

INSPECTION REPORT

ALDERWASLEY HALL SCHOOL

Alderwasley, Belper

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 113021

Principal: Kiran Hingorani

Reporting inspector: Rosemary Eaton
15173

Dates of inspection: 1st – 4th October 2001

Inspection number: 190619

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:	5 to 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Alderwasley Belper Derbyshire
Postcode:	DE56 2SR
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Appropriate authority:	The proprietor
Name of proprietor:	Mr Simon G. Brook
Date of previous inspection:	07/10/1996

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13462	Roberta Mothersdale	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1987	George Davies	Team inspector	Geography History	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
7327	Tony Dunsbee	Team inspector	Music Religious education	
14691	Jenny Hall	Team inspector	Science Personal, social and health education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?
20466	Alan Tattersall	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Equal Opportunities	How well are pupils or students taught?
10781	Bob Thompson	Team inspector	Modern foreign language Physical Education	How well does the school care for its pupils or students?
3055	Clive Tombs	Team inspector	English English as an additional language Post 16	
19386	Trevor Watts	Team inspector	Art and design Information and communication technology	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Alderwasley Hall is an independent day and residential special school for boys and girls aged five to 19 with speech, language and communication difficulties. At the time of the inspection, 126 pupils attended the school. The youngest pupil is aged eight years and there are 32 post-16 students. All but one have statements of special educational needs, for speech and communication difficulties. Around one third of the pupils have autistic spectrum disorders. Ten have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and a further ten have dyspraxia. When they enter the school, pupils' attainment is well below average. This is often because they have previously had a disrupted education. Twenty eight of the pupils are not boarders, because they are able to travel to the school every day. The other pupils' homes are throughout the British Isles, with a small number from abroad. The vast majority of pupils are of white UK heritage, three pupils are of black Caribbean origin, one is Indian and three are Chinese. Of these three have English as an additional language. A high proportion of pupils join the school at other than the usual ages (for example, at five or eleven years old). The school occupies three sites – two teaching and residential and the third is residential accommodation for post-16 students. The school's proprietor is the director of the Honormead Group of schools and its headteacher is known as the principal.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Alderwasley Hall is a very good school with some excellent features. Pupils and students make very good progress. The quality of teaching is very good and pupils are looked after extremely well. The school is very well led and managed and provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The principal leads the school extremely well, inspiring all staff to have very high expectations.
- Teachers have very high levels of expertise and very good knowledge of pupils' needs.
- Speech and language therapists make very good contributions to pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.
- The partnership between teachers and speech and language therapists is excellent and supports pupils' learning and progress very effectively.
- The school makes excellent provision for pupils' health, safety and well-being.
- The curriculum is very relevant to pupils' needs, because it stresses communication, personal and social skills.
- The school works exceptionally hard to keep parents informed about their children's progress and school life.

There are no significant areas for improvement although a small number of minor issues are identified in the full report

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in October 1996. Since then, it has made very good progress. Pupils' progress, which was previously sound is now very good. The quality of teaching has improved and it too is very good. Pupils' attitudes and relationships, which were good in 1996, are now very good. All the issues from the previous report have been tackled systematically, with good or very good progress made with each one. Additionally, a number of other important developments have taken place – for example, a highly effective assessment centre has been established and improvements made to the accommodation, notably the post-16 teaching block. The school now has an advisory board and the senior management team has been extended and strengthened.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year 6	by Year 11	by Year 13	Key	
speaking and listening	A*	A*	A*	excellent	A*
Reading	A	A	B	very good	A
Writing	B	B	B	good	B
Mathematics	A	A	A	satisfactory	C
personal, social and health education	A	A	A	unsatisfactory	D
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A	poor	E

The school sets challenging individual targets for pupils to achieve, in all subjects, therapy, social and independence skills. Pupils make very good progress towards these. Pupils achieve very well and make very good progress in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, information and communication technology and personal, social and health education. Progress and achievement are often excellent in music. In most other subjects, they are good. At the end of Year 11, many pupils are successful in externally accredited courses, up to and including GCSE level. Last year, a small number of passes at Grade C or better were achieved in English, mathematics, science, music and art. Post-16 students make very good progress and achieve very well in a wide range of vocational courses, gaining NVQ and GNVQ accreditation. Pupils and students make equally good progress, whatever their special educational needs, because the school is so well aware of their difficulties and staff work together very effectively to help to overcome them.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and approach their work and activities with enthusiasm.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons, around the school and in the residential setting.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils relate very well to each other and to staff. They readily accept responsibility and learn to be independent – for example, travelling to college or attending activities in the community.
Attendance	Good. The attendance of day pupils is better than average.

Pupils are thoughtful and consider the feelings and difficulties of others. They are tolerant when there are outbursts of challenging behaviour, as a result of other pupils' special educational needs. As they get older, pupils behave well because they understand the difference between right and wrong, rather than just responding to rules. The school council enables pupils to develop their awareness of citizenship. Attitudes and behaviour are often excellent in the residential houses. Pupils' very good personal development enables them to benefit from leisure activities and work experience placements.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 3 – 6	Years 7 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very 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.

English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education are all taught very well, as are the skills of communication, including literacy and numeracy. A significant factor in the very good teaching is the excellent partnership between teachers and speech and language therapists. This ensures that throughout the day there is a consistent emphasis on promoting communication. Teachers have very good levels of subject knowledge and expertise in teaching pupils with special educational needs. This means that they plan lessons that build systematically on what pupils have already learned, so that they make very good progress. As a result, the needs of all pupils are met. Activities are often interesting, so pupils are very well motivated and work hard. Pupils' behaviour is managed very effectively, supported by very good relationships and the teamwork between all staff.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is very relevant, because of the emphasis on communication, personal and social skills.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. There are very good planned opportunities for pupils to practise speaking and staff provide very good models of spoken language for pupils to follow.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and consider the needs of others. An extensive programme of cultural activities and visits is provided. The provision for spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Excellent. All members of staff are vigilant in their care of pupils. There are excellent arrangements to ensure their health, safety and well-being.

The school works very well in partnership with parents. The programme for personal, social and health education, led by speech and language therapists, is very effective. There is a growing range of accredited courses across the curriculum, providing pupils with public recognition of their achievements. The post-16 curriculum is very good and forms a bridge between school and independent living, college and the world of work. There is an extensive range of activities, clubs and visits, in the residential provision, at lunchtime and as part of lessons. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 and post-16 students take part in work experience placements, supported by excellent links with employers and the Careers Service. Child protection arrangements are excellent and staff receive regular training. There are very good procedures for encouraging pupils to behave well. Consistent guidance is provided for them, because of the excellent teamwork between staff. The assessment centre identifies pupils' precise needs and ensures that there is excellent information for planning to support their learning and personal development. Annual review reports are very detailed. The school is working towards making sure that the targets they contain are consistently precise and useful.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The principal has outstanding leadership qualities. He is strongly supported by the senior management team, whose members have significant responsibilities.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Very good. The proprietor supports the principal very well, by providing advice and support from centrally employed staff with particular expertise.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The principal has a very good overview of the work of the school and how it compares to other, similar schools.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The funds available to the principal are managed carefully and spent according to the school's agreed priorities. Major spending is currently the responsibility of the proprietor.

The provision of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is good. Residential accommodation is very good. The staff, whatever their role, are professional and keen to provide the best possible quality of education. The school's plans for future developments are carefully thought out and linked to its key priorities. The principal and the proprietor work very hard to ensure that they get the best value they can from the services and goods they buy. The money received from fees is very effectively managed. A wide and relevant range of training opportunities is provided for all staff. Additionally, the school offers high quality training to parents and to organisations such as universities.

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 like school. • They make good progress and are taught well. • Behaviour is good. • Parents feel comfortable approaching the school with any concerns. • The school has high expectations. • It is well led and managed. • Children are helped to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small number have concerns about the provision of homework. • A few think that they are not kept well enough informed about how their children are getting on.

The inspectors agree with the parents' very positive views about the school. The school is currently reviewing its policy concerning homework. During the inspection, the provision of homework was good. Pupils who are boarders have suitable areas in which to complete their work. The information provided to parents is excellent. However, communication between home and school is affected unavoidably by problems in recruiting and retaining residential care staff. The school does its best to minimise these disruptions.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils and post-16 students make very good progress and achieve very well. This represents a very good improvement since the previous inspection, when progress was sound overall. It is in line with a similar improvement in the quality of teaching, which is now also very good. Pupils' progress is further supported by the sensitive ways in which they are grouped into classes according to their needs. For example, in most year groups, pupils are allocated to one of two classes, according to their ability, and one class is made up of pupils and students aged 15 to 19 with significant autistic spectrum disorders. The teaching, support and curriculum organisation are then carefully adapted to match each group. This means that, for instance, one group of Year 7 pupils spends more time being taught by the class teacher and less with specialist teachers, because they are less ready to make the change from a primary to a secondary way of learning. As a result, they make very good progress.
2. Throughout the school, pupils make excellent progress in speaking and listening. This is chiefly as a result of the high levels of speech and language therapy they receive in lessons across the curriculum and in individual and group therapy sessions. Because of their excellent progress, pupils' confidence is boosted and they are also better able to play a full part in lessons in all subjects, supporting their overall progress. Additionally, the curriculum is suitably weighted towards English and personal, social and health education, both of which tackle pupils' primary needs and enable them to benefit from the opportunities available to them. Speech and language therapists, teachers, support assistants and residential care staff all know pupils and their needs very well and work together very effectively to develop their communication and personal skills. A mark of pupils' progress is the number of older pupils able to take part in work experience placements, to travel independently, work in mainstream schools and colleges, and pursue wide-ranging interests and hobbies in the community.
3. The school sets a great many targets for pupils to achieve, in all subjects of the curriculum, therapy, social and independence skills. These are challenging, and pupils' overall progress towards them is very good. A small number of pupils reach the standards expected for their age in the national tests at the end of Years 6 and 9.
4. The oldest pupils are successful in a wide range of externally accredited courses. Again, these are carefully matched to pupils' needs so that, for example, in mathematics the accreditation ranges from basic numeracy tests, through Certificate of Achievement, to General Certificate of Secondary Education. Last year, pupils in Year 11 were successful in GCSE examinations in English, mathematics, art, music and science. In each subject,

a small proportion of pupils gained Grade C or better, including Grades A and B in mathematics and music. Post-16 students build on these successes by working towards a wider variety of accredited courses such as NVQ, often through links with colleges of further education, and GNVQ – for example, in leisure and tourism and information and communication technology.

5. Throughout the school, pupils make very good progress in reading, mathematics, science, design and technology, information and communication technology, and personal, social and health education. In most other subjects, progress is good. In music, it is often excellent. Progress is broadly satisfactory rather than good in religious education, which has no co-ordinator to ensure consistency of approach from one year to the next. Post-16 students make good progress in reading and writing, because the focus of their curriculum is appropriately more on the practical applications of literacy. Their progress in vocational courses is very good. The school works very hard to match courses to students' interests and aptitudes, so that they are very well motivated. Their academic achievements, together with their very good personal development and independence skills, mean that they are prepared very well for their future lives.
6. The large number of pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders or Aspergers syndrome make the same progress as other pupils because of the very good support and guidance they receive with their learning and to support their social and personal development. The smaller number with difficulties such as dyspraxia or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder also make very good progress, because their individual needs are so well known to staff. The close links between teachers, therapists and care staff mean that approaches are consistent, during the school day and in the residential provision. Pupils and students who are not boarders inevitably have fewer opportunities to join in after-school activities, but there is no evidence that their progress and achievements suffer as a consequence. The pupils with English as an additional language make very good progress as a result of planned opportunities for them to practise speaking and listening and because staff provide such good models of spoken language for them to follow.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils' and students' very good attitudes and behaviour, together with the very good personal skills that they display, contribute significantly to the school's purposeful and well-ordered atmosphere. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection.
8. Pupils' enthusiasm for school is reflected in the cheerful way that they arrive in their classrooms at the start of the day and in the positive way that they approach their work. They listen to staff carefully. For example, a busy science lesson with Year 8 pupils ran very smoothly, because pupils concentrated very hard when the staff were giving instructions and explanations. Pupils show clear enthusiasm, especially when presented with exciting activities. Year 5 pupils were very excited as they pretended to use a 'time machine' to go back to Roman times. Pupils and students concentrate well on their work and a significant majority work very well in pairs or small

groups. The quality of learning in a hockey lesson for pupils in Year 11 was greatly enhanced by their ability to practise productively in pairs. Pupils and students with more complex needs, such as autism, also demonstrate positive attitudes to school. Younger pupils retained a high level of attention during the last lesson of the day as they identified the type of house that they lived in. A group of Year 11 pupils and post-16 students concentrated hard and showed real effort when studying Spain as a possible venue for a holiday. Parents confirm that pupils and students enjoy being at school.

