

INSPECTION REPORT

WITHERSLACK HALL SCHOOL

Witherslack

Grange over Sands

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112452

Headteacher: Michael Barrow

Reporting inspector: Greg Sorrell
21529

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th September 2001

Inspection number: 190469

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Boys
School address:	Witherslack Grange-over-Sands Cumbria
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Appropriate authority:	Witherslack Group of School
Name of chair of governors:	Jim Bowers
Date of previous inspection:	September 1996

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9572	Kitty Anderson	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20165	Alan Lemon	Team inspector	English Religious Education	How well does the school care for its pupils?
8056	Howard Probert	Team inspector	Science Music	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
17681	Roger Sharples	Team inspector	History Geography Equal opportunities	
22391	Nick Smith	Team inspector	Art Design technology Physical Education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
19386	Trevor Watts	Team inspector	Mathematics	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Witherslack Hall School is an independent residential special school for pupils with statements of special educational needs related to their emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are currently 54 pupils on roll, of whom 2 are from ethnic minority backgrounds. The pupils' attainment on entry is below that expected for their age, however, in light of their previous academic records, the pupils achieve well. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The pupils come from many areas of England, including, the North-east, the North-west, the South-east and Greater London. There is no specific term or year when the pupils may join the school's roll.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. The pupils achieve well in most lessons and do well in national examinations. They are helped to do this by the good standard of teaching provided by teaching and support staff, including care staff. In addition to enabling the pupils to make good progress in academic areas, the supportive ethos of the school ensures that the pupils' emotional and behavioural needs are met also. The new headteacher, supported by a re-organised senior management team gives good leadership and is aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The directors give effective support to the school overall, yet need to be more involved in monitoring the school's curriculum and academic performance. The school uses its resources effectively and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching provided by teaching, care and support staff is good and contributes well to the pupils' positive attitude to learning and personal development.
- The pupils achieve well in a wide variety of examinations at the end of their times at the school.
- The provision of extra-curricular activities is excellent.
- The learning support department provides very well for pupils with additional special educational needs.
- The links with the local community and partner institutions are very good.
- The school provides a very good programme of social, moral and health education.

What could be improved

- The breadth, balance and management of the school's curriculum, for example, there is insufficient provision for information and communication technology, religious education and no provision of a modern foreign language.
- The directors' role in the curriculum and standards achieved by pupils is under developed.
- The quality and timing of budget information from the directors to the school.
- The quality of targets in pupils' individual education plans.

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

Overall improvement since the last inspection in September 1996 is satisfactory. All areas have been addressed during the intervening five years, although some have not sustained improvement whilst other aspects are now much improved. The leadership and management of the curriculum has improved significantly due to an increase in the number of subject specialists and a well planned curriculum in most areas. Although there is evidence from subject evaluations, that information and communication technology, religious education and modern foreign languages have received attention in the intervening period, the improvements have been insufficient and these subjects remain areas for development. Assessment procedures have been improved and further attention has recently been given to the curriculum that show a genuine capacity to succeed. Satisfactory improvement is evident in the arrangements for teachers' professional development, although additional training in information and communication technology is required. All issues related to health and safety in design and technology have been satisfactorily addressed.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year 9	by Year 11	Key	
Speaking and listening	C	B	very good	A
Reading	C	C	good	B
Writing	C	B	satisfactory	C
Mathematics	B	B	unsatisfactory	D
Personal, social and health education	B	B	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B		

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

The school uses its analyses of the national test results to set realistic targets for the pupils in order to raise standards. The results from these tests show that the school continues to perform well compared to similar schools. In mathematics, science, physical education, art, geography, design and technology the pupils make good progress. The pupils show particularly good progress in the practical aspects of science when conducting experiments and in outdoor pursuits such as canoeing. In English and other subjects, the pupils' development of literacy is satisfactory overall, although, more attention could be given to the development of good reading habits. By the time the pupils leave, they write well in response to the demands of examination coursework. Mathematics and the use of numeracy across the curriculum, in science and geography, for example, all helps to have a positive effect upon the standards achieved. The pupils' progress in history and music is satisfactory overall, although good musical work is seen during school productions, such as the Christmas performance of Oliver Twist. The pupils' overall progress in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory, despite making satisfactory progress in specific lessons on the subject. Too few resources and a lack of opportunity to use the technology in other subjects adversely affect their progress. The pupils' progress in religious education is unsatisfactory, as the subject's improvement in planning has not yet

had an impact upon what happens in classrooms. A modern foreign language is not taught. The pupils' progress in pre-vocational programmes and careers education and guidance is good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils' attitudes to school are good overall. They show a good attitude to learning and value the support they are given, this is particularly evident with older pupils who have been at the school longer. Pupils are keen to take up the vast majority of opportunities provided, notably those offered as extra curricular activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Overall, the pupils' behaviour is good within lessons and around the school. Occasionally, some behaviour is not acceptable and in most cases, this does not affect others in the lesson. Most pupils get from one lesson to another without fuss.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils' personal development is good and this shows in the quality of relationships they enjoy with teaching and care staff. Within lessons, the pupils learn to work collaboratively, such as in physical education and science. The school council gives them good experience of airing their views. The pupils are courteous to visitors and most are willing to discuss their work. More opportunities could be provided within lessons for pupils to develop independent learning skills.
Attendance	The pupils' attendance is satisfactory. Occasionally, it is adversely affected by the failure of pupils to catch the transport back to school after a weekend home.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good

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

The overall quality of teaching is good. The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory and is good in mathematics, science and personal, health and social education. A major strength is the quality of relationships that teachers and care staff have with the pupils which assists not only their attitudes and behaviour, but most importantly, their academic progress. The pupils learn well in practical situations, such as science, although at times they need strong encouragement to produce written evidence of their learning. Other practical subjects are of high quality, such as outdoor pursuits, rural science and design and technology. Too little use is made of information and communication technology to teach all subjects of the curriculum. This is a weakness, in large part due to an absence of appropriate resources. In some lessons, more emphasis could be placed upon the pupils' development of independent enquires using resources other than worksheets. Communication skills, including literacy and numeracy are addressed satisfactorily across the curriculum. The additional special educational needs of pupils are addressed very well by the school's learning support department.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The overall good quality of the curriculum outweighs its weaknesses. The strengths include quality practical experiences in science, physical educational and pre-vocational programmes. A wide range of examinations are offered to pupils. The weaknesses include insufficient information and communication technology, religious education and access to a modern foreign language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This provision is good overall. Particular strengths are the social and moral aspects. The staff serve as very good role models and give pupils many opportunities to develop appropriate social skills and demonstrate that they know right from wrong. Assemblies offer pupils the chance to reflect upon spiritual matters and planned visits to a variety of places of worship are a welcome addition to the curriculum.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The standard of care for the pupils is good, as is the quality of the support and guidance given to pupils. Despite the long distance between home and school, the partnership with parents is good. The school values the contributions made by parents and encourages them to play a full part in their child's education and care.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The quality of leadership and management by the new headteacher and other key staff is good overall. There is a clear educational direction. The quality of teaching has improved as has subject management, although the school has experienced managerial difficulties in English.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory overall. The board of directors has a secure overview of financial arrangements and have recently provided a range of useful policies to enhance the effective management of the school. They do not have a sufficiently strong role in monitoring the school's curriculum or standards achieved by pupils.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's evaluation of its own performance is satisfactory. Good use is made of analyses of examination results to set targets and the internal system of monitoring staff performance is an appropriate focus of the current development plan.
The strategic use of resources	The overall provision of staff, accommodation and resources is satisfactory. Current procedures by which resources are made available for the curriculum are insufficiently clear to school staff and require review. A significant weakness is the school's use of new technology in teaching and management. The school's procedures to secure best value 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">• Their children make progress.• The information they receive about their children's progress.• They feel that they can approach the school with questions and problems.• Activities outside lessons are good.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework.

Inspectors support the positive views of the parents. The views expressed about homework are valid and are receiving attention by the school in order to have a more consistent approach to the setting of homework.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The report makes judgements on how well pupils achieve taking into account their special educational needs. Most of the pupils have a fragmented educational history and one often disrupted by a burden of personal difficulties. Their attainments in a wide range of knowledge, skills and understanding have suffered as a consequence and, overall, they achieve below the level expected for pupils of their age in all of the subjects they study.

2. Witherslack Hall School's results compare well to those of similar schools in both Key Stage 3 and GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) accreditation. In the year 2000 the majority of pupils passed GCSE grades A* - G in English, mathematics and science. Results for 2001, indicate that the pupils' achievement continues to compare favourably. Pupils also achieve national accreditation in other subjects such as art, design and technology, geography, music and physical education. These achievements indicate an overall improvement since the last inspection.

3. There is no significant variation between the subjects and overall, pupils of all ages are currently achieving and progressing well. However, in the lessons seen, the older Key Stage 4 pupils were seen to be more consistent in their behaviour and progress compared to younger pupils. This indicates a development of positive attitudes to good teaching, proactive learning and an appreciation of well-structured programmes leading to nationally recognised accreditation.

4. Pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their individual needs, although frequently the targets set in individual education plans are too generalised. These targets are not refined sufficiently to provide specific measurable objectives. The pupils' progress is much more evident when reviewing progress made with the help of the learning support team. Pupils with additional special education needs make good progress as a result of this input.

5. Overall achievement in English is satisfactory, although pupils' achievement in writing is good by the time they leave due to the demands made upon them by GCSE coursework. The more confident pupils speak and listen well and sometimes listen to the contrasting views of others. Good examples of discussion seen during the study of Macbeth show understanding of the emotions expressed by characters. Reading is the least prominent aspect of the subject, although many pupils are confident enough to read aloud. Their ability to read for research is adversely affected by the under-used library. All pupils are encouraged to read in residential hours which aids the pupils' overall progress in reading. In lessons most pupils prefer to talk rather than write and are sometimes reluctant to settle to written work which slows the pace of the lessons and reduces the time in which they can be productive. Pupils have little access to information and communication technology to support written work.

6. In mathematics, the pupils' achievements are good. They make good progress in number work and learn to use the four rules in the context of money, weights, measures, fractions and decimals. They learn to plot co-ordinates to create shapes which they know can be rotated. Pupils also collect data that they display as graphs, although they have little access to information and communication technology to develop these skills further.

