

INSPECTION REPORT

WILLIAM BAXTER SCHOOL

Hednesford

Cannock

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124508

Head teacher: Mrs C M Allsop

Reporting inspector: Mr M H Whitaker
1424

Dates of inspection: 7 – 11 February 2000

Inspection number: 190922

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 – 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Stanley Road Hednesford Staffordshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Harrison
Date of previous inspection:	November 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
M Whitaker	Registered inspector	Physical education	What sort of school is it
			The school's results and achievements
			How well are pupils taught
			Leadership and management
			Efficiency
R Mothersdale	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Attendance
			Monitoring of personal development and attendance
			Personal support and guidance
			Welfare, health and safety, child protection
			Partnership with parents
P Hall	Team inspector	English as a second language	Staffing
		Science	
		Information technology	
P Isherwood	Team inspector	Mathematics	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
		Religious education	
P Clark	Team inspector	English	
		Modern foreign language	
N Buckingham	Team inspector	History	Resources
		Geography	Accommodation
M Wright	Team inspector	Art	Curriculum
		Design and technology	Links with the community
		Music	Assessment and monitoring
		Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The William Baxter School is a maintained special school for pupils aged 5 to 16 years who have moderate learning difficulties. A growing number of pupils display emotional and behavioural problems. There are currently 129 pupils on the roll of the school, 88 boys and 41 girls. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below nationally expected levels because of their special educational needs and all have statements. All pupils are of white United Kingdom origin and come from a wide catchment area, some parts of which are very socially deprived. Approximately half of the pupils are entitled to free school meals.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

William Baxter School is an effective school which enables pupils to achieve well in most subjects. Pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve particularly well. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 4 they have improved considerably both academically and socially. Many are now achieving successes in externally accredited courses. The social development of pupils is a major strength of the school. They make very good improvements in their confidence and self-esteem. These achievements are the result of consistently good teaching throughout the school and a broad and balanced curriculum which is well-matched to the needs of pupils. The head teacher and governors lead and manage the school well, successfully identifying areas to improve the school further. It provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is effectively led and managed by the head teacher, supported by staff and governors. As a result, a very good ethos has been established where pupils have positive attitudes to learning, attend and behave well and achieve good standards of work.
- The quality of teaching is very good in Key Stage 1 and good overall because of teachers' specialist subject knowledge and their knowledge of the needs of individual pupils.
- Good levels of welfare and guidance are provided for pupils' personal and social development. This leads to impressive gains in their confidence and self-esteem.
- A broad, balanced and relevant curriculum is provided which prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education or for leaving school. It is particularly effective in Key Stage 4.
- Parents are successfully involved in school and they, rightly, have positive views of the school and of the quality of education provided.
- The school provides very good value for money because pupils achieve well, the quality of teaching is good and the costs are very low.

What could be improved

- The quality of the accommodation restricts the opportunities available for pupils, particularly in science and design and technology in Key Stages 3 and 4 and in outdoor play in Key Stage 1.
- Standards of writing are not good enough, particularly extended writing in English in Key Stages 3 and 4. Opportunities for extended writing throughout the curriculum are limited.
- Teaching is not monitored formally or systematically by senior managers, co-ordinators or governors.
- Targets in the school development plan are not sufficiently closely linked to the intended effect on pupils' learning.
- Information technology is not fully extended across the subjects of the curriculum although it is taught successfully as a separate subject.
- Recent staff changes and recruitment difficulties mean that there is no permanent senior management structure or co-ordinator for Key Stages 3 and 4 mathematics.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvements since it was last inspected in November 1996. Imbalances within the curriculum have been corrected, planning is now much stronger and the Key Stage 4 curriculum has been considerably enhanced through the introduction of a range of externally accredited courses. The school development plan is a more effective tool for managing improvements; resources, although only adequate overall, have been considerably improved and expenditure is closely linked to identified priorities. The quality of teaching has improved, better use is made of assessment and the staff expertise in English and mathematics has increased. Religious education now fully meets statutory requirements. Provision for information technology has improved and both the literacy and numeracy strategies have been successfully introduced. However, significant weaknesses in the quality of accommodation remain.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 11	by age 16	Key	
speaking and listening	B	B	very good	A
Reading	B	C	good	B
Writing	B	D	satisfactory	C
Mathematics	B	C	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	A	A	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B		

The school is setting challenging targets to improve the standards achieved by pupils, particularly in English and mathematics at the end of key stages. Targets in individual pupils' education plans are also well-matched to their prior attainment and as a result of the good teaching they make good progress and achieve well. In English pupils throughout the school make good progress in speaking and listening and in reading good progress is made in Key Stages 1 and 2 and satisfactory progress in Key Stages 3 and 4. Although pupils make satisfactory progress in writing in Key Stages 1 and 2 opportunities for extended writing in other subjects are limited and progress in writing in Key Stages 3 and 4 is unsatisfactory because of the limited range of opportunities provided to develop further. Pupils make good progress in mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2 and satisfactory progress in Key Stages 3 and 4. Very good progress is made by all age groups in relation to personal, social and health education. In science pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1, 3 and 4 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. In modern foreign languages pupils in Key Stage 3 make satisfactory progress whilst good and sometimes very good progress is made in music in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. Good progress is made in design and technology, information technology and religious education by pupils of all ages. Progress in art and geography is good in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. In history progress is good in Key Stages 1 and 3 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2.

There is no significant difference in the progress made by boys or girls or for pupils of different levels of attainment throughout the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils of all ages have positive attitudes to school. They show enthusiasm in lessons and are keen to improve.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in and out of classrooms is good. Misbehaviour is dealt with effectively with minimal effect on the learning of others.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships and personal developments are good. Pupils are given and take responsibility increasingly as they move through the school.
Attendance	Attendance is good. Pupils are punctual both to the school and to lessons.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic about school and are keen to improve. Although some pupils behave inappropriately this is well-managed by staff. In general pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils increasingly take responsibility throughout the school, for example young pupils take and return registers and pupils of all ages represent their classes in the Schools Council and older pupils increasingly travel independently. Levels of attendance are good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good overall. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 98 per cent of the lessons observed. It was good in 55 per cent of lessons and very good in almost 26 per cent. Teaching was unsatisfactory in 2 per cent of lessons. Teaching in English and mathematics is very good in Key Stage 1 and good throughout the rest of the school whilst in science it is good in Key Stage 1 and 4, satisfactory in Key Stage 2 and very good in Key Stage 3. Teaching in personal, social and health education is very good. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well throughout the school and particularly well in Key Stage 1. As a result of the good teaching pupils achieve well in most subjects and their quality of learning is good. Opportunities are sometimes missed to extend pupils' writing skills when the level of challenge is insufficiently high for some pupils. As a result learning and progress are reduced. Teachers know the pupils well and generally match work to their assessed level of attainment enabling them to build on their previous learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. It is particularly good in Key Stage 4 where a range of accredited courses has been introduced.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Not applicable.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils social development is very good. It is good for moral development and satisfactory for spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides good care for pupils. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good and those for behaviour are good. Strong and well-developed assessment procedures are in place. Child protection is sound.

The school has developed the curriculum well. It is broad, balanced and relevant. It has been considerably enhanced in Key Stage 4 by the introduction of accredited courses. Provision for social development is very good. Pupils are given a wide range of responsibilities to develop their social confidence such as in the School Council, or by travelling independently to school or college. Moral development is promoted through high expectations of good behaviour. Pupils were involved in devising school and class rules and drawing up a Bill of Rights. The school cares well for its pupils. Procedures for monitoring academic and personal development are good. Attendance procedures are very good. The school has effective partnership with parents which supports pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher provides good leadership. Co-ordinators roles are developing but monitoring of teaching is insufficiently developed. Recruitment difficulties have slowed some developments.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities. It does not however have a formal system for evaluating curriculum development or teaching.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Procedures for evaluating the performance of the school are good, although there are weaknesses in monitoring teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used effectively. There is a close relationship between education and financial planning.

The head teacher has continued to provide good leadership and management despite not having a permanent Senior Management Team because of recruitment and retention difficulties. This has slowed down some developments such as the systematic monitoring of teaching by both the staff and governing body.

The school has a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses and appropriate targets and priorities for development have been identified. The priorities are insufficiently linked to the intended impact on pupils learning and are therefore difficult to evaluate. Resources are effectively used, and best value principles are applied to all expenditure.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school and staff are very approachable when they have questions or problems.• That the school is raising their child's self esteem and helping them become mature and responsible.• That they consider that the school is well led and managed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The range of the curriculum e.g. Geographical studies.• The uncertain future of the school.

The findings of inspectors agreed with the largely positive views of parents and found no evidence to support the view of a narrow curriculum. It is broad, balanced and relevant. Parents are rightly concerned to see an early resolution to the future of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 The standards attained by pupils by the end of each key stage are below national expectations or averages because of their special educational needs. However in nearly all subjects pupils of all ages make good progress, building on their previous learning, as they move through the school and achieving well. This applies equally to boys and girls. Pupils join the school at different stages of their education as a result of the identification of their special educational needs. All have statements identifying moderate learning difficulties and, as a consequence, their attainment on entry to the school is low. The school has set good targets for individual pupils through their Individual Education Plans and appropriate targets in English and mathematics for the whole school.

2 In English, the majority of pupils have difficulties in speaking and listening when they enter the school. In Key Stage 1 they make good progress and achieve well, developing basic vocabulary and taking part in class discussions. They listen to others, speaking more readily and can dictate simple sentences like 'I went to the park'. In Key Stage 2 their vocabulary is extended and they develop conversational skills when the teacher encourages them to talk together, for example in role play. By Key Stage 3 many pupils are speaking fluently with confidence showing an awareness of standard English. They can identify the main characters in stories and use their language to explain things or ask questions. Their achievement continues to improve and by the end of Key Stage 4 the vast majority of pupils can confidently hold conversations with strangers both in school and in settings such as local colleges or work experience placements. They use telephones effectively and some confidently have their own mobile phones.

3 In reading pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress whilst in Key Stages 3 and 4 progress is satisfactory. In Key Stage 1 pupils enjoy listening to stories, some can recognise words or match letters to letters and letters to sounds. By Key Stage 2 they can retell a story in their own words and most can read together as a group when following text in the literacy hour. They can attempt to predict the outcome of a story demonstrating their understanding. Many know how to find books in the library and can use word books and dictionaries. In Key Stage 3 satisfactory progress is made and achievement is sound. Higher attaining pupils read fluently and with expression whilst lower attaining pupils are still, appropriately, working on letter recognition. By Key Stage 4 most pupils can use their reading skills in every day situations, for example reading signs in shops. Most read accurately most of the time and can identify and assess characters in books and plays.