9. Pupils and students are very aware of the school rules, which are displayed in all classrooms. However, as they get older their very good behaviour is as a result of their deeper understanding of the difference between right and wrong as opposed to just responding to external rules. They show a high degree of natural courtesy to all staff, in class, the dining room, at play times and during evening activities. They are sensitive and tolerant when, on rare occasions, other pupils find it difficult to control their behaviour, as a result of their special educational needs. Behaviour is equally very good when pupils take part in off-site visits. For example, the school receives very positive feedback from providers of work experience for older pupils. The behaviour of post-16 students during a session by a visiting tree surgeon was exemplary as they bombarded him with questions in an enthusiastic but courteous manner.
10. The very good relationships that exist between pupils and students and between pupils and students and all adults are a strong feature of the school. Low-key but careful supervision by staff brings out the best in pupils and students and they know how to respond appropriately in a variety of formal and informal situations. Parents also believe that the school is effective in helping their children become mature and responsible persons. Pupils and students are sensitive to the feelings and difficulties of others, as was demonstrated by post-16 students discussing rights and responsibilities during a personal, social and health education lesson. Pupils queue for their meals in an orderly manner without direct supervision while their social skills during mealtimes make such occasions into calm and pleasurable experiences. They readily accept responsibility, handling equipment sensibly in science and design and technology and helping to set out the classrooms for group activities. Such is the quality of the personal development of post-16 students that their evening activities take place in an atmosphere that compares very favourably with a well run sports and leisure club. Through electing members and serving on the school council, pupils develop their awareness of citizenship. During one meeting, the most original and best solution to a problem came from the youngest person present. The genuine respect shown him by all the other members of the council – ‘That is a great idea’ – provides a very good example of how effective the school is in promoting appropriate attitudes, behaviour and a high level of personal development. Work experience providers appreciate this. Employers write, for example, ‘He was an excellent ambassador for the school’, and students ‘are punctual, co-operative, accomplished, forward thinking, with excellent problem solving skills’.

11. Pupils' and students' attitudes and behaviour in the residential units are often exemplary. This is consistent across all eight houses and all age ranges. This is a credit to the school and all staff. Pupils and students are polite, helpful and courteous to each other as well as staff and visitors. Relationships in the houses are excellent, based on mutual respect. Where possible, pupils and students are given opportunities to develop their own personal interests and abilities. They respond cheerfully and enthusiastically to these activities. For example, both boys and girls take part in local Army Cadet Force activities. Excellent reports come back from the Force on their attitudes, behaviour and full participation. Last year, one student gained the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award – an outstanding achievement.
12. Attendance is good for a school of this type. There are very few unauthorised absences. Pupils' punctuality to lessons is generally good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. During the inspection, there was no unsatisfactory teaching and the teaching was excellent in almost one in ten lessons. This represents very good progress since the previous inspection. Parents have a positive view about the very high quality of teaching. Improvements in planning and the effective application of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, as well as a clear commitment to raise standards are significant factors contributing to the improvement. Where possible, classes are made up of pupils with broadly similar needs. This helps teachers to plan to meet their needs and to provide individual support. Specialist teachers contribute effectively, since they are able to focus on their main subjects. This has led to pupils achieving very well in accredited courses. One of the most significant factors contributing to the quality of teaching is the exceptionally good partnership between teachers and speech and language therapists. This ensures that there is very effective emphasis on promoting pupils' speech and language throughout the day.
14. Teachers' very high levels of expertise and their expectations for pupils to achieve are important factors in the very good progress made by pupils. This is evident in the way that they teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. For example, the effective way that teachers apply their knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy provides pupils with a range of tasks that engage their interest. In one mathematics lesson, the youngest pupils enjoyed the introduction because the teacher posed questions that were matched to their ability but which challenged them – they could only answer questions if they concentrated hard. The teacher's enthusiastic approach and encouragement led to pupils volunteering to try, for instance, to count back from twenty for the first time. The lesson met the needs of all pupils. More able pupils responded to the challenge of selecting number cards to show 43. The effective planning to involve pupils with autistic spectrum disorders enabled them to make similarly very good progress. Through extremely sensitive questioning and encouragement, one pupil eventually selected a 'two' and a 'three' card to represent 23. The strong commitment to promote pupils' skills in literacy was evident in a science lesson for pupils in Year 7. They could explain that they needed to mark new words (such as 'incisors') with a highlighter pen, because it was important to learn them so that they could talk about teeth. During this

very good lesson, pupils who had targets to improve their behaviour, behaved extremely well because they were so interested in the subject.

15. The quality of teaching during lessons to promote pupils' personal and social development is particularly strong, both for pupils and for students aged over sixteen. There is particularly effective collaboration between teachers and other staff, with speech therapists taking responsibility for planning and leading lessons. They have very good knowledge of each pupil's need to develop better social skills and of ways of supporting pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders. Lesson planning takes full account of pupils' needs. For instance, a lesson about being a 'team player' provided an effective means of helping pupils in Year 8 to talk about their difficulties in behaving. As they took turns to lead a guessing game, they followed the speech therapist and learning support assistant's examples, saying 'Well done' and 'Good try', and not getting cross if a wrong answer was given. Instructions were given very clearly, so pupils were not anxious. They felt comfortable to speak out, because their efforts were valued and the teacher (a speech and language therapist) helped them to communicate their ideas – 'Is that a little bit like...?'
16. The excellence of planning was evident in lessons to promote learning in most subjects in the class of pupils and students aged between 15 and 17 with autistic spectrum disorders. The methodical planning before leaving for the supermarket ensured that they understood their tasks and how they should conduct themselves in public. Staff had an excellent knowledge of pupils and students, and planned effectively so that behavioural difficulties did not arise. Pupils made very good progress in the confidence with which they asked for what they wanted in the shop and café. They improved their skills very well because the previous lesson used role-play so effectively to prepare them for the visit. Successful lessons throughout the school often involve pupils acting out roles. They learn particularly well through this practical approach, which has the additional benefit of promoting pupils' communication skills. A minor weakness in teaching is the shortage of planned opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their computer skills in lessons across the curriculum. Teachers often plan activities that engage pupils' interest so that they become absorbed in their work. They motivate pupils effectively through their enthusiasm and encouragement. This was evident during a lesson for pupils in Year 6 to promote the understanding of place value in counting. The teacher quickly engaged them in role-play about villagers waiting at their homes for the delivery of sticks. Pupils were excited and extremely interested when Fred, a toy rabbit, was to distribute them. Fred could only deliver bundles of ten, so pupils concentrated avidly to count sticks because they wanted to help him. They quickly told Fred how many more sticks they needed if they were waiting for more than ten and returned the difference when they were waiting for less. They made rapid progress and by the end of the lesson, they understood that a bundle of ten sticks could be represented by a 'one'. Teachers understand that pupils' performance improves with encouragement, and they use imaginative strategies. For instance, in the computer room, the name of the pupil who is 'friendly computer user of the week' flashed on everyone's screen during lessons. This spurred other pupils on to try for the title next time.
17. Teachers have a very good knowledge of pupils' individual needs and they nearly always use this in order to plan work that is well matched. This was

done very successfully in a lesson in the computer room, for Year 11 pupils, where the introduction included a discussion of each pupil's individual behaviour and social targets. The teacher ensured that each pupil understood the different work that they had to do, and checked this by asking questions. The worksheets provided were varied according to pupils' ability and each pupil received support from staff dependent upon their need. Altogether, the arrangements were very effective to promote pupils' progress, especially since staff intervened when necessary to encourage or provide additional tasks to stretch pupils who were more able. This extremely well targeted support and effective review of personal targets ensured that pupils kept to their tasks, achieving very well. In a small minority of lessons, pupils do not make such good progress because the work is not sufficiently matched to their needs. All pupils in the group may be expected to achieve the same standards.

18. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very effectively. Their success is rooted in the very good relationships between staff and pupils and the skilful way that lessons are planned to maintain pupils' interest. The management of those pupils who have extremely unpredictable behaviour is very secure because of the calmness and sensitivity of all the staff who work with them. They have very good knowledge of the targets that are set for them to improve their behaviour and appreciate what causes them to begin to have difficulty coping with the demands of the classroom. The success of planning to promote good behaviour was evident in the way that a science lesson did not lose pace because staff sensitively helped pupils by ensuring that they concentrated on their work. For instance, staff knew that one pupil had difficulty taking turns in discussions, and they provided guidance on when to answer and when to give someone else an opportunity. Consequently, this avoided behaviour difficulties, allowing pupils to concentrate on their work and make very good progress learning how to dye fabric.
19. In lessons throughout the school, the presence of learning support assistants means that there are often a significant number of adults in class. The contribution of learning support staff to promoting pupils' independent working is much more effective than at the time of the previous inspection. They form part of a very effective team to promote pupils' learning. However, on a small number of occasions they could provide more support. For example, in a numeracy lesson for students over the age of sixteen, students were able to work independently most of the time. The learning support assistant had not been provided with a clear role, consequently missing the opportunity to intervene when students' attention strayed.
20. A small number of parents have concerns over the provision of homework, and the school has plans to clarify its policy and set out its expectations more clearly. However, during the inspection, the provision of homework was good, with some very relevant examples of homework being used to reinforce and extend pupils' learning.

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

21. The curriculum is very effective. The high priority given to the development of pupils' communication, personal and social skills leads to very good achievements across the age range. A very good personal, social and health education programme is in place. Across the curriculum there is very good provision for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Opportunities in information and communication technology skills are very good in the timetabled lessons for this subject. Planned opportunities for speaking and listening by well trained and experienced staff enable the small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language to make very good progress. Carefully tailored plans and support for all pupils, including those with autism, lead to high levels of achievement all round. Classes of pupils of similar ages have subtly different arrangements to meet their needs – for example, the Year 11 pupils and post-16 students with autistic spectrum disorders have to cope with fewer changes of staff than those in other classes. The primary and secondary curriculum draws extensively on the National Curriculum programmes of study, which are appropriately modified to meet individual needs. All pupils enjoy a rich breadth of highly relevant experiences. Added depth of study is available to meet the needs of the higher attainers. A growing range of GCSE and other accredited examination courses, at 16 and in the sixth form, provides pupils with the same public recognition of their achievements as their mainstream peers. The post-16 curriculum provides an appropriate transition between school and independent living, college and the world of work. There are very good opportunities for students to build on the accreditation gained in Years 10 and 11, for work experience and college courses.
22. Improvement since the last inspection has been good, especially in the strengthened links between lesson plans, termly programmes of work and longer term maps of curriculum coverage. Planning the link between the day and residential curriculum has also improved, and day pupils now have better access to evening and weekend events. Approaches to and planning for history, geography and religious education are not entirely consistent because co-ordinators for these subjects have not been appointed. The school has a carefully thought out and ambitious three-year curriculum development plan. There is a strong commitment from the staff to the achievement of this plan.
23. A broad range of activities, visits and clubs forms part of the residential provision; and pupils enjoy lunchtime clubs – for French, table games and poetry, for example. More attention has been given to homework clubs recently, and staff ensure that pupils and students have access to quiet areas with good working arrangements. Opportunities for outdoor activities at lunchtime in the primary school are, however, very limited because there is little safe play space on that site. Very extensive use of visits into the local community, and further afield into Wales and Scotland, bring added richness and relevance to the curriculum for all pupils, especially for post-16 students as they prepare for the next stage in their lives. The curriculum for these students has a different emphasis than in the rest of the school. There is still

the important focus on communication, personal and social skills but this is set within and alongside GNVQ and life skills courses. The links with local colleges are strong and students benefit from mixing with other students. They develop independence skills, for example, planning a meal, travelling by bus, shopping for the ingredients and cooking the meal. They learn to use the library and have a meal in a café.