7. In science, pupils achieve well as they learn about chemical and physical changes in materials through carefully planned experiments. They learn to handle equipment safely and become curious to find out why certain effects occur. Pupils frequently record the results of experiments using graphs, such as when plotting the temperature fall of a chemical reaction. This suitably supports their numeracy skills. Rural studies offers rich opportunities for the pupils to learn about life cycles as seen in garden compost where plants are in a state of decay.

8. In information and communication technology, the pupils' overall achievement is unsatisfactory as it is adversely affected by insufficient resources and learning opportunities. Within discreet lessons, the pupils make satisfactory progress in the range of activities provided. Access to wider opportunities in accord with national guidance is not possible given the current resources.

9. Throughout the school, the pupils achieve very well in physical education and the associated outdoor education. Pupils make good progress in team games such as hockey and football. They understand the need to warm up before exercise. Most pupils make very good progress in outdoor education that includes, canoeing and residential field trips. Year 9 pupils demonstrate competence in capsizing drills and show a keen awareness of water safety. The pupils' progress in gymnastic activities is adversely affected by a lack of adequate on-site accommodation. The school's use of off-site facilities does address this issue somewhat, but not entirely.

10. Pupils achieve well in art, design and technology, including food technology and geography. In art and design, pupils gain increasing confidence using a range of materials to produce works inspired by famous artists. They understand how line, shape, pattern and texture can be combined in imaginative ways to create good artistic results. They complete good three dimensional work based on gargoyles and some pupils use information and communication technology to manipulate images. In design and technology, by Year 11, the pupils respond well to examination projects using lathes, electric saws and other powered and hand tools safely. In food technology, pupils also use equipment safely and understand health, hygiene and safety issues. Younger pupils develop an awareness of workshop routines as they learn to design and make a range of models. In geography by year 11, pupils make good use of the local environment to identify natural features and compare them to man made aspects of the landscape. By Year 9, the pupils recognise countries on a European map and understand the importance of tourism to local and national economies.

11. In history, the pupils' achievement is satisfactory. By Year 9, pupils know about different periods of history, such as the Renaissance, the British Empire and the industrial revolution. In music, the pupils' achievement has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. By Year 11, pupils who have opted for music take part in a range of experiences including keyboards. At times, they make good progress in ensemble activities where they work collaboratively. By Year 9, pupils know about rhythm, pitch and volume that they apply to keyboards and guitar. Opportunities for music in assemblies and concerts are taken by many pupils whose self-esteem is suitably enhanced.

12. The pupils' achievements overall in religious education are unsatisfactory. The standards of written work are below that in other subjects and by Year 11, pupils' tests show that they know the basic facts concerning world religions. Their progress in the subject is adversely affected by a lack of visits to places of worship and religious artefacts.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. The pupils' attitudes to their work and school are good overall and this represents an improvement since the last inspection. Many pupils show positive attitudes to learning. According to the pupils' own comments and reports from parents, they feel the school provides them with a good education and appropriate support. The great majority of pupils are friendly and courteous towards each other, staff and visitors. For example, during lunch times there is a good level of social interaction at their dining tables. They talk courteously to one another and to visitors. At the end of the meals they readily take turns to clear the tables and treat the school care and domestic staff politely. The majority enjoy the school routines and respond positively to them.

14. Pupils enjoy learning and become fully involved in the very good range of activities provided by the school. For example, pupils participate in a wide range of sporting activities including swimming, football, canoeing, challenge walking, fell running and climbing. Some pupils join the Air Training Corp and participate in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. There are also opportunities to participate in chess competitions and pool which collectively contribute significantly to their self-esteem, confidence and to the development of positive attitudes and relationships among pupils. Most pupils are able to sustain their concentration so that tasks can be completed. They respond best in lessons involving practical activities for example, science and physical education. Pupils frequently co-operate well in lessons and support each other well in pairs and small groups as they carry out investigations. In some lessons the pupils' motivation is diminished when they are asked to write using pens and paper. This reluctance is less evident when the use of a computer is available.

15. Pupils who have additional special educational needs display positive attitudes and make good efforts to achieve their individual targets. They relate well to adults and to other pupils and as a consequence gain confidence and make progress.

16. The behaviour of pupils is good and they understand the ways in which the staff work to support positive behaviour, such as the use of individual behaviour management plans. Good behaviour is evident in most lessons, at break and at lunch times. There are no visible signs of bullying or aggressive anti-social behaviour around the school. Pupils respond well to the fair and balanced approach of teachers, support and care staff who encourage the pupils to achieve the highest standards of behaviour. When a bullying problem arises pupils are fully aware of the school strategies to deal with it in a sensitive manner. As a result pupils are able to learn in a secure and friendly environment with very few fixed period exclusions. This contributes to the overall good progress achieved and successfully promotes the school's inclusive ethos.

17. Pupils progressively gain an increasing sense of beliefs and values. By Year 11, pupils have a clear idea about the values of the school and what is important in their own lives. For example, in discussion the pupils have a clear idea of what is needed before they go to a college or be successful in work. The points system provides opportunities to review their own perceptions and ideas about daily life in school and they are able to discuss the impact of their actions on their own lives and the lives of others. This leads to development of a sense of right and wrong in personal and social matters. In recent assemblies they considered terrorism in America and reflected upon these issues in relation to the quality of their own lives.

18. Members of staff provide very good role models for pupils and the great majority of pupils respect them. There are many examples of pupils getting out and putting away furniture and equipment before meetings and assemblies. In practical subjects, they acknowledge the importance of health and safety. For example, during practical investigations in science where they are required to handle chemicals and use equipment like bunsen burners.

19. The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to show initiative and personal responsibility, such as in the school council. Pupil representatives are appointed for a term at a time and they attend regular meetings and are able to raise matters of interest for themselves and the pupils they represent. Past agenda items have included issues about careers, bullying, school food and satellite television. This confirms that they are able to express their views and learn to understand the reasons behind decisions. There are also Certificates of Achievement for pupils who maintain the best bedspace, the most improved pupil of the week and the most helpful and kind pupil. These certificates provide a strong motivating feature that pupils strive to achieve. As they mature pupils are given more independence. For example, Year 11 pupils are taken off the school points system and are required to develop their own self-evaluation in the cottage houses. They regard this as a privilege and take their responsibilities seriously.

20. Relationships in the school are good between pupils and between pupils and staff. The members of the care and support staff provide a high level of care and guidance, encouraging the pupils' social development and minimising disharmony and bullying. Where incidents do occur they are rapidly dealt with to minimise the disruption to others.

21. Attendance is broadly in line with national data for schools of this type. Some pupils fail to catch their transport back to school at the end of a weekend at home. Where this happens they sometimes find it difficult to return during the week. This clearly has implications for their learning. The school day starts on time and pupils are generally prompt into lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

22. Overall, the quality of teaching is good for pupils of all ages. This has a positive impact upon pupils' learning. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when many Key Stage 3 lessons were less effective than those in Key Stage 4. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced and the proportion of good teaching has increased. This represents a good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection.

23. In 53 lessons, or parts of lessons seen, all but one were judged satisfactory or better. Just over 6 out of ten lessons were good or better and nearly 2 out of ten were judged to be very good. In Key Stage 4, where all lessons were at least satisfactory there were twice as many very good lessons compared to Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 3, over half of all lessons seen were good or better.

24. The overall quality of teaching is very good in physical education. It is good in mathematics, science, design and technology, art and geography. In English, history, music, information and communication technology, the quality is satisfactory overall. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the overall quality of teaching in religious education. There is currently no teacher with responsibility for teaching a modern foreign language.

25. The teaching of literacy in English and in other subjects is satisfactory. Several teachers use questioning effectively to involve pupils in learning and find opportunities for pupils to read aloud, for example in geography. Here the teacher asks challenging questions to motivate these discussions and has high expectations of the quality of the pupils' work. The pupils respond by producing detailed drawings to illustrate the planning of community facilities. In many lessons, however, reading is not sufficiently emphasised and it is not always evident that teachers have taken account of the pupils' reading ages when

presenting text. Writing is encouraged throughout the curriculum and most teachers consistently promote the pupils' speaking and listening skills. These are often very good as demonstrated when talking to an audience or responding to questions.

26. The teaching of numeracy largely takes place in mathematics lessons, although there are some good examples of data handling in geography, science and information and communication technology. Current teaching practices are not informed by the most recent national guidance on numeracy, which contains useful examples of different teaching methods that would provide a wider range of learning opportunities for pupils.

27. In most curriculum areas teachers have good knowledge of the subject being taught. Particular expertise in practical activities gets a good response from pupils who go on to achieve high standards, for example, in rural studies, outdoor education and pre-vocational education.

28. A similar impact is seen in many lessons where at the outset pupils are informed of the lesson's objectives. They become quickly involved in work, which they enjoy and therefore sustain their interest and concentration. The quality of relationships is also vital. In successful lessons pupils know the adults well and the teachers have a good understanding of the needs of the pupils and the curriculum. Conversely, in the few instances where these relationships are less well developed, pupils can display poor attitudes and fail to make progress.

29. Teachers' planning is good overall and in some subjects, for example, in science, it is very good. However, planning does not always take sufficient account of the pupils' individual plans nor does it make sure that the activities and resources match the different needs of pupils.

30. Teaching methods are generally effective. Teachers often start their lessons well with quick questioning that poses challenging problems that pupils find interesting. In science, questioning, demonstration and clear explanations by the teachers are combined well and help pupils learn the skills of observation, prediction and develop a scientific vocabulary. In physical education, lessons begin with a good mix of warming up exercises and are organised well to provide high levels of physical activity. In design and technology and art, work is planned effectively so that pupils spend most time in practical activities. In some subjects, for example, history and mathematics, a wider variety of teaching and learning styles could be adopted. In these lessons, there is too little independent enquiry, research and use of computers. Occasionally, pupils are over-assisted and not expected to organise themselves for lessons.

