

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **BRADFIELDS SCHOOL**

Chatham, Kent

LEA area: Medway

Unique reference number: 191116

Headteacher: Mr P J Harris

Reporting inspector: Mr T Richardson  
16500

Dates of inspection: 28 Feb – 3 March 2000

Inspection number: 191116  
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special: Moderate Learning Difficulties

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 - 19

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Churchill Avenue  
Chatham  
Kent

Postcode: ME5 0LB

Telephone number: 01634 683990

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs R Menzies

Date of previous inspection: October 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Tom Richardson	Registered inspector	Music	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further?
			How well are pupils and students taught? How well is the school led and managed? The Fieldview Unit
Michael Hudson	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
			How well does the school care for its pupils and students?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents
Laurie Thomas	Team inspector	Geography; history	
		Personal, social and health education	
		Religious education	
Christine Humphries	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
		Art; design and technology	
Ian Tatchell	Team inspector	Mathematics	
		Physical education	
Jennifer Taylor	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils and students?
		Information technology	Further education
Graham Todd	Team inspector	English, including English as an additional language	
		Modern languages	

The inspection contractor was:

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The Registrar  
Inspection Quality Division  
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London WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Bradfields is a community special school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties aged 11 to 19. It is larger than similar schools with 182 pupils on roll, and almost twice as many boys as girls. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the three pupils with English as an additional language are able to participate fully in lessons. All pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs and 29 per cent are eligible for free school meals. The school makes provision for 8 pupils with autism in the Fieldview Unit; has a special unit for pupils with behavioural difficulty; and 41 students over the age of 16 attend the Further Education (FE) unit within the buildings of Upbury Manor School, some five miles distant. Some higher attaining pupils at age 16 transfer to local Colleges of Further Education, most other students transfer to the school's provision and are joined by a proportion of students who transfer from other special schools. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is well below national averages as a result of their special educational needs. It is, therefore, inappropriate to judge their attainments against those of pupils in mainstream schools.

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

Bradfields is a good school. Good teaching promotes good learning so that pupils achieve well and gain a good range of nationally recognised qualifications by the age of 16. Standards are high and improving year on year. The school has very good leadership and management and provides good value for money. The FE department is in very poor accommodation and has not improved at the same rate as the rest of the school.

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

- Enables pupils to achieve high standards and gain relevant qualifications by the age of sixteen.
- Has very good leadership, supported by an effective governing body, that makes sure all school improvement is in the best interests of the pupils.
- Provides a secondary curriculum, with good departmental structure and specialist subject teaching.
- Provides good teaching in most subjects that leads to good learning and progress for pupils. Teachers have high expectations, plan well to meet individual needs, assess their pupils effectively and are supported by good quality learning support assistants.
- Provides a strong pastoral support network that enables pupils to develop self-esteem and confidence. Pupils have good behaviour and attitudes in class.
- Makes very good provision for pupils with autism.
- Encourages good relationships and social development.
- Makes very good use of internal accommodation at the Churchill Avenue site.
- Provides very good office administration and exemplary documents for the annual reviews of Statements of Special Educational Needs.

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

- The quality of education, accommodation, health and safety, and resources provided in the FE department.
- Communication with parents so they are more fully informed and involved in the life of the school.
- The level of minor verbal and physical taunting.
- The curriculum, so that weaknesses in music, information technology, tutor time and modern languages are rectified.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Since the last inspection in October 1996, the school has made very good improvement. Good progress overall has taken place against the key issues identified then but there is still some work to do on the provision of homework; the communication with parents; and in the subjects of information technology and design and technology. Very good progress has taken place in the more important areas of teaching, learning and standards. Teaching has improved significantly in quality and, as a result, pupils' progress and learning has also improved. Reading, handwriting and spelling are now taught formally and well. There are clear targets for improvement and higher standards set in the school development plan, and these are met routinely. Pupils'

progress in English has improved from poor to good and standards in mathematics and science have improved significantly. The annual review procedures are now exemplary. There is a year on year increase in the results of accreditation at the end of Key Stage 4 and very good provision for autism has been introduced. There is now an established culture for school improvement and the school is in a strong position to sustain continued development.

## 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 14	by age 16	by age 19	Key
Speaking and listening		B	B	C	very good A
Reading		B	B	C	Good B
Writing		B	B	C	Satisfactory C
Mathematics		B	B	C	Unsatisfactory D
Personal, social and health education		B	B	B	Poor E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*		B	B	B	

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

The school is successful in enabling pupils to achieve well and the data from their examination and test results show that standards are rising. Pupils make good progress over long periods of time and the school adds value by raising the level of attainment for most pupils more than would usually be expected in similar special schools. The 1999 National Curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 show that in English, mathematics and science there is an increase in standards, with pupils attaining higher levels than in other years. This improvement in test results is also seen at the end of Key Stage 4. Pupils take Certificate of Education courses in a range of subjects and there is an increase in the proportion of pupils attaining merit or distinction grades. The 1999 results show that the school's target was exceeded and 36 per cent of pupils were awarded distinction. In response to this level of success, the school is now preparing to introduce GCSE courses from September 2000. However, this rate of improvement slows down in the FE department and most students do not build on their previous success at the same rate as in the rest of the school. Pupils make good progress in their personal development. The school is able to support a wide variety of special needs and this has a fundamental impact that leads pupils to fuller access of the curriculum. As a result, their self-esteem improves, pupils become confident in class, and they become proud of their achievements and motivated to learn more.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Pupils are usually polite, courteous and aware of the impact of their actions on others. There are instances of verbal abuse and some minor bullying that makes other pupils feel uncomfortable.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The school is successful in raising self-esteem and confidence. Relationships are good.
Attendance	Good. Better than in similar special schools



The school has an effective pastoral support network that promotes confidence and enables pupils to raise their self-esteem. This results in pupils being motivated to attend school and concentrate on their learning. Pupils enjoy coming to school and most are willing to learn. They respond well to praise and take pride in what they do. Pupils help each other and work successfully together in group activities. The school's measures to combat minor bullying and instances of mild taunting are not fully effective.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14	aged 14-16	aged over 16
Lessons seen overall	good	good	satisfactory

*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 judged to be good or better in 73 per cent of all lessons, very good in 24 per cent of lessons and at least satisfactory in 97 per cent of all lessons. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The quality of learning for pupils matches the quality of teaching provided. A particular strength is the subject knowledge of the specialist teachers. This promotes high expectations and leads pupils to increase their motivation so that they are keen to learn and achieve more. Another strength is provided through the good quality of the learning support assistants. Very good teaching is provided for pupils with autism in the Fieldview Unit and the teacher in charge works very hard indeed to ensure that individual needs are met. The quality of teaching and learning in the Further Education department is satisfactory, coursework is planned effectively but there are occasions when activities provided show lower expectations for what the students should be able to do. Inspectors judge the teaching of mathematics and physical education to be very good. There is consistently good teaching in English, science, art, food technology, geography, history, information technology, French and personal, social and health education. Teaching is satisfactory in design and technology and religious education. Teaching in music is unsatisfactory as insufficient regard is given to meeting the special educational needs of the pupils in the lessons.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a full secondary curriculum with specialist subject teaching.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Good provision is made for social and moral development. Provision for spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. There is a good pastoral network that supports pupils' personal and emotional development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good standards of care. Pupils feel secure and happy in school.

A good range of accreditation is provided and there is effective emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Provision of specialist speech and language tuition is a very good initiative as is the 'setting' of pupils into ability groups. Provision of pastoral care is effective in raising self-esteem and confidence and promoting personal development. The FE department curriculum does not build sufficiently well on that of the school. Most parents are rightly pleased with the school and the difference it makes in the life of their children. The school provides insufficient information for parents and there are too few opportunities for them to be involved in the life of the school. There are times when parents are not sufficiently informed of progress and there are occasions during the day when parents are unable to contact the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. There is a clear vision for continued improvement, shared by all staff. Good delegation enables the deputy head and senior staff to effectively support the headteacher in school development.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well and have a good knowledge of what the school does well and how it should improve.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Pupils' achievements and school developments are evaluated and the information used to set targets for raising standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school development plan is aimed at improving the quality of education for pupils and this is supported by careful budgeting.

