immediately after school there very little scope for activities outside of lessons. A reasonable range of activities is organised for pupils in the lunchtimes.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Pupils' achievements in most subjects by the end of Key Stage 2 are satisfactory although pupils achieve well in English and science. By the end of Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils' achievements are satisfactory in most subjects although all pupils are achieving well in mathematics. In information and communications technology all pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are making good progress in their understanding and communication in lessons because of the very good support they are given and are achieving as well as other pupils. The school has not yet set targets relating to pupils' attainment.

2. Achievements in English are good by the end of all key stages. They are very good for some higher attaining pupils by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils are progressing at a good rate. The National Literacy Framework as it is used at Key Stage 2 provides an effective means for pupils to acquire basic literacy skills. Lower attaining pupils have developed skills for sounding words to help them in their reading, which means they are making satisfactory progress. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are steadily acquiring basic literacy. Their skills for speaking and listening are good. Over time, writing becomes increasingly accurate and pupils grow confident handling free writing so that they are able to make satisfactory progress. At the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils' attainments in English compare favourably with similar special schools. The school's results in National Curriculum test at the end of Key Stage 3 are above those of similar schools and English GCSE results are also better. In 1999, half of Year 11 pupils gained the pass rate in the GCSE examination. Results were slightly better in 1998. In both Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils make good progress in speaking and listening as well as in reading. Pupils learn to enjoy books of all kinds and demonstrate few difficulties in reading books or looking up references in their other subjects. Writing develops well by the end of Key Stage 3 although it develops only satisfactorily by the end of Key Stage 4, where some higher attaining pupils do not present their writing as well as they could.

3. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are good by the end of all key stages. The majority of pupils are attaining standards in National Curriculum tests and GCSE that are above those of similar schools. In 1999 all of the pupils entered gained passes in GCSE mathematics. This was a considerable improvement on the 1998 results. By the end of Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils have mental strategies for adding, subtracting and multiplying numbers up to 10. They are able to describe the properties of common two and three-dimensional shapes. Most can deduce the correct numerical operation to solve a problem. Lower attaining pupils recognise different coins and tell the time. Deaf pupils have learned to sign their mathematical vocabulary. By the end of Key Stage 3, basic numeracy is consolidated well. Pupils can count in 2's, 5's and 10's and work with numbers up to the value of 1000. By the end of Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils understand and apply algebraic formulae and incorporate positive and negative number values. They can measure and mark out using a protractor and compasses. Lower attaining pupils use standard and non-standard measurement although some find it difficult to estimate effectively.

4. Achievements are good in science by the end of Key Stages 2. By the end of Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils achieve satisfactorily. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a good scientific vocabulary. They know about the solar system and the movement of the Earth. They have learned the properties of materials, for example, which will conduct electricity. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils use what they know to make electrical circuits and are able to use a digital ammeter to measure current but are unable to read the scales on an analogue ammeter. By the end of Key Stage 4 the pupils about to take the Certificate of Achievement know that applying heat can speed up reactions but they do not understand fully the significance of surface area to heating.

5. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' achievements are satisfactory in design and technology. Pupils are able to measure out and combine ingredients in food technology. They go on to follow the instructions in a simple recipe. By the end of Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils' achievements are good. Pupils can cut and shape resistant materials with increased accuracy and use tools skilfully to achieve a well finished product by the end

of Key Stage 3. They also plan their own recipes and decide the most appropriate ingredients. By the end of Key Stage 4, all pupils are able to work independently, planning their own work schedule and organising the requirements for tools and materials. They are skilled in cutting, assembling and finishing wood and metal.

6. Achievements in information and communications technology are unsatisfactory at all key stages. Most pupils develop basic computer skills so that increasingly from Key Stage 2 through to the end of Key Stage 4 pupils learn the use of the keyboard and perform some rudimentary interrogation of information, for example, off CD-ROMS. The higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 know about spreadsheets and databases and make charts and graphs. They make these gains by virtue of their certificate course whereas lower attaining pupils miss this opportunity and make little progress.

7. Achievements in art are too low by the end of Key Stage 2 but by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4 they are very good. The impact of specialist teaching results in standards that are occasionally above and well above the national average for all schools. In 1998, nearly all Year 11 pupils entered gained higher grades in GCSE and most of these achieved A and A* grades. All pupils entered in 1999 achieved the pass rate and just under half gained the higher grades.

8. Achievement in personal and social education is good by the end of all key stages. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can discuss the consequences of poor behaviour and this helps them write rules for the classroom. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have refined their discussions to consider what friendship is whereas by the end of Key Stage 4 pupils use their wide knowledge of inter-personal issues to explore the pressures on them to take drugs and ways to resist these.

9. Achievements in French are good by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils make good progress learning pronunciation and are extending their vocabulary at a fast rate. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils can respond to simple questions using their French. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils acquire new words which they can use in various combinations. They write complex sentences and spell accurately in French.

10. Achievements are satisfactory only in games in physical education by the end of all key stages. Pupils are making unsatisfactory progress in the other aspects of the programme of study. Achievements in music are satisfactory by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4. Achievements in religious education are satisfactory by the end of Key Stages 2 and 3 but unsatisfactory by the end of Key Stage 4 because Year 11 pupils do not have sufficient time allocated for the subject.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good at all key stages. Most pupils are happy to come to school. They greet friends and staff with enthusiasm and talk positively about the things that they will do during the day. In their lessons, pupils respond positively to being questioned by the teacher and many are often keen when asked to share what they know or remember. They are ready to take up whatever challenge the lesson presents, for example, to work in pairs, discuss issues as a large group in circle time or engage in a role play of a religious story. The good relationships with teachers and classroom support assistants account for the willingness of pupils to engage seriously in work and sustain their good efforts. When activities are organised outside lesson time, pupils enjoy taking up these opportunities, for example in the lunch-time percussion band and games sessions, and the regular residential trips. The few pupils who, because of their needs, find it difficult sustaining good relationships and attitudes are making good progress in developing an attachment. They benefit from the support of staff and increasingly are able to concentrate in lessons.

12. Pupils' behaviour is good and has improved since the last inspection. Pupils move around the school in an orderly way. Lunch times are pleasant and sociable. Playtimes are boisterous and energetic, and enjoyed by most pupils. Pupils interact best using the play equipment when they chat and take turns. The few pupils who display challenging behaviour sometimes disrupt learning for others in their lessons. The school has set up a new specialist resource room for these pupils to receive support at times when coping is most difficult for them. This is beneficial to pupils behaving well. Groups activities and circle time discussions are used effectively to improve relationships and they are also having a positive impact on the standards of behaviour. Pupils are aware of the effects of their behaviour on others and several are beginning to learn strategies to avoid confrontation. Levels of fixed term exclusions are high but there are no permanent exclusions. The use

an informal 'cooling off' arrangement for some pupils, when they are sent home during the day disguises the true level of fixed term exclusions which is unsatisfactory.

13. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They increasingly take responsibility for their own learning. Each pupil is responsible for his or her own planner that contains their homework diary and good behaviour points. They look after them carefully, remembering to take them from lesson to lesson along with the books and pens that they need. At lunch times there is family service on each table and older pupils take responsibility for serving the food. At this time conversation is generally polite and friendly, and many pupils show real interest and concern for each other. Some older pupils are appointed prefects and they are linked to classes of younger children helping new pupils settle into school by befriending and mentoring them. Pupils work well together in many lessons. They collaborate effectively in personal and social education when asked to develop a role play about saying 'no' to people offering drugs, when orienteering and making decisions about which way to go and in paired reading sessions. By the time that they leave school, pupils are confident to take full advantage of the learning and social opportunities provided by work placements and local colleges.

Attendance

14. The level of attendance is satisfactory. Parents state their children like the school and this is borne out by the fact that the majority of pupils have good attendance records. A minority of pupils have periods of absence and a few pupils are absent for medical or domestic reasons. In other cases pupils are absent for several weeks while they take an extended family holiday. A very small number are unauthorised absences and the school makes good efforts to encourage those pupils' attendance. The majority is transported to school by bus. The buses are usually in good time and lessons are able to start promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. Teaching is good throughout the school and overall the quality of pupils' learning is good. There was effective teaching in over half the lessons observed. In one out of five lessons teaching was very good and occasionally excellent. Only a small proportion of teaching was unsatisfactory or occasionally poor. Teaching is good because teachers have good knowledge of their subjects and they provide challenging lessons. Subject expertise gives rise to confidence in the planning and organisation of lessons so that learning objectives are clear and pursued imaginatively and with high expectations. This leads to lively teaching that succeeds in capturing pupils' interest and enthusiasm. The specialist teaching and support provided for deaf pupils is very good and the teaching and support of pupils for whom English is an additional language is good.

16. Teaching in English is good. There are good discussions held on the stories and poetry pupils have read and this convinces them of the value of this work. Year 7 pupils have acquired the confidence to describe fictional scenes in their reading and to give their opinions of them. This way they find a genuine interest in literature and this is contributing to good learning in reading. A small amount of English teaching is less effective because of a limited knowledge in teaching basic literacy skills. In Key Stage 4 there was some difficulty, because of inexperience, in providing appropriate reading for low attaining pupils. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory at Key Stage 2 and is good at Key Stage 3 and 4. At Key Stage 2, a sound structure exists for pupils of all attainments to learn basic literacy skills satisfactorily. Pupils learn to use phonics with increasing competence to recognise words. At Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils' speaking and listening skills; their reading and writing are being promoted well in the majority of lessons and the quality of their learning is good.