31. The use of new technology by teachers is unsatisfactory due to too few resources and opportunities for training. Resources for the subject are poor. There is no school provision of Internet access, digital cameras, scanners or monitoring equipment. Programs to support the curriculum and pupils with additional special educational needs are also too few. There are also too few printers available to enable pupils to readily print their work. This lack of resources has an adverse effect upon the teachers' abilities to prepare work and offer a wider range of teaching and learning styles. Inevitably, this has an adverse effect upon the quality of pupils' learning in all subjects.

32. The management of pupils is good overall. The support for pupils' learning provided by the support staff, including care staff is very good. Their role is most successful when they are fully informed of the lesson content and can actively assist the pupils' learning. This deployment also offers good role modelling for the pupils' learning as the staff are not seen purely as adults who address prevent inappropriate behaviour and monitor pupils out

of classrooms. When incidents do occur, they are managed well and disruption is kept to a minimum.

33. Good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning are engendered effectively by the combination of teacher's good subject expertise, planning and lively approaches to learning. Pupils are willing to co-operate where they see a lesson has interest and value. In most lessons, such as rural studies, pupils achieve well because they are managed well and this leads to the building of good relationships. Teachers who manage pupils well and have good relationships have few problems and when faced with disruptions are able to persuade individuals back to concentrating on their work.

34. The use of time, support staff and resources during lessons is good for most subjects and consequently has a positive impact upon the pupils' learning. For example, in most practical subjects, resources are well prepared and organised in advance. Such preparations are onerous and the use of a technician would be beneficial to staff and pupils. Effective contributions made by the support assistants promote safer and more effective learning in practical situations, such as outdoor pursuits and experiments with hazardous chemicals.

35. Assessments made by teachers of what pupils are learning during lessons are satisfactory. This is carried out mainly through the process of asking questions and some end of module testing. Some teachers plan time at the end of lessons to summarise work, which serves to check the extent of pupils' understanding. The use teachers make of their assessments to guide pupils and lesson activities are also satisfactory. Greater use of assessments made by colleagues in the learning support department would help teachers to guide pupils' learning with even greater accuracy. The application of homework to support the pupils' learning is inconsistent, however, some teachers do use it well and this helps the pupils to progress with their coursework.

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

36. The school has made some good improvements in the curriculum since the previous inspection, such as the demands of the National Curriculum in most subjects. There is a greater emphasis on the role of subject co-ordinators and this is leading to a clearer focus on the needs of the pupils. However, there are weaknesses related to information and communication technology across the curriculum, modern foreign languages and physical education. The lack of resources and use of information and communication technology is a weakness, as is the restricted access to proper indoor facilities for physical education.

37. The pupils' statements of special educational needs include access to a full curriculum. No dis-applications of the National Curriculum have been applied. The absence of a modern foreign language on the timetable denies the pupils appropriate opportunities in accordance with their entitlement.

38. There is also an imbalance in the curriculum planning for English. Consequently, although the curriculum is relevant to the needs of the pupils, the breadth and balance of the curriculum is not satisfactory.

39. All other subjects are at least satisfactory and mostly good and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning and achievement. The time given to each subject is now appropriate. The previous report noted that not enough time was given to some subjects and too much to others. Effective management of the timetable has afforded longer

sessions for the pupils to develop their practical skills on long-term projects in design technology and physical education.

40. Provision for the personal development of pupils, including social and health education is very good. Sex and drugs education is given as part of a regular programme. Physical education and a key aspect, outdoor education are strengths of the school and make a significant impact upon the pupils' personal development.

41. Co-ordination of the whole school curriculum is at a very early stage of development and the roles of co-ordinators require further definition to ensure that the school has a clear overview of what is being taught, and when. The recent appointment of an experienced deputy headteacher re-affirms the school's commitment to further address the monitoring of the curriculum including its planning and delivery. Currently weaknesses in monitoring mean that agreed policies are not consistently applied. For example, few opportunities to reflect upon their learning are offered to pupils at the end of or during lessons.

42. Older pupils follow appropriate GCSE courses that are relevant to their needs. The school is further developing accredited courses and increasing its links with other schools. The Team Enterprise project, where pupils build their own businesses, is a valuable experience as are awards through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) which actively promote the pupils' development. All pupils develop good Records of Achievement to celebrate their successes.

43. The school pays good attention to the development of pre-vocational studies which are very popular and effective. The very well planned programme includes regular opportunities for assessment as the pupils design and make a range of products in wood using the workshop and its tools in a safe and mature manner. The pupils' progress in these studies is very good and can lead them to achieving a nationally recognised qualification.

44. The overall quality of careers education and the work related curriculum is good. Older pupils receive a very good preparation for the next steps in their lives. They can study for GCSE in up to twelve subjects and optional courses exist in food hygiene and catering, which enable pupils to follow work experience in the locality. Placements include garages, sports centres, hotels and leisure clubs. These links are much valued by the pupils for the independence they offer.

45. The school leavers' programme is thorough and imaginative and promotes a clear understanding of their potential and their entitlements. Pupils are encouraged to work on self-awareness, self-evaluation and confidence. Some of the oldest pupils attend college courses, mainly closer to their own homes, rather than locally to the school. These involve courses such as catering, electrical work, and engineering, and they may be for extended periods of time. Several pupils have attended meetings of regional schools' councils, and one has represented the school at a Social Services conference, speaking up well on behalf of the school.

46. The curriculum is very well supported by links with the local community, including the Air Training Corps, that broaden the school's provision, foster a strong community atmosphere and emphasise the school's pro-active approach to social and educational inclusion. The "Team Enterprise" group involves a number of pupils creating a small business each year to make and sell craft items such as bird feeding tables and nesting boxes. The local careers guidance centre visits regularly to give talks, advice and lessons, valuable assistance is also provided by a local business advisory group. The vicar of the local church is well involved with the school, taking assemblies regularly, and being the "independent listener" at the end of the telephone for pupils who feel the need to talk to someone. The local Millennium Committee also runs events that include the pupils, such as evening talks, fireworks, sports events, and some pupils being in the local cricket team. The connection with a school in Manchester also includes sporting links with the city's leading professional football and rugby teams.

47. Other links include schools that offer opportunities for re-integration into mainstream education. Some of these schools are local while others are closer to pupils' homes. There are frequent and good links with the school's "sister" schools that are part of the same group in the area. The recently formed partnership, supported by the government's Building Bridges initiative has many positive effects on the curriculum and the both sets of teachers' awareness of behaviour management and teaching and learning styles. This excellent initiative, involving a Beacon school, enables the pupils to take part in mainstream schoolwork and access excellent resources, such as fitness machines. Such activities considerably enrich the curriculum and form part of both schools' commitment to educational inclusion.

48. The school provides an excellent range of extra-curricular activities. There is a very wide selection of activities available to pupils in the evenings. Some of these activities make good use of the excellent outdoor provision and include, canoeing, orienteering; team games, golf and bird watching. Indoor activities include preparation for Duke of Edinburgh Award camping expeditions, cooking, ten-pin bowling, badminton and the Air Training Corps. These activities are available to all and taken up by the vast majority. Great care is taken to include all pupils whilst allowing them personal choice. They are very well planned, organised and conducted by well-qualified and dedicated staff who enjoy very positive relationships with the pupils. The staff show a fine balance between guided choice and respect for the pupils' wishes at any given time. For example, pupils occasionally prefer not to take part in planned activities and may opt for a "quiet night in" watching television or simply chatting together in the lounge of their house.

49. The school also runs week-long residential trips for each class, generally at lodges in Scotland, and often involving long hill walks and overnight camping in the wild, especially if pupils are involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. The residential weeks include a good series of activities such as caving, canoeing, climbing and walking. These weeks are very well prepared and similarly reviewed and evaluated. Pupils have also had long distance trips on a canal barge, in two parties, for several days each.

50. The school has very good sporting links with other schools and educational institutions, greatly enriching the education that pupils receive. Staff and pupils make reciprocal visits to enable pupils to access otherwise unavailable facilities. Regular sporting fixtures are also a strong feature of the school's provision.

51. The school has made good provision for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This illustrates an improvement on the previous inspection. This is due to improved planning, a greater appreciation of its importance by senior management and very good input from the care staff. This ensures that all aspects are planned to be promoted formally as well as through the school's ethos.

52. The school's planned provision for promoting pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Religious education lessons and assemblies provide opportunities to do this. Spiritual development is included in "social, personal education and religious education (SPRE). The SPRE co-ordinator has planned for the whole school to address the issues of spiritual development, for example, lesson plans indicate that pupils are aware of wider religions. Celebrations of pupils' endeavours are common within assemblies, as are deeper moments when reflections are made upon human tragedy and misfortune. The daily points system also allows for reflection although these opportunities are not always taken.

53. The school's overall ethos and the ongoing contributions from staff mean that the school provides very good opportunities for moral development. A wide range of opportunities is planned within the curriculum, notably, physical education, to promote trust

and fairness. Pupils' moral development is encouraged throughout the day through pupils' interactions with adults. Staff provide very good role models. Many patient one to one explanations of acceptable behaviour were observed and pupils are able to apologise for getting things wrong and modify their behaviour. Senior boys also provide good role models in the way in which they look after their living areas. They also help in teams and encourage others to do their best.

54. The social development of pupils is also very good. There is a genuine spirit of community around the school and the village. Pupils are encouraged to develop independence in residence and around the school. They take part in many activities including sports events in leagues. Every pupil tries hard to raise their skill level in games. They take part in high quality outdoor education pursuits developing confidence in challenging situations, such as canoeing. Many pupils take up work experience projects and references from the employers indicate that pupils are indeed confident and mature. Pupils behave well, especially on visits and when meeting visitors. They attend local sports halls, climb and canoe. On every occasion they took pride in their work and their school. Photographs of prize days and camps are clear evidence of growth and responsibility.

55. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. There are visits to places of historical interest and clubs exist after school to enrich pupils' awareness of their own and other cultures. The extra curricular aspects of school widen the pupils' experience and understanding. School plays are recorded and provide evidence of music and drama. Art displays and portfolios show that work has been completed on China, and in studying a series of famous artists. Visits to theatres and visits from people like magicians further enhance cultural growth.