The organisation of the school into departments is effective in aiding internal communication and the involvement of all staff in school improvement. The very good office staff and administrative procedures ensure smooth day to day running of the school and secure financial control. There are exemplary procedures for reviewing Statements of Special Educational Needs. Finances are used effectively to raise standards and ensure best value. The weakness is the involvement of senior managers in the FE department, where the rate of change has not kept up with rest of the school. The very poor accommodation for FE is detrimental to the quality of education provided.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pupils are encouraged to take an active part in school life</li> <li>• The school promotes positive attitudes</li> <li>• The school provides an atmosphere of one big family</li> <li>• Parents are made to feel welcome</li> <li>• Pupils with autism are enabled to make good progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide more information to parents about the work of the FE unit; the work of the school; and how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• The amount of homework given</li> <li>• A stronger partnership between the school and parents</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with the positive comments made by parents and confirm that the school meets successfully the wide range of individual needs present in the pupils. There is a need for improved communication between the school and home so that parents can have more information about the progress their children make, the partnership between school and parents can be strengthened, and clarity regarding the setting of homework has yet to be achieved.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. All pupils and students have special educational needs that make it inappropriate to compare their achievements with national averages and expectations. The school is successful in enabling pupils to achieve well and the data from their examination and test results show that standards are rising. This improvement in standards is happening much faster in Key Stages 3 and 4 than in the Further Education (FE) department. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils made satisfactory progress overall, with unsatisfactory progress in two out of every ten lessons observed. This is no longer the case. Inspectors judged the learning and progress made by pupils to be at least satisfactory in almost every lesson and good progress was observed in more than seven out of every ten lessons seen. Inspectors analysed the current work of pupils and compared it with their previous work and the achievements recorded in their annual reviews. This shows that pupils make good progress over long periods of time and that the school adds value by raising the level of attainment for most pupils - more than would usually be expected in similar special schools. This 'added value' is now being demonstrated in the improving examination and test results for the school.
2. In 1998, National Curriculum assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 showed that in English, most pupils attained Level 2. The 1999 results in English show that most pupils still attain Level 2, but that a significant proportion attain the higher Level 3. In mathematics, the 1998 National Curriculum assessments show Level 3 to be the highest level attained. The 1999 results show this has increased so that some pupils now attain the higher Level 4. In science, results have also increased so that the 1999 National Curriculum assessments now show a minority of pupils attaining successfully Level 5, the average expected for their age. This improvement in test results is also seen at the end of Key Stage 4. Pupils take Certificate of Education courses in a range of subjects and there is a year on year increase in the proportion of pupils attaining merit or distinction grades. The school is using this data very effectively to set targets for improvement in standards. For example, in 1998/99 the target was set for 22 per cent of Year 10 pupils to attain distinction in their English Certificate of Education. The 1999 results show that this target was exceeded and 36 per cent of pupils were awarded distinction. New targets have been set. These are suitably challenging, and the school is rightly setting the expectation that the achievement levels of pupils will continue to rise over time. In response to this level of success, the school is now preparing to introduce GCSE courses from September 2000 to promote even higher standards of attainment.
3. Pupils make good progress in their personal development. The school provides a pastoral network through form tutors, heads of department and a pastoral manager, who is also a trained counsellor, responsible for enabling pupils to manage their emotional difficulties. This is very effective provision that is successful with many pupils in reducing their levels of anxiety and frustration so that they are able to take maximum advantage of learning opportunities in class. A large proportion of pupils enters the school with extreme difficulty in communication and delayed language development. The provision made for a specialist speech and language teacher is most effective in directly addressing these learning needs and enabling pupils to access their lessons. There is a behaviour unit where specialist support and guidance are provided to help pupils and teachers to manage difficult behaviours so that learning is not disrupted. Very good provision is made for pupils with autism in the Fieldview Unit that is successful in improving the communication, socialisation and learning standards for these pupils. Good use is also made of external specialists such as speech and language therapists. As a result, the school is able to support a wide variety of special needs and this has a fundamental impact on the development of pupils. The effective targeting of support to meet this wide variety of individual needs leads pupils to fuller access to the curriculum. As a result, their self-esteem improves, pupils become confident in class, and they become proud of their achievements and motivated to learn more. Parents informed inspectors that the school does well to promote the social skills, confidence and self-esteem of their children and the success of this was clearly seen during the inspection. For example, a pupil previously elective-mute has been nurtured to communicate and, by the end of the inspection, was sufficiently confident to greet inspectors spontaneously in the morning. Inspectors held formal discussions with pupils and were impressed with the assured style in which pupils spoke, their politeness, and their good manners.

4. In English at both key stages, pupils' achievement in lessons is very rarely less than good and at times it is very good. Progress overall, including that over time at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is good. From a very low base level of achievement when pupils enter the school, they make rapid progress in confidence and self-esteem, particularly in their speaking and listening and reading skills. Consistently good teaching, using a structured approach at both Key Stages 3 and 4, has brought about significant improvements in reading, spelling and writing skills. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have a broad range of good practical skills in English, and are well prepared for the next stage of their education or employment. They retrieve information from a variety of books or other sources, write for a variety of audiences, and improve the quality of their work through drafting and re-drafting. Many enjoy writing poetry and creating extended pieces of prose to convey their feelings about topics of interest; for example, autobiographies, book reviews and poetry about dinosaurs and pirates.
5. In mathematics, all pupils are achieving standards that are appropriate for their abilities. Most pupils make good progress in developing their numeracy, and higher attaining pupils also make good progress in other areas of the subject. In both key stages the very good quality of teaching provided contributes well to the good progress these pupils make. At the end of Key Stage 4, all current pupils are on target to attain certification in the Edexcel course they follow and some higher attaining pupils are expected to attain foundation level GCSE. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils read, record and measure accurately using rulers and scales. They use their understanding of place value to multiply whole numbers by 10 and use a variety of mental and written computations when solving number problems, adding and subtracting to two decimal places.
6. Achievement in science is good across the school and good in comparison with similar schools. Pupils have a good grasp of technical vocabulary and can label transparent, translucent and opaque materials. They learn about states of matter and show, in role-play, how molecules move in solids, liquids and gases. During Key Stage 4, pupils continue to develop their knowledge and understanding through work on forces and explain how energy is transferred from a person's arm, to a bow string and then an arrow. They learn more detail of atomic structure and chemical processes. Lower attaining pupils learn about weather systems and measure temperature and wind direction with a little support. They record and display this, along with the current internet forecast, in an open area as a resource for others.
7. In art, pupils achieve good standards. In Key Stage 4, in response to good teaching, the current pupils are on target to attain the certificate of education in the course they follow. Pupils are taught design and technology as two separate subjects. One subject is based on the use of resistant materials, such as wood and plastic. The other subject is based on food technology and textiles. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards in design and technology, and good standards in food technology, over the time they are in the school. Pupils in food technology at Key Stage 4 are on target to attain certification in the courses they follow. Pupils achieve above expected standards in geography over the time they are in school. At Key Stage 4, progress is good and pupils are on target to achieve appropriate certification in the ASDAN Youth Award Scheme. Pupils achieve good standards and make good progress in history.
8. In information and communications technology (ICT), pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 achieve good and often very good standards in the technical aspects of operating computers and software. A control technology option for pupils in Key Stage 4 shows them achieving very good standards in their command of the equipment and their knowledge of aspects of control software, and it is hoped to develop a GCSE course for some of these pupils. However, there are aspects of the ICT curriculum that are not taught, such as control technology and monitoring at Key Stage 3 and other aspects, such as handling information, that are not taught sufficiently systematically. Hence, despite the good teaching, achievement is only satisfactory for most pupils.
9. Pupils achieve well in French, and make good progress in their lessons. Progress over longer periods of time is satisfactory overall as pupils find it difficult to remember from week to week what they have learnt. Standards in music are too low. The quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory, resources are poor and pupils are missing the opportunity to develop their musical skills and extend their appreciation of the music they hear in life. Pupils achieve higher than expected standards in physical education; they have maintained the very high standards and very good progress reported in the last inspection. In Key Stages 3

and 4, pupils of all abilities are taught very well and make very good progress so that some pupils are reaching standards in line with national expectations. Progress and standards in religious education are at least satisfactory in all key stages. In Key Stage 3, pupils show appropriate understanding of Christianity. Pupils develop their knowledge of religious celebrations, beliefs and traditions and relate them to family experiences for those of Muslim, Jewish, Christian and Hindu beliefs. At Key Stage 4, pupils follow the ASDAN Youth Award Scheme. They carry out an in-depth study of a moral issue. For each of these issues, pupils research how the major world religions regard and address such matters.

10. In personal, social and health education pupils achieve above the levels expected for their age. They follow a relevant curriculum for personal and social development that contains sex education, substance misuse, health education and careers advice.
11. The students in the FE department do not build on their previous success at the same rate as in the rest of the school. Those on the one year access course make good progress, particularly in independence and vocational skills. The second group has a vocational focus and follows the same courses as the access group, but at a slower pace. This programme is not sufficiently broad, focussed, or progressive and the effectiveness of the provision for these students is unsatisfactory. The third group is generally composed of students with lower attainment. They have the possibility of three years in the FE department and follow the ASDAN Towards Independence Course. About half these students have higher support needs than the majority of pupils at Bradfields, and some have transferred from other special schools at the end of Key Stage 4. The course is appropriately structured and students make satisfactory progress, but there are lower expectations for what these students can do and a minority are insufficiently challenged and make progress at a slower rate than expected. Several of the higher attaining students have good reading and writing skills at an almost adult level, and the majority are able to record and interpret written information. Lower attaining students count small amounts of money with support and set the table correctly for a given number of people. Other pupils draw and interpret graphs of class members' weights and begin to read numbers from a scale marked in 10s. In a computer lesson, they show that they are familiar with a basic art program, navigating its idiosyncratic menu system and saving work successfully, but this is a much more basic task than those undertaken by much younger pupils in Key Stage 3. In religious education, they show that they are very familiar with the story of Christ and significant times and events associated with the Christian calendar. They identify cooking ingredients and shop for these in local supermarkets. They are useful kitchen helpers and develop appropriate skills in line with their abilities. Progress in personal development is good, and students demonstrate this in informal settings. They are welcoming, charming and helpful to visitors, recognising that they might need help and information. They talk about themselves and their interests and ask sensible questions to find out more about others.

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

12. Since the last inspection, pupils' attitudes have continued to be good, and this enhances their learning. In lessons seen during the inspection, the attitudes of pupils were judged to be good in 81 per cent and very good in 26 per cent. Attitudes and behaviour were at least satisfactory in 99 per cent of all lessons seen. The school has an effective pastoral support network and ethos that promotes confidence and enables pupils to raise their self-esteem. This results in pupils being motivated to attend school and concentrate on their learning. A number of pupils have had negative experiences in other schools, but when they enter Bradfields School they respond quickly to the calm, caring and constructive atmosphere it promotes. They enjoy coming to school and most, including those who travel several miles, greet staff cheerfully on arrival. Although there are some inconsistencies between classes, pupils' attitudes to lessons are good, sometimes very good, and they are willing to learn. They are enthusiastic, respond well to praise and take pride in what they do, their good presentation of work in mathematics being an example. They listen carefully, follow instructions and sustain concentration for long periods of time. Pupils help each other and work successfully together in group activities and projects like team enterprise. Most pupils are courteous, respectful and pleasantly inquisitive with visitors to whom they are happy to speak and show examples of their work.
13. Pupils' behaviour is good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. On entry to the school, pupils are set clear and realistic targets to follow and, once they have settled into the new regime, their behaviour noticeably improves. The great majority of pupils are well behaved for most of the time, and any challenging or disruptive behaviour, both during lessons and in and about the school, is well handled by staff. Some pupils are concerned about verbal abuse and minor, but regular, bullying. During the

inspection there were a number of instances when inappropriate language was used between pupils, some of which was racist and sexist in tone. The school has effective procedures to deal with such instances, but pupils feel they are not implemented with sufficient rigour to make permanent change and stop this behaviour happening. Inspectors agree that the school could do more to demonstrate more clearly the kinds of verbal abuse that will not be tolerated. Also, a number of pupils define normal adolescent interaction as bullying and the school needs to help them more clearly define the anti-social behaviours that require sanctions. Pupils respect personal and school property such as equipment, displays and potted plants. At lunch, pupils are well-mannered and patient while waiting to be served, making it a pleasant social occasion. Exclusions in the last school year were due mainly to one pupil.