17. The good mathematical knowledge possessed by some teachers leads to well planned work using interesting and challenging methods. A Year 10 investigation of algebraic formulae creates a delighted response when pupils begin to see number patterns emerge and this allows the teachers to raise the level of the problems so that a good understanding is then established. The quality of learning is good. Mathematical experience is not strong in the teaching of some Key Stage 2 and 3 groups. Teaching fails to give the encouragement most pupils need to learn at an appropriate rate. Lessons lack the organisation and resources to be as engaging and challenging as in the best lessons. The youngest pupils in the school, for example, have difficulty manipulating the small paper clips they are given to roughly measure an object and they quickly lose interest. Number skills are taught well throughout the school and the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has improved mathematics teaching. Pupils at all key stages are learning well about number and its applications. A good knowledge of the strategy is evident in Year 6 where pupils are acquiring independent

working habits and keep track of their own progress. Deaf pupils are learning well the signs for counting and communicating mathematically.

18. In science, a good use of subject expertise by some teachers leads to clear explanations and fruitful discussions with pupils. This results in some rapid strides in learning such as the Year 6 group using prediction for finding things out. Pupils were able to grasp what circuits and resistors are and use the right words to describe them. Expectations are usually high and science teachers plan carefully so pupils can move forward in their learning in a well-stepped manner. Occasionally explanations are not as lucid; pupils struggle to grasp salient points and quickly lose their motivation to persevere resulting in their learning being unsatisfactory.

19. Teaching is strong in art at Key Stages 3 and 4 and in design and technology at Key Stages 2 and 3. It is largely very good at these stages in art because of specialist knowledge of art and the consistent exertion of very high expectations. The teacher has enormous enthusiasm and excellent relationships with the pupils. The quality of learning is very good and results in pupils reaching high levels of achievement in art. There is much less knowledge and confidence about teaching art in Key Stage 2 and pupils learning here is not satisfactory. Pupils are able to learn well in design and technology because teachers have considerable subject expertise and a very good knowledge of pupils needs. Appropriately high expectations are set and lessons are planned in detail.

20. The teaching of French, history, geography, is good. In all of these subjects good subject knowledge gives rise to clear and confident questions and explanation. This creates good learning, for example, when pupils access more complex areas of geographical knowledge such as understanding the conflicting priorities in creating a national park. The small amount of unsatisfactory geography teaching was because the learning objectives were not made clear to pupils; they were not challenged and did not learn as much as they might have done. History teaching is conducted with verve, engaging pupils in lively discussion. This generates a good pace and good learning occurs, for example, in gaining a better understanding of the reasons for the Jarrow March. French teaching is planned well so pupils enjoy the challenge of speaking and singing in the language. Pupils are learning well new vocabulary and ways of expressing themselves in French.

21. The teaching of information and communications technology, personal, social and health education and music is satisfactory. In religious education teaching is mostly good at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory at the other key stages. Where it is good it is lively and captures the interest of pupils. They are keen to learn about religion and moral values. They are given a challenging task in Year 9 to research facts from the life of Martin Luther King. This results in some good learning about discovering information and about racism. Activities are not as challenging for the youngest pupils in Key Stage 2 nor for Year 11 pupils who do not have sufficient time for religious education. But Year 6 pupils gain a firm grasp of right and wrong role-playing the parable of The Good Samaritan. In personal, social and health education the specialist knowledge of one teacher helps in planning a well organised discussion in which pupils gain a critical understanding of current issues. In information and communications technology pupils are making satisfactory progress acquiring the skills to use a keyboard and computer and they are helped to improve their reading and writing while they learn about word processing. However, lesson planning is not providing for pupils different levels of competence and some are not being challenged appropriately. In music, good instrumental skills lead to a variety of practical activities that pupils find motivating. Pupils are managed well but small groups working separately, supervised by a lesson support assistant, are not being assessed by the teacher during the lesson.

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

22. The school has made satisfactory improvements in developing the curricular opportunities for pupils since the previous inspection. Schemes of work have now been established in the majority of subjects and they are the foundation to the improvements in teaching across the school. Planning and teaching in geography in particular have made good progress. The actual teaching time now meets the national recommendations. Weaknesses in the primary department in curriculum and assessment have been addressed and there is now thorough base line testing for younger pupils and ongoing reading tests. The previous report identified that the needs of higher attaining pupils were not being met. This has now been addressed through careful lesson planning and specific grouping in lessons to meet the needs of all pupils. The school effectively ensures that there are equal opportunities for all pupils in every element of the curriculum and school life.

23. The time allotted to subjects on the timetable is overall satisfactory with a sensible priority being given to literacy and numeracy particularly for pupils in Key Stage 2. This gives those pupils a good foundation for work in higher key stages. The curriculum is broad and balanced at all key stages with all National Curriculum subjects and religious education being taught. This gives a satisfactory curricular experience for pupils and Key Stage 2 and 3. In Key Stage 4 the flexibility allowed in the curriculum is being well used to give these pupils a wide range of useful experiences clearly focused on developing their knowledge and personal skills to prepare them for leaving school at the end of Year 11. The school offers a wide range of national accreditation including GCSE in English, mathematics, science and art as well as Certificate of Achievement in English, mathematics, science, and art. Subject specialists teach modules of the Youth Award Scheme so pupils prepare good quality projects mainly for bronze or bronze/silver awards. Over the past year these projects have included elements of food technology, religious education, English, history and geography. This curricular flexibility is good and ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to gain a national accreditation in their final year in school. These and other achievements are recorded in a National Record of Achievement which pupils complete during Year 11.

24. Statutory requirements are met in the majority of subjects but there are elements of the National Curriculum programmes of study not being delivered in physical education at Key Stage 3, religious education at Key Stage 4 and information and communications technology at all key stages. Hence statutory requirements are not fully met.

25. The quality of careers education and the support for pupils as they make the decisions about their future after school are good. The school has developed close and productive liaison with both the careers service and local colleges of further education so that from Year 9 onwards pupils are able to gain accurate information and develop choice making skills. By Year 11, after work experience and 'taster days' at local colleges of further education, pupils are confident to select a career path. For the majority this is further education and for some it is employment.

26. Personal, social and health education is rightly considered by the school to be of significant importance to the pupils. There is a comprehensive policy. Unforeseen delays in its implementation are now being addressed with designated time for each class on the timetable. Sex education and drugs awareness lessons are integrated in to the personal, social and health education programme. The school intends to develop personal, social and health education further and present provision is satisfactory.

27. The provision for extra curricular activities is satisfactory. It is difficult for the school to arrange after school clubs due to transport arrangements but a range of activities are available for pupils at lunchtime. At present these are not organised to be a consistent experience for pupils when they can develop a skill or interest over a period of time. Subject co-ordinators arrange visits, which enrich their curriculum area for example to places of scientific and historical importance and other visits to concerts and theatres have occurred. Older pupils enjoyed camping and adventure activities in Snowdonia.

28. The school has satisfactory links with the community. The links with further education colleges are good but at present those with other mainstream schools are underdeveloped. The school involves members of the local community through contacts with the church, the police and through entertaining the elderly to tea and a concert. Links with commerce have helped raise funds for the school.

29. The school makes very good provision for the spiritual and moral development of its pupils. The provision for social development is satisfactory and for cultural development it is good. The standards of provision at the last inspection have been maintained. Pupils' spiritual development relies on teachers appreciating when opportunities to reflect on life's meaning arise in lessons and in other school events. Some useful opportunities for reflection are provided through prayers and at meal times. Assemblies meet the requirements for collective worship and give pupils opportunities for reflection on their own and teachers' lives and events. Pupils listened to a story about co-operation and were encouraged to reflect on this both in their school life and in their part in the community. The themes for all assemblies are planned to be progressive and to integrate with planning in religious education lessons. There are opportunities for pupils to take part and their efforts are rewarded with praise from their fellow pupils. Although opportunities to include spiritual reflection in the curriculum are not noted or included in the schemes of work for subjects there are examples in personal, social and health education, English looking at the poems of Rupert Brooke, history and art. The possibilities to use science and

mathematics to create wonder at the earth and awe at concepts such as infinity are not included in the work planned. The head teacher and staff encourage pupils to explore the value of others and pupils' ideas are valued giving them confidence to share their memories with a bigger group. Quiet music is played in assemblies to stimulate reflection.

30. Good provision is made for moral development. Pupils know school rules are fair and are able to tell right from wrong. There are effective procedures for pupils to reflect on what they have done and to think about their actions on others. The school's curriculum for personal, social and health education satisfactorily addresses moral issues. Pupils are praised for good behaviour and encouraged to respect the school's values and aims. The personal organiser system for crediting pupils work and behaviour is having a positive impact on standards of work, behaviour and social development. The school is effective in providing a moral code, which is promoted through the life of the school.