56. The provision for pupils with additional special educational needs in the form of specific learning difficulties is very good. The learning support department is critical in improving basic literacy and numeracy. The service is very well co-ordinated and uses assessment on entry to plan effective programmes to assist the pupils' learning. Subsequent assessments take place regularly and provide reliable evidence of pupils' progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

57. This school has built on the good level of support it gave to pupils' welfare, health and safety at the last inspection. It effectively achieves its commitment to addressing pupils' emotional, social and behavioural difficulties whilst ensuring a child's basic right to safety and security. The good level of support and guidance the school gives has a positive effect in raising pupils' achievements.

58. All staff are committed to ensuring that pupils are safe. Any hazards are reported quickly and rectified as soon as is practical. All staff have attended a 'Work in Safety' course. Recommendations in the recent social services inspection have been addressed in an action plan and many have already been put into effect. A thorough system of risk assessments is in place. These will be reviewed on a rolling programme and include a recent review of transport. Examples, of the commitment to the safety of pupils include, all driving staff having to pass specific tests. Outdoor play equipment is tested weekly whilst fire extinguishers and electrical equipment are checked regularly and dated. Regular fire drills and alarm tests are carried out and logged. All members of staff have attended basic first aid training and suitable plans are in hand to extend their skills further.

59. Thorough systems are in place for recording and reporting of accidents and incidents. Boys are well supervised at all times. The radio system ensures that

communication between staff is very good. All staff are trained in positive handling skills thus ensuring safe management of challenging behaviour. The handover procedures from care staff to school staff are thorough and well organised. The emergency contact scheme allows the school to get in touch with parents quickly should the need arise: these systems rightly enjoy the confidence of parents.

60. Child protection procedures are very good. Thorough records are kept and all staff are aware of the steps to follow should they have any concerns. The school now keeps copies of the handbooks recommended in the recent social services inspection.

61. The physical and medical needs of boys are well cared for. Food is nutritious and an emphasis placed on healthy eating. Fruit is available at mealtimes and in the residential houses. The doctor visits school each week and the local surgery is available at other times. Detailed medical records are kept and administration of medication closely supervised and recorded.

62. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupil's personal development including their behaviour are very good. Staff know their pupils very well and are sensitive to their needs. Formal monitoring of personal development, through a wide range of log books, point sheets, care plans and keyworker meetings, is rigorous. Pupils are involved in creating their own plans that include expectations for their own personal development. Pupils are encouraged to carry out responsibilities such as setting up chairs for assembly and carrying washing from the houses. All are expected to keep their own bedrooms tidy. Year 11 boys live in independent accommodation where they take responsibility for planning, purchasing and cooking their own food and doing their own washing. As a result they learn valuable skills which prepare them well for life after school. Those pupils in Years 10 and 11 who have made particularly good progress take the responsibility of undertaking their own evaluation. Each house elects a representative to attend the school council which gives pupils opportunities to take responsibility for the relaying of information and suggestions within a formal structure.

63. Behaviour is very carefully monitored through the points system. Pupils receive points for each lesson in the day. Positive behaviour is rewarded by access to an increasingly wide range of activities. Pupils understand the points system. They know their own targets and are familiar with their own records. Results of the points system are carefully analysed in order to identify trends that in turn are used to review school practices. Behaviour support plans are effective in addressing needs posed by more challenging behaviour.

64. Achievements are celebrated in assembly and certificates filed in pupils' personal records of achievement. Mealtimes, which are well supervised, provide plenty of opportunities for social interaction. Good manners are encouraged and pupils help to clear the tables at the end of the meal.

65. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are well established and kept under review by senior management including the Head of Care. The school council has been involved in discussing issues of bullying. On their recommendation a 'bullying box' has been placed in the main hall. Displays in school give boys guidance and when incidents do occur, they are identified quickly and handled effectively.

66. Arrangements for pupils joining the school are extremely thorough so as to make admission a positive experience. Before entry, boys and their parents make a three hour visit to the school. The admissions officer also meets them at home and provides good

support in association with the assigned keyworker who maintains effective home-school liaison.

67. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Attendance information is circulated to all staff so that every adult knows which pupils are in school. Each class also carries a points sheet which lists every pupil. The points sheet is completed by the teacher at the end of each lesson and is reviewed by the form tutor at the beginning and end of the school day. The points sheet not only keeps a record of attendance but also punctuality to lessons. This is rigorously monitored alongside any occasions when a pupil leaves the room for any reason.

68. Occasionally pupils are absent from school as a result of missing the return transport from home. The education welfare officer is promptly informed and the school makes every effort to encourage parents to facilitate return. Unfortunately, this is not always achieved and results in some boys missing valuable education which adversely affects their progress.

69. The school's assessments of pupils' attainments when they arrive are thorough and provide a secure basis on which to plan for their individual needs. The overall assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is good. The majority of subjects have procedures in place for assessment and this is an improvement since the last inspection when they were less well established across the whole curriculum. Teachers largely implement the current policy. An assessment study by the very recently appointed deputy headteacher has reaffirmed the school's commitment to achieving more consistency in practice and increased accuracy in measuring pupils' attainments. There are some good examples of assessment currently in place, notably in science, mathematics and Key Stage 4 English. Assessment procedures and curricular planning for English is less effective in Key Stage 3 and especially in Year 7.

70. The use of assessment to guide curricular planning is satisfactory. A strength, is the very good use made of assessments by the learning support department to identify areas of need and underachievement. Suitable learning activities are planned and implemented and consequently leads the pupils to make good progress in developing basic skills. Good quality targets are written based on these assessments, which are supplied to every teacher and teaching assistant to help plan appropriate work in each subject. In some subjects, for example, in English, mathematics and science teachers agree targets with pupils based on the assessment of their work. However, the educational targets written into every pupil's individual education and care plan are generalised and lack specific targets to aid progress.

71. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress within subjects are satisfactory. The annual report contains a reasonable assessment of what a pupil has learned and a better indication of the progress he has made. For example, test results over time and any increase in the National Curriculum levels of attainment can be compared. These reports form the basis of the statutory annual review of each pupil's statement of special educational needs in the process of which each pupil can contribute a personal evaluation of his progress. The school recognises there is scope to make pupils' self-evaluations much more focused. Some subjects incorporate self-evaluations and in examination courses pupils are given predicted grades. Overall, these steps support pupils in striving to raise their standards and encourage them to succeed in gaining accreditation.

72. Overall the residential provision is good. In the previous inspection report only a brief comment was made on the good quality of the residential provision and that it was improving. The findings of a recent annual inspection by Social Services confirmed the

good quality of the organisation and management, the friendly and relaxed relationship that exists between staff and pupils, and the positive manner in which behaviour of the pupils is managed. A number of recommendations made in the report have been addressed by the school, for example, a system to record the pupils who refuse their medication.

73. Within this setting, the role of the key worker ensures that the needs of individual pupils are met and that good links are established and maintained between home and school. Pupils feel confident and value the opportunity to be able to discuss personal issues with these members of staff. A parent attending an annual review meeting stated that the school provided a very good level of support to both the home and their child. When pupils telephone home parents are able to speak to members of staff if they have any concerns.

74. The residential accommodation, known as houses and cottages, is staffed by experienced, well-qualified and enthusiastic care workers who work effectively to assist pupils to develop their personal skills and to help transfer these skills to their life after school. The staff work hard to provide a family atmosphere in the houses and this is seen to good effect in the cottages where the school leavers reside. Because of the small numbers in each cottage there are plenty of opportunities to encourage the pupils to develop a range of independence skills. For example, pupils devise weekly menus for their evening meals. They are given a weekly allowance to purchase their own food from a supermarket in Kendal and are encouraged to prepare the meal with staff assistance, if required. These activities promote inclusion and provide good opportunities for the pupils to transfer the skills they have been taught in mathematics and food technology to real life situations.

75. The residential provision is well co-ordinated by the head of care and clear procedures are in operation for staff to follow. There are planned future developments for the provision, for example the continuation of pupils' education targets into the residential setting. A recently introduced homework system is creating the opportunity for this development to take place. There is a detailed induction programme for new members of staff, which is constantly reviewed to keep it up to date. Daily meetings between teaching staff and care staff make a positive contribution to pupils' progress and personal development. Care staff are involved in devising individual pupil care plans, logging any developments and incidents in the houses and contributing to pupils' review meetings.

76. The quality of the residential accommodation is satisfactory overall and that found in the smaller houses is good. The school is appropriately seeking to expand the accommodation and so reduce the numbers of pupils in the larger houses. Evening meals held in the dining room are of a good nutritious standard and provide the pupils with a balanced diet. The meals also serve as valuable opportunities for social interaction.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

77. The school makes every effort to work in partnership with the parents. It has maintained the positive relationship with parents it was found to have at the last inspection. Although only a minority of parents responded to the questionnaire, those who did, expressed positive views about the work of the school. The majority agree that their children like school and are making good progress. They feel the school encourages their children to behave well and work hard and so assists in them becoming more mature and responsible. The parents also feel that the quality of the teaching is good. Parents are particularly pleased with the amount of information they receive about their own child's progress. They feel that the school provides a very wide range of activities outside lessons. The inspection team endorse these views. A significant minority expressed a concern about

the quantity of homework. The homework programme has only recently been introduced and has not yet become part of school routine. As a result most parents are not involved in children's work at home, although some weekend work is set for those pupils who are approaching examinations. In general, the homework set is appropriate and further opportunities to support its completion are being sought.

78. On account of the distances that pupils travel from home, the involvement of parents and carer's in the day to day work of the school is inevitably limited. Despite this, a good range of avenues exist for the transfer of information. For example, the home-school agreement and code of conduct are discussed with parents during the home visit. As a result parents are aware of their responsibilities and the majority have signed agreements. Information regarding policies and events continue to be communicated to parents.

79. Parents are encouraged to attend and contribute to annual reviews and progress evenings. They are also invited to annual events such as the Christmas pantomime, sports day and the awards day. The majority of parents manage to attend at least twice during the school year.

80. The school goes to considerable lengths to keep parents up to date both with developments in the community and also their own child's progress. From their first contact and interview, parents receive a very good range of information. Those who attend the interview make a tour of the site and receive an informative handbook and brochure. The admissions officer makes a home visit so that parents and pupils are familiar with at least one member of staff. Parents are kept up to date with their own child's progress through regular liaison with their key worker. The annual review and report supplies them with very detailed written information. They also receive curriculum booklets so that they are familiar with the subjects that their child is likely to be covering. A well presented and informative newsletter keeps parents up to date with events in school each term.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

81. The overall leadership and management of the school is good despite the significant changes in the senior management team, including the headteacher, deputy and senior care staff since the last inspection. The impact of these changes, some very recent, has been managed well by the new headteacher who has a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Through appropriate developmental planning, there is a clear educational direction being set for the school alongside the well-established level of care for pupils, all of which has a positive effect upon the pupils' learning.