14. The personal development of pupils and their relationships have improved since the last inspection and are now good. Pupils welcome individual and collective responsibility and they play an active part in the school's daily routines. They are set progressively challenging duties as they move through the school and they undertake these with pride and diligence. These and other immediate tasks successfully foster pupils' self-assurance, purpose and esteem, providing them with a positive sense of community and helping to prepare them for contemporary life. Charitable work, educational visits and business links further enhance pupils' personal development and enable them to express measured views on such diverse subjects as drug abuse, conservation and law and order.
15. The attitude of staff to pupils is exemplary. Relationships between them are relaxed, sincere and trusting and this greatly increases pupils' confidence and self respect. In lessons, pupils listen attentively to what others have to say and generally appreciate views and values that differ from their own. Outside the classroom, most pupils interact successfully with peers of their own sex. Relationships between boys and girls are positive and there are many instances of harmonious and constructive friendships. However, because the boys predominate in numbers and many are more boisterous than the girls, there are occasions when relationships in the playground are strained.
16. Attendance is good, with rates of attendance and unauthorised absence in the last school year being better than the national average for this type of school. Two pupils largely determined the rate of unauthorised absence. Registration is conducted promptly and effectively and provides an orderly start to each session. Most pupils are punctual, although those who travel several miles to school are sometimes held up by traffic. Good attendance and punctuality have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Absence rates are published in both the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents.

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

17. The quality of teaching is good and leads to a good quality of learning for pupils. During the inspection, teaching was judged to be good or better in almost three quarters of all lessons, very good in a quarter of all lessons and at least satisfactory in virtually every lesson. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. At that time, more than 20 per cent of lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. This figure has now decreased and teaching is unsatisfactory in only 3 per cent of all lessons. There is a good level of consistency in the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stages 3 and 4 and, in all departments of the school, the quality of learning for pupils matches the quality of teaching provided. A particular strength in teaching is the subject knowledge of the specialist teachers. This promotes high expectations and leads pupils to increase their motivation so that they are keen to learn and achieve more, the results of which are clearly evident in the rising standards in examination and test results at the end of each key stage. Another strength is provided through the good quality of the learning support assistants. Through the good practice of deploying assistants to specific subjects and the good quality of training provided, they have developed their expertise and work as an effective team with teachers to ensure that pupils are supported in their learning. Very good teaching is provided for pupils with autism in the Fieldview Unit and the teacher in charge works very hard indeed to ensure that individual needs are met. The quality of teaching and learning in the Further Education department is satisfactory, coursework is planned effectively but there are occasions when activities provided show lower expectations for what the students should be able to do. Inspectors judge the teaching of mathematics and physical education to be very good. There is consistently good teaching in English, science, art, food technology, geography, history, information technology, French and personal, social and health education. Teaching is satisfactory in design and technology and religious education. Teaching in music is unsatisfactory as insufficient

regard is given to meeting the special educational needs of the pupils in the lessons.

18. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding of how to present their subject. For example, in science, the teacher's knowledge led to excitement communicating itself to pupils so that they became motivated and involved by the detail of topics, and this helped them to make good progress. There was also very focussed work on enabling pupils to understand complex topics, and the teacher was able to rephrase explanations and provide a wide variety of imaginative approaches to consolidating the pupils' knowledge, from role play, through humorous mnemonics, to individually tailored 'Blockbuster' quizzes. Basic skills are taught very well in Key Stages 3 and 4 and teachers use a variety of lessons to promote reading, spelling, writing and numeracy. This is also helped by the partnership and teamwork with learning support assistants working in the classroom. They have good skills, particularly in the teaching of reading and spelling and help pupils to enjoy their lessons. Good speaking and listening skills and the learning of key vocabulary are reinforced in most subjects; for example, in geography when talking about the Brazilian rain forest. Teachers plan lessons well and make effective links between the subject knowledge to be taught and the targets for learning identified on pupils' individual education plans. This is at its best in the Fieldview Unit where a mixture of academic and personal learning objectives are set clearly for each session. These are shared with all staff and known to each pupil. Detailed assessment then takes place and the teacher uses this assessment to plan again what should be included in the next lesson. As a result, pupils make continued and steady progress and the contents of the lesson are always well matched to the needs of each pupil.
19. Teachers have high expectations. In English, there are high expectations of pupils' involvement, engagement, performance and effort and these help to encourage good behaviour and underpin pupils' achievement and enjoyment. In mathematics, the level of expectations is high, and work is presented in clear logical small steps so that pupils are kept moving their thinking forward. In the FE department, expectations are too low and students, for example, who have previously used writing frames to order their thoughts and present their writing in Key Stage 4 are set cutting and sticking tasks to do as a follow up to the lesson. Teachers use a good range of methods and teaching styles to match the variety of learning needs shown by the pupils. For example, in English, effective use is made of questions to make pupils think and therefore develop their ideas. Teachers use praise well and encourage pupils to work hard with the selective use of merits for good work and effort. A great deal of emphasis is placed on specific pupils to encourage their confidence and self esteem. For example, in food technology, the teacher and learning support assistant motivate the pupils with selective praise, carefully monitor the progress made and move them through their tasks providing a range of teaching aids to give pupils ideas and to support them when they are describing what they have done.
20. Throughout the school, pupils are managed well. In mathematics, for example, teachers manage pupils very well and pupils quickly settle to the work planned and enjoy the activities set and the opportunities to contribute during oral numeracy sessions. As a result of good behaviour management, lessons are free of disruption, pupils are rarely distracted, and extend their concentration for long periods of time to finish their work.. In science, pupils are encouraged to give good behaviour by their overwhelming desire to participate in interesting learning activities, such as watching crystals develop under a microscope, or to answer questions in a quiz. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good and this also helps pupils to manage their own behaviour and respect the wishes of their teachers and fellow pupils. For example, in information technology, relationships are very positive, staff like pupils and know them well, giving each one appropriate individual support. This motivates and involves pupils very well and they work hard to produce good work and are proud of what they do. Also, in French, the good relationships between the teacher and pupils enables pupils to participate confidently, and persevere with their efforts. Humour is well used to gain pupils' interest and help them to gain confidence when speaking the language.
21. Teachers make good use of time, support staff and learning resources. In a lesson on drugs misuse, good use was made of the community policeman to provide local knowledge that made the impact of the lesson meaningful and relevant. Good use was also made of the skills of a learning support assistant, qualified in first aid, to teach pupils how to respond to an injury. Teachers keep a good pace to their lessons and provide an appropriate framework of time to motivate pupils to complete their coursework successfully before taking their assessments or examinations. In art, the use of good quality resources focuses attention and inspires pupils to do well. For example, in a Year 8 lesson, good use of reference material and the selective introduction of a taped story and music as an accompaniment, set the mood and created the right

atmosphere for learning. In food technology, time is well used and the teacher is alert to pupils completing tasks quickly so they can be moved on to the next activity. There is good access to computers but these are not yet used sufficiently to support work in most subjects. There is also much too little use of information and communications technology to help pupils overcome their special needs or access the curriculum more effectively, for example through the use of talking word-processors or multimedia software. Teachers make good use of assessment, for example, in information technology, work is very well monitored and assessed on a day to day basis, so that errors or misunderstandings are usually quickly corrected. In physical education, activities are well planned and pupils' achievements are assessed throughout the lessons and recorded in individual records and reports. This information is then used to organise how pupils are grouped so that each group can be taught according to its needs. Homework is set appropriately and usually reinforces or extends what has been taught in class. There is, however, a need to clarify with parents and pupils the expectations for the amount of homework to be set for each Year group.

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

22. The school has made good improvements to the curriculum since the last inspection. Most subjects now have appropriate schemes of work showing what will be covered in each year, and the overall programme of work for all pupils is good. It is broad, balanced and interesting. The school has been developing appropriate accreditation systems and is extending this range to include GCSE in several subjects, providing additional challenge for higher attaining pupils and reflecting rising standards.
23. The curriculum contains all the statutory subjects as well as religious education (RE) and personal, social and health education (PSHE). PSHE appropriately includes well planned drugs and sex education. The sessions during tutor time are used well by some teachers to address issues of immediate importance to pupils, but sometimes there are no purposeful activities. This time needs greater planning to ensure that it is used productively and consistently in every class. Careers sessions and work experience are effective and play an important part in preparing pupils for the next stage of education and employment. Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils benefit significantly from the model of conventional secondary provision with specialist accommodation and specialist teaching for all subjects. This provides a purposeful and varied structure for the school day and ensures that most lessons are taught from a good base of subject knowledge. Currently, provision for information technology does not meet requirements, since the programme lacks essential elements in Key Stage 3 and is not sufficiently planned for all pupils in Key Stage 4. This leads to pupils demonstrating a wide range of skills, but being unable to apply these skills to solve other problems. Provision for music is not secure. Although pupils have valuable musical experiences through regular school performances, there is no on-going planned programme to develop skills as pupils move through the school. Pupils in Key Stage 3 only have French once a week. This is not sufficiently frequent for them to remember vocabulary and develop necessary skills. The taught week is currently rather short and the governing body have taken steps to address this by arranging to lengthen the week from the start of the next school year.
24. There are also aspects of the curriculum that have been developed to meet the particular needs of Bradfields pupils. These include very good provision for speech, language and literacy skills and a pastoral manager, also trained as a counsellor, who spends time with individuals and small groups, helping to develop self-esteem, and teaching pupils to manage their emotions in acceptable ways. The school provides a behaviour unit, but this was not operating fully at the time of the inspection. There is very good specialist provision for pupils with autism, where skilled staff support pupils in making good progress, both in academic subjects and social skills. Effective contributions are made by other professionals, such as the visiting speech and language therapist and the teacher for hearing impairment.
25. In Key Stage 3, all pupils are taught in their own year groups with some additional setting for core subjects. This helps teachers to prepare lessons at an appropriate level for each group, which in turn enables pupils to make good progress in many lessons. This year, Years 10 and 11 have been amalgamated and reorganised into four ability groups. This allows the school to plan a wider programme for Key Stage 4 pupils with additional accreditation, and has given the pupils with higher support needs more opportunities take responsibility and develop confidence within their own groups. The school is aware of the need to evaluate this new system and to manage progress through the key stage carefully.