31. Satisfactory provision is made for social development. School routines promote social interaction effectively, for example at lunchtimes when pupils are able to sit in social groups and older pupils take responsibility for helping younger ones. Other opportunities for pupils to take responsibility are provided by the prefect system in the secondary and primary departments. There has been an opportunity to take part in a school production organised by the Osagyefo an African dance ensemble. Some assemblies successfully promote social themes and there are opportunities for social development in some lessons such as co-operative working, independent research and sharing resources. The school provides opportunities outside of lessons for social development, for example, work experience but there is not a broad enough range of such opportunities for all pupils and those provided within school are too limited.

32. Good provision is provided for pupils' cultural development. The religious education curriculum contains reference to other religions and geography provides a focus on life in other countries. The workshops provided by the dance ensemble that gave pupils an insight into African culture. There are books in the libraries on other cultures and many with supporting text in other languages. Languages of other cultures are evident in displays around the school and many displays have multi-lingual titles. Feast days and festivals are planned for in assemblies and linked to religious education lessons. There is a display in the entrance to the school to celebrate the year 2000. There is a strong emphasis on preparing pupils for life in multi-cultural Britain. There are good arrangements for promoting deaf culture and the school's acceptance of deaf pupils is helping all pupils and staff to gain an awareness of deafness and respect for communication through sign language.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is unsatisfactory. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. Teachers know pupils well and are aware of pupils' attainment and progress in general terms. This is shown in lessons planned to meet the needs of the range of attainments in each class. However, the systems used to record pupils' attainment are not consistent across the school. Systems are not being used at all in mathematics and information and communication technology and their extent is poor in science. The use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is unsatisfactory. The information gained from assessment is not sufficiently analysed or used to adjust planning in schemes of work or to set key stage or whole school targets. The school is in the process of developing its assessment procedures and the moderation of teachers' assessments is being developed to gain consistency in making judgements.

34. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are unsatisfactory. Each pupil has an individual education plan with targets set in English, mathematics and personal, social and health education. These targets come from discussion at the pupil's annual review but as yet they are insufficiently integrated into class work in a consistent way. Class tutors have the responsibility to mentor and support the pupil's personal development but at present they do not have agreed criteria to assess and monitor pupil's personal development. Tutors take a close interest in any behavioural or social difficulty the pupil may be having and then support them appropriately. Many personal, social and health education targets address these areas. However, in too many cases these targets are too broad to be useful in supporting pupils. Teachers and classroom support assistants use every opportunity to provide strong informal support during daily routines such as registration, lunch and play times. They give positive support and encouragement to pupils. Pupils' achievements are promoted using "apple" awards for primary aged pupils and a system of credits leading to

prizes for secondary aged pupils. Other awards, published in the weekly newsletter, are “pupil of the week” and “class of the month”. In this way the school generates enthusiasm for learning. However, the lack of well developed academic assessment and monitoring of personal development means that the support for pupils is not tightly focused on them moving forward in a systematic, well-stepped manner. They are not being made aware of the specific ways they can improve either in written targets or through advice given by the teacher.

35. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. The school awards certificates to those pupils who are able to achieve good attendance. The attendance registers are well kept and up to date. The class teachers follow up any unauthorised absence and any concerns they have are referred on. There are good links with pupils’ families and various strategies such as home visits help to improve the pupils’ attendance. In cases where improvement is not forthcoming, the matter is referred to the school’s Education Welfare Officer.

36. The procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils’ welfare are satisfactory. The school has good child protection procedures. The headteacher is the named teacher with overall responsibility. Procedures follow the local authority guidelines and any concerns are quickly referred to the appropriate authority and this is made clear to parents in the school prospectus. While all teachers are vigilant and make the children’s health and welfare a priority, not all staff have had the appropriate child protection training. The school nurse is a regular visitor. She oversees all health matters and helps with the teaching of personal, social and health education such as sex education. There are good arrangements to make sure that the buildings and grounds are safe and secure, all equipment is checked professionally and there are regular fire drills to practice safe evacuation.

37. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good. The school works hard helping pupils with behavioural difficulties. The support that is given is always positive and encouraging. A special room, supervised by the behaviour management co-ordinator, has been recently set up. Pupils who are misbehaving in class are referred here where they can regain calm and discuss problems and consequences with the teacher. There are positive indications in how the most challenging pupils are increasingly coping with school that the school is succeeding. The school applies sanctions where necessary and makes use of temporary exclusion in extreme cases.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The school works hard to establish and maintains a good relationship with parents or carers. Several parents are co-operating with the school’s literacy initiative by supporting their children’s reading at home. The information from the school to parents is satisfactory. The school prospectus gives useful information to parents and the Annual Governors’ Report is sent to all. There are regular newsletters advising parents of all aspects of school life. Parents agree that they find it easy to approach the school. Each secondary aged pupil is given a personal organiser, which acts as a regular means of communication between home and school. It shows when pupils have gained credits for achievement in subjects or for good behaviour.

39. The school prepares an annual report for each pupil showing details of learning in each subject and the targets for improvement. The school makes arrangements for the report to be translated if the parent or carer’s language is not English. There are at least two evenings a year when parents are invited to meet the tutor of their child. One of the school governors monitors attendance at parents evenings and is actively encouraging them to attend these evenings. All parents are invited to the annual review of their children’s Statement of Special Educational Needs and many participate in the review.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

40. The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are good. At the time of the previous inspection the school required substantial improvement in the quality of education it provided. In a short time it has dealt with this effectively. The school has contended well with this inspection while dealing with a radical re-organisation of the school’s special education needs provision. The headteacher set about the process of improvement with a clear vision and an understanding of what is meant by high standards, good teaching, good curricular opportunities and the quality care of pupils. These are communicated well throughout the

school. They are known and fully shared by the relatively new governing body. It is too early to judge their impact although in a short time they have established satisfactorily their organisation and are beginning a working relationship with the school. Each governor, for example, is assigned to a subject of the curriculum. The previous governors were positively committed and active in helping steer school improvement. With considerable earnestness they set about supporting the headteacher tackle the school's deficiencies. A good example was their action group formed to oversee progress on the action plan arising from the previous inspection. They set high expectations that issues would be dealt with urgently and effectively and, in a most determined way, through regular review, held the staff to account for ensuring the improvements needed.

41. The headteacher has shown a steady determination to achieve her aims primarily by continuing to build a team of staff willing and capable of realising the vision. At the time of the last inspection she did not have the full support of the staff and it was seen that this gave rise to many of the school's shortcomings. Today, the staff actively support the headteacher and work hard to achieve a good and improving school. They have a shared sense of purpose, are optimistic about change and confident in tackling new demands. There are now considerably fewer shortcomings, high expectations of staff are established well and the capacity of the staff to make further improvements is good. Very importantly, the quality of teaching has been improved. This has been achieved partly by making good appointments but also by rigorously monitoring the quality of teaching. A programme of observing lessons followed by discussions with teachers which is helping them to be more effective is improving the quality of pupils' learning. This monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is good. It is carried out by the headteacher and by a consultant from the local education authority. This ensures that a breadth of professional experience and advice is made available to teachers on their teaching and how they managed their subject responsibility. In addition, a regular programme of professional development interviews for teachers is a good help for identifying some areas for improvement in teaching and managing subjects.

42. The ways in which staff fulfils management roles are satisfactory. At the most senior level the strategic thinking and planning is good on the major issues facing the school, in particular its future development in providing for secondary pupils with a wider range of special educational needs. Some key staff have been absent for a long period. Their responsibilities are shared but this places considerable pressures on other managers and limits effectiveness in some parts of management. The Key Stage 4 co-ordinator, acting as deputy headteacher, has too substantial a range of duties to monitor educational provision with sufficient scrutiny. The major way of monitoring the curriculum is largely through a scrutiny of subject development plans. This process is unable to determine effectively whether or not the most urgent priorities have been identified by the subject co-ordinators. The written descriptions of their responsibilities lack the detail that would help towards them being more effective. Consequently, the specialist teachers co-ordinating their subjects at secondary level are not all contributing well to supporting their subjects at primary level and in some subjects the procedures for assessing pupils progress are not in place.

43. The school is making good use of its financial resources. In particular, some of the specific grants it receives contribute to the most effective provision, namely, that for deaf pupils and pupils with English as an additional language. There is effective financial control of the budget. The office manager is expert in using electronic accounting procedures and produces regular financial information for the headteacher and governors. This is accompanied by detailed analysis of spending patterns and predictions for each budget heading. This information makes a considerable contribution to the on-going management of the budget. The budget is managed well so that a range of large and small priorities can be accommodated. Careful consideration is given to the spending proposals in each subject's annual development plan. Governors' have been particularly astute in relating these plans to previous years, which they know will show the coherence in spending over time. The school has been able to address its more major priorities. These have been determined over the past three years by a clear understanding of what was needed to be improved together with the issues determined in the previous inspection. The key issues in the current school improvement plan reflect these present and future priorities well. The headteacher and governors have been adept in continuing to secure the additional funds needed for larger developments such as facilities for science and information and communications technology. There is good caution exercised prior to taking major spending decisions such as by consulting advisers and experts to achieve best value. In the case of information and communications technology, for example, professional advice was obtained on the quality and constraints of different equipment. The school was therefore in a firmer position to anticipate and resolve issues of compatibility and the quality of computer programmes before spending its money.