24. From Year 10 onwards there is an extensive range of work experience placements and employers are very supportive. The school has excellent procedures for informing employers about the special learning needs of the students (but at the time of the inspection, there were some gaps in the information that had been forwarded to the colleges). Very strong team work between the careers education and guidance co-ordinator (a speech and language therapist), the work experience co-ordinator and the Careers Service has resulted in the development of a very good careers education and guidance programme which begins formally in Year 9. These very productive links with the local Careers Service help pupils and parents to prepare for transition from school to the next stage, and to forge links with their local Careers Services. The school has very good links with secondary schools, which extend the range of opportunities available and enable some pupils to work and socialise with others. There are currently no pupils attending local primary schools, but a target in the school development plan is to continue to develop mainstream links.
25. The school has already identified the unwieldy number of targets set for younger pupils at their annual reviews and has begun to reduce them through interim reviews. The interim review targets are, however, sometimes too broad for progress to be easily monitored, and few strategies accompany the targets to guide their implementation.
26. The provision for pupils' spiritual development remains satisfactory, with regular opportunities for reflection in religious education and assemblies, extended by valued links with local faith communities. There is also a strong link between the teaching of music and helping pupils prepare to take part in annual religious ceremonies held in local churches, such as the school's Harvest Festival and Christmas Carol Service. Where pupils have individual religious needs, the school ensures that these are met. For example, staff have assisted a Jewish pupil with preparations for his Bar Mitzvah and the local vicar, as school chaplain, has given pupils instruction prior to their confirmation.
27. Provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is very good and has improved well since the previous inspection. The school consistently fosters respect between individuals and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and actively consider the needs of others. Pupils in Years 3 to 6, for example, recently organised a sponsored scooter ride, raising money for international relief organisations. From their efforts, a sum was donated to help fund the primary schooling of a child in the Gambia.

Staff provide excellent examples of teamwork, consideration and caring for others.

28. Very good attention is paid to the development of pupils' social skills – for example, through the personal, social and health education programme. They are also involved in a wide range of extra-curricular activities on and off the school site. These include many opportunities to compete in local, regional and national sporting events, notably in football and horse-riding. The school makes great efforts to teach pupils how to mix with others, to develop the ability to be part of a team and to be a team leader. They are members of organisations such as Scouts and Guides, as well as being able to join in activities in local youth clubs. Skills of self-reliance and team working are developed through regular expeditions to youth hostels and participation in the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. For older pupils with more complex needs, residential trips have been important in helping them to practise key social skills, such as working together, listening to each other and making new friends.
29. The school offers an extensive and varied programme of cultural activities and visits, which enriches the pupils' learning very significantly. Music and art are important elements in providing pupils with experience of both their own and other cultures. Significantly, pupils have opportunities to learn about current popular culture so that, for example, they know how to dance and behave appropriately for their ages. The school has close links with a similar school in Hamburg and staff and pupils have visited each other's schools and played together in joint concerts. Pupils have travelled to France, to study the Impressionists and memorials to World War I. Involvement in arts festivals where other cultures – such as African music – are represented, provide pupils with additional experiences of listening and performing. Visits to many towns and villages in the Midlands and north of England, to museums, theatres and other places of interest have all added significantly to developing pupils' awareness of a range of cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. Overall the school makes excellent provision for the care and well being of pupils and has made very good improvements in this area since the previous inspection.
31. Excellent arrangements are made to ensure pupils' and students' health, safety and well being. Child protection arrangements are excellent and the training officer ensures that the first training all staff receive is in child protection procedures. They then receive regular training, supported by a suitable school policy and guidelines. A full time nurse is in place, and she attends to pupils' and students' medical needs, and advises on dietary requirements. Catering staff are made very well aware of pupils' individual needs. Food is very good quality with ample choices. The community paediatrician attends the school on a regular basis and an educational psychologist is a valuable part of the staff team. There are consultancy arrangements with a child psychiatric team that makes weekly visits. Care plans are detailed and include aspects of behaviour, social development and inclusion as well

as physical care. Arrangements for the administration of medication are very good. The provision of first aid is excellent. Designated staff carry out regular health and safety inspections of the site. These tours are well documented. Day-to-day observations by staff ensure a safe environment for pupils and students. All members of staff are vigilant in their care of pupils and students. Teachers are well aware of safety issues relating to lessons and take necessary steps to ensure that correct procedures are followed. For example, in design and technology lessons, the teacher explains the correct and safe way to use tools, and in a lesson where a visiting tree surgeon was demonstrating his skill, the staff were very careful to enforce and stress health and safety guidelines.

32. Very high priority is given to the welfare of pupils and students, overseen by the head of care and her deputy. The school attaches great importance to the personal dignity of pupils and students. Parents are pleased with the level of support in school. They see it as a caring community where staff are approachable, and in which their children are happy and safe. Inspection findings support these views. Pupils and students are well supervised and there are always sufficient staff on duty to ensure their welfare. The commitment and expertise of staff is high. Residential and education staff collaborate well and this enhances significantly pupils' personal and social development. Good links are maintained with a variety of agencies to ensure the well-being of all pupils, especially those with additional special needs. Every residential pupil and student has a designated key worker. Pupils know who they are and how to get in touch with them. There is a visitor who calls on a very regular basis and acts as a listener. This works well, but as he is employed by the Honormead Group, he cannot be described as an independent listener. Parents' views of the school's residential provision are very positive. Their opinions are confirmed by last year's excellent social services report. Only a few minor recommendations were made and these have been fully implemented.
33. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Clear routines and high expectations are consistently reinforced by all staff, helping pupils and students to understand and meet the school's standards. There are effective behaviour management plans for pupils and students who have specific difficulties. These are used very successfully to support improvement, and are reviewed regularly and updated as needed. As a result of this, and very effective classroom management, the school maintains a very positive learning environment that is rarely disrupted. Staff refer to behaviour management plans in lessons and on other occasions, such as evening activities, if the need arises. Good examples of this practice were seen in several lessons. Pupils were closely monitored and, if appropriate, their behaviour plan was implemented and the necessary action taken. At this time staff would talk quietly to the pupil and refer to specific targets in their plans. This worked very effectively and quickly got the pupil back on task and into the group. Pupils and students could not recall any instances of bullying; they are clear that, on the rare occasion when there are difficulties, they all have an adult in whom they can confide and that the school takes speedy and proper action.
34. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory. However, class attendance registers across the school are not regularly monitored for consistency in marking procedures, record keeping or reasons for absence. Procedures to make sure that staff know where pupils are during the day and in the residences are good. The school has well thought out measures for indicating when pupils move in and out of buildings on the site including cards that indicate whether a pupil is in or out of a building, and signing in and signing out books. A transport

manager has recently been appointed, to co-ordinate pupils' and students' movements between sites, in order to promote punctuality.

35. The educational and personal support and guidance given to pupils and students is very effective in raising achievements throughout the school. Since the time of the last inspection, the school has reviewed its procedures, and these now promote very good practice and a high level of consistency. The support provided to pupils and students with more complex difficulties, such as those with autistic spectrum disorders or displaying aspects of Aspergers syndrome, is very good. The very good liaison between teachers, therapists and care staff results in a coherent approach to the help and guidance given. For example, occupational therapists work very effectively with other professionals in order to assess pupils' needs and provide necessary support. Pupils receive the support outlined in their statement and annual review. The excellent partnership between therapists and teachers means that pupils' needs for speech and language or occupational therapy are met very effectively in class, in periods of withdrawal and in the residential setting.
36. Overall, the monitoring of pupils' progress and personal development is very good, and is assisted by the very good arrangements for assessing pupils in order to identify their precise special educational needs and to provide support for learning. The school now has its own assessment centre. Here, a four-day very detailed assessment process, covering all aspects of the pupils' needs and development is carried out. The outcome of this assessment determines whether or not Alderwasley Hall can meet the needs of the child. These arrangements are particularly impressive and ensure that new entrants will specifically benefit from the expertise of the school. The excellent information gathered before admission provides a very sound basis for planning subsequent support for pupils. If the child is admitted, within two months a statement implementation plan is generated. This is used to build upon information gained at assessment and set targets for the pupil for the year ahead. The monitoring of the plan is carried out through the statutory annual review process.
37. Pupils' annual reviews are carried out in great detail and are very thorough, particularly for the assessment and provision of new targets for speech and language development. The school has recognised the large number of targets as a problem, and teachers, therapists and key workers have begun drawing up a smaller number of short term targets for pupils to achieve. Methods of checking the quality of the new targets are now being devised. The school also uses the expertise of occupational therapists very effectively to identify motor therapy plans for individual children, which are implemented in conjunction with the pupil's physical education programme. Overall, there are good procedures for assessing pupils' progress within subjects. The information collected is used well to inform planning – for example, to determine the level of accreditation to be offered – and to prepare the pupil or student for the next step in their learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The school's partnership with parents is very good and their views of the school continue to be very positive. Parents are often overwhelmed with relief to find a school where their child is happy. Examples such as 'The day he came here I could see he was a different child' and 'My child said "Mum I feel safe. People smile at me"' clearly indicate the trust that parents place in the school to look after their children. At the school's Open Day, the number of parents attending the event and taking part in the various activities organised by and for the pupils, gave a very clear indication

of the great support that they feel is due to the school. Parents also raised a large sum of money to support the purchase of library and playground equipment for their children.