Since the last inspection, the school has increased the range of accreditation available and standards have risen year on year. As a result, the curriculum offered in the FE department is now of a lower standard than that at the end of Key Stage 4, as this department has not kept pace with the rising standards in the rest of the school. Also, as pupils become more and more successful, the school is rightly reviewing the qualifications pupils and students can obtain and introducing GCSE in some subjects from September 2000.

26. The school has close links with other local special schools, and pupils from the school for children with severe learning difficulties are successfully integrated into several different courses. There are currently no Bradfields pupils involved in inclusion programmes at other schools. The school is aware of the benefits of such programmes and the governing body are looking at this in the light of new government initiatives. There are no Key Stage 4 links with colleges of further education, and this is an area in which pupils are lacking opportunities to develop skills, within a safe context, for enriching their experience and looking forward to education after school.
27. There are restricted opportunities for extra-curricular activities, largely because of pupils' transport arrangements. The clubs that have been organised have been enthusiastically attended by pupils. This includes the Treasure Seekers – a reading and book club. Some pupils who travel independently attend a gym club, and sporting fixtures are arranged with nearby special schools. Lunchtime activities include games and pool for older pupils in their common room and the opportunities to use the school's good computer suite.
28. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. RE lessons effectively teach pupils to value the contribution of all members of the community and to consider their own beliefs and values. Assemblies do not always conform to strict requirements for collective worship, but do celebrate success and develop a sense of community. A period for quiet reflection during a whole school assembly, when pupils were asked to think about 'the lovely sense of achievement' generated genuine warmth and peace. There are too few planned opportunities to develop spirituality across the curriculum, but some teachers take time to encourage wonder and delight especially in science lessons. Autistic pupils were amazed at looking at a jumper with a magnifying glass, and a Year 8 class were captivated when observing copper sulphate crystals forming under a microscope.
29. Moral and social education are good. All adults provide good models of behaviour and give consistent messages of what is expected in school, and how pupils should care for the environment, property and each other. Pupils are encouraged to discuss moral dilemmas in PSHE lessons and in RE, they also look at these questions from the point of view of different faiths. The accommodation and school routines encourage appropriate social behaviour with big, calm circulation areas where pupils interact positively with staff between lessons. Lunchtime is also a pleasant social occasion, where good manners and conversation are encouraged. Increasing opportunities are taken to give responsibility as pupils get older. They participate in the school council; older pupils run the tuck shop and help younger pupils with reading. Residential camps and visits to France, help pupils to become more independent and experience very different life styles. However, there are not sufficient opportunities within the curriculum for pupils to develop independent learning skills. Too much work is teacher directed and skills based, with an insufficient emphasis on research and independent organisation of projects. On balance, cultural education is satisfactory. Pupils are appropriately taught about the local culture through history and geography lessons – there is currently an attractive display of early photographs of hop pickers in Kent. They visit museums and performances, and understand the importance of occasions such as Remembrance Day. Pupils learn about different cultures and faiths in geography and RE, celebrating and finding out about different festivals and life styles, but there is insufficient reflection of a range of cultures in displays and in the daily life of the school. It is important that this becomes an integral, planned aspect of the curriculum in order to prepare pupils more fully for life in our increasingly diverse community.

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

30. Procedures for child protection and pupils' welfare are good, the same judgement as at the last inspection. Procedures for accidents, illnesses and medicines, both in school and on educational visits, are good and the medical room is well equipped. Sufficient staff have first aid training. The child protection policy is

effectively structured and appropriate, the child protection officer is designated, trained and known to staff, and good links are established with the appropriate agencies.

31. The health and safety policy is clear and suitably supported by departmental safety rules which are prominently displayed. The good awareness of staff of health and safety matters makes pupils feel safe and secure and impacts favourably on their attitude to learning. However, health and safety in the FE department is unsatisfactory and the condition of the accommodation is demoralising for those who work there. The main school is clean and hygienic. Fire procedures are good and emergency evacuations are regularly practised. Formal risk inspections are not carried out. Hazardous substances are well managed and most but not all statutory inspections of appliances and equipment are in-date. The school is taking action on those that are outstanding. Attendance registers do not include parents' telephone numbers and minibus journeys are not closely controlled. Security arrangements are good and frequently reviewed.
32. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. The attendance policy, which is outlined in the prospectus, is known to parents and those who do not observe it are reminded to do so by the school. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are carefully monitored by form tutors and the pastoral manager, and a late book is kept. The school works closely with the education welfare service. The attendance policy does not yet give guidance on the disadvantages of taking family holidays in term time.
33. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. The school's behaviour management policy suitably defines standards and expectations and is supported by a balanced range of rewards and sanctions which are implemented by staff with consistency and common sense. The behaviour policy is supplemented by classroom and playground rules, which are clearly displayed. The rules, to which pupils have input, help them to conform to positive behaviour patterns and to take ownership and responsibility for their own behaviour. Individual and class awards are used to encourage good attitudes and behaviour, while serious incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with most effectively. The school's procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good and supported by appropriate policies on equal opportunities and bullying. Staff are very alert to potential behavioural problems and the behaviour of all pupils is carefully monitored and recorded. However, pupils continue to report minor incidents of verbal abuse and boisterous interaction they refer to as bullying. Whilst the school's policies and procedures are valid and in place, they have yet to be seen to be fully effective by pupils.
34. The school's procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic performance and personal development are good. The assessment of pupils' attainment in English, mathematics, geography, history and physical education is good, while in food technology, the Fieldview Unit and speech and language teaching it is very good. Individual target setting procedures in the core subjects of English and mathematics are good and pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are properly recorded with the information being used to guide planning and improve achievement. Individual educational plans are drawn up with care and targets are precise, while pupils' annual reviews are fully pertinent and exceptionally well formatted and maintained. The plans and reviews are discussed with or sent to parents for comment.
35. The educational and personal support and guidance of pupils is good, as it was at the last inspection, with some procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development being very good. Staff know the pupils well and are fully mindful of their individual needs. A measure of the high regard placed on personal development is evident in the appointment of a pastoral manager specifically to coordinate and lead support for the personal needs of individuals. As a result, pastoral care and support is very good and pupils' social development is actively promoted. This substantially raises their confidence, self-esteem and sense of responsibility and enables them to concentrate on their academic studies. This is a strength of the school. The well-structured drug and sex education policies are sensitively integrated into the good personal, health and social education programme and linked effectively with other subjects, like science. Through the programme pupils gain a good appreciation of moral and social issues such as bereavement, citizenship and the environment. In their education plans, pupils are set vocational targets and activities relevant to their needs and personal development. Their responsibilities and duties range from equipment preparation and independent travel, to younger and older pupils' paired reading, activity options and upkeep of the weather map, to tuck shop management and membership of the school council. Staff ensure

that all pupils experience success and are rewarded for their efforts and achievement.