4 Pupils' progress and achievement in writing are good in Key Stage 1, satisfactory in Key Stage 2 but unsatisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4 where they get too few opportunities either in English lessons or in other subjects to develop their writing skills. In Key Stage 1 although only a few pupils can write independently they develop hand eye co-ordination skills well and learn to colour carefully. Some can copy writing or write over letters or words. In Key Stage 2 pupils' understanding of spelling and grammar improves when they use spellings in context. Their understanding of verbs and adjectives improves and some develop an awareness of punctuation. In Key Stage 3 they begin to use basic punctuation in their own writing but they are not given enough opportunities for extended writing and as a result they lack confidence and become reluctant. In Key Stage 4 writing for particular purposes such as form filling or writing letters develops and some will attempt creative writing although again opportunities are restricted and progress is unsatisfactory.

5 The introduction of the literacy strategy in Key Stages 1 and 2 has had a positive impact on pupils' achievements and it is being extended into Key Stage 3.

6 The numeracy strategy has been effectively introduced in Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils in Key

Stage 1 achieve well and make good progress in mathematics. Pupils count up to ten, some with help, whilst the higher attaining pupils count up to 20. Many can perform simple addition and subtraction tasks. In the area of shape and space, they match colour sets of squares, oblongs and circles. They are starting to identify and name shapes.

7 In Key Stage 2 they continue to achieve well and make good progress. The lower attaining pupils follow patterns. They increase their understanding of number by counting using blocks and other equipment. The higher attaining pupils carry out addition and subtraction with numbers up to and above 20. By the end of the key stage most pupils calculate accurately in ones, fives and tens. In the area of shape and space most pupils recognise and name regular and irregular shapes describing their characteristics.

8 Achievement and progress in Key Stage 3 are just satisfactory. This has been effected by the absence of a mathematics co-ordinator in the senior school. Pupils continue to develop their understanding of number. The majority identify place value in tens and units. By the end of the key stage about half of the pupils are starting to understand place value with hundreds. The higher attaining pupils understand simple multiplication and division. In problem solving they use their mathematical knowledge to answer questions based on given information. For example, working out the cost of various activities at a sports centre. The higher attaining pupils draw symmetrical shapes and increase their understanding of shape and space. Older pupils are starting to understand probability.

9 In Key Stage 4 the majority of pupils follow externally accredited courses building on their prior attainment. They achieved satisfactorily and make sound progress. They show a growing understanding of number and use this to work on increasingly difficult tasks. In work on measuring temperature the pupils use negative numbers. Pupils use decimal places with greater understanding. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress in money management. They change pounds to pence and solve problems such as 'if one item costs £x how much do 5 items cost?'. Understanding of time is developing, with many pupils starting to use the 24-hour clock. In the area of shape and space the pupils have developed their knowledge and understanding of right angle turns and reflective symmetry.

10 Pupils achieve well in science across the school. Achievement is satisfactory in Key Stage 2 and good elsewhere. By the time the present pupils finish Year 11, it is likely that the majority will gain a nationally recognised certificate of achievement. Achievement by the end of Key Stage 1 is good. Pupils are developing their observational skills well and make good gains in investigative work through a range of experiments, for example they know the difference between forces that push and pull, and are clear that forces can make objects move. They apply their knowledge successfully to an investigation involving toys that are pushed, pulled and spun. They can explain the experiment to others and more able pupils tabulate their results.

11 Achievement in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory although there are many good features. Pupils have extended their observational skills to look at types of animals, their features and preferred environments. They identify light sources in the home, and explore the behaviour of light on a range of reflective, transparent and non-reflective surfaces. Some can use their knowledge to explain how safety might be improved at night. There is less recorded evidence of work in the area of physical process than in the other attainment targets.

12 Pupil's achievement is good in Key Stage 3. They learn to sort vertebrates into their five main groups and can form sets, or allocate animals to sets with increasing confidence. Their ability to record experiments improves, for example to show the changes caused by variations in temperature to solids, liquids and gases. There are insufficient opportunities for extended writing in both Key Stages 2 and 3.

13 Pupils achieve well by the end of Key Stage 4, managing between 1 and 6 units of a nationally recognised certificate of achievement. The school predicts, based on reliable evidence of achievements so

far, that over 70 per cent of this Year 11 will achieve full certification. Inspection evidence supports this. This represents a good level of achievement. A minority of pupils has demonstrated ability in narrating the course of an investigation, but as elsewhere, too much reliance is placed on work sheets that limit the opportunities to write.

14 In the other subjects of the National Curriculum achievement and progress are good overall. In modern foreign languages pupils in Key Stage 3 make satisfactory progress whilst very good progress is made in music in Key stages 1, 2 and 3. Good progress is made in design and technology, information technology and religious education by pupils of all ages. Progress in art and geography is good in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. In history progress is good in Key Stages 1 and 3 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2.

15 Overall there has been good improvement in the standards achieved since the last inspection. There is no significant difference in the progress made by boys and girls or for pupils of different levels of attainment throughout the school. Pupils of all ages achieve well in relation to their individual targets, identified in education plans. They build progressively on previous learning as they move through the school as a result of good teaching which usually matches well to their prior attainment.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16 Pupils respond well to the school with good attitudes to learning. Their behaviour, personal development, relationships with other pupils and staff and their attendance at school are all good.

17 Pupils enjoy coming to school. They quickly form into lines in the playground at the start of the day and are very prompt to their lessons. The morning greeting sessions at registration are good-humoured and pupils respond well to their teachers and peers. There is a good response to the lunchtime clubs and disappointment amongst those pupils who have to wait for another time to access an activity. They are appreciative of the efforts that their friends make in lessons and are anxious to demonstrate their knowledge as for example in plenary sessions at the end of the literacy period. Pupils are especially positive in their attitudes during practical elements of lessons and enjoy demonstrating their skills. During an activity at the local agricultural college, where pupils had the task of mucking out two stables, they cheerfully collaborated and assisted each other in completing a job that not all pupils may have originally looked forward to.

18 The behaviour of pupils is good and the school places great emphasis on the expectation of good behaviour from others as a right for pupils. There have been a number of recent exclusions, but pupils most recently involved in these incidents are all back in school and are responding well to the reactive behaviour management programmes, involvement in support group programmes and reward strategies organised by the school. Behaviour in lessons is generally good and this has a positive impact on all pupils' learning. Pupils' behaviour out of school is also good. During activities observed where pupils were away from school, pupils are frequently commended on their good behaviour, and this has most recently led to a café rewarding the whole school with a fund raising initiative for Easter eggs. At lunchtime and break time pupils play well together and their good behaviour during meals is encouraged by the good relationships that they enjoy with the lunchtime staff. The school makes good use of the expected and trusted good behaviour of older pupils to support their more independent activities at lunchtime away from the playground.

19 Pupils' personal development and relationships with others are generally good. Many routine procedures in the school such as the fetching and returning of registers, tidying up of classroom tables, organisation of milk, supervision of younger pupils in the playground are capably organised and carried out by pupils with only minimal involvement of staff. The credibility of the work of the student council draws on the strength of the trust that pupils place in their representatives and the democratic vision that pupils bring to making decisions on school rules and routines, as for example in the provision of school lockers for pupils. Pupils respond well to the school's personal independence programmes and become

increasingly confident both in the school and in the community. Older pupils demonstrate independence, for example they travel to their work experience placements and college courses independently, can plan, shop and cook a meal without direct adult intervention, and take on a range of responsibilities for themselves as for example the responsibility of ensuring the correct clothing for an activity. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. This raising of personal esteem among pupils has a very positive impact on their ability to learn and is highly valued by parents and carers.

20 Pupil's attendance at the school is good and has improved since the previous inspection. There are no cases of truanting, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. The number of unauthorised absences from the school has also reduced since the previous inspection, and overall attendance at the school is above average for similar schools. Where the absences are unauthorised the school makes very good efforts to discover the reasons behind the absence and to involve the education welfare service to ensure that these cases are reduced to a minimum. The school has sound systems in place to monitor and assure the attendance at college and work experience placements of those pupils who are out of school for part or all of the day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

21 The quality of teaching is good overall. It is very good in Key Stage 1 and good in all other key stages. During the inspection teaching was very good in almost 26 per cent of lessons, good in 55 per cent and satisfactory in 17 per cent. Only two per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Improved curriculum planning has been a significant feature in this.

22 Teaching in English and mathematics is very good in Key Stage 1 and good throughout the rest of the school. In science it is good in Key Stage 1 and 4, satisfactory in Key Stage 2 and very good in Key Stage 3. It is very good in personal, social and health education throughout the school. Literacy and numeracy skills are generally taught well throughout the school particularly in Key Stage 1 as a result of the national strategies. Teaching is particularly good in Key Stage 1 because of the teachers' very good knowledge of the needs of the pupils and the close match between their earlier attainment and the work set which challenges them to achieve higher standards and make good progress. It is also good in a number of subjects for secondary-aged pupils, because of the expertise and specialist knowledge of teachers, for example in science, art, design and technology and physical education. They use their knowledge effectively to challenge and motivate pupils and, as a result they make progress and achieve well.

23 Teachers generally have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and of the needs of pupils throughout the school. In history in Key Stage 3 for example the teacher uses her specialist knowledge well to stimulate and motivate pupils when discussing what life must have been like aboard the Mary Rose and in a Key Stage 1 science lesson when investigating how things move questions challenge pupils to develop their understanding of pushing and pulling.

24 Planning is generally thorough with clear learning objectives evident. Again, it is very good in Key Stage 1 where the teacher plans effectively to ensure that specific needs of all pupils are met to allow them to join in all activities throughout the curriculum. In physical education in Key Stage 3 planning clearly identifies the learning objectives when teaching vaulting and as a result pupils are clear what they are trying to achieve and how they can improve. Effective learning therefore takes place and progress is good.

25 Expectations are generally high throughout the school. Teachers challenge pupils to develop their understanding with high but realistic targets. In a Key Stage 3 English lesson where pupils listened to a poem expressively read by the teacher and were expected to develop creative writing as a result of the stimulus, constant praise, encouragement and reinforcement gave pupils confidence to express their ideas and very good learning resulted. Otherwise very good lessons miss many opportunities to challenge pupils writing ability and expand their thinking, for example in science or history where worksheets restrict the

opportunity for more able pupils to write extended prose about life on the Mary Rose. Basic skills of numeracy and literacy are generally well promoted throughout the curriculum. Speaking and listening is particularly strongly promoted. In modern foreign languages in Key Stage 3, for example, pupils are constantly encouraged to listen carefully before responding when playing games to identify the names of facial features. In geography pupils express their ideas well when discussing the siting of villages and towns when exploring localities. Writing is not developed satisfactorily throughout the curriculum. Information technology skills, whilst used effectively in discrete lessons are not yet fully developed in other subjects, although there are some opportunities in mathematics, English and personal and social development work.