39. Parents appreciate the opportunity to have a focused discussion with teachers, care workers and therapists at their child's annual review. They are comforted by the fact that the school is willing to hold additional meetings if it is considered necessary to pursue any areas of concern. They value the school's efforts to give their children the confidence to travel independently between home and school. For example, 'My son can now independently make a train journey from Derby to London and go on the underground. He can function in the world. What matters is that he can make his own way.' Parents welcome the reassurance provided by the school – for example, a copy of the canteen menu, sent home to a family who were anxious over what their child was eating. They also appreciate the honesty and integrity of the approach that the school takes to the work of their children. 'The school is not a soft touch. The staff will tell me when he is capable of more.'
40. The range and quality of information that the school provides for parents is excellent. The school works tirelessly to ensure that parents have access to information – for example, in newsletters and reports. Pupils' annual written reports are laden with facts, targets, specific curriculum information and detailed, knowledgeable commentary from residential care workers and therapists. Parents are most impressed with the attention that nearly all key care workers and house co-ordinators pay to making sure that they are spoken to each week. The provision of home/school diaries for some pupils is valued by many parents, but seen as inappropriate for their children by others. In general, however, parents are agreed that where the school and parents consider that a home/school diary can give a parent useful information, the school will co-operate. A few parents are concerned that when there is a high turnover of care staff in the residential provision, communications between home and school can be affected and feel that these areas require a 'tiny little tweaking.' The school is well aware of the problem and does its best to minimise disruption.
41. The impact of parents' involvement with the school is good. They are frequently asked to assess the work of the school by answering questionnaires – for example, about the annual report to parents or Open Day – in order for the school to see if it can improve its provision. Due to the distance that many parents live from the school, it is not practical for the majority of them to be involved on a day-to-day basis. However, new technology is improving parents' involvement with the school and their contribution to their children's learning. Residential pupils can e-mail home, and, in theory, involve parents in their homework. A parents' group meets regularly with the school management team. It performs a useful role by organising a register of parents in different parts of the country who have elected to support new families of children in the school and pass on information, and by holding social and fund raising events.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. The principal has outstanding leadership qualities. His commitment, sincerity and very high expectations are evident immediately. He is very clear that he intends the school to be 'confident and outward looking – a centre of excellence.' Because he is such an able communicator, he inspires others to strive for similarly high standards. As a result, the staff, whatever their role, are professional and enthusiastic, determined to enable each pupil to do as well as they possibly can. The very high quality management means that this large and complex school runs smoothly and efficiently, without losing sight of individual pupils and their needs.
43. For some time after the principal's appointment three years ago, the school had no deputy headteachers and no permanent head of care. Following recent appointments, a strong senior management team is now in place, representing the major areas of the school's work – such as education, care, therapy and assessment. Each of the team has significant responsibilities delegated to them, and their work is already having an impact on the quality of provision and pupils' progress. However, because the principal is aware that most are still developing their leadership and management roles, plans are in place to provide suitable training and support to enable them to increase their effectiveness still further. A key feature of the successful way in which management tasks are shared is the principal's belief that staff should excel in a small number of areas, rather than being 'Jacks of all trades'. An example of this is the way in which the head of the assessment centre, who has supported the principal very strongly since the previous inspection, is now able to concentrate more on developing this specific aspect of the school.
44. The system for setting out the school's plans for its future development is very well thought out. A clear and concise overall plan includes longer term goals and an outline of the current year's intentions. Despite the school's independent status, these reflect national priorities and an awareness of how they relate to Alderwasley Hall and its pupils. Underpinning this plan are detailed action plans, produced by the staff with responsibility for each area. These break down major developments into manageable tasks and set out how they will be achieved. Procedures are now being finalised in order to check if work is proceeding as planned. Since the previous inspection, an annual report to parents has been produced. This provides a wealth of information about every aspect of the school's life and offers an opportunity for all staff to be involved in celebrating what has been achieved and establishing a basis for future developments. This report and plans at all levels relate explicitly to the school's chosen key issues – literacy, information and communication technology, school image and inclusion. This clear focus means that staff are fully aware of these priorities, contributing to a consistent emphasis and increasing success in achieving them.
45. Through a range of methods – such as discussions with staff, reviews of plans and pupils' achievements – the principal has a very good overview of the work of the school. Meetings with headteachers of other, similar schools contribute to his knowledge of how Alderwasley Hall compares. The school has recently introduced new formal measures to check the work of teachers and care staff,

with other staff groups – such as learning support staff – to follow. These will strengthen the leadership role of subject co-ordinators, enabling them to more easily identify and share good practice. Three subjects are without designated leaders, so teachers have no direct source of advice and support, which is a weakness.

46. The Honormead Group's proprietor supports the principal very well – for example, by helping him to keep abreast of national developments and statutory obligations. This advice and support takes many forms, but a particularly effective measure is the provision of centrally employed staff with particular expertise – for example, in caring for children and young people, health and safety, education, personnel and finance. Since the previous inspection, a small advisory board has been established, which includes the directors of the Honormead company and two members nominated by the principal. This provides a further source of advice and support and acts as a channel for communication about the school's performance. Discussions are taking place with regard to the creation of a group more similar to a governing body, the principal being particularly keen to involve staff, parents and members of the community.
47. The ownership and strategic management of the school are currently in a state of flux, with significant changes anticipated in the near future. The Honormead Group is preparing for these by planning to provide additional support for the principal, to smooth the transfer of control of the school's budget. In the past, other elements of the Group's interests have had repercussions on developments at Alderwasley Hall. For example, plans to create primary and secondary sites, reducing pupils' movements between the two, have twice been postponed. This has led to frustration on the part of staff and the need to revise the development plan, with the additional work that this entails. However, this has not undermined relationships between the principal and staff or been allowed to slow down the pace of change and improvement.
48. The principal manages carefully the funds available to him. There is a very good balance between giving responsibility to senior members of staff, and checking afterwards to see how much benefit the spending has been to the pupils. Within the school, each department – such as the curriculum, residential care, and therapy – has its own budget that it spends according to the priorities that have been agreed. The Honormead Group also manages its responsibilities well, with accounts that are very well checked, and with a constant push for efficiency within the organisation. The transfer of responsibility for running the school's finances away from the central office into the school itself should make for more efficient management of the funds. Additionally, when the budget is known, it will be possible for the school's development plan to be costed. The financial management was also considered to be good at the time of the previous inspection, but now the school is on the brink of a major step forward into managing the whole of its funds itself.

49. The principal and Honorhead work very hard to ensure that they get the best value they can from the services and goods that they buy, such as teachers and other staff, transport and equipment. They also do very well in ensuring that they give the best possible value to the people that they serve – the pupils, the parents, and the local authorities that place pupils in the school. The principal, particularly, compares the school's fees and the services that it offers with a group of other similar schools throughout the country. There is very good co-operation within this group, as well as a competitive spirit that helps to ensure that the members are doing their best for their pupils. The school also discusses what it offers, and how successful it is, with parents and education officers when they visit, and the parents' group gives regular feedback to the principal.
50. A very large proportion of the money raised from fees is spent directly on goods, staffing and maintenance for the direct benefit of the school and its pupils. It is very efficiently managed, and the results are that the pupils make very good progress socially and academically, especially in their communication development. A sign of the increased effectiveness of the school is that it was seen to be giving good value for money at the time of the previous inspection, and now it gives very good value for money.
51. The school makes good use of computer technology. The use of computers by staff is expanding rapidly, as new computers are brought in and linked together, so that all staff have access to a great deal of information about pupils' performance and the curriculum. In the administration office, staff use computers very well for maintaining pupils' records and those of the finance controlled by the school.
52. There are sufficient well-qualified teachers for the number of pupils and students in the school and the ratio of learning support assistants is satisfactory. The provision of speech and language therapists – who are equally well-qualified – is very good and they, in conjunction with teaching and support staff are very effectively deployed. There are sufficient residential care staff to meet with the needs of the pupils and students and they are well deployed and work harmoniously together. The school does not have a problem in recruiting teaching staff or speech and language therapists. It is addressing the high turnover of care staff through its review of their salary and career structure. A very effective administration team provides very good support for the school. They work very well together and through very good working practices, including the use of technology, have minimised the problems associated with the school being on a split site.
53. A good induction programme for all residential care and school based staff prepares them very well for their general responsibilities. The ongoing staff development programme provides opportunities for all staff to extend their expertise in a wide range of care, curriculum and therapeutic areas. For example, a significant number of care staff have gained NVQ Level 3 accreditation in Caring for Children and Young People. Training is carefully linked to the school development plan and the recently implemented performance management programme. The school's commitment to staff

development is clearly demonstrated by its appointment of a whole school training co-ordinator.

54. The quality of the teaching accommodation is good overall. The main building at the Callow Park site has been imaginatively adapted to make effective use of the variety of spaces available for teaching pupils in Years 3 to 6. Very good accommodation is available for post-16 pupils in their separate, newly opened teaching block, where the area dedicated to information and communication technology is a distinctive feature. On the main site, given the constraints of a listed building, the quality of the teaching accommodation at Alderwasley Hall is good. Two rooms for information and communication technology have recently been well refurbished. The buildings on both sites are well maintained by premises staff and are spotlessly clean.
55. On both sites, there is a lack of access for people with physical needs. However, this does not cause difficulties for anyone at the school. At Callow Park, there is a relative shortage of outdoor play space for younger pupils and existing hard play areas lack clear line markings for either physical education or to encourage the playing of traditional children's games. At Alderwasley Hall, there are no changing or shower facilities for pupils of any age doing physical education and this leads to an inappropriate use of residential accommodation by pupils during the teaching day. Very good links with a specialist sports college alleviate the problem to a certain extent.
56. Overall, residential provision throughout the school is very good. There are very good facilities in each residential unit with spacious bedrooms and well-furnished communal rooms. Living areas are attractive, clean and well maintained. Pupils and students have sufficient privacy and good storage facilities in their rooms, where they are encouraged, to add their own personal touches. Bathroom and shower facilities are satisfactory and older pupils and students use the kitchens to prepare their own snacks. A number of post-16 students benefit from a more adult and relaxed environment at Cavendish House.
57. Resources for teaching and learning are generally good, representing an improvement since the previous inspection. For music in particular, they are very good, with pupils having access not only to a wide variety of instruments but also specialist computer software and recording technology. In other subjects, they are at least satisfactory. However, the libraries on both sites are poorly stocked, with an insufficient number of books to encourage pupils to browse and extend their personal interests. In English, there is a lack of suitable computer software and regular access to computers to support pupils' learning, particularly in Years 3 to 6. In science, some improvement is needed in the range of resources for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and in their organisation to make them more readily accessible. In design and technology, the specialist teaching area is not large enough for the convenient storage of all the tools pupils might need to use and more resources are required to support the learning of older pupils following externally accredited courses.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. The following minor issues should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan:
1. Ensure that all subjects have designated co-ordinators to ensure consistent approaches to teaching and curricular planning. Clarify subject responsibilities for post-16 courses. (Paragraphs 45,93,97,130)
 2. Continue to develop the accommodation. In particular, provide suitable changing and showering facilities for pupils to use before and after physical education lessons.(Paragraphs 55,111)
 3. Increase the number and range of books in the libraries. (Paragraph 57)
 4. Ensure that pupils make full use of computers to support their learning across the curriculum. (Paragraphs 83,97,101,118)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	102
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	58

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	10	39	41	12	0	0	0
Percentage	9.8	38.2	40.2	11.8	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	126
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	126

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	33
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	1
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	3
White	
Any other minority ethnic group	

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	24
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.25
Average class size	7

Education support staff: Y3 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	39
Total aggregate hours worked per week	1385

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	3777499
Total expenditure	3643714
Expenditure per pupil	NA
Balance brought forward from previous year	NA
Balance carried forward to next year	NA

Annual fees: 38 week boarding = £32085;
day pupils = £18015

Most fees are paid by pupils' local education authorities. A very small number of pupils are paid for privately.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	132
Number of questionnaires returned	64

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	27	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	36	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	48	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	44	9	5	16
The teaching is good.	72	28	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	33	8	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	17	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	80	16	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	61	30	2	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	79	17	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	77	22	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	66	23	8	0	0

Where percentages do not total 100, this is because not every parent responded to particular statements.

Other issues raised by parents

Many parents took advantage of the opportunity to share their views of the school. These were almost invariably very positive. A number of issues were raised that related to individual pupils and the provision made for them. These were considered when judgements were made.