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

36. Parents' views of the school are good. Most of those who answered the questionnaire and contributed to the parents' meeting are supportive of the quality and effectiveness of the school's provision for their children. Parents say the school is well led and managed, teaching is good, and their children work hard and make good progress. They confirm their children enjoy attending the school and are becoming more responsible and mature, and they find it is easy to approach staff with questions and problems. Parents support the school's attitudes and values and most aver that behaviour is good. Inspection evidence upheld these views.
37. Some parents question the provision of activities outside lessons. Inspection evidence showed that there are few after school clubs and, because of transport availability, these are used only by children who travel independently. The school is considering the introduction of a breakfast club. Parents expressed some concerns about the school working closely with them and how well they are kept informed about their children's progress. Evidence gained during the inspection supports these reservations and highlights home-school communication as an area for improvement. A significant number of parents express concerns about the homework their children are given. Evidence during the inspection found that homework is only set for those pupils who clearly benefit from it. This is not understood by some parents or pupils.
38. At the time of the last inspection the school's links with parents were good; they are now satisfactory. The school values the part parents play in their children's education and encourages them to be involved, wherever possible, in the life of the school. Although parents are not asked to help in the school or accompany educational visits, they are always welcome to visit the school to talk to staff and see their children's work. Some parents who collect their children from school take the opportunity to discuss and support their children's learning, however for those who live several miles away, access to school staff is often difficult. When parents are not present to discuss their children's education plans or annual reviews they are sent to them to comment on progress and strategies. One afternoon each week, the pastoral manager makes home visits to parents, particularly those new to the school. This is a useful and effective practice that establishes relationships and further partnership. The induction programme for new pupils includes open and sampler days during which parents are given a proper understanding of the school's practices and activities. Thereafter, before placement they are made aware of the school's policies including the behaviour policy. The parent teacher association is under supported.
39. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is unsatisfactory. So too is the timing of information provided for parents, including that on pupils' progress. There are parents' evenings, although not in the further education unit, and annual review meetings, which are supplemented by a home-school contact book and telephone calls. However, many parents do not attend the meetings and the contact book is used inconsistently across the school. At lunchtimes when parents may wish to communicate with the school, the office is shut and the telephone unanswered. In some year groups, notably Year 8, information on children's progress is not passed to parents for several months. Although newsletters and school reports are sent to parents, they are at times not received or fully understood. The homework policy, too, is not clear to all parents. The prospectus imparts helpful information and complies with statutory requirements. The governors' annual report to parents is nicely written and easy to read. It omits progress on the school action plan and a statement on security. The school complaints procedure is explained adequately in the prospectus.
40. Although the school welcomes parental contributions to their children's education there are limited opportunities, apart from formal meetings which many do not attend, for all parents to contribute significantly. Some parents provide educational support at home, but others who may be willing to do so are unsure of what they can offer or the part they might play in consolidating and developing what their children learn at school. A few parents rely heavily on the school to educate their children and contribute little to their learning. A sound home-school agreement has been drawn-up, but the school has no strategy for monitoring its on-going partnership with parents.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The school benefits from very good leadership and management. This is an improvement on the previous inspection since when, much has been done to raise standards, to improve teaching and to promote a higher quality of education for the pupils. There is now a clear vision set for continued improvement and this is shared with all staff. The roles of senior managers are clearly defined and there is good delegation so that the deputy headteacher and senior managers assist the head effectively. A good initiative is the organisation of the school into departments, each containing a number of subjects. This is effective in aiding internal communication and ensuring all staff can have an involvement in school improvement. Senior managers set a positive tone and encourage successfully an ethos of everyone wanting to do their best. The quality of teaching is monitored effectively and this has produced an improvement in quality. Appropriate plans are made to extend this monitoring role to enable heads of department, after relevant training, to be more fully included in monitoring the teaching within their own departments. The outcomes of school improvement are evaluated through careful scrutiny of pupils' attainments and learning experiences.
42. Since the last inspection in October 1996, the school has made very good improvement. Good progress overall has taken place against the key issues identified then but there is still some work to do on the provision of homework; the communication with parents; and in the subjects of information technology and design and technology. Very good progress has taken place in the more important areas of teaching, learning and standards. Teaching has improved significantly in quality and, as a result, pupils' progress and learning has also improved. Reading, handwriting and spelling are now taught formally and well. There are clear targets for improvement and higher standards set in the school development plan, and these are met routinely. Pupils' progress in English has improved from poor to good and standards in mathematics and science have improved significantly. The annual review procedures are now exemplary. There is a year on year increase in the results of accreditation at the end of Key Stage 4 and very good provision for autism and speech and language teaching has been introduced. The rate of improvement in the FE department has been too slow, but is now in a position to accelerate with new premises planned from September 2000. There is now an established culture for school improvement and the school is in a strong position to sustain continued development.
43. The governing body are of good quality, with good knowledge of the school and effective involvement in strategic improvement. They make sure that all statutory duties take place, have good procedures and practices and seek to ensure that most statutory requirements are met. Governors are fully involved in prioritisation of what it is most important for the school to do in implementing improvement. They visit school routinely and track pupils through different lessons to share their experiences and evaluate the impact of their policies on school life. Governors write perceptive evaluations of their visits and these are used by the headteacher as further monitoring of the quality of education provided. Through this, governors come to know what the school does well and what needs to be improved. The regular meetings of the governing body and the network of routine staff and department meetings in school keep the school community informed of what is going on and allows a good interchange of opinion to take place. As a result, the whole school community works hard to ensure all school development is aimed at improving the quality of education provided for pupils. This is also evident in the very good priorities that are set for improvement in the school development plan and the very good way the governors help shape the direction of the school.
44. The leaders of the school have a good and clear view of its performance. Data from the monitoring of teaching, lessons, assessment and examination results is analysed rigorously. From this, strengths and areas for improvement are noted. These are then used to inform the contents of the school development plan and to set relevant targets for improvement. This is particularly effective in raising standards and the targets set for improvement in Year 11 examination results are routinely met, to the extent that GCSE examinations are being introduced to provide even greater challenge for pupils and students. The strengths and weaknesses of individual teachers are known to senior staff and effective support and advice is provided to help teachers overcome any weaknesses. The need to provide specialist support for pupils with autism, emotional difficulties, communication delay, and others with behaviour difficulties, has been

recognised and new provision established that is very effective at meeting these needs. The weakness in these considerable strengths is that the focus has been on improving provision at Key Stages 3 and 4 at the expense of the provision in the Further Education unit. This now lags behind the rest of the school and the headteacher has appropriate plans to improve the provision as students move into new premises (provisionally scheduled for September 2000).

45. The school currently makes good use of financial resources and has good procedures to ensure that best value is obtained from school development. The previous inspection noted strengths in governing body support in determining financial targets and effectively monitoring expenditure. Since then the role of the governing body in determining best value has been strengthened by their monitoring of the school's provision and quality of education provided. The school has implemented a system of asset registers in response to the previous inspection, however the registers are not yet checked annually.
46. Very good office staff and administrative procedures ensure smooth day to day running of the school and secure financial control. The day to day running of the school accounts is good and there are effective procedures for informing the headteacher and governors of the current financial situation. The school office works well and satisfactory use is made of information technology to handle and improve routine communication and essential office tasks. Clerical and administrative staff have good relationships with pupils, staff and parents providing a welcoming interface between the school and the community. However these links should be strengthened by keeping the office open during the whole of the school day, so that parents are able to communicate with the school at all times. Administrative procedures are effective in making sure that all the statutory requirements for Statements of Special Educational Needs are met in full. The school has devised a format for recording the progress pupils make and the decisions taken at annual reviews. These documents are exemplary and show with ease and great clarity the effectiveness of the provision made against the needs identified in the original Statement. Specific grants made to the school for professional development are used well and administered appropriately. Through this, teachers and learning support assistants are able to benefit from appropriate training courses, and their needs are identified through professional appraisal meetings. Governors and senior managers are fully involved in school development planning and aware of budget implications and trends over time. As a result sufficient funds are made available for secure development to take place: this year the school has produced a series of good quality action plans linked to the school development plan and school budget to improve the quality of education provided. The finance committee provide good regard to strategic planning and ensure school development priorities match the budget available.
47. There are good levels of staffing and teachers and learning support assistants are well qualified and experienced. New staff follow good induction procedures and there are good arrangements to provide further training as required. The main school offers very good accommodation and rooms are allocated and used very well. Pupils benefit from being taught in good quality specialist facilities, for example, in science, design and technology, and art. There are sufficient rooms for each subject to have a room set aside for lessons. As a result, work can be displayed from a range of Year groups which also serves to raise expectations and show pupils what they will be doing in later years. The corridors are wide, and movement around the school is easy. This makes the change between lessons speedy and uneventful. There are spacious grounds and good provision for sports, although more could yet be made of play areas to provide activities other than football at break-time and to create areas to sit with shade from the sun. The good quality of the interior of the school motivates pupils and staff and contributes to the raising of morale. However, the accommodation for the FE unit is very poor and is detrimental to the quality of education provided. The local education authority plans to assist the school to rectify this situation by moving the unit into new premises. This is due to take place very soon. Students and teachers should not have to tolerate working in cramped and dilapidated conditions with poor heating and a large number of health and safety issues. The result is that the quality of education provided there is lower than in the rest of the school, and much of this is due to the demoralising premises currently in use. Good resources for learning are provided for most subjects in the main school, except for music, where there are only a limited number of instruments that pupils can use. However, the resources for learning in the FE department are poor. Computers are out of date and students are having to reinforce, for example, the concepts of time by using the same plastic clocks they had when in their infant schools.
48. The school has higher than expected standards in important subjects and has made very good improvement since the last inspection. There is good leadership and strategic management of school

finance. The governing body also provides good evaluation of best value. The school receives a lower than average income per pupil and, despite the weaknesses, in FE provision, provides good value for money.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

49. The governors, senior managers and staff should seek to further improve the school by addressing the following items.
- a) As a matter of urgency - improve the accommodation, resources and quality of education provided in the FE department through:
- the headteacher, senior managers and governors providing more focused leadership to promote rapid change;
  - ensuring the move planned for year 2000 is in to accommodation of at least the standard of that provided for Key Stages 3 and 4;
  - providing up to date computers and age-appropriate resources for learning, so that students extend the achievements gained at the age of sixteen;
  - raising standards, through ensuring that teachers have high expectations and build upon the prior attainment of students; and
  - monitoring and evaluating the provision to ensure that all students add value to their achievements.
- b) Improve communication with parents so they are more fully informed and involved in the life of the school through:
- providing information at the start of each school year of the topics pupils will be studying in class;
  - providing opportunities for parents to meet with teachers sufficiently early in the school year so that both can work together to help achieve the targets set;
  - making sure that policy decisions and messages are communicated effectively; and
  - ensuring that parents are able to contact the school at all times during the school day.
- c) Reduce the level of minor verbal and physical taunting through:
- demonstrating to pupils more clearly that gender, sexual and racial taunting will not be tolerated;
  - ensuring pupils know the difference between adolescent interaction and bullying; and
  - demonstrating more clearly to pupils the effectiveness of anti-bullying measures.
- d) Improve the curriculum, so that weaknesses in music, information technology, tutor time and modern languages are rectified through:
- extending the length of the taught week, as planned;
  - providing a scheme of work for music so the curriculum meets all statutory requirements and ensuring that teaching is matched to the learning needs of the pupils;
  - ensuring that: information technology is used to support all other subjects; ICT is used to help pupils overcome their special educational needs; and that all National Curriculum requirements for the subject are met;
  - ensuring the rigorous good practice evident in some tutor periods is consistently applied in all classes; and
  - making sure that French is taught in Key Stage 3 more than once a week so that pupils remember better what they have learnt.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	88
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	24	49	24	3	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*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	182
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	52

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### *Attendance*

<b>Authorised absence</b>	%
School data	5.2

<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	%
School data	2.2

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	1999	16	6	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Level W	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5
Numbers of pupils at each NC level	English	2	6	10	4		
	Mathematics				5	2	
	Science		6	3	3	3	2

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	1999	17	13	30

Certificate of Education		Distinction	Merit	Pass
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	English	11	12	5
	Mathematics	9	12	5
	Art	3	4	

ASDAN Youth Awards Scheme		Bronze	Bronze/silver
Number studying for approved qualifications or units and who achieved all those they studied	27 entered	27	5

### *Attainment of students post-16*

Edexcel Vocational Certificate		Number entered	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied		9	89

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

### *Exclusions in the last school year*



	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	3
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	2
White	174
Any other minority ethnic group	3

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	15	2
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

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

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	9.8
Average class size	15

#### **Education support staff: Y7– Y13**

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	584

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1998-99
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	£
Total income	904020
Total expenditure	884981
Expenditure per pupil	4863
Balance brought forward from previous year	18102
Balance carried forward to next year	19039

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	182
Number of questionnaires returned	62

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	26	3	5	2
My child is making good progress in school.	39	48	3	2	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	45	10	3	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	32	26	15	5
The teaching is good.	42	45	6	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	37	18	11	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	32	2	2	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	37	2	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	32	37	15	11	5
The school is well led and managed.	52	35	3	2	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	37	5	5	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	27	13	5	15

### **Other issues raised by parents**

Additional comments were made on six questionnaires. Two parents expressed pleasure that their children enjoy school. There was praise for the provision for autism and the progress it promotes. Three parents would like improved communication with the school so that they can know more about their child's learning.