26 Pupils are effectively managed and this has a positive impact on learning. Any potentially difficult behaviour is dealt with, with minimal fuss and little impact on the learning of other pupils. Methods employed are generally effective and the structure of the literacy and numeracy strategies has had a positive effect on teaching and learning. Lessons usually have a good balance of whole class teaching and group and individual work which helps to maintain the pace of lessons and pupils' interest. In a history lesson looking at slides whole class discussion was followed by written work in pairs, groups or individually and as a result learning was good because their interest and motivation was maintained. Some potentially higher attaining pupils could have been further extended if the written work had been more demanding.

27 The support assistant makes a very positive contribution to pupils learning in Key Stage 1. Planning clearly identifies the role and ensures that she is well-targeted to support learning in all areas of the curriculum. Elsewhere in the school support staff use their skills effectively and are very valuable to learning but are not always carefully deployed to the maximum effect.

28 Assessment is used effectively to ensure that demands are well-matched to the prior attainment of pupils. Teachers use targets in individual education plans effectively to determine challenging work and assessment against these is used to develop new targets enabling pupils to make progress. Homework is used satisfactorily to support learning.

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

29 The curriculum is broad and balanced with good coverage provided of all National Curriculum subjects including religious education, personal, health and social education, careers education, and a wide range of vocational opportunities. Information technology is taught as a discrete subject but not yet used effectively in all curriculum areas. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. Statutory requirements are fully met. The religious education teaching is guided by the locally agreed syllabus and the personal health and social programme ensures appropriate teaching of sex education and drugs awareness. The quality of the curriculum planning is good, it is detailed and takes due regard of the gender, age, ethnicity and intellectual capacity of the pupils. The code of practice is fully implemented and the individual education plans targets for the pupils are effectively used to inform teaching. This well balanced and structured range of curricular activities has a positive impact on the good achievement of the pupils, who make good progress against their prior attainments. Good use is made of taught time. Particular good use has been made of the freedom given to schools in planning, in Key Stage 4, in order to provide a very effective life skills programme. This programme includes a wide range of accredited courses, careers education, community visits, citizenship and environmental education and a variety of work experience opportunities. This programme has a significant impact on the social maturity and personal development of the pupils and in their ability to cope well with the transition into their next stages of education.

30 Subject co-ordinators have been very effective in developing subject documentation and matched recording procedures which are very well used to track the good progress made by the pupils. The well

structured curriculum planning process is thorough and effectively informs the teaching and learning processes across all curriculum subjects in Key Stages 1 and 2, and very effectively in the specialist teaching of subjects in Key Stage 3. It has also ensured the successful implementation of the literacy strategy and is supporting the developing numeracy strategy. The former has already had a significant influence on the use of literacy across the curriculum and there is evidence to show that this is beginning to be improved in the area of numeracy. There have been significant improvements in both the quality of teaching and the achievements of the pupils since the last inspection partly as a result of the improved curriculum planning.

31 Teaching staff make good use of the range of extra-curricular clubs and visits to motivate the pupils, to extend their horizons and to develop their learning skills. Good use is made of local schools and colleges in order to extend the range of accredited courses available for pupils in a very cost effective manner by making good use of special grants. Good relationships are maintained with all partner institutions and these are helpful to the school in its determination to develop the good transitional arrangements for pupils and to maintain a high level of mainstream inclusion wherever appropriate. The good levels of inclusion are a direct outcome of the good quality curriculum planning and coverage of all appropriate national curriculum targets.

32 The school's links with the community make a good contribution to pupils' learning. This programme is further enhanced by the use of visiting artists, musicians, lunchtime clubs and extra curricular activities and the development of whole school dramatic performances most recently based on the works of William Shakespeare. Trips into the area are used as part of a valued reward system for older pupils and an effective target for their social independence training. All pupils in the school benefit from the wide range of visits that the school builds into the curriculum and this is supported by the expertise of the learning support assistants, four of whom are accredited drivers of the school minibus. The school has close links to a local playgroup and a centre for elderly people. Pupils benefit from these combined work experiences and community service placements. Regular work experience placements through Year 11 rely on the goodwill of the many employers who maintain close links with the school and the Career Service. The school liaises closely with local colleges of further education to provide a wide range of courses where pupils are working alongside their mainstream peers. The school's provision for personal, social and health education benefits from the regular contribution of social and health workers from the community.

33 Within the curriculum good provision is made to support the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of the pupils.

34 Good provision is made to support the spiritual development of the pupils and they achieve well. Religious education is well taught in lessons and reinforced well in assemblies, pupils enjoyed moments of reflection. Throughout the lessons observed many opportunities were provided for pupils to reflect on physical and practical changes in science, to watch with awe and wonder at the patterns of ice crystals formed during a science lesson and the chemical changes taking place in liquid welding in a design and technology lesson. The pupils visit a wide range of places of worship and celebrate religious festivals in order to deepen the understanding of their own faith and that of others. All of these experiences help in the development of a spiritual ethos within the school which has a positive influence on the level of pupils' understanding, sensitivity and behaviour.

35 The quality of provision to promote the moral development of pupils is good. Staff are consistent in their behaviour as role models and vigilance in lessons and around school ensures good moral attitudes among the pupils are maintained and developed. Pupils know right from wrong and respect the schools good procedures and practices. In many practical lessons pupils demonstrate their good understanding of class rules and the reasons for them. In food technology lessons pupils exemplify this by making posters for display in the room relating to potential hazards and good practices.

36 Pupils' social development is good. It is very successfully promoted by the school by encouraging the pupils to work in pairs and groups and in finding opportunities to value the views and feelings of others. Relationships between teachers and pupils and within peer groups are good. Pupils understand how to behave in lessons, around the school and on offsite visits within the community in other schools and colleges. These good links established within the community encourage pupils to continually foster and develop their social skills and confidence. All the pupils show sensitivity and willingly help and support younger pupils in and around school. In lessons the higher attaining pupils confidently provide help, guidance and support for their classmates. Social behaviour at lunchtime is good. Pupils engage in convivial conversation with their peers and adults, and demonstrate their increasing maturity and confidence.

37 Cultural development is satisfactory. Effective use is made of off site visits and of various stories from literature, in drama activities, in humanity, art and musical experiences in order to widen the pupils knowledge and experience of life in a multicultural society. As a result they develop a sense of their own culture and a growing awareness of the multi-cultural diversity in society. The work in the curriculum on citizenship has a positive influence on this aspect of their development.

38 Whilst the curriculum provided as a whole is good in each key stage, the quality and extensive range of the Key Stage 4 curriculum is a positive strength of the school and a very significant improvement since the last inspection. The increased accreditation opportunities provided for pupils in Key Stage 4 has had a marked impact on the increase in the standards achieved. This is well demonstrated by the significant percentage of Year 11 pupils who are able to participate fully in openly enrolled local further education, leading to nationally recognised accreditation.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39 The school's arrangements for child protection are satisfactory and remain as secure as in the previous inspection. Child protection arrangements are led by the head teacher who is the designated person. No other current member of staff has received recent and relevant training in child protection procedures from the area child protection committee, but staff have access to the procedures, and have received some in-service training in these procedures and in referring any concerns they may have. Day-to-day working practices for monitoring and promoting the health and safety of pupils are satisfactory. Dispensation procedures for any medical needs are currently organised by the school's learning support assistants, who are also responsible for the good first aid and accident procedures. Responsibility for monitoring the health and safety arrangements in the school is not presently co-ordinated in a rigorous fashion. Risk assessments have been completed regularly although it was not carried out last term because of staffing arrangements. Fire drills are held regularly, and recorded, and necessary safety checks are carried out or organised for physical education apparatus, fire fighting equipment and electrical appliances. Young pupils are well supervised at playtimes both by staff and older pupils, and arrival and departure arrangements for pupils are well organised and safe. The school liaises with health authorities to provide a level of cover that meets the requirements of the pupils' statements, but some parents did express concern that this provision is not sufficient to meet the needs of their children. The inspectors found the levels of cover to be adequate for the present needs.

40 The school rigorously monitors all reasons for pupils' absences and registration procedures comply with statutory requirements. The school has very good and realistic procedures to promote attendance and these clearly demonstrate an increase in the attendance of pupils and very significant successes with pupils whose attendance is below 85 per cent. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good and the school makes effective use of a range of individual behavioural programmes where this is considered to be appropriate. The school has adopted a range of age appropriate rewards and sanctions, many of them suggested by pupils, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. When exclusions do take place, the school maintains an exclusion log and only considers this move when it is considered necessary either for the safety of other staff and pupils or that the disruption in

learning for other pupils cannot be tolerated. The governing body is properly involved in all cases and an incident record is kept. Procedures to monitor pupils' personal development are good and especially detailed in the secondary school where an increasing responsibility is placed on older pupils to encourage their personal independence. Special mention assemblies highlight the achievements of pupils and a range of awards and certificates make a valuable addition to the pupil's individual record of achievements. The school supports healthy eating programmes and meals at the school offer pupils not only a good choice of well prepared, attractively presented, fresh food, but also the personal intervention of the school cook to ensure that pupils' good manners are maintained and that they receive an ample portion of food.

41 The school has extensive and well thought out systems to monitor pupil's personal and social development. These together with the systems for assessing pupil's academic progress, and progress against individual education plans, enable staff to know pupils well. Teachers can then plan educational opportunities that are well matched to pupils attainment and promote progress. In all the systems there is a developing and significant role for pupils' to originate, agree or modify classroom rules and the school 'Bill of Rights and Responsibilities'. Much of this activity is developed through the School Council and contributes well to citizenship across the curriculum.

42 The school is involved with other schools and services in a well thought out preventative strategy, known as 'nurture groups'. These groups are targeted at pupil's thought to be potentially at risk of exclusion. They result in additional access to other professional specialists to support the pupils and their parents, and are contributing to a reduction in the numbers of exclusions. Although these groups are withdrawn from the curriculum for short periods each week, times are rotated to minimise curriculum loss in the same areas. Within the main body of the school population there are a good range of systems to monitor pupils social development and any behavioural problems. Pupils are subject to regular review, consistent behaviour management strategies within class, and individual programmes supplementing annual review targets where necessary. Parents report themselves delighted with the successes achieved by the school and the improvements they see in their children. The inspectors supported this view.