44. There is a good match of number, qualifications and experience of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. There are three unqualified teachers who teach English and physical education lessons. Their experience and knowledge of the pupils' needs are good and their lack of formal teaching qualifications is not significant. There has been a high rate of staff turnover and this causes the school some problems in continuity, for example, in the implementation of ongoing developments in areas of its work such as assessment. New appointments have, however, made a positive contribution to the collective subject expertise of teachers. In English, mathematics and geography expertise is now good. There has been a major improvement in the staffing arrangements for pupils with English as an additional language whose progress is now much better as a result. There is also high-quality provision for pupils with hearing impairment. Learning support assistants are a strong team with very good working relationships with teaching staff and they make a very effective contribution both to the all-round care of pupils and to their academic progress. Records show a good range of in-service training provided for staff, on both a whole-school and individual basis. There are good arrangements for the allocation of funds for training in line with school and subject development priorities and for staff to feed back the benefits of their training. Arrangements for the induction of new and temporary staff are unsatisfactory. An informal mentoring system is operated but the quality of information and advice given to new staff is variable and there is insufficient monitoring of their progress.

45. Accommodation is good. It provides a full range of specialist rooms and is clean and well maintained. The displays of pupils' work are good, especially their art. All of the work on display in classrooms and around the school enlivens the learning environment and visibly celebrates pupils' good achievements.

46. Learning resources are good. There has been an improvement in their range and quality since the last inspection. Information and communications technology equipment has been upgraded but the school is not yet making full and effective use of it. The stock of books both in the libraries and in the classrooms now includes more materials which are appropriate to the needs and interests of pupils, although suitable readers for lower-attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 are still in short supply. Resources for mathematics are deficient in materials for practical work.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. To further improve the quality of education and standards achieved, the senior management team and the governing body should:

- (1) Implement an assessment policy that will ensure that there are:
 - well structured and clearly understood procedures in place to assess every pupils progress in what they know, understand and can do in each area of the curriculum.
 - well structured and clearly understood procedures in place to assess comprehensively defined aspects of pupils' personal development.
 - ensure every teacher uses the assessment information to plan lessons, the curriculum and the pastoral support of all pupils.

Paragraphs: 33, 34, 42, 44, 51, 58, 62, 64, 70, 76, 80, 83, 98, 101, 107

- 2) use a detailed analysis of all the assessment information on pupils available to the school to:
 - set whole school targets for raising standards.
 - write specific, short term targets for each pupil that will aid their progress by being addressed regularly in the teaching of those pupils.

Paragraphs: 33, 34, 51,56, 76, 80, 83, 98, 101, 107

- 3) use the existing resources for information and communications technology to:
 - broaden pupils learning across the curriculum
 - support pupils special educational needs across the curriculum

Paragraphs: 6, 21, 46, 64, 76, 80, 83, 98, 101, 107

- 4) develop and implement a comprehensive induction programme for all new and temporary staff that ensures they are supported, made fully aware and understand the school's expectations on providing for pupils' academic and personal needs.

Paragraphs: 44, 50,

- 5) meet the statutory requirements for information and communications technology at all key stages; physical education at Key Stage 3 and religious education at Key Stage 4

Paragraphs: 24, 84, 101, 107

There are other issues in addition to the key issues necessary for the school to consider.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

91

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 1 | 21 | 34 | 34 | 7 | 2 | 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

118

Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals

61

English as an additional language

No of
pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

29

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of
pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

0

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

0

Attendance

Authorised absence

Unauthorised absence

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| | % |
| School data | 8.4 |

| | |
|-------------|-----|
| | % |
| School data | 1.6 |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 3 |
| Black – African heritage | 1 |
| Black – other | 1 |
| Indian | 3 |
| Pakistani | 17 |
| Bangladeshi | 9 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 79 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 5 |

Exclusions in the last school year

| | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 3 | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – other | 1 | 0 |
| Indian | 0 | 0 |
| Pakistani | 2 | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 |
| White | 11 | 0 |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 1 | 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:

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 13 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 9 |
| Average class size | 10 |

Education support staff:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 9 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 291 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|------|
| Financial year | 1999 |
|----------------|------|

| | £ |
|--|--------|
| Total income | 806094 |
| Total expenditure | 813072 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 6890 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 33414 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 26436 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 118 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 47 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 45.0 | 40.0 | 6.0 | 9.0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 30.0 | 40.0 | 13.0 | 13.0 | 4.0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 23.0 | 40.0 | 11.0 | 19.0 | 6.0 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 11.0 | 40.0 | 22.0 | 22.0 | 4.0 |
| The teaching is good. | 43.0 | 38.0 | 4.0 | 6.0 | 9.0 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 53.0 | 28.0 | 6.0 | 11.0 | 2.0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 51.0 | 38.0 | 6.0 | 4.0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 54.0 | 33.0 | 2.0 | 2.0 | 9.0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 39.0 | 35.0 | 11.0 | 11.0 | 4.0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 35.0 | 41.0 | 0 | 7.0 | 17.0 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 38.0 | 29.0 | 18.0 | 11.0 | 4.0 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 32.0 | 15.0 | 17.0 | 21.0 | 15.0 |

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The majority returning the questionnaire support the school on most of the points enquired about. Most believe the school is led and managed well. Nearly all say their children like the school although not as many feel their

children are making good progress. In the parents' and carers' meeting some felt that their children did not get enough help with reading. A view was expressed that the school has improved their GCSE results. Inspectors found that pupils are making good progress and the amount of progress they are making has improved since the last inspection because teaching is now more effective. The majority agree that teaching is good and think their children are expected to work hard. Parents' and carers' were almost equally divided on whether the right amount of homework is being set. While most parents are happy about the standards of pupils' behaviour a minority are concerned and in the parents' meeting one said her child had been bullied over a lengthy period citing free play activities at lunchtimes not being supervised well. Inspectors saw that lunchtime activities in the playground were boisterous but that no one was being bullied. During the inspection pupils' behaviour was seen to be mostly good and pupils related to each other well. A sizeable minority of parents thinks their children are not being helped to become mature and responsible although a majority thinks otherwise. Inspectors found pupils readily accepted responsibility but that the number of opportunities to do so were too limited. Most parents and carers said the school is keeping them informed. Even more would be comfortable about approaching it with a question or a problem. Parents and carers are divided on whether the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

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

ENGLISH

48. Pupils' achievements in English are good overall. They are satisfactory by the end of Key Stage 2 and good by the end of the other key stages. In statutory assessment by teachers at the end of Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils' levels of attainment are above the average found in special schools of this type and in 1999 almost half of the Year 11 pupils achieved passes in GCSE examinations. Pupils' achievements in their speaking and listening skills are good in all key stages. They are also good in reading and responding to literature in Key Stages 3 and 4. The overall development of pupils' writing skills is satisfactory in all key stages but the quality of the presentation of written work by higher-attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 does not develop as much as it could. The introduction of the National Literacy Framework at Key Stage 2 has brought greater structure to pupils' learning in the basic skills and is beginning to have a positive effect on standards, particularly for lower-attaining pupils. Reading and writing in other subjects across the curriculum are also making a good contribution to pupils' progress in literacy.

49. Improvement in standards in English since the last inspection has been good. In reading, progress was reported to be unsatisfactory. It is now at least satisfactory and it is good in some aspects, for example, in the response to literary texts. Pupils now achieve success in nationally accredited examinations at the end of Key Stage 4. The progress of pupils with English as an additional language was described as unsatisfactory. It is now good. The good standards of speaking and listening have been maintained and there have been positive developments in the range of writing attempted by pupils, particularly in their response to fiction and poetry.

50. At Key Stage 2, pupils make steady progress in their basic skills. Their written work shows clear improvement over time in accuracy and in their confidence in free writing. In their reading, there is a wide range of attainment but they are all using phonics with increasing competence as they progress through their reading schemes. They are very lively in oral work and at times their ability to listen and to respond appropriately is poor but when interested in the work they are showing very good gains in their spoken vocabulary. Teaching in all key stages displays a particular strength through the use of challenging questions to elicit a good response from pupils in whole-class discussions. In a Year 7 lesson for example, pupils showed very good development in their ability to give their opinions and to justify them when presenting scenes from the fiction which they are reading. In several Key Stage 4 lessons, pupils were also talking confidently and with good levels of detail about their work, an ability noticed in other subjects such as geography and design and technology. Reading continues to develop well through Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils enjoy books of all kinds. They read texts and worksheets in other subjects with few obvious difficulties and are beginning to use reference books with increasing independence. They are introduced to pre-twentieth century literature, including Shakespeare, during Key Stage 3 and by the end of Key Stage 4 they are showing in their oral and written work that they have good levels of understanding of plot and character despite their difficulties with some of the language. Teaching makes good use of pupils' reading to set interesting written tasks and by the end of Key Stage 4 their folders contain good examples of these as well as of letters, imaginative writing, factual writing and note-taking and of their ability to draft and revise their work. Teachers' marking is constructive but there is insufficient emphasis on the correction of errors in spelling, punctuation and the organisation of writing. Presentation of work, particularly by the higher-attainers, does not correspond to the quality of the content. A number of lower-attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 continue to have significant problems with literacy and are showing little if any progress. Planning shows inadequate detail and focus on their individual needs. There is a lack of both appropriate strategies and learning materials for them. Pupils with English as an additional language, on the other hand, are receiving very effective support and show good progress in all aspects of the subject.