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE**

## **CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH AUTISM (THE FIELDVIEW UNIT)**

50. Since the last inspection, the school has made specialist provision for pupils with autism in the Fieldview Unit. There are eight pupils currently on roll, all in Years 7 and 8, taught by two full time teachers. A specialist suite of rooms has been converted for this purpose. Pupils are encouraged, where appropriate, to become involved in lessons with their age group in school and benefit from the school's other specialist resources, including access to the speech and language teacher.
51. This provision is very good. High quality teaching promotes good learning and good progress so that most pupils learn to manage their behaviours, become sociable and communicate effectively. The unit is led and managed very well and gives very good value for money.
52. Pupils demonstrate good achievements in their social development as they are able to sit easily in a group and show an awareness of what others do. In a physical education lesson, pupils were confident in the noise of the gymnasium and passed a ball to one another with good eye contact and consideration for how the other may catch it. In a music lesson, pupils followed a score, knew when their turn was due and relied on one another so that a group performance was achieved of 'Pop goes the Weasel' on chime-bars (in the style of handbells). As a result of this level of social development, pupils are becoming increasingly able to extend their academic achievements. They listen carefully to their teachers and try hard to follow their requests. Pupils are reading with confidence and enjoyment, most show hesitation with new words, but three pupils read with expression and regard for punctuation. Handwriting is tidy, with a cursive script, and work is neat and well presented. In mathematics, pupils order three digit numbers, count the value of coins and know that five is half of ten when measuring in centimetres. Pupils understand concepts such as magnification in science and use their knowledge of number to calculate whether or not the magnification is two times normal size.
53. The teaching provided is so consistent in quality that inspectors judge it to be very good overall. Lessons, the room, and all aspects of the daily experience for every pupil are planned with meticulous attention to detail. The teacher in charge has a very clear knowledge of the needs of every pupil and demonstrates a high level of specialism in autism. This knowledge is applied very effectively. The curriculum for the unit is very well planned and this, along with the targets from individual education plans, is used to determine what each pupil will learn each day. Learning objectives are stated clearly and written in a book for each pupil. This helps all staff, and the pupil, to know what they are expected to do and learn. Assessment details are written into this book each day and used to help plan the lessons that follow. All pupils have their own, very well organised working bay, with daily timetable, activities and learning targets. As a result, everyone knows what is expected, when it will take place and what will be involved. The routines set are then adhered to with well timed precision. This degree of consistent certainty is most helpful in motivating pupils to attend to their learning and they concentrate calmly for long periods of time as a result. Group and whole class teaching is an integral part of daily programmes and pupils learn how to interact with other adults and be sufficiently confident to take part in lessons outside the unit. For example, pupils are encouraged to invite a guest adult from the main part of the school for tea, and bake cakes in anticipation of their visit. This is designed to take away the fear of strange people and situations and enables pupils to experience success when they go out from the unit and work in main school lessons with the teachers they have already met. Teachers and support assistants work very well together and concentrate on helping the pupils at all times. The teacher in charge works very hard indeed and her colleague has now developed sufficient skills to take a more equal part in sharing the work load and taking more responsibility for the daily routines.
54. Pupils are cared for very well, there are very good relationships with parents and the provision is led and managed very well. There is a constant striving for improvement and a desire to do the best for every pupil. Parents, before the inspection, praised the work of the unit and expressed their gratitude for the progress their children make. Inspectors endorse their views and have every confidence that the provision has the potential to sustain its high standards and continue to effectively meet the needs of its pupils.

### **FURTHER EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS AGED 16 - 19**

55. Further Education (FE) provision for 41 students aged 16 to 19 is housed in the buildings of a mainstream secondary school several miles from the main site. Higher attaining students from the school usually transfer to local colleges of further education, and the remainder transfer to the school's provision, where they are joined by a proportion of lower attaining students from other special schools. At the last inspection, provision was judged to be good. It is now unsatisfactory, due in large part to appalling accommodation, a lack of appropriate resources and a limited curriculum. Students do not have sufficient access to specialist teaching or appropriate teaching rooms and are not provided with the opportunities to build on the good education that they have had in Key Stages 3 and 4. This results in their rate of improvement slowing down, so that most students do not build on their previous success at the same pace as in the rest of the school. For example, students transfer at the end of Key Stage 4 with good levels of competency on computers but are then restricted in their development by having to use older machines that are incapable of carrying out the work they are used to. Improvements to the curriculum have recently been introduced but are, as yet, too new to have any impact on the achievements of students.
56. There are three distinct groups of students. The first group follows a one-year access course, consisting of two days work placement and three days in school. These students tend to be clear about what they want to do and the courses that they want to follow next year in local colleges, such as retail or horticulture. The programme for this group is good – especially the extended work experience which gives opportunities for taking real responsibilities and helps students to manage their time and tasks independently. The second group has a vocational focus and follows the same courses as the access group, but at a slower pace. This programme is not sufficiently broad, focussed, or progressive and the effectiveness of the provision for these students is unsatisfactory. The third group is generally composed of students with higher support needs. They have the possibility of three years in the FE department and follow the ASDAN, Towards Independence Course. Whilst the course is appropriately structured, there are lower expectations for what these students can do and some are insufficiently challenged and make progress at a slower rate than expected.
57. The students on the access course make good progress particularly in independence and vocational skills, whilst progress is satisfactory for most of those on the three-year course. Progress in lessons seen during the inspection was generally satisfactory. Several of the higher attaining students have good reading and writing skills at an almost adult level, and the majority are able to record and interpret written information. About half the students have higher support needs than the majority of pupils at Bradfields, but this is not necessarily in relation to their learning. Lower attainers count small amounts of money with support and set the table correctly for a given number of people. Other pupils draw and interpret graphs of class members' weights and begin to read numbers from a scale marked in 10s. In a computer lesson, they show that they are familiar with a basic art program, navigating its idiosyncratic menu system and saving work successfully, but this is a much more basic task than those undertaken by much younger pupils in Key Stage 3. In religious education, they show that they are very familiar with the story of Christ and significant times and events associated with the Christian calendar. They identify cooking ingredients and shop for these in local supermarkets. They are useful kitchen helpers and develop appropriate skills in line with their abilities. Progress in personal development is better and students demonstrate this in less formal settings. They are welcoming, charming and helpful to visitors, recognising that they might need help and information. They talk about themselves and their interests and ask sensible questions to find out more about others. They have long conversations about life outside school with their friends, sometimes during lessons. In class they are somewhat compliant learners and work steadily.
58. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It varies from good to unsatisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally adequate to teach the prepared lesson, but not to develop and resource the curriculum at an appropriate level. They have to put up with poor facilities, for example in food technology and ICT, which seriously limit the programme of work and therefore the progress that students make. There is too much colouring, cutting and sticking in some lessons, and sometime students copy out work that they cannot read or fill in answers by matching numbers or letters. This wastes learning time and fails to address the topic of the lesson or to develop basic skills of numeracy and literacy. Students are well managed and relationships very good, so that aspects of social development are promoted throughout the school day.
59. All students have a programme consisting of basic skills, general studies, leisure and independence skills and courses with a vocational focus. Subjects that are covered include Parentcraft and Citizenship. Good

use is made of visiting speakers, for example a health professional who makes a regular contribution to sex education. They undertake work towards Edexcel accreditation in several subjects. This scheme accredits work at levels 1,2 and 3 of the National Curriculum. For lower attaining students this is appropriate, but some students have already attained these levels in Key Stage 4, and need greater challenge to ensure that they make progress. Although the taught curriculum and accreditation represent low expectations of what students will achieve, the unit has the flexibility to support students in developing individual skills – for example helping students to prepare for the driving test, and allowing one person to spend time developing his drawing and model making skills. Each student has a carefully prepared individual education plan, and regular assessment is appropriately carried out. The adult ethos and very positive relationships help students to develop social skills, and local facilities are used well to teach independence and mobility. The immediate environment, however, curtails many opportunities for appropriate activities and interaction with other young people. There are no college links for any of the students, but occasional informal arrangements are made to accommodate Bradfields students on a local employment initiative. Some use is made of main school facilities for art, but not for science, technology or ICT where specialist accommodation and good resources are an essential element in appropriate provision.