82. Overall improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. All areas have been addressed during the intervening five years, although some have not sustained improvement other aspects are now much improved. Although there is evidence from subject evaluations, that ICT across the curriculum, religious education and modern foreign languages have shown improvement in the intervening period, they are currently areas for development.

83. The quality of school development planning is good and suitably informed by its mission statement. It supports the ethos of the school and identifies suitable priorities, such as performance management, literacy and planning. Since the last inspection, management responsibilities have become more clearly defined and now address all areas of the school's work. Most staff act in a management capacity in one way or another and they work effectively to provide appropriate educational provision. The over-ambitious expectations for the leadership and management of English have very recently been revised to allow the subject leader to become more effective and better supported in taking

the school's literacy strategy forward. Formal cycles of lesson observation and feedback to teachers are planned to resume following a term's suspension due to changes in senior management.

84. Overall, the directors fulfil their role satisfactorily. They receive regular information from the headteacher regarding the weekly running of the school and matters relating to non-academic issues such as the health and safety of pupils. Recent developments include a very comprehensive range of supportive policies aimed at harmonising good management practice within its schools.

85. They are not however, sufficiently engaged in curriculum matters, pupils' progress or academic standards. Too few opportunities exist for them to act as the school's "critical friend" who can constructively support and challenge the school's quest to raise pupils' achievement. There is no regular programme of planned visits to look at the school at work in order to gain an overview of the school's overall effectiveness in meeting the aims of its development planing.

86. Since the previous report there has been a considerable improvement in the expertise of the teachers to enable the school to meet the requirements of the curriculum. Members of staff are involved in a number of significant developments to extend the range of relevant learning experiences for the pupils, for example the introduction of the pre-vocational studies programme. There are still gaps in the qualifications of teachers in certain areas of the curriculum, such as modern foreign languages. The school experiences recruitment difficulties and despite strenuous efforts to attract suitable qualified and experienced staff via local and national press, the posts only attract a limited response. A very recent appointment has been made to strengthen English. Access to regular appropriate professional curriculum development is also a problem for the staff. Very recent moves have been made to address this issue by seeking curriculum advice from a neighbouring local education authority. A lack of access to Internet based resources compounds the problem.

87. The care staff and the classroom assistants play a very positive role in the development of the pupils, for example the organisation of a wide range of stimulating activities in the evenings. During the school day, their deployment includes "keyworking" with pupils and some monitoring of pupils when out of class for any reason. However, their deployment within lessons to support the pupils' academic needs has a most beneficial effect upon pupils' progress, particularly when certain pupils' behaviour is more challenging than usual.

88. There are regular meetings between the different groups of the staff and this creates a good team approach in the school. The school has recently introduced a homework scheme and this will improve further the twenty-four hour curriculum. Staff work hard to provide purposeful and meaningful activities for pupils and there is a very positive attitude towards the pupils' overall development.

89. There is a lack of technical support in the practical subjects, such as science, design and technology and pre-vocational studies. This leads to the teaching staff devoting significant amounts of their own time in preparing the technical aspects of their subjects for the benefit of the pupils. An appropriate allowance is made for the maintenance of ICT facilities, although additional technical training would be advantageous if all current and future provision is to be maintained "in-house".

90. The school operates a very thorough induction scheme for new members of staff. The in-service training of the staff is good and the courses offered are appropriate, for

example training on different methods on the management of behaviour. A formalised performance management system is in the early stages of development. This system will build upon the good monitoring and self-evaluation undertaken by subject leaders last year.

91. The standard of accommodation is satisfactory overall. It is well maintained and a number of areas have been made attractive by the display of pupils' work, for example in the corridor areas. Any wilful damage is quickly repaired and there are no signs of vandalism or graffiti. The residential houses have a homely feel and pupils are given the choice when personalising their bedrooms. Two of the residential houses accommodate larger numbers of pupils and two lack a kitchen. The school has put forward proposals to convert a further two cottages in the school grounds to provide more residential provision and consequently reduce the numbers in the larger houses. There is a lack of indoor facilities for physical education and this restricts the range of the curriculum, for example the amount of gymnastics that can be taught. The grounds are attractive and are very well used for a range of activities, for example, rural studies and sport. The strong emphasis given to the schools' appearance is effective in encouraging the pupils to value and care for their surroundings.

92. Resources across the subjects are variable in quality and quantity but overall they are satisfactory. There is a lack of access to computers in the classrooms and library and this has an adverse effect upon the pupils' capacity for independent research. In the pre-vocational areas staff and pupils have put a great deal of effort into making equipment, for example the work-benches, but overall there is a lack of suitable equipment and machinery. In certain subjects, such as mathematics there is a limited amount of resources to meet the different needs of the pupils. This is also relevant to the library where the range of books, their classification and use are areas for development.

93. As at the time of the previous report, the day-to-day administration of the school is good. There is now more control of spending from within the school than was previously the case, and the general management of the school's finances is satisfactory.

94. The school plans its spending carefully and satisfactorily, with clear priorities that are mainly to do with staffing costs and replacement of resources for each subject. Major spending requirements are discussed separately with the central group that owns the school.

95. Subject co-ordinators are sometimes not clear about funding for their subject and this restricts their ability to plan the strategic development of their subject. Many are unsure about what they can spend money on, for example, whether it is replacing materials, or buying completely new resources. There have been delays in spending money on some areas, such as improving some residential areas, and some subjects, such as mathematics and information and communication technology.

96. The central group of schools is being reorganised and appropriately aims to allow the school to have more control over the way in which the money is spent. The central office monitors finances closely and is suitably audited for its company reports. Budget surplus monies address the group's development needs, overheads and other services within the organisation, such as the educational psychologist.

97. The school has good measures in place to secure best value for its pupils, their parents and local authorities. By tendering and research it obtains good value from its different suppliers for catering and cleaning, for example.

98. The headteacher is able to compare the school's performance in examinations and national tests with other similar schools across the country. The headteacher and senior management team evaluate the school's developments, especially the staffing levels, through the targets in the school's annual planning system. Parents are invited to comment on the school's provision, as are visiting officers from different education authorities.

99. The school enjoys few specific grants to support developments. One recent initiative has been successful, however. The "Building Bridges" initiative sees a very fruitful partnership with a Beacon school that effectively promotes educational inclusion, outdoor education and good teaching practice. The funds are monitored very well, and are used effectively.

100. Overall, the school's response to the potential benefits brought by information and communication technology has been poor. There are too few computers and related equipment in classes, which means that pupils are not learning how to use them effectively in different subjects. There is no Internet access to support teachers' professional development, pupils' access to resources and links with other schools. The absence of an Intranet means that opportunities are missed to enable more effective communication between the various departments, offices and houses. The school's senior management team do not have ready access to computers, which has an adverse effect upon their abilities to access management information, including finance details to support development planning. The administrative staff, however, do use computers well to produce pupils' reports and school-related information.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

101. To further develop the work of the school, the directors, senior managers and staff should now:-

(1) Improve the curriculum's breadth and balance by:

Addressing the need for increased use by subject teachers of ICT.
(information and communication technology) 31, 112, 122, 129, 143, 147, 149

Resourcing the subject adequately, in terms of Internet access, programs, hardware and peripherals, so that due attention can be given to national programmes of study. 8, 133,156

Providing appropriate training for teachers to enable them to make best use of ICT. 31, 86

Giving due emphasis and monitoring to Religious Education to ensure that planning for the subject is put into practice. 12, 171

Making available a suitable programme of study in a modern foreign language. 37

Providing appropriate training to enable teachers to deliver a properly resourced modern foreign language programme. 24

Reviewing the planning for Year 7 English. 69, 112

(2) Improve the school's management by:

Creating procedures to enable the Board of Directors to take a more active role in monitoring academic standards and the curriculum. 85

Clarifying the financial arrangements of the school's budgetary systems to enable the school's management and teachers to plan developments using accurate and timely financial information. 95

Improving the senior management team's access to appropriate ICT that will support the above issues. 100

- (3) Improve the quality and impact of academic information contained in pupils' individual education plans by:

Ensuring that the targets are specific to the needs of individual pupils. 4

Drawing upon the good quality information obtained by the learning support department and using this to inform pupils' plans. 35, 56,70

Monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the implementation of the plans in the classroom. 85

The directors, senior managers and staff may also wish to consider:

The arrangements for the management of English. 83, 86, 112

Technician support for science and pre-vocational educational studies. 34, 89

The regular deployment of care staff to support the pupils' learning. 32, 34

A resource audit for all curriculum areas that can inform the recently proposed planning and assessment procedures. 92, 112, 122

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	53
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	161

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	25	18	1	0	0
Percentage	0	17	47	34	2	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s].

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	54
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	8.3	School data	8.6

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	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	62
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	7	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y 7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5
Average class size	7

Education support staff: Y 7– Y11

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	227

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	1,428,887
Total expenditure	1,418,569
Expenditure per pupil	22,516
Balance brought forward from previous year	-9,887
Balance carried forward to next year	415

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	.6
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	54
Number of questionnaires returned	14

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	14	64	14	7	0
My child is making good progress in school.	29	50	14	7	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	14	50	21	7	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	21	14	21	14
The teaching is good.	43	29	0	7	14
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	50	0	7	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	29	14	7	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	36	29	21	7	0
The school works closely with parents.	43	29	14	14	0
The school is well led and managed.	57	14	0	21	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	29	14	14	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	64	21	0	0	14

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

ENGLISH

102. Overall, pupils are achieving satisfactorily by the end of Key Stages 3 and 4. The majority of Year 11 pupils passed GCSE English gaining an A* - G grade. These results are consistent with those of previous years and, on the limited data available, they compare very favourably with the results of similar schools. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are achieving satisfactorily in speaking and listening, reading and writing. This is similar by the end of Key Stage 4 except that in writing most of these pupils are achieving well because of the emphasis given to GCSE coursework assignments.

103. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils listen attentively and with interest. Higher attaining pupils are usually confident and contribute assertively, ensuring their words and intonation communicates clear, simple messages but not speaking at length or elaborating their views. In Year 9, pupils talk about the presentational devices for a tourist brochure, explaining how actual brochures use colour, images and text for a persuasive purpose. They often listen carefully to others' sometimes contrasting views. Lower attaining pupils need encouragement to speak and then do so hesitantly but showing they have listened and followed conversations.

104. The pupils performing in the school's production of *Oliver Twist* understood the dramatic content of their lines and responded appropriately to the emotional import of what other actors said. By Year 11, pupils still respond directly to the teachers' questions and seldom enter into discussions with each other. When interested, they listen intently and answer confidently. Following a video excerpt from a film of *Macbeth*, Year 11 pupils shared their knowledge of the play and higher attaining pupils described clearly, in reasonable depth, the significance of the witches.

105. Currently reading is the least prominent activity in English lessons. There are not sufficient and sustained opportunities for individual and group reading. When reading takes place, most pupils are happy to read aloud to the class. Good reading habits are not developed sufficiently and pupils seldom use reference books to widen their search for information beyond the books supplied in a lesson.

106. Pupils are encouraged to read during residential hours and those that do, value this opportunity and enjoy being read to. Reading skills, across all ages, go from those at an early stage of word recognition to the highest attaining pupils whose accuracy in reading is appropriate for their age. Generally, pupils read hesitantly and without expression; they understand the words, self-correct mispronunciations and discuss what they have read. Some Year 8 pupils read poetry aloud with accurate pronunciation and in keeping with the rhythm of the words. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 are engaged well in reading *Macbeth* finding much that they can relate to in its plot and characters. They use the text effectively to interrogate the underlying themes of human nature.

107. All pupils, when they arrive, have their reading skills tested and subsequently re-tested at regular intervals. Pupils whose low reading scores indicate a concern are given very effective support from staff in the learning support department. Judging from observations of that support and the improved performance in tests, these pupils are making good progress in learning to read. The successful teaching of phonics means these

pupils are able to decipher increasingly difficult words; a Year 10 pupil who has had support for eighteen months had no difficulty in reading, at first sight, the word 'Milwaukee'.

108. In lessons, pupils prefer to talk and answer questions verbally rather than write. Often, they need persuasion to settle to a writing task and this slows their progress. However, by the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils structure their writing satisfactorily with full sentences, paragraphs and punctuation. On the rare occasions when electronic word-processing is used, pupils' writing is well-drafted and graphic devices such as a banner title adds to the overall quality of presentation.

109. In teaching, particular attention is paid to spelling and handwriting and it is widely the case that pupils take care in producing legible and neat work. Pupils write letters, instructions and imaginative stories. They examine tourist brochures and take notes towards writing a persuasive text promoting an attraction using emphasis such as underlining and bold type to create visual impact. By Year 11, higher attaining pupils write good analysis of scenes from Macbeth and express well formed opinions about the play. They make good progress towards writing targets, for example, improving paragraphing, punctuation and re-drafting their GCSE coursework assignments.

110. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In a few lessons with Year 10 and Year 11 pupils it is good or very good as a direct result of an increased number of adults supporting the teacher and pupils. This has a positive effect on pupils' behaviour and as a result, pupils' attention, concentration and effort improve. In a very good Year 11 lesson, a higher attaining pupil carefully evaluated and questioned the quality of his writing with the teacher. This led to a deeper understanding of Macbeth and improved writing. In the one unsatisfactory lesson where there was no additional support, several Year 9 pupils persistently disrupted work and very little was achieved.

111. Teaching assistants are good at helping lower attaining pupils. They have a good knowledge of these pupils and plan their work well. Teachers have a sound understanding of the subject, which they use effectively. Lessons start well with questions that test and help recall what pupils have learned recently. While pupils are less motivated by writing tasks, when the teacher approaches this correctly, for example, supplying clearly stepped directions for completing writing, pupils usually respond positively. Some lessons lose pace and pupils' lose interest when changes of activities are not thoroughly planned to hold their attention. In a Year 8 poetry lesson, pupils found it difficult to move from understanding rhyme to composing a rhyming poem. They were not given sufficient resources, such as, a list of rhyming words, to steer them towards success. Their concentration and productivity dropped off considerably. Some simple and direct devices such as writing learning objectives and key vocabulary on the board or showing video excerpts proved very effective in reinforcing learning in several lessons. Pupils are managed well and a great deal of patience, perseverance and sensitivity is shown by teachers. Pupils are sometimes over-helped and there is not enough onus upon them to organise their own learning resources.

112. The leadership and management of English are areas for development. The co-ordinator, whose commitment is good, has insufficient time to carry out the principal responsibilities properly. The headteacher is aware of this and has recruited a temporary teacher with considerable knowledge of managing an English department to support the co-ordinator. Currently, there is no curricular planning for Year 7 in place and the library is currently redundant and its stock of books needs a review. The range of fiction is satisfactory but books are not sorted out between easy and difficult reading. Information and communication technology resources and their use in English are unsatisfactory.

113. Overall, the quality of provision for English is satisfactory, yet the amount of improvement in English since it was last inspected is limited. There have been frequent changes in those appointed to teach English, which has hindered addressing improvement.

114. The planning for approaching what pupils need to learn remains incomplete. The steps taken to expand the use of information and communications technology in English and to implement a literacy strategy for the school are insufficient. The teaching of literacy is nevertheless satisfactory, most especially because the support for literacy by the learning support department is very good. The significant minority of pupils throughout the school with additional learning difficulties are achieving well in literacy as a result. While literacy is not otherwise planned and co-ordinated across the school, pupils do read aloud and complete written assignments in some subjects they study. The opportunity for pupils to discuss their work with each other is promoted very well in a range of subjects including science.

MATHEMATICS

115. The pupils' achievements are good when compared with similar schools, and when considering their previous achievements. By the time they leave school, about half of the pupils achieve passes at GCSE, with grades E to G, and this is a good achievement compared to similar schools. This is an improvement on the satisfactory standards at the time of the last inspection.

116. Pupils' skills and knowledge are frequently very low when they enter the school. They make good progress as they develop through the school. Their attitudes and behaviour improve considerably, and this helps their learning immensely. They mainly settle well to work and start to learn the various aspects of mathematics that are included in the school's curriculum. Pupils make good progress across the range of number work, learning to add and subtract numbers, and to multiply and divide them, using money, fractions and decimals as well as simple numbers. They learn to measure accurately in metres and centimetres. They solve problems in distances of kilometres, as well as learning about the different two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Higher attaining pupils learn to alter and manipulate shapes by rotating them or making mirror images of them. They learn to plot co-ordinates, and to draw different kinds of graphs, such as bar, line and pie graphs. They use these well in other lessons, including science and geography.

117. The quality of teaching is good. This is a good improvement on the situation at the time of the previous inspection, when it was satisfactory, with some unsatisfactory teaching in the lower three years. During this present inspection, the teaching was good in all of the lessons seen, and an analysis of pupils' work indicates that the teaching is consistently good in the long term. Pupils' work is sometimes not marked, but frequently the teacher discusses work with pupils during the lessons and this prompt feedback assists them to learn from mistakes and persevere. Teachers plan, organise and prepare their lessons well. Most pupils settle quickly, join in with discussions, request further explanations if necessary, and will concentrate on their work throughout the lesson. They largely ignore distractions, and disturbances around them, and make good efforts not to "rise to the bait" when challenged by less well behaved classmates. The learning support staff are very good at helping teachers to calm some pupils and work with them closely on their behaviour, as well as with their work.

118. Teachers use praise very well to motivate the pupils, giving them credit for their efforts as well as their actual successes. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and they encourage pupils well, explain well, and demonstrate how to work problems out, and give good verbal feedback when pupils are struggling with some of their work. This enables pupils to learn well in lessons.

119. Whilst the teaching is good overall, there are some under-emphasised features. These include, bringing more variety into the way that lessons are taught. There is sometimes little difference between lessons and there is scope to have more practical work, paired work, or group work in lessons. The opportunity to consider the structure within the primary numeracy strategy would be an appropriate focus for the subject. Differentiated learning styles, for example, the use of computer assisted learning and "booster" sessions of intensive work could be used to make lessons more easily understood by the lower attaining pupils, and more challenging for higher attainers.

120. The leadership and management of mathematics are good. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge, but has little awareness of the recent recommendations from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. (QCA) He has a good plan for how the subject could be developed. This is detailed and practical, and it is very well evaluated each year. The targets are very relevant to the school's needs within this subject, including the need for more training, especially concerning the National Numeracy Strategy, the increased use of computers, additional input and resources for the ability range.

121. Unfortunately, several of the past targets have not been achieved, partly because of staff changes and possible restrictions and delays on funding for resources which lead to an assumption that developments could not be financed.

122. There is a good assessment system in place, and it is used satisfactorily in the development of the curriculum. The curriculum is well balanced and broad, and all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered appropriately. Some approaches from the Numeracy Strategy, such as mental and oral maths, would add to the breadth of the subject. The provision of learning resources for mathematics requires review, particularly related to the use of ICT and practical resources.

SCIENCE

123. Achievement and progress in science at the end of key Stage 4 are good and compare very favourably with the standards achieved by similar schools. The achievement and progress by the end of Key Stage 3 also compare favourably with similar schools. These achievements have improved since the last inspection. All pupils, including those with additional special needs, are working at appropriate levels. There are also good opportunities in lessons to improve their numeracy and literacy skills. For example, the construction of graphs to record their findings. Discussion forms an important part of all lessons and this helps to improve their speaking and listening skills.

124. By the end of Key Stage 3, the pupils understand chemical and physical changes in materials, for example, wax melting and iron rusting. They also learn that change can be physical or chemical and that some changes are reversible and others irreversible. They identify that chemical reaction is taking place when there are bubbles, smell, colour change or rise and drop in temperature. In one lesson seen, they were observing the reaction of sulphur in a test tube and deciding whether the change is temporary or permanent. The pupils were eager to follow the questions and many provided accurate answers. They were well behaved and collected their apparatus responsibly before working on their tasks and recording their findings. In rural studies, they consider what happens chemically in a compost heap and the beneficial and harmful effects of micro-organisms. They know about life cycles and change with particular reference to decay in plants. They also use a range of garden tools including fork, spade, hoe and rake and know how the purpose of the tool influences its shape.