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

ENGLISH

59. Overall, pupils achieve very high standards in English and they make very good progress throughout the school. This is because the school places particular emphasis on English within the curriculum and because teaching is consistently very good. Literacy skills are also deliberately reinforced across other subject curriculum areas. The most significant feature of all English lessons, is the excellent teamwork between teachers and speech and language therapists in terms of joint planning, teaching, target setting and evaluating, so that learning is of a very high quality all day every day. As a result there are excellent opportunities for very good quality speaking and listening activities and effective models of spoken and written English provided by all adults. This is particularly important for pupils for whom English is an additional language. They make very good progress in line with other boys and girls including those with autistic spectrum disorders. In nearly all lessons there is an insistent but realistic expectation of good behaviour and communication and a very good range of interesting and challenging activities. Pupils make excellent progress in speaking and listening, very good progress in reading, and good progress in writing. Writing skills are less well developed in the school because of the greater and more appropriate emphasis placed on speaking and listening, but are nevertheless good.
60. Younger pupils in the primary classes share their weekend news, taking it in turns to speak and ask questions of one another, before writing one or two simple sentences in their diaries, often copied from adults' writing. Most letters are usually clearly shaped and correctly orientated. Attractive big books – 'Handa's Surprise', 'Little Red Riding Hood', and 'Knots on a Counting Rope', are used well to improve fluency, comprehension and response. Pupils are interested and attentive. They listen to the teachers or speech therapists reading and attend carefully. Older, more able pupils, join in reading aloud. They read simple unfamiliar texts accurately and use expression and intonation to enhance meaning. They readily identify the title, author and illustrator from the book cover. They know they will be asked to identify characters and objects or to predict what will happen next and this maintains their focus. The teachers reinforce good looking with positive comments – for example, 'I wondered if anyone would spot that monkey. Well done! Good observation!' The teacher deals calmly with loud and excited behaviour and says, 'P.., that's a bit loud' so that the pupil is quiet but maintains interest. Teachers are well supported in their work by the quiet but timely interventions of speech therapists or learning support assistants, so that pupils stay on task and learning opportunities are maximised. Good questioning further confirms their understanding – for example, 'What do you think happens next?' and 'What do you think the wolf is thinking?' All contributions are valued, so pupils are comfortable and confident in answering and asking questions. Appropriate

activities – for example, simple games like ‘fruit salad’, role-play, filling in speech bubbles, making their own story rope, or making their own books to be read out as a play – further reinforce learning. Older pupils are introduced to powerful imagery and descriptive language in their story with phrases like, ‘His dreams are more beautiful than rainbows and sunsets’, and ‘Don’t be afraid, ride like the wind’, which they begin to use in their writing. More pupils write in a lively and interesting way, linking ideas together. Handwriting shows accurate and consistent letter formation. There is a growing understanding of the purpose of punctuation with the use of full stops, capital letters and question marks.

61. In lessons for pupils in Years 7 to 9, drama and role-play is used effectively to enhance communication and inter-personal skills. In one lesson, key words and sentences displayed on the whiteboard – for example, ‘How much does it cost?’ and ‘May I have a bag please?’ provided a structure, which enabled pupils, including three for whom English is a second language, to act out shopping situations with growing confidence. The teacher and language therapist offered excellent demonstrations and prompts of encouragement. A pupil who rarely talks ‘almost’ took part, but was still involved in writing everything down in great detail. The teacher managed behaviour in a positive way – for example, ‘N.. is that friendly?’ was a sufficient rebuke for the pupil to apologise, and ‘Good sitting J..!’ was an encouragement for others to do the same. Older pupils in this age group display a growing knowledge and understanding of drama and are confident and articulate in role-playing a domestic drama, acting in turn as the audience and evaluating the roles of each other. All pupils keep a drama log, which helps them understand and reflect on what they are doing, how well they have done and how they can improve. Pupils in Year 7 enjoy shared reading of ‘Charlie and the Chocolate Factory’ by Roald Dahl. They listen actively and answer questions readily and with great understanding. More able pupils express themselves well, exploring and communicating ideas. All contribute descriptions of ‘Willie Wonka’ and these are gathered in a ‘mind map’ and compared to the actual descriptions in the text. Some embellishments are identified as a result of pupils remembering details from the film. In another lesson, pupils in Year 9 planned and wrote at some length on building a character for extended descriptive writing. The teacher led the class in a lively discussion on how to create a character, using a variety of footwear to inspire ideas. She was brisk, bright and humorous in her delivery and engaged the pupils throughout. Good care was taken to ensure that a pupil with visual impairment had a writing template and sloping desk to allow her full access.
62. More able pupils in Years 10 and 11, following the course leading to GCSE Foundation Level listen to the stimulating music of the 1812 Overture and draw up a plan for writing a story or poetry to express the emotions, mood and feelings that the music suggests. The pupils are well motivated and industrious because the task is pitched at the right level. Relationships are very good and this creates a purposeful ethos in which good learning occurs. There is also a good work ethic within the classroom. The teacher’s enthusiasm for the subject is infectious. She gathers pupils’ ideas and

vocabulary on the whiteboard to provide a reference point for their work. Most pupils are able to work independently using spellcheckers or dictionaries. They plan, draft, and proof read their work, taking a pride in their handwriting, which is joined and legible. Around the room there are very attractive displays of poetry and prose enhanced by the use of computers. Many of the pupils in this group apply their creative talent and with the expressive arts group have produced a semi-professional video 'Alien Trilogy' which shows how to dramatise story and heighten the sense of menace and atmosphere with suitable visual effects and music. Less able pupils working towards the Certificate of Achievement enjoy a shared reading session of 'Harry Potter'. The lesson is well planned and organised so pupils know what is expected of them. Most read text aloud with fluency, accuracy, confidence and expression. In responding to questions, for example, 'Why is it called a vanishing glass?' pupils express opinions, which show they are able to interpret the plot. In a lesson with less able pupils a wider range of teaching methods is used, commonly tailored to individual needs and idiosyncrasies. For example, the lesson begins with a processing game – 'Quick thought catch'. In this pupils have to throw a bean bag to each other while remembering the order of the alphabet, days of the week, different modes of transport, different types of cereal, chocolates, and so on, all against the clock and the current record. This fun activity improves their thinking process, hand-eye co-ordination and group skills. It provides some light relief and a break in a very long two-hour lesson. The pupils then settle to individual reading tasks in one-to-one and small group situations including using tape machines and the library. Very good assessment and individual reading and behaviour targets ensure that learning is focused and well planned.

63. The subject is well led by two experienced and committed co-ordinators. In addition, a literacy team – a group made up of English teachers and speech and language therapists – has been formed to raise and monitor literacy standards and improve consistency across the school. This group has so far produced a reading pamphlet for parents, a guidelines booklet and training on making and using worksheets, a library improvement programme and training for care staff on improving literacy across the school. As such, the team is having a powerful impact on standards.
64. There have been very significant improvements in English and it is now a major strength of the school. Staff have responded positively and robustly to areas of development highlighted by the last inspection. Teaching and learning are now consistently very good. There has been a big improvement in accreditation to challenge higher attaining pupils, with participation in national tests, opportunities to take literacy tests at the end of Year 9 and Certificate of Achievement or GCSE (Foundation) options for Year 11 pupils. Last year, one pupil obtained a GCSE 'C' grade. There has been an increase of more demanding texts within classrooms, and a new emphasis on handwriting programmes. Homework is now a regular feature of all year groups, and along with recently introduced study periods for older pupils, consolidates and extends learning. Information and communication technology is increasingly well used to support the subject with the timetabled

use of the computer suite. However, this does not fully compensate for the shortage of computers within English classrooms. While the library accommodation has been improved, the school is aware of the need to improve the quality and range of reading materials.

MATHEMATICS

65. The standards of achievement and progress made are very good, because the quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent and is very good overall throughout the school. This represents very good progress since the previous inspection. An extremely significant strength of teaching is the way that staff work together effectively to promote pupils' language development through mathematics. The provision of speech therapy is integral to the teaching of numeracy and has a significant impact on the way that pupils use mathematical language. Therapists provide very effective support in class, taking responsibility for leading parts of lessons. The provision is planned very well. For instance, there are extra mathematics lessons to compensate for any time 'lost' to the subject through the withdrawal of pupils for language support.

66. Pupils in the primary classes make very good progress overall in lessons. Occasionally, progress is excellent, reflecting the excellent quality of teaching. There is a very good emphasis on promoting communication and language, because the work of speech therapists is such a fundamental part of planning and support in lessons. This leads to pupils using the language of number well when discussing their work. Teachers have developed their own methods of effectively promoting numeracy. They have taken very good account of the National Numeracy Strategy to improve methods further and this has raised standards of teaching and learning. Teachers' highly skilled approach was evident in a lesson about using number skills to solve problems. The teacher used an exciting and enthusiastic approach to motivate them. Because there is such effective collaboration between staff, the learning support assistant led a group of pupils who needed to gain more confidence in number order. The task flowed from the literacy lesson about Little Red Riding Hood. This enabled pupils to grasp the idea quickly, engaging with the task to become 'problem solvers'. Each one concentrated very hard, thinking about numbers up to ten, counting forwards and backwards to try to place stepping stones over a river to help the character to cross safely. Their perseverance was outstanding, counting steps and justifying their choices, making excellent progress in understanding numeracy and using language to explain their findings.

67. Older pupils, in Years 7 to 9, continue to make very good progress, building on their good grounding in earlier years. The highly effective liaison with speech therapists means they can overcome their difficulties to explain what they are doing, gaining confidence in using the correct language. In one very effective lesson, pupils considered a range of events to say if they were possible or impossible. They made very good progress and by the end of the

lesson, through effective guidance they judged that a person who did not buy a ticket might win the National Lottery. They understood that a friend might buy the person a ticket, concluding that the event was unlikely rather than impossible.

68. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have very good opportunities to obtain accreditation up to and including GCSE level. This reflects the very high expectations of staff for pupils to learn numeracy and develop skills in independent working. Pupils completed a good range of tasks in one lesson, dividing decimals and using formulae to calculate missing dimensions in geometrical drawings to achieve very well. A significant factor in promoting pupils' learning was the way that staff helped pupils to think about how they solved the problem. This helped them to remember their methods and to use them with more independence to solve similar problems.
69. The older pupils who need more support with numeracy receive this very effectively in the class for the oldest pupils with autism. They make excellent progress on occasions. The tasks they follow are very suitable because they are relevant to pupils' future needs. They work diligently, following practical tasks such as weighing quantities of ingredients for cooking. Pupils applied this knowledge very effectively when faced with a challenge to combine ingredients to make shortbread in a food technology lesson. When they visited a supermarket, they demonstrated excellent achievement in budgeting to purchase their food and snack, because they received excellent support and encouragement from staff. This was highly effective in preparing pupils to use their numeracy skills beyond the school.
70. Although there were few occasions during the week that pupils used the computers in their classrooms to promote numeracy, there are good opportunities for pupils to receive a weekly lesson in the computer room. This enables pupils for instance to investigate patterns or present their work in graphs. Several subjects provide opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills. For instance in a science lesson, Year 11 pupils confidently measured and recorded volts and amps when they investigated electricity. Many lessons in the computer room provide very good opportunities for pupils throughout the school to use their number skills, such as adding data to tables and using formulae, for instance to total columns of money. The provision of homework is good. Teachers liaise well with staff in the residential houses, providing equipment such as pairs of compasses for each house so that staff can issue these if they are required.
71. The co-ordinator manages the subject very well and engenders a high level of commitment to provide effective opportunities to promote pupils' numeracy skills. This includes staff providing extra opportunities for pupils to learn at the twice-weekly lunchtime mathematics clubs. The school is outward looking to share expertise. Staff meet with those from other schools and bring in good practice – for instance, attending training courses relating to pupils who have specific difficulties understanding number. They then produce guidance sheets for other staff members to follow. They also share their expertise with other schools, in order to help to raise

standards of assistance for pupils who find the language of examination papers difficult.