60. Parents have little involvement in the life of the FE department. Some choose not to visit before students transfer from main school. This should be encouraged wherever possible as part of the process of selecting post-school provision.
61. Day to day management of the FE department is satisfactory. Documentation is of good quality and is clear on practice and procedures. Communications within the department are good – complex and individual arrangements are integrated successfully with regular work. There has not, however, been effective action taken at appropriate levels within the school to monitor provision for this group and ensure improvements. The distance from main school means that some members of staff have never visited the FE department, and there is little sense of continuity with school provision. Resources for learning are generally limited and unsatisfactory, with an obsolete computer network. What there is, however, is used well. Members of staff know students and their special needs well, but they lack specialist subject knowledge. The accommodation is very poor and presents serious health and safety hazards. Currently, the food technology room is infested with mice. Building work being carried out within the host school has dislodged pictures from the wall and sent them crashing to the floor, luckily when no students were in the room. Some fire appliances are out of date, and those in the food technology area are unsecured and could easily cause injury if they were knocked over. Other rooms are in a general state of disrepair and dilapidation.
62. There are well advanced plans to move the department to new premises in early summer. The lease in the host school will soon expire. Accommodation has been identified but no building work has yet been planned in detail. A number of the most serious concerns will be addressed by the move, but there remains the need to bring the quality of education in the unit into line with that in the remainder of the school, to prepare students adequately for further education through college courses and to maintain and monitor provision by closer links with school systems.

## **ENGLISH**

63. The 1999 national test results at the end of Key Stage 3 show an improvement over the previous two years, with the majority of pupils attaining Level 2, and a minority attaining Level 3. At Key Stage 4, results in the Welsh Board Certificate of Education examinations show significant improvement over the same period with pupils gaining a high proportion of merits and distinctions. Scrutiny of pupils' books, files and records shows that progress over time is incremental, continuous and good. At both key stages, pupils' achievement in lessons is very rarely less than good and at times it is very good. Progress overall, including that over time at Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, is good. From a very low base level of achievement when pupils enter the school, they make rapid progress in confidence and self-esteem, particularly in their speaking and listening and reading skills. Consistently good teaching, using a structured approach at both Key Stages 3 and 4, has brought about significant improvements in reading, spelling and writing skills. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have a broad range of good practical skills in English, and are well prepared for the next stage of their education or employment.

64. Higher attaining pupils make good progress by the end of Key Stage 3, and speak confidently to ask and answer questions. Pupils in Year 7 have good recall of events of previous lessons, and successfully answer questions about the *Odyssey*. They show by their responses, that they have a good understanding of the story and are able to describe the *Cyclops*. Pupils make good progress in reading and are becoming more confident. The majority show accuracy when reading and are beginning to read with fluency. They are enthusiastic and enjoy reading books and demonstrate a good understanding of the text they have read. Pupils can brainstorm ideas, mapping out the key words to use for their writing. In Year 9, for example, pupils make good progress in learning about the plot and main characters when studying *Macbeth*. They show their ability to work well in small groups when sequencing the main events of the play. By the end of Year 9, pupils make good progress in writing in a variety of styles with quite extensive accounts using a neatly joined script. Their handwriting is well formed, neat and legible. Homework is effective and is set on a regular basis to encourage reading and extend pupils' writing.
65. Lower attaining pupils at Key Stage 3 also make good progress and become more confident when expressing themselves. When given verbal instructions, they understand and follow them in a sequence very well; for example, when working with the speech and language teacher in developing expressive language skills and talking about their activities during the holidays. Their reading skills also develop rapidly at this key stage, with pupils making good progress in their knowledge of letter sounds and blends. Handwriting improves well, and most pupils write with careful attention to letter formation.
66. Higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 4 continue to improve their speaking and listening skills. They listen carefully to poetry read by the teacher that had been written by former pupils. Before writing their own verse they ask and answer questions and hold discussions that show understanding and skills of reasoning and deduction. During work experience placements, pupils show that they can talk with employers sensibly and understand verbal instructions or regulations that are explained to them. Course work for Records of Educational Achievement and work in lessons indicates good progress overtime in reading and writing skills. Most pupils read fluently and accurately. They retrieve information from a variety of books or other sources but information and communication technology is not used enough for research, reinforcing basic skills or for writing. Pupils write for a variety of audiences, and improve the quality of their work through drafting and re-drafting. Many enjoy writing poetry and creating extended pieces of prose to convey their feelings about topics of interest; for example, autobiographies, book reviews and poetry about dinosaurs and pirates.
67. Lower attaining pupils make good progress in their ability to discuss and listen to the views of others. They also make good progress in reading, so that they follow straightforward stories or understand written instructions. Many still write with an immature style of letter formation, but they nevertheless spell simple words accurately. Progress is good, and pupils understand the functional use of writing, for instance to express their ideas.
68. At the time of the last inspection, standards of listening, reading and writing were judged to be poor and few pupils could produce neat legible writing. There were insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop extended pieces of writing. The school has addressed these issues and very good progress has been made. Pupils now receive formal reading and handwriting lessons. The improvements made have raised standards of attainment in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 3 and external accreditation at the end of Key Stage 4 shows significant improvement. Resources have improved considerably and they are now good. There is a good range of appropriate reading material which includes big books. The school also has a teacher to work exclusively to support speech and language development and this is most successful in addressing individual needs.
69. There has been a significant improvement in teaching since the last inspection, so that there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. Approximately 30 per cent of all teaching is very good, 60 per cent is good and the rest is satisfactory. Teaching of reading is good. Teachers use their good subject knowledge and assessments of pupils' learning difficulties very effectively, developing pupils' reading skills through a commercial reading scheme. Lessons are well planned, with clear indications about what pupils will be taught, the resources that they will need and activities that are appropriately matched to the levels of ability of each pupil. A key strength in the teaching, is the effective use of questions which makes pupils think and, therefore develop, their ideas. Teachers make good use of writing frames, which support

pupils' understanding of how to structure their writing. This was observed when pupils were working on a module of work about advertising. High expectations of pupil involvement, engagement, performance and effort help to encourage good behaviour and underpin pupils' achievement and enjoyment of English. Teachers use praise well and encourage pupils to work hard with the selective use of merits for good work and effort. The specialist teaching of speech and language is of good quality and well planned so that individual needs are addressed directly. This leads to pupils learning well and developing their communication skills to a level where they can benefit from teaching in other lessons. For example, careful work with one pupil has enabled him to speak for the first time to adults and is helping him gain sufficient confidence to take part in lessons. The few incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour are effectively dealt with using the structure provided by the behaviour policy. There is always very good partnership and teamwork with learning support assistants working in the classroom. They have good skills, particularly in the teaching of reading and spelling and ensure that pupils enjoy their lessons. The good quality of English teaching is reflected in other subjects; for example, good speaking and listening skills and the learning of key vocabulary in science and the expressive language used by pupils in geography when talking about the Brazilian rain forest.

70. The department is well led and managed, staff work closely together as a team, planning is good and all the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Schemes of work are good and help to ensure the continuous progress of pupils in the subject at each key stage. However, drama is not formally taught and there is insufficient emphasis on the teaching of grammar. The school uses the expertise of the speech and language teacher very effectively for pupils in the main school and for those in the Fieldview and FE Units. Teaching is closely monitored and all staff assess and record pupils' progress well. Good access is made for pupils to accredited courses through ASDAN and the Welsh Examination Board.

## **MATHEMATICS**

71. All pupils are achieving standards that are appropriate for their abilities. Most pupils make good progress in developing their numeracy, and higher attaining pupils also make good progress in other areas of the subject. In both key stages the very good quality of teaching provided contributes well to the good progress these pupils make. At Key Stage 3, pupils are taught very well and make good progress, so that most pupils attain National Curriculum level 3 and a few higher attaining pupils have achieved level 4 in the 1999 national tests - an improvement on the previous years results. At Key Stage 4, good progress is maintained as a result of very good teaching. At the end of Key Stage 4, all current pupils are on target to attain certification in the Edexcel course they follow and some higher attaining pupils are expected to attain foundation level GCSE.
72. In Key Stage 3, pupils in year 7 know the names of ordinal numbers and give various examples from everyday situations and know that all competitors would like to be first. By the end of Key Stage 3, the highest attaining pupils recognise that numbers can be sub divided into fractions or decimals and that these can be equal. Pupils recognise two and three dimensional shapes and measure angles or turns. Pupils can collect a range of information and present their findings as bar graphs or pie charts. Pupils in year 9 analyse their use of time, producing information on the amount of time they watch television, sleep, eat etc. and produce pie charts in their workbooks and as two dimensional models using information technology.
73. Lower attaining pupils can perform calculations including addition, subtraction and multiplication. They use real money to understand the value of coins, when solving numerical problems. By the end of Key Stage 4, they read, record and measure accurately using rulers and scales. They understand different types of scales and read information from a timetable. Higher attaining pupils make good progress in numeracy, for example they use their understanding of place value to multiply whole numbers by 10 and use a variety of mental and written computations when solving number problems adding and subtracting to two decimal places.
74. At the last inspection, standards were reported to be satisfactory across both Key Stages except in the practical and investigative aspect, and the more able pupils were not always sufficiently challenged in their work. The present position shows improvements made in the organisation, pupils are now placed in

teaching groups according to their ability. The introduction of accredited coursework has raised standards and provided appropriate coursework for pupils, challenging the more able and providing the least able with the support they need to succeed.

75. The quality of teaching is very good overall - a further improvement since the last inspection. This has had a very positive impact on the pupils' learning. Pupils benefit from very good teaching in all year groups and have an appropriate mix of whole class and individual mathematics programme lessons. All lessons are well planned to meet the requirements of the mathematics curriculum and the individual needs of the pupils. Teachers have very high expectations and move pupils thinking forward in clear and logical small steps. For example, in a lesson on ordinal numbers pupils were given numbered cards - 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> etc. before entering the classroom and the teacher successfully introduced the concept through a series of activities each one building on the one before. At both key stages, pupils know what to do, teachers explain what is expected, and provide support and encouragement throughout lessons, marking and assessing pupils' work quickly so that pupils' achievements are recorded and they are encouraged to acquire new skills and understanding. Teachers keep a good pace to the lessons and provide an appropriate challenge for pupils who know the requirements of the courses they are following and are keen to complete their coursework successfully before taking their end of year assessments or examinations. Pupils are rarely distracted and concentrate for extended periods of time completing their set tasks. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. Teachers manage pupils very well and pupils quickly settle to the work planned and enjoy the activities set and the opportunities to contribute during oral numeracy sessions.
76. The progress pupils make is assessed at the end of each lesson and in the end of year examinations. Parents are informed of pupils' progress at the pupils' annual review and agree their numeracy targets for the following year. The curriculum has recently been reviewed to include opportunities for all pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 to take the Edexcel certificate in mathematics and the most able pupils take the GCSE foundation course in mathematics. The subject is well supported by a good range of resources, however the use of information technology to extend pupils' understanding and support their investigative work in mathematics should be further developed. The subject is well led by a knowledgeable co-ordinator who promotes high standards and has appropriate plans to develop the subject further by incorporating aspects of the National Numeracy Strategy and strengthening numeracy across the curriculum.