43 The staff of the school have been effective in developing robust assessment procedures in the majority of curriculum subjects in order to monitor effectively the academic, personal and social development of the pupils. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The procedures are well developed in the majority of subject areas and they are particularly effective in design and technology and food technology where they are very well used to inform planning and teaching. These procedures are not yet fully developed in the humanities curriculum, particularly at Key Stages 1 and 2, nor in religious education. The assessment procedures recommended by the code of practice are used effectively and all national curriculum statutory assessments are effectively implemented and used by the senior management team to track trends. The school has well established baseline assessments thus insuring that it is possible to track the achievements of pupils from their moment of entry into the school. The good use of published reading tests also helps the school to monitor effectively the progress made towards its longer-term targets. The targets in pupils' individual education plans are clear and provide a good focus for the work of teachers in school and parents at home. They encourage the development of good shared monitoring of social and academic development between home and school. These procedures are valued by parents and teachers. In a number of lessons teachers are beginning to involve pupils themselves in the assessment and monitoring procedures in all key stages although this is most effectively developed within the Key Stage 3 and 4 curriculum.

44 Procedures for recording the achievements of the pupils and careful monitoring of the gains made in learning are significantly improved since the time of the last inspection. In particular the very wide range of externally accredited courses offered in Key Stages 3 and 4 has had a significant impact on the raising of teachers' expectations. They have focused and improved the procedures for monitoring, recording and celebrating pupils' achievements. This is particularly well demonstrated in the school leavers record of achievement files, which contained evidence of improved academic performance, certificates

gained in sporting, social and personal activities as well as evidence of preparation for the next stage of education through reports from local further education colleges and work experience employers.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45 The parents' view of the school is very good. Parents and carers are especially pleased with the approachability of the school and that they are always able to talk to a member of staff about their concerns. Parents value the confidence that the school gives to their children and the emphasis that the school brings to giving the pupils confidence and in raising their self-esteem. Many parents feel passionately that their children are happy for the first time in their schooling since they began to attend this school. The fact that the future of the special schools in the area is the subject of a review is giving many parents and carers a great deal of anxiety, as they do not want to see the provision changed.

46 The school's links with parents are good. The school makes a very welcoming provision for parents to come into school and take refreshments in the company of other parents. Parents value the contact and support that they have from other parents of children with special needs and appreciate that the school provides a permanent venue for their meetings. The school supports the activities of the Friends' Association and enables them to use the administrative facilities of the school, to promote fund raising and social activities. Parents have now assumed the task of writing the regular newsletter from school, and this is a direct result of the skills parents have learned from staff at the school in information technology. Day to day links with parents over any problems with a pupil's attendance, health or behaviour, either good or disruptive, strengthens the contacts between home and school and help to lessen the effects of the wide spread catchment area of the school. The school is very flexible in arranging meetings for parents with transport difficulties and facilitates the use of school transport to assist parents in their attendance of Annual Reviews.

47 The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good. Parents and carers now take an active role in deciding the targets on their children's individual education plans. By having copies of these plans at home, parents and carers support their child's learning at home. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school regularly seeks the views of parents as for example in the provision of homework and home/school agreements, and is working with parents to support the effectiveness of homework provision for older pupils. School workshops to explain the literacy and numeracy strategies in the school and how parents might most effectively support their child's learning at home have been attended by a number of parents of primary age pupils.

48 The quality of information provided for parents is good. The school's prospectus, the governor's annual report to parents and pupils' annual reports all meet with statutory requirements. Daily information on younger pupils is provided by the use of the home/school diary, but as older pupils become more independent, home/school communication on for example, homework becomes more age appropriate and, where possible, is verbal. Letters and information are sent home on a regular basis via the pupils and the school escorts ensure that most letters do reach home.

49 A few parents support the work of the school by accompanying school trips when staff need assistance, but despite virtually all parents being so positive in their views of the school, only a small number of parents actually organise themselves to help in the school. The overall contribution to children's learning at school and at home is satisfactory, and this is despite the school's best efforts to involve more parents in the school since the previous inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50 The head teacher provides good leadership and management for the school. This has developed since the last inspection, particularly in relation to ensuring the development of the curriculum. This has had a significant impact on the quality of teaching and standards achieved. The uncertainty about the

future of the school because of the review of special needs provision has led to some recruitment and retention difficulties in recent times and as a result there is no permanent deputy head teacher or senior management structure. Despite the additional pressure on the head teacher the school has been well led, although the planned development of the monitoring of teaching has been slowed down. Clear, challenging but appropriate targets have been set both for end of key stage classes and for individual pupils through their individual education plans. These are successful in raising achievement.

51 The roles and responsibilities of subject co-ordinators has been developed since the last inspection. They plan effectively, meet regularly and monitor planning and pupils' work. However their role in monitoring teaching in a systematic way has not yet been developed although some does occur. At present there is no full-time permanent co-ordinator for mathematics and this has had an effect on the development of the subject. The recent temporary appointment of a subject specialist has improved the situation.

52 The head teacher and governing body have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities. It is well informed and a number of governors spend time in school although they do not have a formal system for monitoring curriculum development or the impact of teaching on achievement.

53 The school development plan is a useful tool for guiding the future direction of the school although it is difficult for governors to take a long term strategic view because of the county review of provision. The plan is well-informed from a variety of sources including subject audits which identify the development needs of subjects. As a result appropriate priorities have been identified and targets set. Broader targets, for example to raise standards in English and mathematics are linked to the impact on pupils' learning. However other targets in the school development plan are currently not. As a result it is difficult for the school to evaluate the effect of developments in these terms. However, there is a clear, shared commitment to raising standards. The development of accredited courses in Key Stage 4 together with challenging targets at the end of Key Stage 2 provide clear evidence of this.

54 The head teacher and governors work very effectively to ensure that there is a clear link between educational and financial planning. The budget is carefully allocated to meet the priorities identified in the school development plan, and the head teacher successfully pursues additional funding to improve the quality of education. Financial control systems are secure and the school administrative assistant provides valuable support to the head teacher in monitoring expenditure. Administrative procedures are efficient, allowing teaching staff to concentrate on their roles. Although there is currently a large carry forward clear plans are in place to reduce this. Best value principles are applied to all areas of expenditure.

55 Little has been achieved since the previous inspection when it was recommended that urgent steps should be taken to improve the quality of the accommodation, especially for the secondary phase. With the exception of the erection of a security fence and resurfacing parts of the playground, accommodation for the secondary phase remains unsatisfactory, particularly in science and design and technology. A good choice of modules in science means that the deficiencies in the science accommodation do not adversely affect pupils' achievements, but they do restrict curriculum opportunities for pupils who are able to achieve examinations at a higher standard. Although small tools are stored appropriately, the design and technology is room cramped with fixed equipment covering floor space thus limiting the area in which pupils can move. A general lack of storage results in cluttered classrooms although displays of pupils' work does much to brighten up the walls. Much of the furniture is shabby and worn, however, the planned improvements for information technology and for the administrative areas will enhance the overall accommodation and particularly promote pupils' learning in information technology. These weaknesses need to be rectified in order to allow pupils to access the full range of National Curriculum opportunities.

56 The primary department is bright and airy with colourful displays of work and books which make a stimulating learning environment for pupils and a good contribution to promoting pupils' interest in the

topics displayed. The multi-purpose shared area is welcoming and pupils use it at playtimes as well as during lesson times to find books for pleasure and to support specific areas of learning. Classrooms are well organised with adequate space for all activities. Resources are very accessible. Outside play areas, including grassed areas, are restricted with no large play equipment for younger pupils to enable them to develop their imaginative and social play.

57 The caretaker and cleaners work hard to keep both the inside and outside of the school clean and tidy and very little litter is visible, but problems with the actual fabric of the buildings, such as a leaking roof, still remain.

58 Resources have improved since the last inspection and are now at least satisfactory in most subjects and good in some. The overall stock of books is too small especially in the secondary library, but most subjects are supported by a small range of reference books. Religious education has a relevant range of artefacts but there are few in history and geography, although the Loan Service is well used. Music and physical education have a good range of small equipment which is suitable for the activities offered. Storage in the secondary department is unsatisfactory but resources are generally accessible and are of good quality since many are new. Staff use the local environment and museums well to extend pupils' learning in some topics.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59 In order to raise standards further the governors, head teacher and staff should:

- a) Improve standards achieved in written work, particularly in Key Stages 3 and 4 by providing more opportunities for writing extended pieces of work both in English and in other subjects. (Paragraphs 4, 12, 13, 60 and 63)
- b) Improve the opportunities available in science and design and technology in Key Stages 3 and 4 and opportunities for outdoor play in Key Stage 1 by improving the quality of the accommodation. (Paragraphs 55, 56, 91 and 102)
- c) Improve the overall leadership and management by
 - Ensuring that the quality of teaching is systematically monitored by governors, senior managers and subject co-ordinators; (Paragraphs 51 and 52)
 - Ensuring that targets in the school development plan are more closely linked to the intended effect on pupils' learning; (Paragraph 53)
 - Establishing an appropriate permanent senior management structure and co-ordinator for mathematics. (Paragraphs 50 and 80)

In addition to the above key issues the governors, head teacher and staff should:

- Extend the use of information technology to support learning throughout the curriculum. (Paragraph 25, 29, and 118)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	97
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	26	55	17	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	129
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	64

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	129
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	10
Average class size	14

Education support staff: YR – Y11

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	264

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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	8	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	1998
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	£
Total income	617,675
Total expenditure	589,817
Expenditure per pupil	4,538
Balance brought forward from previous year	25,750
Balance carried forward to next year	53,608

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	129
Number of questionnaires returned	50

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	69	18	6	2	4
My child is making good progress in school.	70	22	4	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	49	8	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	54	34	6	4	2
The teaching is good.	68	22	4	4	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	62	30	2	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	16	2	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	26	2	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	68	22	6	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	72	20	4	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	72	14	4	4	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	58	28	0	6	8

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

ENGLISH

60 Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in English throughout the school in relation to their earlier learning and sound progress is made. Achievements are good in speaking and listening across all the key stages. Achievement in reading is satisfactory overall although in Key State 1 it is good and a number of pupils in other key stages also make good progress. Achievement in writing although good in Key Stage 1 is unsatisfactory overall, because insufficient progress is made in Key Stages 3 and 4.

61 There has been significant improvement in speaking and listening since the last inspection especially in building the confidence of older pupils to express their opinions during discussion, hold conversations with each other and with strangers and eventually be able to talk in public. An example of this was seen during the inspection when three boys from Year 10 spoke to the whole school about their work in a café. In Key Stage 1 pupils learn basic vocabulary, improve their ability to listen while others are speaking, take part in class discussions and a few use full sentences when describing their own experiences for example “I went to the park”. By the end of Key Stage 2 all pupils have extended their vocabulary, most use correctly structured sentences. Nearly all pupils hold short conversations with each other and a few talk fairly confidently with unfamiliar adults, such as the inspectors at lunchtime. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are aware of standard English and most talk confidently. They use speech effectively to ask questions, express their views about characters or events in plays or stories and they enjoy talking together in their free time. By the time the pupils reach the end of Key Stage 4 they have become confident speakers, will talk in public and some are skilled at using the telephone even having their own mobile phones.