51. Teaching is good and the particular strengths that it displays can be clearly linked with the good progress made by pupils. High expectations in the use of books and other reading materials across the curriculum, for example, and the use of challenging questions to stimulate interest in fiction and poetry do much to raise attainments in reading. Pupils are encouraged very effectively to listen carefully and to talk

confidently. This has a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes to the subject and to their learning, which is good. On the few occasions when teaching was less effective in the lessons observed, the most common factor was lack of knowledge of suitable strategies for the teaching of basic skills to the lower-attaining pupils, particularly at Key Stage 4. Teachers' planning is good and the schemes of work which have so far been completed show a very good range and balance of the key skills set out in the subject's National Curriculum programme of study. The teaching of the basic skills, however, and the use of reading schemes are not yet effectively integrated into the schemes of work and the systems of assessment for the subject have some way to go before they provide sufficiently detailed and specific information on pupils' progress. Standardised reading tests are used but their results are not being effectively aggregated to evaluate standards or to set whole-school targets. The co-ordinator is aware of these areas for development. Good progress has been achieved towards other priorities. Library provision, for example, which was judged to be inadequate in the last inspection, is now satisfactory and the effectiveness of in-service training, particularly in the teaching of reading, has also improved.

MATHEMATICS

52. Achievement in mathematics is good throughout the school. For the oldest pupils it varies from satisfactory for lower attaining pupils, to very good for some of the higher attaining pupils who are aiming to take GCSE examinations. In 1999, six pupils achieved GCSE passes in mathematics. A significant number of pupils attain standards above those achieved by pupils in similar schools.

53. There have been satisfactory improvements since the last inspection, particularly in relation to raising standards. This has been largely due to the appointment of skilled teachers with good subject knowledge, the development of a good scheme of work and the impact of the National Numeracy Strategy.

54. By the end of Key Stage 2, the highest attainers are developing appropriate mental strategies for adding, subtracting and multiplying single digits. They understand place value and have experienced work with fractions and decimal numbers. They have a good vocabulary of two and three-dimensional shapes and can talk about their properties, applying their knowledge to work in a variety of situations. They use calculators when appropriate, and keep tallies in data-logging projects. They use good reading skills to solve mathematical problems expressed in words, working out what calculations are necessary. Other pupils experience a full programme of activities, learning to recognise coins, to tell the time, to measure and to use appropriate vocabulary to compare heights and weights. Pupils with hearing impairments are very well supported in the development of concepts through signed discussions of comparisons between different people and objects, and use the correct signing for counting and communicating mathematically.

55. By the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils have instant recall of addition and subtraction to 10, and appropriate vocabulary for measurement and comparison. They count in fives and tens and twos with confidence. They learn to measure accurately, lining up the origin accurately and inferring the units on a scale marked in tens. They use this skill to complete and then read a distance table using a map of the United Kingdom, dealing with numbers up to several hundred, with several pupils estimating what answers should be and identifying unlikely ones. They explore the properties of shape and begin to develop concepts of symmetry and reflection.

56. By the end of Key Stage 4, the highest attaining pupils attain GCSE passes and all other Year 11 pupils achieve a Certificate of Achievement. The highest attainers work out a series for a simple algebraic formula, recognise and continue the pattern with positive and negative numbers. They learn to use conventional mathematical instruments such as protractors and compasses appropriately. Lower attaining pupils use standard and non-standard measures confidently. They work neatly and can set out their work in tables. Pupils use calculators to check their results, but some pupils are not able to estimate the likely correct answer. Most of these pupils use appropriate reading skills to work from simple textbooks. Some pupils with English as an additional language have difficulties when working on written problems that demand the combination and manipulation of information from a variety of sources.

57. The best teaching is underpinned by very good subject knowledge at an appropriate level, which allows for well-planned and interesting lessons where pupils are continually challenged and excited by new learning, such as when Year 11 worked on algebraic formulae. Practical activities are well organised for primary pupils, but resources are limited and some are of poor quality. This particularly disadvantages children

taught by temporary teachers. There are not enough practical experiences in some lessons in the secondary department and this sometimes lessens the impact of otherwise good teaching. Expectations vary between teachers. Where subject knowledge is best, expectations are high and pupils make very good progress in their learning. There is a very good reflection of the pace and philosophy of the numeracy strategy, particularly in Year 6, where lively pupils are managed very effectively and helped to develop independence and knowledge of their own progress. Time is generally well used in lessons and support staff are well deployed to keep pupils on task and working productively. In lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, inexperience leads to lack of challenge and pace, activities are not well organised so time is wasted and pupils mark time or sometimes get bored and difficult. There are currently no planned opportunities for using information technology in mathematics lessons. This is unsatisfactory.

58. Due to long-term absence there has been no effective co-ordination of mathematics for some time and a new, enthusiastic, skilled co-ordinator has only just been appointed. There is no current monitoring of teaching or learning, and the quality of provision relies largely on the skilled teaching of individuals. Procedures for assessment are unsatisfactory. There is a shared commitment to high standards and improvement in the subject, but there are too few formal opportunities for sharing good practice, supporting inexperienced teachers or the joint planning of activities.

59. Despite a good broad and balanced curriculum, there is some disruption due to the timing of lessons. On occasions there are changes of support during lessons, some primary lessons are interrupted by playtime and secondary pupils go for recorder lessons at odd times. Again this lessens the impact of otherwise good provision.

SCIENCE

60. Pupils' achievements in science are satisfactory overall. By the end of Key Stage 2, because of effective teaching, pupils' achievements are good. They know the differences between night and day, the movement of the sun and why we need light. They know how to find out which materials allow electricity to pass through them; that some materials are better conductors than others and they can predict what might happen during their tests. Their use of scientific language in the correct context is good and they understand technical words and use them to describe what is happening.

61. By the end of Key Stage 3, the knowledge pupils have gained in Key Stage 2 is built on satisfactorily. Pupils use what they know to construct circuits but are not able to use an ammeter to measure current. Some pupils are not achieving as well as they could because of difficulties in reading. Some pupils are achieving well, for example, a Year 9 group in which pupils identify and classify the three rock types. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils' achievements are good. They know that reactions can be speeded up by the application of heat but not fully understand about the influence of surface area on the reaction rate. Some of the current pupils are on course for the Certificate of Achievement in science. Higher attaining pupils are entered for GCSE. In recent years most pupils entered for GCSE achieved pass grades.

62. At the time of the last inspection, standards in science were satisfactory. Experimental and investigative skills have improved at Key Stages 2 and 4. Assessment still lacks rigour especially in relation to measuring pupils' investigative skills. A satisfactory scheme of work has been written and pupils can now gain certificates to recognise their achievement at Key Stage 4. The quality of teaching remains satisfactory.

63. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In the best lessons, teachers plan carefully to meet the needs of all pupils. They present interesting demonstrations and use challenging questioning to help pupils discuss scientific principles. This motivates pupils; they are keen to learn and concentrate for long periods of time. The quality of learning is good. For example, in a lesson investigating materials, the teacher's use of key phrases and questioning probed pupils' understanding so that most recalled and used the words 'circuit' and 'resistor' correctly. Teachers set high expectations for Key Stage 2 pupils and this moves their thinking forward in clear and logical ways. At this stage lessons are well planned and very well paced. Pupils are managed well in Key Stage 2 and satisfactorily at the other stages. Expectations are satisfactory in Key Stage 3, for example, in a lesson on rock types pupils exploration of samples helped them gain new knowledge about the different types of rock. Their learning is satisfactory. In one Year 7 lesson however, the teachers' expectations were unrealistic because the basic concepts were not explained clearly. Not enough regard was

given to what pupils already knew and pupils became restless and bored. In several Key Stage 3 lessons the use of work sheets, textbooks and writing on the board proved difficult for pupils to read. Consequently, the quality of learning is unsatisfactory.

64. Procedures for assessing what pupils know at Key Stage 3 are poor and do not show pupils clearly what to do to improve. The planned curriculum does not include opportunities to enhance spiritual development and to show how computers can be used to support learning.

ART

65. By the end of Key Stage 2 the standards achieved by pupils are too low. Throughout the key stage, art activity is incorporated largely into topic work although some discrete work happens in Year 6. Art activities are mostly not planned with sufficient attention to what pupils ought to be learning. Their knowledge of processes such as drawing and applying colour; their awareness of such elements as line, tone, pattern and texture are not developed enough. By the end of the key stage, when pupils have tried drawing from observation, for example, making portraits, they show they have attained a basic understanding and skill in seeing shape and proportion. Higher attaining pupils use a range of line and marks to describe some facial features in detail.