SCIENCE

72. Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well, because the quality of teaching is very good. Over half of those entered for GCSE single science attain grades A to C. Improvements in science since the last inspection report are good. Higher quality teaching across the school is now helping pupils to make faster progress and achieve higher standards.
73. Primary aged pupils can investigate whether tinfoil conducts electricity; they know the names of the main organs of the body; and have a good understanding how animals are adapted to live in cold or hot climates. Pupils with autism make excellent progress learning about changes in chocolate when it is heated and cooled. Pupils have such a good understanding of food chains that they can spot deliberate mistakes. Very good access to specialist laboratory facilities enables secondary aged pupils to make very good progress using bunsen burners. Year 8 pupils, for example, can safely test foods for sugar. Pupils with autism in Year 7 and Year 8 also do practical work. They test foods for starch, using pipettes with meticulous care.
74. In Years 10 and 11, pupils continue to extend their scientific knowledge and vocabulary. Pupils in a lower attaining Year 10 group, for example, are confidently using the scientific names for three different enzymes and they understand the role of these chemicals in digestion. Year 11 pupils progress to setting up parallel circuits with voltmeters to find and record relationships between voltage and numbers of bulbs in the circuit. Through GCSE coursework, pupils hone their investigation skills. They make most progress in planning and setting up their experiments, collecting data and recording results. It is the enquiry skills of analysis and evaluation, in investigations of the rates of reactions with hydrochloric acid, for example, which pupils across the attainment range find more difficult and where their achievements are more modest.
75. There is an excellent emphasis on developing communication and literacy skills in primary and secondary science which reflects the school's overall aim for the curriculum. Pupils learn to listen, ask questions, and speak to their peers through role play, for example, in a Year 6 lesson on learning to say 'No' if offered harmful substances. Pupils read texts in order to find information and learn how to highlight key scientific words. They use the computer to research – for example, in a Year 10 class investigating the process of digestion. Through GCSE course work, pupils learn to put all their literacy skills into practice through preparation and presentation of scientific investigations. They develop their numeracy skills by presenting information in graphical form, and by reading scales on scientific equipment. Pupils use their information and communication technology skills to find information and to word process their work. Progress in the use of these skills is not as good

as progress in literacy and numeracy because fewer opportunities to use computers are presented in science lessons.

76. With almost all the teaching very good, and occasionally excellent, there are many teaching strengths. The enormous respect that staff show to pupils and the praise they give for their efforts leads to excellent relationships in lessons and very productive use of time. There is an excellent partnership between teachers, speech and language therapists and classroom assistants which promotes access to activities, development of literacy skills in science settings, and excellent role models for pupils to develop their personal, social and communication skills. The teaching of pupils with autism and of hearing impaired pupils is especially effective because methods are very carefully matched to learning needs, giving these pupils the same very good access to practical work as their peers. The planning of lessons, and the calm, quiet, and secure management of pupils, especially in the laboratories, are especially effective in enabling pupils to develop a full range of enquiry and practical skills. These opportunities for practical work, individually and in pairs, are motivating and develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Doing practical work promotes very high standards of safe, mature behaviour. Specialist teaching in the secondary school guides pupils to do very well in GCSE examinations. The chance to gain public recognition for their achievements, like their peers in mainstream schools, is especially motivating.
77. The science department is very well led and managed on the secondary site and links with the primary department are improving. The range and availability of resources for primary aged pupils need to be improved.

ART AND DESIGN

78. Pupils' achievements, and the progress they make, are good, regardless of their ability, because teaching is good. This is the same as at the time of the last inspection.
79. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have been making satisfactory progress in lessons taught by their class teachers. However, there is a new co-ordinator who is teaching art as a specialist subject, and pupils are now learning well. These younger pupils have learned to use paints, charcoal and chalk in a variety of ways in their lessons; painting, drawing and sketching from life such things as shells, portraits and other people. They have made collages of fish, for instance, and have made smudged pictures with pastel colours.
80. The older pupils, up to Year 9, are making good progress because they have had specialist teaching for some time. They have experimented with different media, designs and patterns. They have sketched, for instance, stained glass windows, insects, sweets, fruit and their classmates. The more able pupils have drawn very careful pictures, of a harbour with yachts and a lighthouse, for example, in good perspective, and they have drawn and painted pictures in the style of Lowry and Hockney, as well as having made wall hangings in the style of Frank Stella.

81. In working towards the GCSE accreditation, pupils' progress is very good. The more able pupils have produced some very good outcomes, including sequences of paintings like cartoons, Chinese figures, and surreal and abstract pictures. They have used a range of materials, separately, and in different mixtures, including plaster on paper, crepe and tissue paper and highly reflective coloured paper, as well as glitter, and photographs that have been extended to make much larger pictures. Pupils have also produced collages of different materials to make, for instance, a picture of a living room as part of a bigger project, and have made mosaics, and experimented with differently textured finishes and surfaces. There is little three-dimensional work to be seen in any part of the school, and this is a shortcoming in the curriculum, which would otherwise be good.
82. Lessons are well planned and prepared, and the teacher explains carefully what is expected. Sometimes the activities are too difficult or complex for the least able pupils to be able to concentrate on for extended periods, particularly in the middle age groups of the school. The teacher brings the class together well to demonstrate new points during the lessons, and to explain the next step. Relationships in art lessons are positive, in the main, although a small minority of pupils do not always pay attention or behave well when the teaching becomes a little slow or when the activities are complicated. Good use is made of the support assistant in art lessons, with good help given to the less able pupils, or those with behavioural difficulties. In one good lesson, Year 7 pupils were learning how to draw from their feelings, as well as their close observations of an object. The teacher had arranged a lighted candelabra in a darkened room, and oriental music played in the background. Pupils entered in a hushed atmosphere, and were able to draw what they saw in silent concentration for twenty minutes, before going on to making a 'mandala' pattern for the cover of their art books. However, the change of activity was too abrupt, and not well related to the first part of the lesson, which had been very spiritual in its delivery, and could valuably have been extended in the same tone for the whole lesson.
83. The leadership and management of art are good. The new co-ordinator has already drawn up a good plan of what is needed in the subject, including the use of computers, which are not used at all at the moment. The art room is good, with an entrance area for display, storage and individual work, but it is up a flight of stairs, and it is the access route to another class.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84. Pupils make very good progress in lessons and achieve very well by the time they leave school. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is very good overall. This, together with the improvements to accommodation, represents very good progress since the previous inspection.
85. The youngest pupils make very good progress designing and making models, using a good range of materials. There is usually a close link between the

class topic and the assignments they undertake. For instance, when pupils make models of the Loch Ness monster they include details from their discussions in literacy lessons. Teachers understand pupils' needs very well. This is evident in the way that they provide additional guidance for pupils to learn to cut and stick, because they know many pupils have difficulty handling materials. Pupils make very good progress in both designing and making. They succeeded very well in a lesson to follow up work in their literacy lesson about weather stations. Pupils responded very well to the effective use of a fan to represent the wind to test the effect on different materials. Staff asked pupils questions skilfully and this guided them to make a choice between materials to show the effect of the wind most effectively. Pupils recorded their work well, evaluating and discussing designs to make their models better. The effective planning and support matched to pupils' ability ensured that they gained a very good understanding of the need to design and evaluate before they made their final product.

86. In Years 7 to 9, pupils continue to make very good progress designing and making. Through lessons to design yachts they have made very good progress understanding the need to test their designs fairly. In a lesson to design and test sails, they followed the very good staff demonstration and worked carefully, ensuring that their models for the hull were accurate.
87. The oldest pupils make very good progress working towards accreditation up to GCSE level. Pupils worked diligently in a lesson to design wooden containers. Their designs were neat and the products carefully made. They improved their standard because staff gave constant evaluation of their performance and encouraged them to maintain a high standard in measuring and making. Higher achieving pupils receive good opportunities to progress towards more advanced design. They design a wooden container but produce a more detailed evaluation of their work. For instance, one pupil is achieving very well, designing portable storage for shoe cleaning materials with a cleaning platform as the lid.
88. Pupils have the opportunity to opt to study for accreditation in food technology. For example, they design a range of 'energy biscuits' and evaluate them for taste and judge the popularity through a survey. They make very good progress understanding that they can utilise the results of their survey to improve the final product. Staff provide very effective guidance so that pupils work with independence and this helps them to make considered choices about which product is the best. The department is creating a collection of international recipes to help people who have difficulty following the usual language of recipes. The oldest pupils, with autism, made very effective use of the recipes in a lesson to challenge them to make shortbread with as little adult help as possible. This worked very well because the highly skilled staff intervened subtly to guide pupils only when it was necessary. Consequently, pupils gained in self-esteem as they successfully completed their assignment.

89. The co-ordinator has had a significant impact on standards in the subject. Computers are used effectively to support pupils' designing skills. Although the specialist teacher and technicians have made significant improvements to accommodation, there are still shortcomings. The room is too small to install all the equipment required to provide a wider range of accredited tasks. There are good links with a local school to provide access to some of the facilities not available on site.

GEOGRAPHY

90. Pupils make good progress and achieve well, as a result of good quality teaching. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Because of the way that geography is planned, it was only possible to observe two lessons. Geography is taught to all pupils up to Year 9 and to the class of oldest pupils with autistic spectrum disorders.
91. Pupils in the primary classes understand the difference between large and small settlements. They build on their early work as they identify buildings in the community such as stations, hospitals and shops and become better able to distinguish between farmland and built up areas. Their increasing ability to read simple maps supports all their learning. They learn to draw plans of a garden and use colour to identify features such as rivers, roads, built up areas and farmland on an Ordnance Survey map. Teachers plan lessons carefully and choose activities well. This ensures that they work with effort and maintain their interest for what are lengthy lessons. For example, they enjoyed the variety of activities presented in a lesson about 'Where we live' and showed significant excitement when role-playing how they travelled from home to school. One pupil correctly insisted that the driver of the taxi should sit in front on the right while another decided that the aeroplane needed a stewardess. Pupils performed their roles with accuracy and confidence.
92. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 continue to make good progress as they learn about another country through plotting the location of the major cities in India and link their previous work on the rain cycle to the monsoon and its effect upon people's lives. Their work on this topic, which involved the study of a Sikh wedding, extended their cultural awareness. More detailed work is carried out on settlement as pupils increase their knowledge of different types of houses such as terraces, detached and semi-detached dwellings. They apply their map work to the interpretation of road maps to plot routes, showing an understanding of scale. By the age of 14, they use geographical terms correctly and use them when investigating similarities and differences between physical and human features of different localities. The oldest pupils with autistic spectrum disorder enjoyed their lesson about Spain. The teacher's careful selection of different maps, atlases and a globe ensured that they were all able to find Spain and its capital. Her rotation of students through a carefully selected variety of activities made sure that they all had an opportunity to learn about the physical features of Spain, make choices about whether they would have a beach or country holiday and give some thought to costs. They all had an opportunity to use computers to search for additional information about Spain, enhancing their information and communication technology skills.
93. Overall, planning in geography is satisfactory. However, there continues to be a need to appoint a co-ordinator who will oversee planning and provide support for non-specialist teachers.