62 Pupil’s achievements in reading are satisfactory overall although standards are good in Key Stage 1 and for some individual pupils in other key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils know that words and books convey meaning enjoying the experience of listening to stories. The development of the Literacy Hour is having a significant and positive impact on this area of learning. Pupils learn to handle books correctly. They know that the outside cover indicates what the book is about and that authors write the stories helped by ‘illustrators’ who “do the drawings”. Nearly all can recognise some letters, the majority use picture cues to help them attempt reading while the higher attainers read simple text understanding the main features of the story. In Key Stage 2 the majority of pupils make good progress and achieve well, however the most recent end of Key Stage 2 results indicate a lowering of achievement level in Year 6 possibly due to the high number of pupils with additional learning difficulties. By the end of this key stage nearly all pupils can recognise and read familiar words using their developing phonic knowledge to tackle unfamiliar words although many still rely on information from picture cues. The higher attainers read fluently with expression and have a variety of strategies to tackle difficult words. They understand basic punctuation although they do not always react to it when reading aloud. A few pupils continue to work at recognising individual letters and matching sounds to letters. By the end of Key Stage 3 the majority of pupils can recognise and name all the letters of the alphabet and generally read familiar words accurately although a few lack confidence and seek adult support when reading text. The higher attainers read independently with understanding and expression and are able to retell a story and make predictions about possible future events for example what the Iron Man might do with the monster from space. By the end of Key Stage 4 all pupils can use the library for reference and some for research. They study the module ‘reading for pleasure’ in the NEAB Accreditation Course and use their reading skills in everyday life for example to recognise important signs, follow a TV guide and know how to use a telephone directory. Drama is included in the timetable from Key Stage 1. Everyone enjoys these sessions through which the pupils gain confidence and self esteem learning to express feelings and understanding what it is like to be something or someone else. For example in Key Stage 1 they acted as cats and a very angry little girl with great enthusiasm and understanding. In Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils are able to rehearse

and perform short plays or extracts of plays to other groups in the school or for the Annual Concert when the residents from the local Old People's Home are invited to the rehearsals.

63 Pupil's achievements in writing, whilst good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2, are unsatisfactory overall because insufficient progress is made in Key Stages 3 and 4. In Key Stage 1 pupils develop their hand-eye co-ordination and pencil control through drawing and colouring in shapes so that by 7 years of age most of them are careful and usually accurate. They begin to over-write letters, some can copy letters and a few can form letters by themselves while the higher attainers can write single words independently. In Key Stage 2 progress is slow and achievement is only satisfactory. Pupils continue practising their hand-writing skills but except for the higher attainers letter formation is not good and they rely heavily on worksheets or adults scribing the sentences they create to be over or under written. For example one pupil thought of a sentence "Oh, we are having a lovely day" but needed adult help to copy it down. Only one pupil in the class was able to write his sentence independently. By the end of the key stage pupils know the shape and form of most letters in the alphabet, are aware of basic punctuation and can talk in correctly structured sentences but they are not provided with sufficient opportunities for writing in order to develop their skills or confidence. By the end of Key Stage 3 many pupils are still working on improving letter formation and positioning. Most continue to use printed script but a few, especially those who have recently transferred from mainstream schools, are able to write legibly using a cursive style. There is reluctance on the part of many pupils to write but they are able, some with adult help, to produce short pieces of informative writing when appropriately motivated for example, writing about a chosen activity such as swimming or basketball. In Key Stage 4 pupils understand the importance of writing for a purpose such as filling in application forms or writing letters but there is little enthusiasm for the creative writing needed in the accreditation course. While some pupils do produce interesting pieces of work opportunities are limited to extend their writing skills as a consequence of which standards achieved are unsatisfactory.

64 Pupils have good attitudes to learning and enjoy English lessons, especially the literacy hours and drama. They generally behave well, listen attentively and sustain their concentration, helped by the interesting and motivating tasks and materials used in the lessons. Pupils learn to wait for their turn, work together or independently as required, taking pride in their own and others achievements. The few pupils who become distracted and potentially disruptive lose interest, shout out and wander 'off task' but usually settle quickly back to work through the vigilance and early intervention of staff although on one occasion the over-excitement had an adverse effect on the whole class.

65 The quality of teaching across all key stages is consistently good and occasionally very good which ensures that pupils make good progress and learn effectively. The weakness is the restricted opportunities provided for extended writing in Key Stages 3 and 4. The successful introduction of the literacy hour has had a positive impact on teaching, in planning classroom management and subject knowledge which represents improvement from the last inspection. All teachers have very good knowledge of their pupils. By establishing calm and supportive atmospheres where each individual contribution is respected and valued pupils' confidence and self-esteem is increased. The interesting and varied activities and resources linked with skilled question and answer sessions makes sure pupils are fully and actively involved which encourages their motivation and concentration. Pupils are usually appropriately challenged but there are problems in encouraging independent and creative writing partly because many pupils dislike the task and so present a greater potential for disruption. The decision to introduce non-fiction as a basis for writing is proving effective. There are some opportunities for planning and drafting of writing on the computer but there is insufficient equipment to give adequate access and experience.

66 The curriculum is broad and balanced meeting the needs of all pupils. It now incorporates the National Literacy strategy and NEAB Accreditation Courses and NEAB Literacy for Key Stage 4 pupils. In addition to the curriculum taught in lessons it is enhanced by various visits and visitors for example drama workshops such as the three day 'Shakespeare' project which included a visit from 'Shakespeare 4 Kidz' ending with a theatre trip to see the same company perform. The school has been very successful in

introducing the literacy hour which is having a positive effect on learning and standards of achievement particularly in speaking and listening, reading in Key Stage 1 and the early years of Key Stage 2 and appreciation of literature throughout the school. There is a need to develop writing skills not only in English but across the curriculum.

67 English makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development with respect to moral, social and cultural issues. For example, pupils analyse the meaning behind the stories and by character assessments from such works as Aesop's Fables in the lower school and Shakespeare in upper school. In addition any opportunities are taken for underlining the need for caring for the community and the environment as they occur.

68 Since the last inspection the assessment procedures have been extended and are now very effective for informing future planning. Every pupil has a baseline assessment from which the first Individual Education Plan is set up. These are regularly reviewed and updated with parental involvement through the Annual Review. There is meticulous analysis of the annual reading tests from which targets are set for each age group. The school now recognises that the pupils were so successful in meeting these targets last year they intend to extend the challenges for the coming year. There is clear evidence that the results on the Statutory tests are improving as are the outcomes on the accredited courses for Key Stage 4 pupils.

69 Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress through home school books and the Annual Reviews. They are also encouraged to support learning at home by monitoring homework and hearing their children read. Two parents meetings were held in school to introduce them to the literacy strategy which were very well supported.

70 English is well managed by the two subject co-ordinators one for Key Stages 1 and 2 and the other for Key Stages 3 and 4. There are regular informal and formal meetings between all staff concerned with the teaching of English and in particular at the end of the academic year in preparation for transition from the primary to the secondary phase. The co-ordinators monitor teacher's planning and the records of achievement but there is no time available for monitoring teaching. The accommodation is good with a specialist English room in the upper school which provides adequate storage. The two libraries are developing well. The primary one having benefited considerably from the money provided through the Study Skills Project. Resources are now satisfactory which is a significant improvement since the last inspection although there continues to be a need to expand the number of books and develop the use of information technology.

71 Since the last inspection the subject has improved in several areas. The literacy strategy has been successfully implemented, clear and effective individual education plans are in place, teachers' knowledge of the subject is good and classical literature has been introduced. The accreditation schemes that had just been started at the time of the last inspection are now well established and proving successful while the speaking and listening skills of all pupils has been so well extended that almost everyone is confident talking to each other or strangers and some will speak in public.

MATHEMATICS

72 Pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve well and make good progress in mathematics. The pupils count up to ten, some with help. The higher attaining pupils count up to 20. One pupil uses numbers over 100. The pupils perform simple addition and subtraction tasks. In the area of area shape and space, the pupils match and colour sets of squares, oblongs and circles. They are starting to identify and name the shapes. The pupils develop mathematical language and use words including shorter and longer.

73 In Key Stage 2 the pupils continue to achieve well and make good progress. The lower attaining

pupils follow number and shape patterns. They increase their understanding of number by counting using blocks and other equipment. The higher attaining pupils carry out addition and subtraction with numbers up to and above 20. By the end of the key stage most pupils calculate accurately in ones, fives and tens. In the area of shape and space most pupils recognise and name regular and irregular shapes, describing their characteristics.

74 Achievement and progress in Key Stage 3 are just satisfactory. This has been affected by the absence of a mathematics specialist in the senior school. The pupils continue to develop their understanding of number. The majority of the pupils identify place value in tens and units. By the end of the key stage about half of the pupils are starting to understand place value with hundreds. Most of the pupils carry out addition and subtraction using two and three digit numbers. The higher attaining pupils understand simple multiplication and division. In problem solving the pupils use their mathematical knowledge to answer questions based on given information, for example, working out the cost of various activities at a sports centre. There is increasing understanding of shape and space, for example pupils recognise three-dimensional shapes including cuboids, cylinders and pyramids. The higher attaining pupils draw symmetrical shapes. Older pupils are starting to understand probability.

75 In Key Stage 4 the majority of pupils follow externally accredited courses. They achieve satisfactorily and make sound progress. The pupils build on the skills acquired earlier. They show a growing understanding of number and use this to work on increasingly difficult tasks. In work on measuring temperature the pupils use negative numbers. In addition and subtraction pupils use and understand decimal places. Most pupils make at least satisfactory progress in money management. They change pounds to pence and solve problems such as 'if one item costs £x how much do 5 items cost?'. Understanding of time is developing, with many pupils starting to use the 24-hour clock. In the area of shape and space the pupils have knowledge and understanding of right angle turns and reflective symmetry.

76 The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Pupils' progress has improved in Key Stage 2. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced in the early key stages. The quality of teaching has improved, lesson objectives are clear and there are increased opportunities for older pupils to follow externally accredited courses. The lack of a mathematics co-ordinator in the upper key stages has slowed the rate of improvement. The present situation is fragile and as a result continued improvement cannot be fully guaranteed.