66. By the end of Key Stage 3 the picture could hardly be more contrasting due to the impact of enthusiastic teaching based upon very good subject knowledge, very good relationships with pupils and very high expectations. Achievements are high in relation to what is expected of pupils with moderate learning difficulties. A good example is that all pupils have an understanding of drawing, using line and tone effectively to express what they see. They know there are different sorts of pencils that produce a range in the quality of line and tone. The standard of observation and drawing achieved by the minority of higher attainers is near to that expected of pupils in all schools. A few reach a standard above this by exploiting the range of pencil line and tone and achieving work expressing in fine detail the proportions and features of what they observe.

67. For the same reasons as in Key Stage 3, the majority of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 achieve high standards. Higher attainers achieve very high standards that are excellent in relation to their special educational needs. In the 1998 GCSE examination most pupils entered achieved A*-C grades and most of these were A* and A grades. These results sit well with those of all schools nationally. In 1999 all entered for GCSE achieved the pass rate and nearly half gained the higher A*-C grades. The sketchbook is established well as the basis of research and experiment. Pupils use a process of investigating colour, textures and pattern to generate and refine ideas. They often do this independently, for example, bringing in materials they have found to develop a collage project. This enables them to discuss their work knowledgeably and they employ an appropriate art vocabulary doing so. For example, a pupil points out the careful gradations of colour he has built into his textile collage.

68. The improvements made in art have been very good. The previous report recognised the vision and drive of the then new co-ordinator. The co-ordinator has rapidly realised her vision through the very high standards of art and the very good progress pupils now make at Key Stages 3 and 4. At the time of the last inspection progress at these stages was unsatisfactory. Primary pupils' progress was judged satisfactory then but is now unsatisfactory because teachers' expertise and planning are not sufficient. The co-ordinator has not been able to support the primary teachers as much as they need in order to raise standards.

69. Teaching is very good at Key Stages 3 and 4. It is unsatisfactory overall at Key Stage 2, although on those occasions when art is taught directly pupils' knowledge and skills are being developed satisfactorily. In Key Stages 3 and 4 the teacher uses her specialist knowledge very effectively and the quality of learning is very good. In each lesson, using very well structured introductions, she clarifies the areas of learning pupils need to fix upon. Pupils' understanding of these are very well reinforced by showing good examples in older pupils work. A good discussion ensues which tells how well pupils understand the teachers' intentions. This is a very good opportunity for developing and using art vocabulary as well as rehearsing important bits of knowledge, for example, 'drawing is 90 per cent looking and 10 per cent drawing'. These interactions carry the teacher's very high expectations. They are always delivered enthusiastically and achieve a high level of interest, confidence and motivation in all pupils. Expert planning has meant that over time pupils have consolidated much knowledge and skill and they acquire the wherewithal to pursue and persevere with refining work over many weeks. The teacher has a firm grasp of the National Curriculum and the GCSE syllabus. The teacher

provides very good informal assessment, checking pupils' work and communicating clearly with them about what works well and not so well. Pupils work largely independently, sustaining a productive pace through the lesson. The projects are interesting and in each year they address very effectively what pupils should be learning. The strength throughout Key Stages 3 and 4 is very much in using colour, texture and pattern. Pupils quickly become adept in exploiting the colour and surface characteristics of a wide range of materials. They also learn skills in constructing art in three dimensions using card and plaster. Relationships are very good between the teacher, support staff and pupils. Support staff are well briefed and make very positive contributions during lessons without being overly prescriptive. Homework activity is very good, becoming increasingly significant throughout Key Stage 4. In order to complete the coursework for GCSE pupils teaching continues through lunchtimes and in school for several weekends.

70. The art co-ordinator has very successfully led the development of art at Key Stages 3 and 4 and this accounts for the high and sometimes exceptional standards achieved. The teacher remains well informed of pupils' attainment and progress but does not record information systematically. The resources for art have been improved, particularly in the range of books and other visual materials. These reflect the wide diversity of art and culture. Pupils' achievements are fully celebrated in plenty of colourful displays throughout the school. The scope for evaluating and supporting primary teachers is not developed sufficiently.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

71. Pupils are achieving well in design and technology over the time they are in the school. The pupils have satisfactory achievements by the end of Key Stage 2. The teacher adopts a primary model when organising the food room, which build pupils' confidence and enables them to work and learn as a group. Teacher's planning and selective use of learning aids and resources help to overcome problems that pupils have measuring, sequencing tasks, following instructions. Pupils recognise familiar ingredients and know how to combine them. They build well on previous gains in knowledge. They add new skills and refine old ones. They learn new vocabulary and information and, above all, enjoy their learning.

72. In Key Stage 3 pupils are achieving well. In the workshop they cut and shape components with increased accuracy and join them to make mechanical toys. Some pupils use jigs to support their cutting skills. All take great care with their work and they are very pleased when all the components fit together. They know what they are learning and on one occasion thanked the teacher at the end of a very good lesson. When they work with food pupils enjoy designing new products and decide which ingredients to include. The pupils making juggling bags really appreciate the support they receive from the teacher and the learning support assistants when placing their patterns on the fabric and cutting out their shapes. They piece the bags together confidently some using temporary tacks and others by machine sewing.

73. In Key Stage 4 many pupils work on individual projects in the workshop. They make their own decisions about the order of working and the correct tools to use. They can cut wood and metal to size, assemble and finish the materials and make informed changes as they proceed. Pupils use different types of writing, drawing and presentation of data for recording processes. Pupils are competent to evaluate food products. They identify preferences and arrange foods in a rank order as a result of informed judgements. Pupils manage and organise themselves well when using food. They can follow flow diagrams and proceed with independence and confidence.

74. Design and technology teaching has been improved since the last inspection by the appointment of subject specialists. An appropriately broad range of materials is now employed. Curricular planning is very good with schemes of work established and detailed lesson plans that identify resources to support pupils' learning. The style of documentation is the same for both practical areas and this makes its use for planning, assessment, continuity and progression much more efficient. The accommodation is of a good size and the total refurbishment of the workshop and the food/textiles rooms provide stimulating, quality environments, is an excellent improvement. Both areas are now fully utilised for teaching and the range of practical resources is very good.

75. Teaching in design and technology is very good overall. There are some excellent features of teaching in Key Stage 2. Teachers know their pupils well. The learning support assistants working as communicators for the hearing impaired pupils help those pupils' learning very effectively. The teachers use very good subject knowledge and a range of teaching styles to build on previous learning and enabling the pupils to make

progress. Detailed lesson plans include outcomes and resources. The level of challenge makes sure time is used well. Although planning includes some assessment this is not consistent on an agreed format for all areas of learning and has been identified as an area for development.

76. The curriculum is broad and balanced with all materials covered. The use of information and communications technology is planned to support the learning. The agreed strategy for both areas and its helpful features contribute well to pupils' learning. The school has made good progress in developing accredited courses covering all material areas for Key Stage 4 pupils and this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. The use of numeracy skills is successfully encouraged in all key stages and the use of technical vocabulary is relevantly encouraged. The subject is very well co-ordinated by both teachers with responsibility for their own areas. While there is some monitoring of pupils progress in each area, until the assessment is rationalised, this cannot be used successfully to monitor progress overall. The quality and quantity of resources for learning and teaching are very good and the use of digitised images of processes and pupils finished work is very good practice especially to inform pupils of their progress over time.

GEOGRAPHY

77. Standards of achievement are good in geography at all key stages. The youngest pupils in Key Stage 2 are presently studying how arid conditions produce deserts. They know how underground water brought to the surface can produce an oasis. In Key Stage 3 pupils are using correct geographical vocabulary to describe temperature and by the end of that key stage, pupils are able to describe the size and function of different settlements and they are able to back up their decisions using examples of places they personally know. In Key Stage 4, pupils work enthusiastically on a project about conflicting interests in the Peak National Park. They are able to work collaboratively in discussion to reach conclusions about, for example the effect of limestone quarrying on a sensitive landscape. Throughout the school pupils maintain neat and well presented note books which show a gradual development of the use of maps to illustrate a variety of geographical factors such as relief, population and climate.

78. The quality of teaching is good overall with examples of very good teaching and an individual example of unsatisfactory teaching. In that particular lesson the objectives were not challenging nor were they made clear to the pupils and little new learning took place. In the very good lesson the teacher's subject expertise enabled confident extra comments and explanations that expand the text and give pupils a firm foundation of knowledge. In these circumstances learning was good. Pupils could understand the complexities of the task, in this case to decide upon conflicting priorities for development in a national park and they could maximise their use of the time available. High expectations of independent thinking leads to good study skills particularly in Key Stage 4. When teaching is good the lesson plan has clear objectives and the precise use of geographical vocabulary enables pupils to describe features, for example on photos of desert landscapes with the same accuracy. Teachers use questions skilfully to check and correct pupils' knowledge so that when pupils record their observations in writing it is correct and their knowledge secure. There is a strong sense of progression of learning in teachers' planning from one lesson to the next.

79. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection when the report highlighted a number of deficiencies. There is now a secure scheme of work at all key stages and this covers National Curriculum requirements. There is a common method of recording pupil's attainments. Resources are now satisfactory and teachers now have the tools to deliver the subject. This is the basis of the rise in the quality of teaching and the good progress that pupils are making in their knowledge and understanding of all aspects of geography.

80. There are insufficient examples of incorporating information and communications technology within the geography scheme of work nor in the day to day classroom work in geography. The method of recording attainment in the subject is consistently used but the information gained is insufficiently evaluated and analysed to target future work either for individual pupils or for groups of pupils.