HISTORY

94. Pupils' achievements and the progress that they make are good, in line with the quality of teaching. Standards are more consistent now and this represents a satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. The subject is timetabled for pupils up to Year 9 and is offered as one of the options for those up to Year 11, who may study for a Certificate of Achievement in the subject. Pupils make equally good progress, regardless of their particular special educational needs.
95. Younger pupils make progress in their understanding of times past and chronology through investigating toys from long ago, a child's life in Victorian times and a study of the Romans mining for lead in Matlock. Pupils recalled their visit to Matlock with clarity and excitement. The teacher's imaginative use of a 'time machine' to take pupils back to a Roman banquet had pupils demonstrate great interest in how the Romans eat and generated very good discussion about the role of slaves. The enthusiasm with which support staff also played their roles contributed significantly to the success of this lesson. The history of Egypt provides pupils with opportunities to learn about the past of another country and they look in detail at Egyptian burial customs. Teachers plan lessons well, provide an interesting variety of activities to promote learning and consistently check on the pupils' recall of previous lessons.
96. Pupils continue to make progress in Years 7 to 9. By the time they are in Year 9, they demonstrate a significantly better understanding of the concept of time and they clearly distinguish between historical fact and historical stories and myths. They have an understanding of how changes over time can occur through their study of industrial change and can empathise with people from the past such as when they appreciated why cottage based weavers objected to the development of the flying shuttle and spinning jenny. Teachers use role play very effectively to promote the pupils' learning. The discussions, which are an essential element of this approach, show that pupils have a very good understanding of quite complex historical issues. A well planned and exciting lesson about the reasons for the Battle of Hastings had pupils not only offer very good explanations but also ask very pertinent questions. This lesson showed how well teachers stress the need for judgements to be based upon good evidence – such as the use of the Bayeux Tapestry for work on the Norman period.
97. The satisfactory quality of planning in history that was identified in the last inspection has been sustained. However, there continues to be a need to appoint a co-ordinator who will maintain an overview of planning and provide support for non-specialist teachers. Information and communication technology is under-used in history and the school recognises the need to purchase suitable programs.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

98. Throughout the school, pupils make very good progress in learning how to use computers and related equipment. Their achievements are very good in specific lessons in which information technology skills are taught. This is a good improvement on the situation at the time of the last inspection, when overall progress was considered to be satisfactory.
99. Pupils, including those with needs such as autism, learn very well in computer-based lessons. They make a very good start in their early years in the school, especially in key areas such as finding the way round the keyboard features, the menus, how to use the mouse, and in writing in a variety of styles, fonts and colours. As pupils move through the upper school, their progress continues to be very good in specific computing lessons that are often aimed at using word-processors, databases and spreadsheets. Towards the top of the school, they become skilled in making posters and newsletters, and they competently produce very good pages of pictures and text, perhaps using a digital camera, and adding borders and bright titles, with an attractive layout. The more able pupils connect with the Internet, and gain information from it for their projects. Some pupils, for instance, are learning about organisations 'with principles', such as Oxfam, Greenpeace or the Red Cross, and are making a multi-media presentation of several pages of pictures and text, in order to give a talk to the other members of the class. Pupils also learn to send emails to each other, and they know how to hold a video conference, with cameras connected to the computers, so that they can talk to their parents, for example. Many pupils gain passes in external courses such as Certificate of Achievement and GNVQ Foundation level.
100. The teaching is very good, and is sometimes excellent. Lessons are very well prepared and organised. The specialist teacher knows the subject and the pupils very well, and has developed a very positive rapport with the pupils. Because he is so enthusiastic, pupils are keen and eager; they enjoy lessons and learn very willingly. He expects pupils to try their best and to concentrate fully, in return giving them the best possible attention, guidance, encouragement and support, frequently with the valuable aid of a support assistant and/or a speech and language therapist. In one excellent lesson, for example, with the younger pupils, the teacher had prepared three different levels of work – about different kinds of vehicles – for the different abilities of the pupils. He explained clearly what the lesson was about and showed the pupils how to change the colour of words on the screen, to add more words, correct spellings, highlight sections of the print and how to move them round. The teacher's energy, well-directed questions and prompts, and the assistance of two other staff, helped to keep a group of very distractible pupils concentrating very well for over half an hour. The pupils had a computer each, but the screens are rather high for the smaller pupils to be able to see easily from the keyboard to the screen. All other lessons, with the older pupils in school, are of the same energetic and enthusiastic style. The very well motivated pupils are learning very well, with a computer each, good programs and very well prepared activities, in lessons that are lively and varied.

101. The subject is led and managed well by a co-ordinator who is not teaching information technology this year. He has very good knowledge of the subject, and is reorganising the whole of the computer arrangements throughout the school, for the pupils, the teaching and therapy staff, and the office staff. Whilst the overall progress that pupils make has improved considerably since the last inspection, there are still two particular areas for development. Firstly, many subjects, such as art and religious education, do not make satisfactory use of computers to enrich learning, or to extend the use of information technology skills. A few subjects, however, such as mathematics, English, and personal, social and health education make some effective use of computers. Secondly, pupils are not taught any control technology, which is a part of the curriculum for this subject. The introduction of both aspects would raise the quality of the taught curriculum from satisfactory to good. Nevertheless, a great deal has been accomplished in all other aspects of the subject in the past five years. The resources have been built up very well and are now good, lacking mainly the kind of programs that are valuable for gaining information in individual subjects such as history, geography or science. The accommodation is also now good, with three suites of computers, most of which are good and new themselves, and they are currently being fully linked together.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

102. French is not offered on the school curriculum. However, there is a weekly lunchtime club. This is a valuable activity, which extends pupils' conversational French and teaches them about many aspects of French culture. This year, French was offered as an option for pupils in Years 10 and 11, but none wished to take it up.

MUSIC

103. Pupils' achievement and progress are very good in Years 3 to 6 and they are excellent in Years 7 to 9. Whilst there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement of the pupils' progress overall in Years 10 and 11, some excellent performance and participation in music was observed. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when progress in music was described as satisfactory or better. The music co-ordinator and a learning support assistant, who is also a skilled music instructor, teach all music in the school. Pupils benefit greatly from their specialist knowledge of the subject. The quality of teaching is consistently very good and at times is excellent, especially in singing, composing and improvising with tuned and untuned instruments. Very good links with a mainstream school provide opportunities for Year 10 and 11 pupils to follow GCSE courses.

104. The teacher takes advantage of every opportunity to promote learning. For example, pupils in Year 3 have a good and growing knowledge of the names and musical qualities of a wide range of percussion instruments. In one lesson, the pupils had chosen an instrument each, named it correctly and made sounds of their own choice with it. One pupil chose to bring cymbals together very quietly, whereas others had made loud clashing noises with them. The teacher used this opportunity very well to point out to the whole class that they had now learnt from this a range of sounds cymbals could offer. Later in the same lesson, there were very good examples of musical activities being used by the teacher to reinforce the pupils' learning in other subjects. Pupils sang songs such as 'Antonio' and 'Five White Teeth', with great enjoyment. This allowed the teacher to test very effectively their understanding of the correct sequence of the days of the week, the different emotions of being happy or sad, how they should look after their teeth and counting in order from one to five.
105. In Years 7 and 8, pupils are developing their composing skills and learning how music can be used to create sound images. For example, in a lesson in Year 7, the teacher used a poem about the wind very successfully to stimulate the pupils' imagination and to introduce them to the task of composing. Having read the poem aloud to them, the teacher told the pupils 'You're going to be composers'. They were then each allocated various tuned and untuned instruments, including bead-shakers, drums, cymbals and pre-programmed sounds of thunder, rain and birdsong on electronic keyboards. With the teacher playing the piano and the learning support assistant taking the role of conductor, the pupils then improvised a piece of music descriptive of rain building up to a storm and then subsiding again to calm. The teacher was very positive in praise of the pupils' achievements and skilfully linked the activity to musical history by comparing what the pupils had done to the inspiration the composer Vivaldi had drawn from the weather. Effective use is made of information and communication technology. In one lesson, in Year 8, the teacher made very good use of specialist computer software to help pupils in turn to enter and save for themselves in standard notation the tunes they had composed.
106. In Year 11, the teacher set high expectations of good performance from pupils with more complex needs and they responded very well. The pupils chose to sing 'When the Going gets Tough' by Boyzone. With lyrics copied by the teacher beforehand, they sang in harmony to the tune as it was played on CD. The teacher led the singing, putting her own vocal skills to very effective use and pointing out to pupils as necessary how heightened posture could aid their own voice production. Building on their enthusiasm for this task, the teacher then initiated a session of improvised percussion in which all took part. While the pupils beat rhythms on various plastic drums and containers in time to the teacher's lead, the two learning support assistants present played drums and tom-toms to maintain pace and variety. Although not all the pupils found it easy to keep the beat all the time, they were all engaged in this task. Partway through, one pupil varied his contribution by shaking maracas instead, for which he sought the teacher's approval and which was given in a

very positive and encouraging manner. Altogether the lesson offered the pupils a musically rich and varied set of experiences. By being sensitive to the pupils' wide spread of ability, the teacher created a very positive and truly inclusive atmosphere within the classroom and was able to extend their learning well by adapting modern musical idioms familiar to them.

107. Music is very well led and managed throughout the school. Music makes a very significant contribution to pupils' social development and cultural awareness through the wide-ranging programme of activities offered throughout the school. For example, many pupils have individual tuition in instruments such as the piano, oboe, guitar, bass guitar and drums. Other opportunities for performing include the school's annual Open Day and Christmas Carol Service, where a large number of pupils take part with confidence and enjoyment and achieve high standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

108. Since the previous inspection, physical education has made satisfactory improvement and maintained its high standards. Pupils achieve well and make good, sometimes very good, progress across the school. They gain a range of accreditation, across a very wide range of activities. The teaching is never less than good and is often very good. Pupils of all ages and special educational needs are improving their sense of direction, body awareness, balance and concentration span, as well as the ability to relate to staff and peers during lessons and games. The co-ordinator has worked hard to improve some of the facilities available, such as the climbing wall, fitness room and an adventure playground.
109. In the primary aged classes, pupils change promptly for lessons, listen carefully to instructions and are aware of safety requirements in lessons. They identify and use various parts of their body to stretch and balance, play team games and show an understanding and acceptance of simple rules. They throw, catch and bounce different size balls, and those with motor difficulties persevere and improve their performance. Lessons are well planned, so no time is wasted. More able pupils transfer their ball skills into a game of football, passing, receiving a ball on the move and shooting for goal. Good sportsmanship was evident during a hard fought game. The more skilled players consistently encourage their less skilled team-mates.
110. During Years 7 to 9, pupils learn new skills such as handling and gripping a hockey stick, turning the stick and hitting the ball. Pupils pass and receive standing still, then advance to passing and receiving on the move. These skills are then put into a game situation under simple rules. Because of the very good relationships staff have with pupils, pupils accept the umpire's decisions even when they feel hard done by. Very good team-work between the teacher and the learning support assistant is a strength of the subject. Pupils are introduced to rugby skills. Initially they have difficulty with the strange shaped ball. But with concentration and perseverance and skilled teaching, they pass and receive a ball in the standing position, and progress

to running, passing, receiving and touching down the ball with downward pressure to score a try.

111. The older pupils build on previous knowledge and skills to play hockey to a reasonable standard. New skills are introduced, such as the push shot and pass. Staff emphasise safety at all times and ensure that the sticks are always handled carefully. The teacher is very skilled at questioning pupils. He gives them just that little bit of extra time to allow them to answer, then challenges the pupils to extend their answers. This works well and increases pupils' listening and speaking skills. The oldest pupils warm up carefully and run a cross-country run prepared in advance by the teacher. During this run they each take turns to lead the group. Each pupil has leadership tasks to complete. This is good and builds up pupils' social and moral development. However, when pupils return from this exhausting, demanding run, there are not appropriate facilities for them to use, such as changing rooms and showers. These older pupils use the fitness room well. They use equipment sensibly and safely. They set themselves personal targets to achieve and better, recording their performances and trying to improve each time. They show a good understanding of exercise and which machines to use to develop different parts of the body. During these sessions, staff stress health and safety aspects in order to ensure that no pupil over-extends or injures themselves through over-enthusiasm or carelessness. Pupils build up self-awareness and co-operative skills through their swimming. They improve their stamina and learn different strokes. They tow buoyancy aids as bodies, preparing for life saving skills. They increase their overall confidence as well as water confidence during these sessions, because staff make good use of praise and encouragement.
112. The subject is well led and managed. The curriculum is well planned to cover a good range of activities, which ensures that each pupil develops his or her skills to the full. This is enhanced by the after school activities offered to pupils, such as Kwik cricket, cricket, tennis, rugby, volleyball, riding and many others. Visitors are invited into school, such as lawn tennis coaches and canoe clubs, and the school takes part in inter-school football matches with other schools. There are good links with a mainstream secondary school. Physical education makes a positive contribution to pupils' social and moral development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

113. Pupils' progress and achievements are satisfactory overall. In Years 3 to 6 and Years 10 and 11 standards are satisfactory and they are good in Years 7 to 9. This is as a result of satisfactory and, on occasions, good teaching and is broadly the same as at the time of the previous inspection.
114. A scrutiny of teachers' plans and work recently completed by pupils shows that primary aged pupils have developed a satisfactory knowledge of key aspects of religion in the Christian tradition. For example, they have learnt some of the stories from the Old Testament (such as Ruth and Naomi, Jonah

and the whale and Samson) and about major events in the life of Jesus, including the Christmas story, the parable of the Good Samaritan, the Temptation and the Easter story.