125. Year 11 pupils investigate the effects of temperature change sodium thiosulphate and plot a graph to demonstrate the rate of reaction. They use equipment carefully including Bunsen burner, conical beaker and the thermometer before measuring the amounts accurately and constructing their graphs. They know that matter is made up of particles and that these particles are known as atoms. They learn that solid particles have a definite shape and volume, liquids have a volume but take the shape of the container. They use terms like H₂O (water) and CO₂ (Carbon dioxide).

126. The overall quality of teaching is good. The strengths include good subject knowledge and enthusiasm. The pupils are managed well and they receive good demonstrations that inspire scientific enquiry. Lessons are well planned with extensive opportunities for practical work allied with appropriate references to health and safety. Care is also taken to ensure that work in lessons is differentiated to meet the needs of high and low attaining pupils. The co-ordinator ensures that all staff teaching the subject have support for their lesson planning.

127. Pupils work in pairs or individually and good support is provided by both the learning support staff and the teacher by way of checking their accuracy and ensuring safety factors are observed. During one lesson pupils listened carefully to the questions and answers before recording their answers. In all the lessons observed the teacher ensures that lessons are not only informative but include a sense of fun which the pupils enjoy. One pupil who was being difficult later apologised to the teacher for his behaviour. The lesson was successful because of the good management of the pupils and the appropriate balance of discussion, demonstration and activity.

128. The management of the subject is good with strong commitment from the science co-ordinator and a clear capacity to improve. This is due to appropriate policies and more challenging work for the pupils. Improvements have also been made to the resources available for practical investigation. There is still a shortage of apparatus, such as, power packs and voltmeters for physics experiments. The laboratory and outdoor facilities combine to provide good accommodation for science. Assessment procedures which include a graded marking system, individual targets, and end of module assessments are good.

129. The longer term planning demonstrates the co-ordinator's clear view for the development of the subject. This includes the need to develop the use of information and communication technology in lessons which is very under-developed. Homework procedures also require standardisation. There is also recognition of the need to embed rural studies within the science curriculum to enhance the already important contribution it makes to the pupils' progress in the science.

ART AND DESIGN

130. Pupils achieve well and make good progress. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils use their previous work on old buildings as background information to help them design doors. They understand how line, shape, pattern and texture can be combined in imaginative ways to create good artistic results. They make good presentations and use a range of skills and a number of artefacts. Their work is often inspired by the work of famous artists. They understand and use printing techniques design stamps. Many produce two and three-dimensional work and their portfolios show evidence of printing and of making gargoyles. By the end of Key Stage 3, the pupils choose subjects prompted by careful explanations from the teacher, to design and make. For example, they use templates to design tiles and they know about terracotta.

131. Pupils generally enjoy their art lessons and over time they refine their skills and understanding. They learn best when they are engaged in more practical tasks and are kept busy. They need time to complete their work but can become disruptive if they have completed their tasks and have no other activity. They generally speak enthusiastically about their work and take care to do their best. Their behaviour is mainly satisfactory.

132. Taking account of lessons seen and the scrutiny of pupils' work, the overall quality of teaching is good. Good teaching is marked by well planned activities that match the pupils' abilities. The lesson objectives are clear and this ensures that the pupils understand the task. Teacher's good knowledge of the subject enables pupils to use books and examples of fine art to produce imaginative work of their own. Expectations are suitably high. Pupils are asked to work hard to produce quality examples for their GCSE portfolios. Good teaching is seen when teachers manage difficult pupils with understanding and calm, gentle persuasion often returns a difficult pupil to the work in hand. Occasionally, teaching is less successful when pupils stay off their planned work and are not picked up by staff. This can lead to disruption. Pupils need considerable guidance to develop the skills and techniques that will eventually allow them to express themselves in drawing, modelling or painting. Tasks are challenging to most pupils and act to consolidate the development of fine control and observation skills. The time allowed is fully used.

133. Resources for art are satisfactory, although the co-ordinator needs to use her own scanner to complete work for pupils. The school has a kiln but no wheel. The subject, has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, is well co-ordinated by a specialist, with high expectations of pupils' work that has a positive effect upon the standards achieved in GCSE.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

134. The pupils' achievement is good. This represents a clear level of improvement since the previous inspection and the issues raised in that inspection have largely been addressed. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a range of design activities, experience construction and woodwork and have the subject taught in an appropriate classroom and workshop. The workshop is well equipped to provide access to good quality work with a range of materials. Design aspects are well embedded although work with metal is limited. The food technology department provides very good experiences for pupils of all ages who gain both socially and academically

135. By the end of Key Stage 4, the pupils are keen to carry out workshop activities. They centre work on lathes, use electric saws and handle equipment, such as soldering irons safely. By the end of Key Stage 3, the pupils draw plans and patterns, without computer aid. They identify tools and their purpose and with good quality support they become aware of workshop safety. Pupils are expected to use the correct terms for prototypes and models and are becoming aware of the place of design. In food technology, pupils work really hard to follow recipes, they use kitchen equipment properly, and cook well. They take part in catering courses and learn about safety and hygiene.

136. The quality of teaching is always good, and sometimes very good. Teaching is most successful when pupils' behaviour is managed correctly using the excellent systems in place. This involves very close co-operation between teachers and support staff. Teaching is very good when standards are high and pupils know exactly what is expected in lessons. Teachers provide very good role models and pupils behave very well as result. Meticulous planning, to match the lesson to the ability of pupils is a strong feature as is the level of specialist knowledge. There is a good atmosphere, pupils feel valued and secure and as a result they work hard. They are proud of their work and are happy to share.

137. Good teaching ensures pupils listen attentively and as a result they learn. They respond well to the well-managed and creative atmosphere that exists in most lessons. The good teaching also means that pupils enjoy the subjects and produce high quality work. They take care when producing food to eat and offer it to visitors with justified pride. On

rare occasions, the pupils lose interest and misbehave. However, these instances are well managed by teaching and support staff.

138. The school has developed a good scheme of work that reflects the National Curriculum programmes of study. It is relevant and provides a good foundation for GCSE work where the results are good. The food technology element runs a number of catering courses and health and hygiene courses, which enable pupils to take part in work experience in the catering industry. The school recognises the contribution that design and technology makes to other subjects, for example mathematics and science, although these are not explored in detail. Neither has the school addressed the issue of the use of information and communication technology in classes. This limits the design and recording opportunities considerably. For example, there are no opportunities to maintain a digital record of pupils' work via the use of a digital camera.

139. The subject is efficiently managed and has improved since the last inspection, for example, there are now two subject specialists each having their own accommodation. The design suite is developing well although there are very few opportunities to work with metal. The food technology department works successfully throughout the year at making good links with the community. The development of consistent assessment and recording procedures still needs to be addressed.

GEOGRAPHY

140. Achievements in geography are good and pupils make good progress. By the end of Key Stage 4, most of the pupils take a nationally recognised qualification. Pupils with additional learning difficulties make good progress because of the support they receive.

141. Since the last report the school has made a good improvement in the subject, and this is particularly evident in the quality of teaching. The geography specialist who has good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for using fieldwork to develop the pupils' geographical skills onwards teaches all pupils from Year 8.

142. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have taken part in a field trip in the Lake District to conduct a detailed study of a river as part of their examination coursework. They draw good quality diagrams to illustrate the changing depth and width of the river as it travels down the valley. Pupils distinguish the difference between man made and natural features from a map and state the effect that man has had on the environment. When talking about quarrying the higher attaining pupils know that limestone is a sedimentary rock. They have the ability to give well-reasoned answers on why industry in the countryside has positive and negative influences on the environment. By the end of Key Stage 3, the pupils recognise the countries in Europe and use maps to find out where somebody lives in this country. As part of their study of tourism they have a good understanding of the types of jobs that are connected to a number of leisure locations, for example at an airport, hotel and ski resort. They also consider the features of a river course and its effect on the environment.

143. The quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good. In lessons where the teaching is very good the activities and resources are well prepared to meet the needs of all the pupils in the class. At the beginning of the lessons pupils are given an opportunity to talk about what they have studied previously. Pupils respond well to these opportunities and discuss points they have remembered in a sensible manner, for example the names of different rocks and the way they were formed. The behaviour of pupils is well managed and the teacher and support assistants moving around the class to give them individual support maintains their interest in the activities. Older pupils show good levels of independent work on their examination assignments. Pupils enjoy the challenges they are set in the lessons.

The lack of access to a computer in the classroom and the limited range of appropriate reference books in the library restrict the amount of independent research work that the pupils do.

144. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator has developed a scheme of work, which reflects the needs of the pupils. Pupils' work is assessed on a regular basis and the information is used to set individual targets. These targets are placed in the front of the pupils' exercise books. The co-ordinator has identified the need to improve the use of information and communication technology in the subject development plan.

HISTORY

145. Pupils' achievements and progress in history are satisfactory. At present there is no teaching of history to pupils in Years 10 and 11.

146. By the end of Key Stage 3, the pupils understand that the Renaissance was a period of new ideas, why a census is taken and how people travelled in the Middle Ages. In Year 7 pupils study the period 1066-1500, in Year 8, 1500-1750 and in Year 9, 1750-1900. Pupils in Year 9 have constructed a timeline to show the Prime Ministers from 1970 to the present day. When asked about a display on the classroom wall they talk, with prompting, about the British Empire and what industrialisation meant.

147. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The teaching is largely delivered using worksheets and textbooks. In both the lessons seen the pupils spend a considerable amount of time cutting out pictures from worksheets and gluing them in their books. Scrutiny of some exercise books shows that higher attaining pupils are given opportunities to expand their ideas through free writing. The teacher provides good ongoing praise for the pupils' effort when they are working during the lessons and this is well supported by the classroom assistants. The good use of marking during the lessons helps to build the pupils confidence. At the beginning of lessons the pupils concentrate well on the activities but as it progresses they lose interest and their concentration deteriorates. There are too few opportunities for the pupils to apply their experiences from visits to local sites of historical interest, from artefacts and information available from computer programs.