HISTORY

81. Standards of achievement in history are satisfactory. History is taught at Key Stage 2 and 3. Some pupils complete historical projects as part of the Youth Award Scheme in Key Stage 4. These are of good quality. The youngest pupils in Key Stage 2 are enjoying learning about Henry VIII and they are able to

knowledgeably discuss the King's need for a male heir and hence his six marriages. They are becoming aware that the values and attitudes of people can be very different in other times than ours. In Key Stage 3, pupils are beginning to use contemporary sources as evidence, for instance, two accounts of the character of William the Conqueror. Pupils are able to consider the conflicting views of the Royalists and the Parliamentarians. They know details of the events leading to the execution of Charles I. By the end of that key stage, older pupils can compare conditions in Germany and in England after the First World War and they are beginning to find out about the social consequences.

82. The quality of teaching in history is good overall with an individual example of unsatisfactory teaching. History is taught with enthusiasm and good subject knowledge which leads to good quality learning. Pupils are encouraged to join in lively discussion about, for example, the reasons that led to the Jarrow March. In whole class discussion teachers use questioning and pupil's own ideas or comments skilfully to help them consolidate an accurate knowledge of topics. This makes for good lessons in which all pupils are actively involved and the pace is crisp. When this is reinforced by written work in groups well chosen to take account of pupils' different literacy levels all pupils make good progress in the lesson and the quality of their learning is good. Good use is made of resources, for instance pictures to help younger pupil's sequence Henry VIII's marriages. The scheme of work being used gives a progressive experience of both factual knowledge and historical skills. In the one unsatisfactory lesson the management of pupils was ineffective giving rise to minor interruptions which caused the teacher to be distracted.

83. The level of improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory. There is now greater consistency of teaching in each key stage. The use of the scheme of work has been maintained and non-specialist teachers now have the expertise and confidence to teach well. At present information and communications technology is insufficiently integrated into the pupils' work in history. While individual teachers have worked with dedication and enthusiasm there has been no co-ordinator for the past two years and this is a weakness. Assessment documents have not been consistently completed and information from this assessment is not used effectively to evaluate progress nor to inform teachers planning. The overall responsibility to monitor and evaluate the work of the department or the progress of pupils is not clearly defined. This has inhibited developments.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

84. Pupils' achievements in information and communications technology are unsatisfactory throughout the school. Pupils develop good skills in particular aspects of the subject, but in no key stage or year group is a full statutory programme taught. Pupils of all ages are unable to achieve as much as they ought to.

85. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils have appropriate keyboards skills and are independent in logging on to the network and running their chosen software. They begin to understand some of the conventions of regular office software, such as the indication of spelling errors. The highest attainers copy type accurately. They are familiar with a children's atlas on CD ROM and are confident to explore, making informed decisions, for example, about where to find out about deserts using the colour of the land and the country as clues. They do not, however, have sufficient experience of handling information on the computer, music and painting programs or modelling and control activities.

86. By the end of Key Stage 3, the highest attaining pupils have good keyboard skills, and type their work straight onto the computer, applying appropriate spelling strategies, correct punctuation and capital letters. They learn appropriate search strategies when finding topics in a CD ROM encyclopaedia. They can use a computer aided design programme to develop diagrams and designs. Pupils learn to identify different sorts of information, and develop a sound basic technical vocabulary relating to information and communications technology. They have not had sufficient opportunities to achieve information-handling skills, design multimedia presentations or undertake modelling activities. They experience a narrow range of software operations.

87. By the end of Key Stage 4, the highest attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 continue to improve their keyboard skills and develop a basic knowledge of databases and spreadsheets. They produce good quantities of work including information set out in graphs and charts. Some pupils research, using the Internet at home and, for example, contribute useful information to a project on food. The work Key Stage 4 pupils undertake is done through the basic skills component of their Certificate of Achievement in Design and Technology and is of

good quality. Groups that do not do this course, follow the same programme as in Key Stage 3 pupils with similar outcomes.

88. There have been some improvements since the last inspection, particularly in respect of resources, but the programme of work is still too narrow and the schools' good resources are not yet used efficiently. However, information and communications technology is now a priority for the senior management team. The co-ordinator was appointed primarily as a design and technology co-ordinator and had no previous skills or experience of the subject or of pupils with learning difficulties. He has tackled this task with great professionalism and is enjoying the challenge of building both his own skills and the information and communications technology curriculum from scratch. The school has invested heavily in a complete network, covering an information and communications technology suite and all classrooms. The recent involvement of local authority advisers is beginning to have an impact on activities and the co-ordinator is keen to make links with other similar schools.

89. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers support pupils well in developing the basics of using computers and, learning word processing, pupils improve their spelling and reading skills. Teachers' inexperience using information and communications technology beyond this leads to low expectations and insufficient opportunities for pupils to make full use of information and communications technology across the curriculum. Therefore, learning is unsatisfactory. Work is carefully monitored, and support staff well used so that everyone is kept busy and productive. There is no consistent recording of the progress that pupils make in information and communications technology. Therefore, lessons are not planned satisfactorily on the basis of pupils' previous performance. The degree of support and challenge is varied satisfactorily during the lesson to suit individual pupils. However, all pupils in the group move through the same series of activities despite their great differences in ability and interest. The teacher for pupils with hearing impairments provides very good information and communications technology activities, helping those pupils improve their speech. Some use is made of a text-to-speech facility, and pupils occasionally use a programme to improve letter-writing skills. More generally, there is very little use of computer software to help pupils overcome their special educational needs, access the curriculum more effectively or develop more efficient ways of recording their work.

90. The co-ordinator is occupied largely with developing the secondary phase scheme of work, and does not have sufficient time to monitor the work of colleagues adequately. He is aware of the need for training and raising the awareness of all subject staff, and is planning to take advantage of the current national training opportunities.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

91. Achievements in French are good. The good standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained. In addition, pupils' success in the subject will now be recognised through nationally accredited examinations at the end of Key Stage 4.

92. Pupils achieve well in their language skills, such as imitating pronunciation and listening attentively to spoken French, in both Key Stages 3 and 4. In Year 8, they are extending their vocabulary at a rapid rate, learning by heart the French names for the days of the week and the months and using them confidently in question and answer sessions. By the end of Key Stage 3, they are responding well to questions in which they are asked, "Where are you going?" using simple grammatical structures correctly and with clear pronunciation. Pupils are reading and copying single words and short phrases with good levels of accuracy. Pupils in Key Stage 4 continue to develop their vocabulary and are achieving very well using new words in a growing variety of patterns in statements and questions. By the end of the key stage, their written work shows that they are comfortable with increasingly complex sentences, in exercises which simulate dialogues in a French café, for example. In spelling tests, their recall of memorised words is good.

93. Teaching is good. Teachers' planning is good. It includes clear progression in what pupils are expected to know, understand and do and makes good use of the different areas of experience specified in the subject's National Curriculum programme of study. Through these and a very good collection of learning resources the subject makes a very positive contribution to pupils' cultural development. The teacher's expectations are very high and pupils enjoy the challenge in French lessons. They are very keen to use the language both in prepared exchanges and in simple classroom conversations. They join in the singing of French songs with enthusiasm. Teaching both promotes and makes very effective use of these positive

attitudes. Lessons are fun. They include very good use of a wide variety of learning resources and achieve a lively pace. French is used progressively through the key stages for classroom instructions and questions and a good model of pronunciation is provided for pupils. As a result the overall quality of learning is good.

94. The checklist system of assessment is good as it uses specific references to the National Curriculum levels of attainment. In this and in the increased emphasis on reading, the subject has improved since the last inspection,

MUSIC

95. Standards of achievement in music at Key Stages 3 and 4 are satisfactory. Pupils sing well in assemblies and play keyboards. Fifty pupils in the school play the recorder and can perform simple melodies from notation with reasonable accuracy. No lessons were seen at Key Stage 2 and there was insufficient evidence from pupils' work to judge their achievement. By the end of Key Stage 3 many play random notes and a few do so rhythmically. Some pupils are able to perform simple short compositions after listening to rhythms. Older pupils respond well to experimenting with sounds on the euphonium and trumpet. They all make sounds and two pupils discover they perform with some control and one achieves a melody. At the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have improved and developed their rhythmic and melodic ideas. Pupils enjoy music and when given the opportunity to play and compose they are very enthusiastic in praising one another's achievements.

96. The previous inspection noted pupils enjoyed the musical opportunities and made good progress with the standard of singing in lessons less good than the playing of instruments. Since then the standards of singing has not been maintained and the standards of teaching has declined from good to satisfactory with progress satisfactory as a result. There is now a drive to raise standards with a new co-ordinator in post and a satisfactory curriculum now outlined in a scheme of work. The timetable does not allow for extra choir time but the co-ordinator has successfully launched a tambourine club that is very much enjoyed by the players.