115. In the best lessons, pupils learn more effectively because of the teacher's ability to direct their enthusiasm and interest appropriately. At the start of a lesson in Year 7 about the story of Moses, a pupil had brought his own illustrated Bible to show the teacher and the class. The teacher used this opportunity well, encouraging the pupil to show the class his pictures of Moses and tell the others which parts of the story they illustrated. This not only helped the pupil himself to speak confidently about the subject matter but also helped all the pupils to recall their prior knowledge from a previous lesson. The teacher continued the lesson by telling the story of Moses' flight from Egypt and his encounter with the burning bush in her own words, using language appropriate to the pupils' age and ability. She paused at regular intervals, using questioning well to check the pupils' understanding. Their answers showed that they were attentive and could give reasoned explanations relating to what they had heard. For example, the teacher asked 'Why didn't the King of Egypt want Moses to lead the Israelites away?' and a pupil replied 'Because he'd have no-one left to build his pyramids.'
116. Good teaching helps older pupils to begin to develop an understanding of the symbolic meaning of stories from the Bible. In a Year 9 lesson, for instance, the teacher was well supported by the visiting local vicar, who assisted with introducing pupils to thinking about Old Testament stories on a number of different levels. Beginning with the story of Noah's Ark, pupils knew that not everyone believed the story of the flood was factual but understood that people living at the time would have thought the event affected their whole world. Through carefully structured story-telling, questioning and discussion, the teacher helped them to understand that by telling a 'really good story' messages about God are more likely to be accepted. The pupils then talked about the story of David and Goliath. Whilst they were aware that such an event could have happened, they also learnt that David could be a symbolic representation of Israel.
117. In Year 10, lessons focus on moral issues, helping pupils to learn about making important choices and being able to justify a point of view. In one lesson, the teacher asked pupils to think how they would respond to a situation in which two girls who are friends are approached by a new girl in the class to join in what they are doing. The pupils were able to put forward a number of different possible responses, which the teacher praised for their variety. As they discussed the options, they used language well and confidently: for example, 'Minimise conversation and keep a low profile', 'Make an arrangement to see her another time'. The teacher built on this good beginning, to talk with the pupils about another difficult situation when they witness possible shoplifting by an old lady, and used well-phrased questions to force the pupils to re-examine their thinking. While one pupil's first reaction was to challenge her by asking 'Are you going to buy that?', the teacher asked the class 'Are there more tactful ways of asking the old lady if she knows what

she has done?’ From this, one pupil proposed ‘Do you realise that ...?’ as a more suitable opening for speaking to her.

118. There is no designated co-ordinator at present and no current policy statement for the subject, giving individual teachers a lack of clear direction for planning schemes of work and reviewing pupils’ progress. This leads to inconsistency from one year-group to the next in approaches to teaching. Computers are used insufficiently to support pupils’ learning. The school has indicated its intention to adopt the local Agreed Syllabus as a framework for future teaching and this would be a very helpful step towards raising teachers’ awareness of good practice.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

119. Pupils make very good progress through the personal, social and health education curriculum because provision for this subject is very good. They develop a very broad range of personal, social and life skills. They achieve a good knowledge of healthy diets and healthy living, personal hygiene, first aid, sex and drugs education, work experience and careers awareness.
120. In the primary part of the school, pupils learn to take turns, role-play, understand the importance of sharing and fair play, and when to say ‘No’. Through interesting games and use of the computer, primary pupils with autism learn a similar range of skills. They also learn to acknowledge the presence of their classmates and recognise each other’s facial features. In the secondary school pupils explore a very wide range of feelings and emotions, and learn to ask each other questions. Through talking and writing tasks they express their opinions about, for example, bullying. Their social development advances as they progress through the secondary school, by learning to lead and be members of a team, and to conduct a conversation. They learn how to keep safe on the roads and in the swimming pool. Older pupils become more aware of the situations that generate a range of emotions. They prepare talks on racism, and understand that not everyone will agree with the opinions they hold. By the age of 16, pupils have a good range of knowledge about alcohol and drug abuse, pregnancy, contraception, racism and friendships; knowledge which contributes very well to their personal, social and moral development.
121. From the age of 15, pupils learn vocational skills through their very effective careers education and guidance programme and work experience opportunities. A very wide range of employers support the school and they are very well informed about the learning needs of students prior to placement. Students have placements in, for example, the local police force, a landscape architect office, a nursery and a bank. They work on a farm, do catering, construction and shop work, helping in a care home and with Royal Mail, and many more. They achieve very well.

122. The speech and language therapists, who are very effective in this role, lead most of the teaching. Their teaching is expressive and imaginative and their questions and methods are carefully tailored to meet learning needs. They provide a very appropriate emphasis on communication, personal and social skills; an excellent reflection of the school's commitment to these areas as the main priority for the school curriculum. The partnerships between therapists, teachers and classroom assistants are excellent, providing pupils with superb role models for the development of their own social skills. Lesson plans are closely matched to the termly scheme of work, and to the school's longer term plans, making sure that pupils' learning builds steadily on what they already know, understand and can do. Staff have very good knowledge of pupils' individual learning and behavioural needs; and the interesting, relevant and age appropriate activities they prepare successfully motivate pupils. Careful planning, very good methods and knowledge of the pupils form the basis for the very secure management of pupils in lessons, and the high standards of discipline achieved. Together, these features mean that pupils make equally good progress, whatever their particular difficulties.
123. The co-ordination of personal and social development is very effective, securing opportunities for pupils to make very good progress as they move through the primary and secondary phases and on to post-16. Provision for personal, social and health education has improved well since the last inspection report with very high quality teaching now a consistent feature across the school. The provision of sufficient books for pupils, however, continues to be a weakness, as reported last time. There are excellent examples of the use of video to record progress. There are not enough video cameras, however, for this highly effective technique to be used consistently across the school.

POST-16 EDUCATION

124. The post-16 provision is very good. It offers a relevant and flexible education and care curriculum that meets the needs of a wide range of students, including those with speech and language difficulties, those for whom English is a second language and those with autistic spectrum disorders. Students achieve very well and make very good progress overall. This is as a result of teaching that is frequently good and very good, and occasionally excellent. Teachers and speech and language therapists have very detailed knowledge of each student's difficulties and exploit learning opportunities with great care and skill. The management of students' behaviour is astute, patient, consistent and effective. By the time students leave school their knowledge and skills provide a very good base for them to continue to progress towards independence.
125. The curriculum is made up of a variety of components. All students access speech and language therapy, personal and social development, vocational studies, work experience, careers education and a college placement. However, there is a significant and distinctive change of emphasis when

pupils enter the post-16 facility. The application of the key skills of communication, literacy, numeracy and information technology is geared to real life and work situations. Communication, speech and language development and personal and social skills are a major component within the curriculum and the personal, social and health education course is delivered by speech and language therapists. A key feature of the provision is the excellent quality of the teamwork of staff – teachers, therapists, care staff and special support assistants – working in partnership with the students. Through the tutorial system, action plans are devised which identify individual needs and assesses how well these are being addressed.

126. In English, less able students make good progress in consolidating the communication skills of listening, talking and writing. For example, in one group, some students with autistic spectrum disorders speak, read and write at a reasonably fluent level, but their comprehension is poor. Nevertheless, through firm and shrewd management, they apply themselves to a well-planned written task using computers. They also write postcards home and stamp and post them, demonstrating an awareness and understanding of the different purposes of writing. Assessments in all subjects are used very effectively to identify where students need extra help. As a result, numeracy lessons during the inspection focused on long multiplication. In one very good lesson, students learned a new method. From being very lacking in confidence, they gained new skills and were amazed and pleased. One student, previously insecure, spotted another's mistake and got up and demonstrated on the board. The temporary teacher had established very positive relationships with students, who responded very well to her encouragement.
127. In a leisure and tourism session, students developed their appreciation of why people go on holiday. Again, because relationships were so good, they were confident to take part in a discussion to generate ideas. Skilled questioning enabled them to extend their answers, practising their communication skills. This led them into independent work as they surveyed other people's leisure activities. Personal, social and health education continues to be a strong feature of the curriculum. In an excellent lesson, students increased their knowledge of the changes that occur in the body through ageing. They took part in a very well organised game of 'Call my Bluff', plotting vocabulary such as 'menopause', 'puberty' and 'geriatric' on a time line. The staff were positive and encouraging, which resulted in students volunteering answers with confidence. In the accredited life skills course, students learn, for example, how to plan a meal, travel to the shops, buy the ingredients, and cook the meal. They learn how to use facilities in the community like the library, supermarkets and restaurants. They respond particularly well to the more relaxed style of many lessons – for example, in information and communication technology – which acknowledges that they are young adults. In careers education, an interesting talk and demonstration by a tree surgeon, reinforced key concepts such as health and safety at work and that different people have different aptitudes, skills and preferences. Students' mature and positive attitudes to their work contribute to their very good learning.

128. Through work experience, students have the opportunity for placements within the school, in sheltered work or at places like supermarkets, the police station, garages, and parks department. Links with local colleges allow for inclusion opportunities and access to a wider range of accredited courses such as joinery, plumbing, painting, decorating, information processing, typing and brickwork, leading to vocational qualifications. More able pupils are placed on appropriate academic courses.
129. The separate residential provision for post-16 students is very good. There are more than adequate staff on duty and organisation and management are carried out effectively. The accommodation is very good, clean, warm and comfortable. It provides fully for the varying needs of the age, gender and ability range served. Good conditions are provided within which individual study can be undertaken. The relationship between school and the residential element is a close one and ensures that approaches to managing students are consistent. A very good range of opportunities is provided for students, both in the school setting and in the community, to develop leisure and recreational skills and gain social and cultural knowledge and experience. Such opportunities include line dancing, singing, karate, keep fit and swimming. Essential safeguards are in place in relation to student care, welfare, health and safety matters. Links with parents and carers are maintained and encouraged. Students have their own student forum to voice any ideas and concerns and are increasingly encouraged to develop independence within the residential setting in preparation for life after school. Areas for development should include consideration of the setting up of an independence flat at Cavendish House and the provision of more reading material (newspapers and magazines) to encourage students to read for pleasure and information, in their free time.
130. The post-16 provision is well led by an experienced and committed teacher and there have been a number of significant improvements since the previous inspection. These include an improvement in teaching and learning; more effective assessment procedures including joint target setting with students; a wider range of work experience opportunities and the new core curriculum. In addition, students have splendid new classroom accommodation including a well-equipped computer suite. There is a need to clarify teachers' responsibilities for subjects and courses, and to improve the resources for numeracy and literacy including the library.