77 The development and use of numeracy across the curriculum is satisfactory. In design and technology the pupils measure when designing and making and they weigh ingredients when they cook. When using mathematics programs on computers the pupils develop their information technology skills such as handling data and producing a range of graphs. In science there are good examples of the use of number, for example in a Year 3/4 lesson when pupils measure the distance they have thrown.

78 The pupils have good attitudes to mathematics and this has a positive effect on their learning. In most lessons the pupils listen carefully in introductory or mental number sessions. There are however, a small number of pupils who need reminding about their behaviour in some lessons. When given opportunities the pupils work well together. A good example of pupils sharing ideas and helping each other was seen in a Year 6 lesson on solving simple problems. The pupils enjoy the subject and explain politely what they are doing. Most pupils concentrate well on their work and persevere when they find it difficult.

79 The quality of teaching is good and never less than satisfactory. In Key Stage 1 the quality of teaching is very good. In all lessons, the teachers explain to the pupils what they are going to learn in the lesson. Their knowledge of the subject is secure in all lessons and teachers teach basic skills well. There is regular reinforcement of key vocabulary, for example in a Key Stage 1 lesson both the teacher and support assistant constantly used the words 'wide' and 'narrow' to develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding. All teachers visit individual pupils to question and assess knowledge and understanding.

Pupils are regularly asked to explain how they got a particular answer, for example in a Year 11 lesson a pupil is asked to explain what he did to change a number from 30 to 29. The good management of pupils has a positive effect on learning: it allows the teachers to concentrate on imparting knowledge. Resources are well used, particularly in Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is developed by the good use of mathematical games. In Year 3/4 pupils work in groups and use games to learn about odd and even numbers, combining coins and counting up to 10. In a small number of lessons questioning is not always fully developed and teachers do not always respond quickly to pupils who have completed their work. The good quality of teaching has a positive effect on the pupils' achievement and progress.

80 The management of the subject is good in Key Stages 1 and 2. There is a recently appointed co-ordinator who is committed to raising standards of achievement. In Key Stages 3 and 4 the management is unsatisfactory. There is no co-ordinator at present and as a result the capacity for future planning and development is fragile. Temporary arrangements are proving satisfactory in the short-term. The school have recognised this situation and is taking action. There is no systematic approach to monitoring within classrooms to raise the quality of teaching throughout the school. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Planning is sound. There are good systems of assessment and these are used satisfactorily to develop pupils' learning and set future targets. The learning resources have been improved and are now satisfactory to meet the needs of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

81 Pupils achieve well in science across the school in relation to their earlier attainment. Achievement is satisfactory in Key Stage 2 and good elsewhere. By the time this year's pupils finish Year 11, completed units suggest over 70 per cent will gain full certification in a nationally recognised certificate of achievement.

82 Achievement by the end of Key Stage 1 is good. Pupils are developing their observational skills well and make good gains in developing the languages and processes of investigation. They remember the difference between forces that push and pull, and are clear that forces are 'how you make things move that cannot walk.' They apply their knowledge successfully to an investigation involving toys that are pushed, pulled and spun. They are then able to demonstrate their findings to others. The more able pupils tabulate their results.

83 Achievement in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory although there are many good features. Pupils are less forgiving of any flaws in lesson design and time is lost in some lessons. They have extended their observational skills to look at types of animals, their features and preferred environments. They identify light sources in domestic environments, and explore the behaviour of light on a range of reflective, transparent and non-reflective surfaces. Some make a secure link between their findings and how safety might be improved at night. There is less recorded evidence of work in the area of physical process than in the other attainment targets.

84 Pupil's achievement is good in Key Stage 3. They learn to sort vertebrates into their five main groups and can form sets, or allocate animals to sets with increasing confidence. They record experiments that show the changes caused by variations in temperature to solids, liquids and gases. There is insufficient evidence of narrative or extended writing in both Key Stages 2 and 3.

85 Pupils achieve well by the end of Key Stage 4, managing between 1 and six units of a nationally recognised certificate of achievement. The school predicts, based on reliable evidence of achievements so far, that over 70 per cent of this Year 11 will achieve full certification. At this stage in the year this represents a good level of achievement. A minority of pupils has demonstrated ability in narrating the course of an investigation, but, as elsewhere, too much reliance is placed on work sheets that limit the opportunities to write. For example in a Key Stage 2 lesson too much was wasted in organising and

managing the lesson.

86 Teaching is good with almost a third of lessons being very good and the occasional satisfactory or unsatisfactory lesson being seen. The many strengths seen in teaching occur in the majority of lessons and the weaknesses are occasional structural flaws in otherwise good lessons that reduce the learning in that lesson alone.

87 Teachers plan imaginative and creative investigations and experiments that stimulate pupils, and, as in the lesson exploring the patterns in ice frozen within balloons or surgical gloves, create a real sense of wonder. Lessons are general well paced although teachers in their enthusiasm occasionally allow them to over run thus risking losing opportunities for consolidation. In Key Stage 1 an imaginative use of resources and recording devices were very well matched to the ability range in the groups, creating good levels of challenge and achievement for all pupils. All science lessons show a good level of understanding of strategies to promote speaking and listening. They demonstrate less confidence in promoting writing for a variety of purposes, as a result too few examples of extended or narrative writing are seen, although a small number are to be seen in the certificate of achievement portfolios at the top of the school. In most lessons support staff promote good behaviour and support learning in effective and well-planned ways. In a few lessons their role is too passive as a result of too little pre-planning by the teachers, but even there they make good use of the opportunities that present themselves.

88 Teachers in this school have been very successful in promoting a very positive attitude towards science, resulting in good levels of participation and achievement across the school. Pupils are excited and challenged by their lessons and learning is generally good. Learning and pupil's attitudes to learning are occasionally less good in Key Stage 2 where they lose concentration, listen less well and occasionally behave inappropriately in parts of less well thought out lessons where more independence and self-control is required.

89 Occasionally lessons make a significant contribution to pupil's sense of awe and wonder, as when exploring the intricate internal patterns in large balloon shaped blocks of ice. Other lessons contribute to cultural awareness when the topic allows them to explore environmental issues and consider our responsibilities to the world around us.

90 The curriculum is broad and largely balanced, within the limits imposed by the poor accommodation. Through good management and invention the effects are minimised, but choices of units of work have to be carefully made as there is only one sink and no heat source in a somewhat overcrowded room. The school achieves success in the certificate of achievement course, again by careful selection of the course requirements, but could not deliver a GCSE course for more able pupils. Accommodation and storage for science is poor and there has been no progress since the last inspection. Resources are satisfactory and enable the current curriculum to be delivered, although there is very little evidence of the use of information technology to support science recording or presentation.

91 The subject is enthusiastically led and makes a positive contribution to the quality of the overall school provision, however there is no realisable plan at present to improve the quality of accommodation and limited evidence of monitoring of teaching. The school successfully minimised the potentially negative effect on pupils' learning by carefully selecting appropriate courses which they are able to teach. A real strength of science in the school is the creation of exciting lessons despite the restrictions imposed by the facilities. Assessment systems are good and are supported by skilled teacher assessment of understanding during lessons, enabling the pace and level of challenge to be well matched and adjusted.

ART

92 In all key stages pupils achievements in art are good. The products of their work are well displayed in their classrooms, in the art room and generally around school. The pupils make good gains in their knowledge skills and understanding in relation to their earlier learning and a few pupils achieve in line with the national expectations at the end of key stages. Art is not taught at Key Stage 4 although suitable arrangements are made for talented pupils to follow courses at a local College of further education where they can continue their studies.

93 Pupils develop a good understanding of the properties of paints, modelling media and fabrics in Key Stages 1 and 2. They learn printing techniques and model more creatively in Key stages 2 and 3. Pupils work in three-dimensions and create large-scale friezes, posters and collage display panels, such as are used to decorate the senior school corridor. Pupils work in the style of different artists. Within the specialist subject teaching in Key Stage 3 pupils explore a wide range of media and learn to weave with a range of fabrics, develop collages using a range of media, create large three-dimensional models and sculptures including those using bicycle parts to good effect. Pupils develop good skills using a range of hand tools and when working in clay paper, plastic, card, fabrics and when making models using junk materials as observed in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. Pupils draw and paint with growing confidence from direct observations of fruit, vegetables and flowers. They are beginning to use sketch books to help them form more detailed drawing.

94 Pupils are excited by the opportunities provided for them and in the majority of lessons they behave very well, complete their tasks and collaborate well and share ideas. They often modify their work as a result. Pupils concentrate very well in their artwork and this was demonstrated very well in a lesson in Year 8 when pupils developed and used good fine motorskills and intense concentration when using scissors to cut out their hand prints in order to contribute to the completion of a large classroom collage which formed a part of an ongoing healthy eating study project.

95 The quality of teaching in lessons is predominantly good because of the quality of planning of the teachers, the good skills and understanding of the subject and their awareness of the individual needs of the pupils. In all three stages teaching is conducted at a lively pace and as a result pupils are motivated and challenged. The pupils respond well, become highly motivated in their desire to produce finished pieces of work often with good attention to colour balance, form texture and fine line detail. The very effective use of direct teaching focuses the pupils' attention to raise the levels of skill. Only in a few lessons when the pace was slower and the expectations less clearly stated was teaching only satisfactory. In these lessons the teachers had to prompt the pupils frequently in order to maintain control and appropriate standards of behaviour. As a result some time was lost in these lessons and the learning of pupils was periodically interrupted.

96 The co-ordinator has worked effectively to provide much more structured curriculum planning than was evident at the last inspection. As a result the curriculum is now more effectively planned in all key stages. This is particularly true in Key Stage 4 when the needs of individual pupils are met in conjunction with local further education colleges. The subject is efficiently managed, and the detailed subject auditing is used well to ensure that priorities are clearly established and used to inform whole school development planning. Levels of resources which were satisfactory at the time of the last inspection, have been maintained and in some respects improved in order to support the developing curriculum. However, the use of information technology to support and extend the art curriculum is in the very early stages of development and as yet is having no significant impact on the learning of the pupils in any key stage. The accommodation is adequate to support the curriculum. The good links established with partner schools and colleges are very effectively used to compensate for any minor deficiencies the school encounters, for example the firing of individual pieces of pottery or clay models.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97 Although the standards of attainment in design and technology are generally below the levels expected for pupils in key stages 1, 2 and 3, there are a few pupils who attained standards appropriate for their age in Year 11 and as a result achieved sound grades on externally accredited courses.

98 Pupils' achievements are good in all key stages and they make good progress in the majority of lessons in all elements of the design and technology curriculum, including food technology. The amount of progress made in lessons is only reduced when pupils are given insufficient opportunities to practise the required skills, for example, when making sandwiches. In all lessons pupils make good progress in their ability to control both hand and power tools, kitchen appliances and a wide range of resources. They develop a good understanding of the properties of resistant and flexible materials. They become increasingly aware of the chemical changes which take place in food during the cooking process, for example when whisking air into sponge cake mixes before baking.