97. Teaching is satisfactory. The teacher has very good instrumental skills. She manages the range of pupils' special educational needs and their behaviour satisfactorily. In some lesson the pupils are divided into smaller groups. In these instances some pupils work in an adjacent room with the learning support assistant. Their activities are not monitored sufficiently by the teacher to ensure they are making progress. The teacher has a very calm and positive approach with pupils and changes activity frequently to keep pupils motivated. Relationships are satisfactory. Pupils respect and appreciate the support they receive from the teacher and learning support assistants. They are patiently encouraged to concentrate and sustain their interest. The teacher uses the opportunities for playing instruments as an incentive to complete the writing task.

98. The subject is led satisfactorily and while the weaknesses in the organisation of the music timetable have been identified by the music co-ordinator they have not been addressed. This relates to a disparity in the time allocated to different Year 11 groups. The subject co-ordinator is the school's only music teacher and is employed part time, which may be why the opportunities provided for extra curricular music are very restricted. There are a number of whole school performances that help lift the standards of singing, for example at Harvest Festival and Christmas time. A new system of assessment has been started this term but pupils do not know how well they have done or what they should do to improve. There are no opportunities for pupils to use computers to enhance their musical skills although the curriculum is planned satisfactorily to extend pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

99. Achievement in games is satisfactory. It is difficult to comment on standards in other areas of activity in the physical education curriculum as only two lessons were observed involving other activities. Year 8 pupils were taking part in a gymnastics session in which they were jumping from a variety of apparatus. They were not exploring different ways of travelling in flight or developing a sequence of movements, which would be appropriate aims for these pupils. Planning indicates limited time for gymnastics in the Key Stage 3 scheme of work and it is unlikely that pupils will be able to develop their gymnastic skills at an appropriate rate. In an orienteering exercise involving Year 10 pupils the levels of attainment were well below a reasonable expectation for these pupils. Planning for this activity does include provision for more demanding exercises

away from the school site. In games, pupils in all key stages are achieving satisfactorily. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are developing their throwing and catching skills at an appropriate rate. They respond well to the good quality coaching which they receive in racket skills. The good positioning of their feet and body increases their achievements in striking the ball. Key Stage 3 pupils are showing satisfactory progress in football. They are learning how to pass the ball accurately and to move into space to receive passes. Low-attaining pupils persevere despite their difficulties and are keen to take part in small-sided games. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils show on the basketball court that they have developed a good grasp of tactics and teamwork. Their individual skills such as passing and dribbling the ball have developed well. They compete with enthusiasm but also display good sporting behaviour. They are familiar with the rules and are able to referee the game competently.

100. The teaching of games is satisfactory. Overall, it has improved since the last inspection. Teachers manage pupils very efficiently and, consequently, pupils are generally behaved well in lessons. Teachers give clear directions so lessons proceed at a good pace with effective use made of time. Pupils listen well to teachers' advice and they try hard to improve their performance. They are helped well to accept limitations in their own and others' performance and are encouraged to support each other well. However, they are given insufficient opportunities to think and talk about their performance and as a result they do not develop their independence as much as they could. Knowledge of the full range of activities specified in the programme of study, particularly at Key Stages 3 and 4 is inadequate and, as a consequence, pupils' learning is unsatisfactory.

101. The planning of the curriculum for physical education reveals a disproportionate amount of time spent on games. There is therefore a lack of balance in the activities which pupil's experience and this factor seriously affects the progress they can make in gymnastics, swimming and outdoor pursuits. This shortcoming was identified in the last inspection and not enough has been done to rectify it. The statutory requirements for the subject at Key Stage 3 are not being met. In-service training has been undertaken in a discipline of developmental movement, which has been introduced to several classes to good effect but apart from this there have been inadequate steps taken to broaden staff expertise through professional development. Improvements to the breadth and balance of learning opportunities for all pupils have been unsatisfactory. Procedures for assessment are satisfactory but the use of assessment information is unsatisfactory.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

102. By the end of Key Stage 2 the standards pupils achieve are satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils know the main events of Jesus's life and know the basic facts of Hinduism; that, for instance, it is the principal religion of India. Pupils remember that Jesus was kind to people; he healed the sick. They are keen to recall stories about Jesus feeding the multitude with loaves and fishes and also the parable of the Good Samaritan. Lower attaining pupils remember stories only being about God and that Jesus was the Son of God but try hard to give answers to questions. All Year 6 pupils engage in a lively enactment of The Good Samaritan doing well to portray the different qualities of each character. They play their parts with all seriousness and take turns considerately. Pupils also listen attentively and demonstrate respect in relation to the religious material. Higher attainers describe the events and people in good detail. Most pupils recognise good and bad examples of behaviour in the story and some see how it can relate to their own actions.

103. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are achieving satisfactory standards. They remember the key events in the life of Jesus leading to the crucifixion and resurrection, enjoying answering questions and contributing to discussion. In Year 9, pupils have a sound understanding of what actions and attitudes constitute discrimination against others, speaking seriously about how wrong it is towards people. One pupil is aware of a wider meaning of discrimination explaining that the restriction on children drinking alcohol is a proper form of discrimination. All pupils are able to work co-operatively researching for biographical details on Martin Luther King. They use indexes in books and extract relevant information from the text.

104. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils are not achieving as well as they could because there is not sufficient opportunity to continue religious education during Year 11. Pupils in Year 10 have built on their achievements from the previous year. They have each produced well-written and illustrated analysis of a major religion. They give serious consideration in discussion to the meaning of prayer, listing the many ways praying is used, for example, to give thanks or praise and how it occurs in different religions.

105. At the time of last inspection primary aged pupils were making unsatisfactory progress. Currently, their progress has improved and is now satisfactory. The religious education curriculum was only being established then and is now in a well planned form although not in place entirely in Key Stage 4. The good leadership qualities of the then new subject co-ordinator have been borne out in respect of curriculum development and also regarding improving religious education resources. These are now good.

106. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stages 2 and 4; it is good in Key Stage 3. Teachers' knowledge of religious education is at least sound and, while most are not specialists, the good curriculum plans and resources to hand ensure they proceed with lessons on at least a sound footing. Lessons invariably get off to a good start with a group discussion and pertinent questioning. This is particularly good in Key Stage 3 where the teacher has specialist knowledge that is expressed effectively in framing questions. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are frequently promoted well. They are readily motivated by this approach and show real keenness to recall their previous work. This demonstrates well what they know and understand. The lively and entertaining teaching in Year 6 succeeds very well in getting a difficult group engaged. The prospect of role-playing a religious story positively excites them, resulting in pupils making particularly good efforts, for example, one delivers an extended and detailed recount of The Good Samaritan to the class. At the end of this lesson the teacher took a moment with the group to reflect on having shared a successful activity and one everybody enjoyed. This helped build a positive attitude leading to good learning. Lessons are often as interesting, well organised and challenging in Key Stage 3. The team-teaching in Year 8 worked very well in dramatising the final days of Jesus and a deaf pupil was kept fully involved with the effective signing done by his classroom support assistant. The team-teaching worked well to consolidate pupils' knowledge and understanding of the story and to see its religious dimensions. Another good feature of teaching in Year 9 was the opportunity for pupils to do research on Martin Luther King from a selection of reference books. Pupils took charge of this confidently, working as pairs sharing the reading and taking notes.

107. The curriculum uses the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education effectively to plan programmes for each key stage. Assemblies are thoroughly planned to address a wide range of religious and cultural festivals and teachers have a list of these events so they can plan activities for their classes. Systematic assessment procedures are not in place and, as Year 11 pupils do not have sufficient time for religious education, the statutory requirements are not being met.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

108. Achievement in personal, social and health education is good. In Key Stage 2, pupils are able to distinguish between good and poor behaviour and explain the differences. They know the consequences of their behaviour and are able write a rule that helps them behave well. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils share his or her ideas about friendship in circle time and appreciate each person's unique contribution. They recognise the ways in which bullying will happen and share their ideas of how best to deal with it. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils can use their own experience to talk in a considered way about resisting pressures to take drugs. They have a wide knowledge of interpersonal issues and can relate what shared interests would be important in long-term relationship. They are learning about victim, rescuer and persecutor roles and confidently act these out in front of small groups of their peers, showing they are developing a grasp of these concepts. Pupils know about the range of opportunities available when they leave school and can discuss advantages and disadvantages of different possibilities. On an initial visit to the local college, for example, they showed great independence and maturity. They are preparing well for the next stage of education.

109. Since the last inspection careers education has remained good. The school has recently begun to develop a programme for secondary aged pupils including relationships, drugs and health education. Some very good materials are being accumulated to support a new curriculum for personal, social and health education. Circle time has been established and its success has been monitored and supported by a member of the senior management team.

110. Teaching is good and leads to good learning. It is underpinned by very good subject knowledge and the positive effects of recent training in using circle time approaches for discussing personal and social issues. Issues such as relationships, loss and separation, bullying and drugs abuse are handled informatively and sensitively. Good questioning leads to pupils building their awareness of topics under discussion and role-playing scenarios brings issues to life. Pupils are helped to express and examine their own views and others because of the high expectations for maturity and the very good relationships with teachers. Pupils' ideas are

carefully heard and valued. There is a good rapport developed during circle time activities and pupils are enabled to talk and listen effectively. A good pace that is often set leads to excited task focused conversations.

111. The personal, social and health education curriculum is being developed appropriately to meet new statutory requirements.