148. The subject is satisfactorily managed and has improved since the last inspection. However, developments are still required to the subject planning and assessment procedures. The pupils need more opportunities to extend their research skills during the lessons and resources for the subject are limited and are comprised mainly of textbooks.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

149. The school's provision for information and communication technology has not significantly improved since the last inspection and is unsatisfactory overall. The quality of teaching the subject is satisfactory, however, its use across the curriculum in other subjects is unsatisfactory and has an adverse effect upon overall progress.

150. By the end of Key Stage 4, the pupils' syllabus is largely determined by examination requirements. They make satisfactory progress in the aspects of work they address, although this is inevitably limited due to a lack of resources and applications across the curriculum. Pupils word process documents such as curriculum vitae that enable them to see the benefits of attractive presentation. They create spreadsheets using data from a geography river study and know how to display this information as a graph. They recognise the need to enter data and select options carefully. Generally, they take care with their

work, printing off the finished items. Most pupils use a range of icons that improves the presentation of their work: some of which is displayed around the school and adds to the pupils' self-esteem.

151. By the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils draw by hand parts of a computer and label them. They enter values, such as sweets and pocket money into a simple spreadsheet and some pupils create graphs from this data with appropriate adult support through “chart wizards”. There is some evidence that pupils can retrieve information from a CD ROM. All pupils know about the importance of saving data for later retrieval. Some pupils also know that a database is a collection of linked data that can be accessed in a number of ways to provide information. Year 7 pupils use common drawing tools to draw shapes and use colours.

152. Most pupils use the drawing tools within a word processing application to model a seating plan for a classroom. Some of them also know how to carry out operations on the shapes produced, such as, copy, paste, group and ungroup. Their overall progress in modelling is adversely affected by a lack of appropriate software. For most pupils of all ages, there is little evidence that they know or understand how to use control or measurement techniques, although a few pupils have experienced some success using logo.

153. Where the subject is taught as a discrete subject, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. One of the main strengths is good subject knowledge of the co-ordinator. Lessons start with clear introductions which promote the pupils’ understanding of the lesson objectives. Lessons are well planned and the pace of work is satisfactory at most times where pupils stay on task. Relationships and attitudes to the subject are generally satisfactory and the teacher is aware of the need to secure a sound foundation on which to build a productive relationship with pupils. Several pupils exhibit a genuine enthusiasm for the subject, seeking out additional work to carry out away from the classroom. Staff pay good attention to the pupils’ social and moral development, in promoting care for equipment and respect for others. When incidents of inappropriate behaviour occur, good use is made of care staff to resume the working ethos as quickly as possible.

154. The recently appointed co-ordinator has begun to address the weaknesses in the provision and has overseen significant improvements in the reliability of the ICT suite where most pupils make satisfactory progress in the aspects that can be covered with existing resources. The co-ordinator has designed a scheme of work to enable all pupils to develop a reasonable grasp of common applications such as word processing and spreadsheets. In doing so, the pupils experience a consistent curriculum and work towards similar objectives across the year groups. The weakness of this approach is that there is insufficient progression for pupils who have developed some ability in the subject and the balance of teaching is heavily weighted towards the subject and not its integration into other subjects. The use of field data from geography is a good example of what may be achieved, but these instances are rare. The non-specialist ICT staff acknowledges the need to increase their skills and confidence.

155. Literacy and numeracy skills are promoted through ICT lessons, for example, when pupils draft a letter as part of their examination coursework or they create a spreadsheet to record the speed of objects floating down a river. Additionally, a small number of literacy and numeracy related activities are to hand whenever a pupil has finished a particular task, e.g. a teacher-made wordsearch with specific ICT vocabulary or use of a CD ROM containing mathematical problems. This makes good use of the time available and keeps the pupils focussed upon work: the teacher is aware that the CD ROM is not age-appropriate in presentation, although it continues to offer sufficient challenge to many pupils of all ages.

156. The curriculum at Key Stage 3 is neither resourced for, nor informed by National Curriculum programmes of study and schemes of work. There is a need to develop

resources throughout the school in terms of hardware, programs, Internet access and staff training. The co-ordinator is aware of recent guidance and the improvement in resources required. The curriculum for Key Stage 4 pupils takes suitable account of the GCSE syllabus.

MUSIC

157. The pupils' achievements and progress in music is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection when achievement was judged to be unsatisfactory.

158. By the end of Key Stage 4, the pupils perform an ensemble activity playing a range of tunes that they have learned together. They use electronic keyboards to create and develop musical ideas to explore how sounds can be made and changed. For example, when preparing presentations for the concerts 'Singing in the Rain' and 'Jack and the Beanstalk'.

159. By the end of Key Stage 3, the pupils know about the elements in music and begin to learn about sound, pitch and volume before proceeding to chords, harmony and texture which are applied to their keyboard and guitar learning. They develop an awareness of rhythm and melody and begin to explore a range of ideas and create their own music. They learn about the work of composers such as Handel. They study notation and explore sounds with instruments such as electronic keyboards and guitars.

160. All pupils are encouraged to choose one particular instrument. In addition pupils are provided with opportunities to sing and play instruments in assemblies and at concerts. For example, they participate in the Millennium Concert in Witherslack Village and the annual school concerts at Christmas.

161. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory and occasionally good. The strengths are evident when the lesson's objectives are clear and instruments are readily available. Regular praise and encouragement supported by skilful accompaniment using the electric guitar combine to good effect as the pupils work hard and enjoy their experiences. Their attitudes to learning are satisfactory and are best when staff sufficiently engage them in practical, yet purposeful activity. The pupils can be impatient when waiting to get "hands on" instruments.

162. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The curriculum policy and curriculum is in place and takes account of recent guidance, although assessment is at an early stage of development. The pupils' progress is not measured using nationally recognised levels, which has an adverse effect upon the range and balance of the work in the subject. The use of assessment to plan future lessons is not evident.

163. The quality of the accommodation and learning resources is satisfactory overall, although not all the existing resources were fully operational at the time of the inspection. Effective use is made of electronic keyboards, guitars and percussion instruments, but there is a lack of wind and string instruments. Extra curricular music is very effective in enabling the pupils to make further progress.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

164. Physical education, coupled with outdoor education, is a strong feature of the school. The pupils' levels of achievement throughout the school are very good.

165. By the end of Key Stage 4, the pupils apply their skills in team games such as hockey and football. They understand the need for a warm-up before activity and many know about the function of muscles. Pupils who are in Years 10 and 11 are producing good work for GCSE accreditation. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils canoe safely in calm waters and practice capsizing drills. They also know how to form rafts and work towards national awards in canoeing. All pupils make good progress in other outdoor pursuits such as cross-country running and climbing.

166. All pupils take part in camps and walks and residential visits and the subject is clearly making a very good contribution to their personal and social development. Every pupil is given the opportunity to take part in games for the school, many against other schools. They accept challenges and with the help of support staff, the least enthusiastic are able to make progress.

167. Pupils are enthusiastic and co-operate well in teams and pairs. They appreciate and praise each other's efforts. They demonstrate what they have learned and most prepare themselves well for lessons by wearing the correct kit.

168. The quality of teaching is always very good. This is due to the teachers' knowledge of the subject and understanding of pupils' individual needs and abilities. Staff have high expectations that pupils will achieve and behave well, with the result that pupils work at a good pace and with high degrees of concentration. The staff are also very enthusiastic, and this motivates the pupils to do well and succeed. Teachers plan their lessons very carefully to ensure that each element is understood and that pupils build their skills effectively. Each aspect of a lesson builds on the one before. For instance, a lesson on hockey is strictly timed to ensure that all skills are included and that pupils are aware of the progression. Staff maintain very good discipline and manage their pupils well. Safety is always a key issue and teachers emphasise this most effectively.

169. Physical education and outdoor education are delivered as one subject by teaching and care staff who combine well. The policy documents are comprehensive, clear and there is a good subject development plan. There are satisfactory procedures for assessment that are appropriately adapted to reflect the differing abilities of pupils. This is a recent development, and one that describes the pupils' participation and behaviour rather than identifying all elements of pupils' skills and commenting on what they know, understand, and can do. The overall improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

170. The absence of an on-site gymnasium adversely affects their progress in gymnastic activities, indeed, there is no covered sport facility. However, the school makes good use of external facilities when available, for example, local sports halls and a Beacon school to look at fitness activities. The grounds have very good quality outdoor play equipment, as well as grass and hard play areas.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

171. The analysis of pupils' written work shows that their progress in the subject is unsatisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 4, the pupils have made unsatisfactory progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of religions. At the end of the units of study in religious education pupils are tested to assess their gains in knowledge. These show pupils know the basic facts concerning the major religions. By the end of Key Stage 3, the pupils have produced only a small amount of work and the standards achieved are often below those evident in their writing for other subjects. In religious education pupils write in short sentences listing the basic facts of the major faiths and significant parts of this is copying. Pupils do not extend writing to comparing the traditions and beliefs of different

religions nor to personal evaluations of the differences. The wide range of knowledge and experience contained in the books on religious education are not reflected in the work done by pupils.

172. It was not possible during the time of the inspection to observe lessons in religious education; therefore no judgements on teaching and learning are made.

173. The curricular planning undertaken by the co-ordinator provides a sound basis for appropriate learning opportunities for all pupils. However, this planning has not been implemented successfully. Religious education is part of the school's social, personal and religious education curriculum sharing the time available with a personal, social and health education programme. Overall, there is insufficient time for religious education; it is interspersed between, and overshadowed by, units of study in personal, social and health education. In addition, the co-ordinator is unable to monitor and support the several staff responsible for teaching religious education so it difficult to develop teaching further and raise the standards of pupils' achievements. In the few examples of teachers' lesson plans seen the activities undertaken were appropriate but what it was intended pupils' should learn by these activities remained vague. The number and range of religious education books is satisfactory although the supply of religious artefacts is inadequate. While pupils have not visited religious centres such as temples, mosques and churches it is planned they do so in the future.

174. This subject was an identified weakness in the last inspection and remains so. Although there are improvements in the quality of the planning for the inclusion of religious education, thus far, too little impact is evident in the progress made by pupils.