99 The pupils have good attitudes to learning and when motivated and given the opportunity to be practically involved they sustain their concentration well. This was demonstrated well in a number of lessons, for example, when pupils were making photograph frames using plastic materials and when designing health and safety posters in Year 10. Pupils were quite meticulous in organising their materials, making decisions and concentrating for significant periods of time when making boats in Year 1 and when whisking light sponges in Year 9. In the majority of lessons pupils are keen, listening carefully to instructions and watching and learning from the good demonstrations given by their teachers. In a design and technology lesson for example pupils were totally enthralled when watching a demonstration of the liquid welding process in a lesson involving joining plastics before attempting to fulfil the task for themselves. Pupils behave very well and only rarely became boisterous or unsettled when lessons lack pace or interest. Relationships are good. Many opportunities are provided to foster the development of good relationships by the careful planning of the lessons by the teachers and high expectations of behaviour set by all adults.

100 The quality of teaching is consistently good and often very good. In the very good lessons the pace is livelier, pupils work with a greater level of independence and the knowledge and skills of the teachers are used to good effect to extend the understanding and learning of the pupils. Whilst expectations are generally high, the introduction of accredited coursework in Key Stage 4 has had the effect of raising standards even higher. Teachers and classroom support assistants work very well together and provide good role models for the pupils. In a few less satisfactory lessons teachers spend too much time demonstrating the skills required and provide insufficient opportunities for the pupils to experiment for themselves. When this rarely occurred as, for example when making sandwiches, some pupils became disappointed and made less progress. In all key stages the teachers are consistent in their use of a very well organised set of assessment and recording procedures. Good wall charts are used to record the pupils' progress against the planned learning objectives for the particular unit of externally accredited coursework. The involvement of the pupils in this process is developing well and several good examples were observed in food technology lessons. All of the records of progress are meticulously maintained, dated and effectively used by the teachers to inform planning. Good use is made of homework to support learning particularly, in food technology lessons. The teachers, in collaboration with their classroom support assistants, use their knowledge of the subject and the pupils, their teaching skills and their good subject knowledge to raise the level of achievements of the pupils. Teachers and classroom assistants work very well together helping to maintain an environment in which the pupils can learn well and make good progress.

101 The enthusiastic and well-informed subject co-ordinators have worked hard to develop and extend the range of activities offered to the pupils. Statutory requirements are fully met. The school provides a wide range of resources and teachers use their best endeavours to make the best possible use of them in spite of the inadequate specialist accommodation within which they have to work.

102 Good progress has been made since the last inspection in developing a more structured curriculum and one which makes good use of externally accredited courses and vocational experiences. The quality of teaching has continued to improve because of the good knowledge and understanding of the teachers. However no progress on the upgrading of the specialist accommodation in either food technology or design and technology has been made. The school works hard and successfully to minimise the effects of this on the achievements of pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

103 Standards are below what would normally be expected for pupils at the end of each key stage but taking account of prior attainment their current achievements are good.

104 Geography is not taught at Key Stage 4 but there is a geographical element in the work pupils undertake in the Youth Award Scheme. At Key Stage 1 pupils are beginning to have an understanding of direction and position. They understand what “ in front of, beside, behind and next to” means and can follow instructions involving these positions. Scrutiny of work indicates that they can use objects of reference on a simple plan of a familiar location. Higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 2 identify the different layers of a rainforest and, with reminders, can name some of the exotic animals which live there. Others have a basic understanding of land use around them and why it sometimes changes, for example, a new supermarket. People are questioned to find their views. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are able to differentiate between physical and human features and are consolidating their knowledge and understanding of physical features such as, hills, beach, sea and rivers. The concept of changing land use is continued in Key Stage 3 when pupils study changes in land use using farming as an example. They also are beginning to understand changes in employment in terms of primary, secondary and tertiary jobs.

105 Since the previous inspection both standards and the quality of teaching have improved. Assessment is not consistent across the school and does not always inform planning. However, teachers use their knowledge of pupils to ensure they are able to build on their earlier learning. Resources have been increased and are now adequate.

106 Pupils generally demonstrate positive attitudes to their work in geography. Younger pupils in particular enjoy playing a game which relates to direction and this reinforces their learning. When teaching is well organised and resources are interesting, pupils respond with enthusiasm and maintain their concentration throughout. Many pupils work independently and productively and enjoy sharing their work during a plenary session.

107 Teaching is good with some weaknesses in Key Stage 2 when the geographical element of the lesson is not clear and in Key Stage 3 when the lesson is over-dominated by the teacher resulting in few opportunities for independent learning. On the whole lessons are clearly planned with appropriate learning objectives. Both introductory and plenary sessions are used well to assess what has been learned and give feedback to pupils. Good use of differentiated worksheets increases pupils’ confidence and enables them to complete work, often independently. In most lessons support assistants are well deployed but there are occasions when they have little involvement in the lesson, for example when pupils spend considerable time listening to the teachers. All staff relate to pupils well and this increases their confidence and they learn more effectively.

HISTORY

108 Standards achieved in history across the school are below what would be expected at the end of key stages but are good for these pupils considering their prior achievements. No history was observed at Key Stage 2 and it is not taught at Key Stage 4. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have an emerging sense of chronology and understand events that happened yesterday and what they might do tomorrow. During their topic about “Transport” they recognise that an old train set is not like the trains they see today and scrutiny of work shows that they have looked at horse-drawn carriages and different types of houses. Pupils’ work at Key Stage 2 shows that pupils have studied the Romans, Ancient Greeks and the Egyptians looking at clothes, people and houses. At Key Stage 3 watching slides or a video gives pupils a good understanding of earlier periods in British history, such as, the industrial revolution and Medieval Britain and pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding of these periods in history. Their ability to recognise primary and secondary sources of evidence and the value of artefacts is developing.

109 Since the previous inspection when little history was observed, satisfactory improvements have been made in pupils’ achievements and in their teaching. As in geography, assessment procedures need further development. Resources have been improved and are adequate. The teachers use many of their own resources to add to those of the school. There are currently too few school artefacts.

110 Pupils display very good attitudes in history lessons. When resources stimulate their imagination, such as a train set or a video, they concentrate well and listen attentively. Older pupils ask questions and demonstrate enthusiasm for the topic and this contributes to their understanding. All pupils are well behaved and willingly complete worksheets carefully.

111 Teaching is consistently good at both key stages. Well constructed lessons, good subject knowledge and effective questioning support pupils’ learning. Many lessons depend on discussions led by the teacher who encourages all pupils to be involved and good use is made of questions to verify prior knowledge, assess what has been understood within the lesson and also to extend pupils’ thinking. Lively and enthusiastic teaching, along with interesting resources, effectively engages pupils and helps them to acquire new knowledge. When lessons have a good pace and good level of challenge pupils respond positively and make gains in their learning. In a lesson concerned with exploring evidence from the Mary Rose pupils were stimulated by a wide range of resources and source materials. This captured their imagination and good quality discussion and leaning ensued. Good gains were made in their knowledge and understanding as a result, but written work, at the end of the lesson did not challenge all pupils.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

112 Achievement and progress in information technology are good within all key stages. In Key Stage 1 despite limited access to computers, the youngest pupils are making good progress. They make good gains in confidence, mouse control, the recognition of screen symbols and icons and in keying in lessons.

113 By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have become confident users of the computers in the small specialist room. They create collaborative stories using a word-processing programme to create well-presented work. They can open, save and close files and alter spacing, select and change fonts, begin new paragraphs and add punctuation. The lessons seen successfully supported gains in story development and the structuring and punctuation of written work.

114 By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils are able to use a range of graphical ways of representing data, including pie and bar charts. They explore databases in commercial software and sort entries about birds against a range of criteria such as beak shape, size, preferred foods, habitats and nesting sites. They can design simple posters and select and change font size, style and colour in order to make their outputs more

attractive.

115 By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils can complete many of the processes described in Key Stage 3 with more speed and confidence. They can describe the processes they have gone through to achieve their desired effects. They begin to select and argue the preferred type of representation of graphical data, giving sensible reasons.

116 Attitudes towards information technology are always good and very good in some lessons. They expect to enjoy information technology lessons, but also to work hard and speedily. They respond very well to the level of challenge. They usually work in pairs and while keen to be in charge, have learnt to take turns and to respect the machines. They learn well, paying close attention to the teacher, develop an ability to read or recognise messages and instructions on the screen. By Key Stage 2 they are beginning to see errors and to retrace steps in order to correct them. They contribute ideas willingly and are ready to help each other. This learning is contributing positively to their social skills, their self-confidence and their ability to function in the world outside.

117 Teaching is always at least good, and in Key Stages 2,3 and 4 it is often very good. The strengths of teaching are the enthusiasm with which the subject is presented, the very good relationships with pupils which are used to promote high standards of learning and a very good ethos in the room despite its small size. Very good knowledge of pupils and command of the subject result in accurate, continuous assessment of learning and understanding, allowing regular and accurate adjustments to pace and level of challenge. Relationships are very good and self-esteem is promoted by praise, humour and success. There is very good integration of English and maths into the specialist teaching of information technology, but limited teaching of information technology by other teachers in support of the curriculum. This is a product of resources, teacher skills and confidence and a lack of cross-curricula planning. However there has been a significant improvement recently. Much work has been undertaken by the co-ordinator and the head teacher to identify areas for development. This is clearly planned for and finance has been earmarked to fund the development.

118 The curriculum as planned is broad and balanced, although there is less evidence of control and modelling in pupils files than of the other aspects of the curriculum at present. The weakness is the lack of planned development of the use of information technology across the curriculum. This is planned to be more fully developed when the current building programme for an extended classroom is completed and with it the very significant growth in hardware and software is completed. A small number of examples of the use of information technology to support the presentation of writing were observed in the scrutiny of pupils work. Overall the subject has progressed well and the clear plans indicate further improvement this year. There have been sufficient improvements in the achievements of pupils as a result of the developments.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

119 French is taught in Key Stage 3 and pupils are disapplied from the requirements in Key Stage 4. During the inspection only a small number of lessons could be seen. Pupils achievements are sound and satisfactory progress is made. Some pupils make good progress in their ability to speak the language and they listen carefully to improve their pronunciation. Opportunities for written work are more limited and progress for some pupils is just satisfactory. The achievement of pupils has been maintained since the last inspection.

120 Pupils learn a range of vocabulary concerned with colours, numbers, body parts and everyday language. They begin to use words to construct simple sentences and can follow instructions when, for example, identifying facial features and linking them to characters. Written activities are largely concerned with copying sentences or writing single words.

121 Pupils have positive attitudes to French. They enjoy their lessons and join in conversations with enthusiasm. They work well in pairs and groups when identifying and matching words and pictures. They behave well in lessons. Higher attaining pupils willingly take a lead in lessons when reading out instructions for games for example.

122 The quality of teaching is sound and sometimes good. Lessons are well-prepared with a range of methods used to maintain pupils' enthusiasm. There are quick changes of activity and a high emphasis on speaking and listening. Although this reduces the opportunity for written work it enables pupils to make rapid gains in their knowledge of vocabulary and maintains their interest.

123 The planned curriculum is broad but imbalanced, because of the limited opportunities for written work. The co-ordinator has developed the subject appropriately initially enabling pupils to develop confidence, building on their successes in the spoken word. This has led to positive attitudes. Resources are adequate.

MUSIC

124 In all key stages pupils achievements in music lessons are at least good and occasionally for higher attaining pupils is very good in relation to their earlier learning. However, attainment is below levels expected of pupils by the end of each key stage. The majority of pupils in Key Stage 1 are working towards level 1, whilst in Key Stage 2 most of the pupils are working at level 1 with a few working towards level 2 and in Key Stage 3 pupils are working almost equally at levels 2 and 3 with one or two individual pupils approaching level 4.

125 The pupils in Key Stage 1 are beginning to recognise, match and replicate sounds They are aware of tone. They use their voices in different ways, with enjoyment. The majority can repeat short melodic patterns and respond to different moods in music lessons. The younger pupils particularly enjoy the combined use of music and physical movement when singing action songs and rhymes.

126 The pupils continue their good progress and by the end of Key Stage 2 the majority recognise how sounds are made. They can sing confidently, with a sense of melody and expression, and perform both individually and in groups. Pupils use percussion instruments to accompany others maintaining a steady pulse. A few of the higher attaining pupils can order sounds and compose very simple musical structures. These pupils are beginning to represent sounds with written symbols.

127 By the end of Key Stage 3 all pupils have made good progress and can recognise and explore the use of a variety of sounds. They demonstrate this well in individual lessons and working in large groups with peripatetic teachers. They enjoy the lively appraisal sessions and listen very carefully to music from a variety of cultures. Pupils sing in time with a sense of melody and maintain a steady pulse. They identify rhythms and repeat them when following either guitar or recorded music. A few pupils have an understanding of notation. Twelve of these pupils are successfully learning to play the recorder. They demonstrate their skills well when performing in music groups at the beginning of whole school assemblies. The extra curricular clubs provided at lunchtime give the pupils further opportunities to develop and practice their skills.

128 The pupils enjoy their lessons. In Key Stage 1 they have great fun, clapping rhythms in time with songs from Paddock Farm. Pupils in Year 7 became totally engaged in the musical experience when working alongside a visiting musician and developed musical scenes around the music.

129 Pupils behave well and sustain their concentration in lessons in all key stages and this has a positive impact on the standards they achieve, for example when appraising and performing alongside

recorded music around a topic of animals. The behaviour in lessons is good because the pupils are keen and highly motivated by the good teaching.

130 The quality of teaching is good and occasionally in Year 1 it is very good. It is also very good in lessons where teachers are supported by a peripatetic musician. Teachers plan their work carefully and provide a good range of resources to stimulate the pupils. The pace of learning in all lessons is brisk and teachers have high expectations of the pupils. All teachers make very good use of visiting specialist music teachers, published programmes and recorded music in order to stimulate and motivate the pupils. The strategy is very effective in raising standards of achievement. Music is not taught in Key Stage 4. The curriculum is very well planned and statutory requirements are fully met. The well structured musical environment created in the school has enabled the new subject co-ordinator and the peripatetic music teacher to continue to move the subject forward and ensure that the pupils experience continuity and progression in their learning. The new subject co-ordinator has enthusiastically undertaken her role. All of the staff have maintained the quality of music developed since the last inspection in spite of staff changes and have worked together to improve the quality and range of resources available.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

131 Pupils of all ages achieve well in physical education, they make good progress across a range of activities and some attain standards similar to those of pupils of the same age nationally. They achieve particularly well in swimming. This has been maintained since the last inspection.

132 In Key Stage 1 pupils develop their spatial awareness in gymnastics lessons when travelling around the hall. They develop balances using various body parts and link them into simple sequences. They successfully transfer these skills to small apparatus such as benches. Progress is good and they learn well, developing their skills of fine and gross motor control.

133 Games skills are developed in Key Stage 2. Pupils improve their ability to strike a moving ball. They develop their throwing and catching skills and learn to co-operate effectively in team games and when working in pairs.

134 Gymnastic skills develop well in Key Stage 3, as pupils build on their previous learning. In formal gymnastic lessons they develop their vaulting skills. Learning to control their movements and land effectively. The pupils develop their ability to link movements into sequences. In one class a group of pupils worked hard to develop synchronised movements in jumping, balancing and rolling during gymnastics lessons. Pupils in Key Stage 3 attain well in swimming with most reaching age appropriate standards, many can swim full lengths of the pool using a variety of recognised strokes.

135 During the week of the inspection no Key Stage 4 lessons were observed and there was insufficient evidence on which to base judgements about achievement. This was because lessons are planned at the beginning and end of the week.

136 Pupils throughout the school have positive attitudes to physical education, they listen carefully to instructions and try hard to improve their performance. They co-operate well in pairs and team games and this makes a positive contribution to their social development. Their attitude to the subject makes a considerable contribution to their achievement.

137 The quality of teaching is constantly good in all key stages. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations which they use effectively to challenge and motivate pupils. Good use is made of this knowledge, for example when demonstrating vaults in gymnastics. Lessons are well organised, resources are readily available and there are clear objectives.

138 The curriculum is very well planned in Key Stages 1 and 2 and has improved considerably in Key Stages 3 and 4. A very varied programme is taught throughout the school enabling pupils of all ages to succeed in a wide range of activities. Assessment procedures are being modified to reflect national changes in the curriculum and the co-ordinator has worked very hard, and successfully to develop the curriculum.

139 The subject is well led by the co-ordinator although opportunities for monitoring teaching are not fully in place. Monitoring of planning and some limited observations of lessons takes place. Staffing, accommodation and resources are good and these are positive features of the progress made by pupils

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

140 Only a small number of lessons were observed during the inspection period. Pupils' work was scrutinised and a group of older pupils were interviewed about their work.

141 There is good achievement in religious education in all key stages. Progress in lessons seen was satisfactory and at times good. In one lesson progress was unsatisfactory for a minority of pupils.

142 In Key Stage 1 the pupils understand that there are special times, for example birthdays. They are given opportunities to celebrate when they learn about the Hindu Festival of Divali. The pupils are becoming familiar with religious symbols, such as the cross in Christianity.

143 In Key Stage 2 the pupils develop their understanding of Christianity and other religions. They understand that Christians prepare for special times including Christmas and Easter; and that Muslims prepare for Ramadan. They know stories from the Bible, for example the story of Moses. They know that some people belong to different religions including Judaism and Islam. Pupils are starting to think and reflect about what they say and write which may hurt or upset others.

144 In Key Stage 3 the pupils recognise that there are different places of worship, such as churches or mosques. With help, they identify parts of the mosque including the Maret and Mihrab. The pupils understand that there are similarities between faith groups as in the ceremonies of marriage. They compare and contrast marriage in the major religions. In learning from religion the pupils think about moral topics like injustice. They express opinions about racism and homelessness.

145 In Key Stage 4 the pupils follow an accredited course as part of the Youth Award Scheme. Pupils show good skills in carrying out guided research on a major world religion. The pupils studying Islam know that there is a special book and that Muslims wash their hands before reading it. They know that Muslims pray five times a day, using a prayer mat. The pupils studying Buddhism understand that there are special buildings including temples and monasteries. In discussion the pupils explain what things are common to each religion, for example sacred writings and prayer. The pupils have interviewed a faith leader and the local Salvation Army Officer, asking their own questions. This has given them insight in to the life of a religious leader. In 'Faith in Action', the pupils have studied Martin Luther King and Helen Keller. The pupils know about the problems faced by black people in America and the actions taken by Martin Luther King to overcome them. They express opinions about the situation and how it was unfair. When looking at Helen Keller, the pupils recognise the great faith that Anne Sullivan had when she worked with Helen to ensure that she overcame her difficulties.

146 The school has made very good progress since the last inspection. There is good quality planning well related to the local authority agreed syllabus. Resources have been developed to include artefacts from the religions studied. There has been a little monitoring of teaching by the co-ordinator. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject have improved.

147 Religious education makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' literacy development. Pupils are given opportunities to read and write but extended writing for the higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 3 is not well developed. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The pupils learn about a Greater Being and they are given opportunities to think and reflect. Moral and social matters are discussed. Pupils learn about Christian and other cultural heritages.

148 In the very small number of lessons seen the pupils' attitudes to religious education were satisfactory. In one lesson the attitudes were unsatisfactory. The older pupils interviewed about their work showed very positive attitudes. The majority of pupils listen to each other and share their views, for example in Year 7 when talking about homeless people. There are however a small number of pupils who do not listen to each other and call out; this has an adverse effect on the progress made. The majority of pupils relate well to their teachers and carry out instructions well. The older pupils are proud of the work they have carried out. They explain what they have done, listening very carefully to each other. All the pupils interviewed said how much they enjoyed their work.

149 The quality of teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory. However, it varies from good to unsatisfactory. In the lesson where the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory class control was inconsistent and work did not challenge the higher attainers. As a result of the quality of teaching the rate of progress for a number of pupils was unsatisfactory. In the other lessons the teacher was consistent in her approach to discipline and provided work that challenged the pupils, for example, using dictionaries to write their own lists of special things at home. Good use was made of the pupils' own experiences, when asking if they had seen people who might be homeless. In a Year 7 lesson the teacher led a good discussion session, which resulted in pupils talking about warmth, love and security at home. The teacher developed this well, first to find out how pupils would feel if these things were missing in their lives and then how they thought others would feel, for example homeless people. In the lessons where the quality of teaching was good this had a positive impact on the good progress made by pupils.

150 There is good co-ordination of the subject. The co-ordinator has worked very hard since the last inspection. There is good planning in the subject. The school has improved resources and these are used well to enhance learning. There is no formal assessment in the subject and as a result the school cannot guarantee step-by-step development in the subject for individual pupils. There is no systematic approach to monitoring to improve the quality of teaching throughout the school. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The subject is enhanced by visits out to local churches and a mosque. A variety of Christian leaders visit the school. Visits from leaders of other religions and faith groups do not yet take place.