## SCIENCE

77. Achievement in science is good across the school and good in comparison with similar schools. Standards, as shown by performance in national tests, have risen significantly over the past three years and continue to rise, with a few pupils attaining Level 5 at the end of Key Stage 3. In lessons seen during the inspection, much of the Key Stage 3 work in Physical Processes and Materials was pitched at a demanding Level 4. Creative and purposeful teaching, with frequent and varied opportunities for consolidation, ensure that most pupils acquire this level of knowledge and understanding. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is driven by the new Edexcel syllabus; this provides accreditation to Levels 1, 2 and 3 and teaching based on very good subject knowledge extends the challenge, providing work at higher levels. This scheme leads into GCSE and it is planned to introduce this for some pupils from September 2000. All pupils undertake experimental work, but expectations of their independence and competence in this area limit achievement to lower levels in this aspect of science. The lowest attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 are not taught by the same specialist teacher as other pupils. Their achievements are satisfactory, but are not as good in relation to their abilities as those of other pupils in the school.
78. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have a good grasp of a range of appropriate topics. For instance, they have a good technical vocabulary relating to the properties of light and can say that a light bulb is luminous, but the moon is not, and can label transparent, translucent and opaque materials. They learn about refraction - higher attainers apply this knowledge successfully and predict that a thinner convergent lens will bend light less than a thicker one. They learn about states of matter and show, in role-play, how molecules move in solids, liquids and gases and even the youngest lower attainers can say that the connection between molecules are bonds (by remembering the link with 'James Bonds'!). They construct identification keys, with some support, and have investigated and identified some minibeasts in the



school's woodland area. They record work carefully and construct good diagrams based on observation, the teacher's model or, occasionally, their own research. Some pupils are able to speak at some length about planets that they have investigated, sequencing concepts coherently and including interesting facts and detail.

79. During Key Stage 4, pupils continue to develop their knowledge and understanding through work on forces and energy, with higher attainers able to label kinetic and potential energy. Other pupils explain how energy is transferred from a person's arm, to a bow string and then an arrow. They learn more detail of atomic structure and chemical processes. Their discussions of changes during puberty and human reproduction demonstrate that they have a comprehensive knowledge of processes but have not fully learned the appropriate technical terms. This is in part due to several changes of teachers that they have had during this key stage. They copy diagrams of the carbon and nitrogen cycles on a computer. Pupils can explain details of the process but find it hard to give an overview. Lower attaining pupils learn about weather systems and measure temperature and wind direction with a little support. They record and display this, along with the current Internet forecast, in an open area as a resource for others.
80. Teaching in both key stages is good. It is best when taught by the specialist science teacher, but is always satisfactory. In the best lessons, recent subject knowledge is very good. Excitement communicates itself to pupils and they are motivated and involved by the detail of topics, and this helps them to make good progress. During their work on the solar system, they found out about the latest planet to be discovered beyond Pluto – they named it 'Micky' and could talk about its atmosphere. There is very focussed work on enabling pupils to understand complex topics, and good subject knowledge allows the teacher to rephrase explanations and provide a wide variety of imaginative approaches to consolidating knowledge, from role play, through humorous mnemonics, to individually tailored Blockbuster quizzes. The teaching of literacy is well embedded, with opportunities for learning definitions and spellings, while good presentation is emphasised. Pupils are well managed and good behaviour of difficult groups is often achieved by their overwhelming desire to participate in interesting learning activities, such as watching crystals develop under a microscope, or to answer questions in a quiz. In some lessons, support is fully used, but there are occasions when the teacher could deploy staff more effectively. For instance, in several lessons, more discussion could have been generated and reluctant speakers given greater opportunities by splitting into smaller groups for short periods. Sometimes the range of learning activities is limited especially for lower attainers, so they have few opportunities to consolidate and deepen their knowledge. Pupils are asked to predict and hypothesise, but in some lessons there few opportunities to apply learning and develop independent experimental skills.
81. Leadership in science is satisfactory with the recent appointment of a new subject specialist, but roles and responsibilities have still to be developed to ensure that all pupils have access to a similar quality of provision. The current curriculum is exciting and develops a broad range of skills and knowledge, but it is still based on old National Curriculum orders. Despite this, the raising of standards is impressive. The plans for improvement of resources and the introduction of GCSE accreditation are appropriate and demonstrate a commitment to continuing high expectations.

## **ART**

82. Pupils achieve good standards in art in the time they are in the school. In Key Stage 4, the good quality of teaching provided affects the overall good progress that pupils make. In Key Stage 3, pupils are taught well and make satisfactory progress. Progress through this key stage in drawing and painting skills has been limited and slow due to the larger numbers of pupils in the groups and the limited opportunities to improve pupils' skills. Smaller groups since September have increased the opportunities for more one to one instruction and, as a result, standards, especially in Year 7, are improving. In Key Stage 4, in response to good teaching, the current pupils are on target to attain the certificate of education in the course they follow. This course sets a lower expectation for the standards some pupils could achieve and GCSE is rightly being considered from September 2000. In the 1999 results all pupils entered for the certificate of education were successful.
83. In Key Stage 3, pupils in Year 8 understand how a picture of Nebumen Hunting in the Marshes tells a story. Pupils in Year 9 identify with the art of the Native American Indians as they design and construct

their totem poles. Although their drawing skills are immature, they select from and experiment with a suitable range of materials, images and ideas and extend their knowledge and experience of tools and techniques. There is also some evidence of pupils reviewing and refining their work. This level of knowledge is built upon in Key Stage 4 where pupils demonstrate increasing knowledge of the work of other artists, which they use freely to inform their decisions about their on going and completed two and three dimensional work.

84. All pupils gather resources and materials in sketchbooks to give them ideas but these could be better organised for easier reference. From the wealth of work on display around the school, pupils have a rich artistic experience with a freedom to express their ideas using a wide range of media.
85. At the last inspection, standards in art were satisfactory. They are now good. A satisfactory scheme of work to show the topics that will be taught has been written that clearly provides for the development of pupils' understanding and knowledge of art and appreciation of well known artists. Pupils can now gain a range of certificates to recognise their achievement in Key Stage 4. However, accreditation through the General Certificate of Secondary Education is not yet an option for the more able pupils. There has been an effective development in raising standards, promoting progress and improving the quality of teaching.
86. The quality of teaching is good overall. Quality resources focus attention and challenge and inspire pupils to do well. In a Year 8 lesson good use of reference material and the selective introduction of a taped story and music as an accompaniment, set the mood and created the right atmosphere for learning. From their questions, comments and observations, pupils showed sustained interest throughout the lesson. The teacher and the learning support assistant show good subject knowledge in the way they work as a team to enable pupils learning. They are competent in teaching skills but do not always give sufficient additional guidance to raise the standard of painting skills. For example in a Year 7 lesson, based on a work by Ferdinand Leger, pupils could identify with the style of Leger and the teacher was pleased with their level of observation skills but the limited painting skills were not developed to improve the overall quality of the pupils' work. Behaviour management is very good and all staff work hard to keep pupils productively on task. Introductions to lessons do not always inspire learning, but pupils become more motivated as the resources are selectively introduced. Good planning, with objectives that pupils understand, is evident especially at Key Stage 4, where pupils are working to produce set pieces to prescribed times. The teacher and learning support assistant work hard to provide a quality learning environment in which all pupils' work is valued and celebrated. The teacher has high expectations, for example in Year 10, where the pupils have been successfully encouraged to re-evaluate and to refine their work and to make further developments in the light of their own evaluations.
87. The progress pupils make is assessed satisfactorily at Key Stage 4. Procedures for assessment are developing at Key Stage 3, in line with the change in curriculum organisation, to better inform pupils of their achievements and progress and to support teachers planning. The need to focus more on the basic skills of drawing and painting is recognised and beginning to be addressed in Key Stage 3 through the new scheme of work. There is a need to include more planned opportunities to enhance cultural development and to show how computers can be used to aid learning, especially about the knowledge and understanding of art and design. The subject is very well led and the mechanisms are in place to promote higher standards, to ensure a consistent quality of education and to include the General Certificate of Secondary Education as an option for accreditation at Key Stage 4.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

88. Pupils are taught design and technology based on the use of resistant materials, such as wood and plastic. Pupils achieve satisfactorily, over the time they are in the school. However, there is weaker teaching than in food technology and pupils make less progress than they show they are capable of in other subjects.
89. In Key Stage 3, pupils can sand predetermined shapes and know the names and uses of the tools with which they are working. When using wood and card, pupils are not always sure how to proceed and often ask for guidance, rather than showing confidence in their own skills. They can construct in card and know what a simple structure is, but they are given too many work sheets and this limits their learning and slows their ability to think for themselves how to solve design and making problems in other projects. In Key

Stage 4, pupils continue in much the same way as in Key Stage 3 and acquire a sufficient working knowledge of materials and their properties but show practical skills that are under developed.

90. There has been unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection. At that time, standards in design and technology were satisfactory in both key stages. The position is still the same. Satisfactory schemes of work, showing the topics and projects that will be taught, have been written but there has been no effective development in raising standards, promoting progress and improving the quality of teaching.
91. Teaching is satisfactory. Lessons have sufficiently clear objectives but these are not always communicated effectively to the pupils. In a Year 7 lesson on structures, time was lost because pupils did not know how to proceed and had to rely on watching one another, referring to work sheets and using the learning support assistant for advice. The teacher has good subject expertise and this shows in the lesson introductions. However, some of these are too long and pupils lose sight of what they are expected to do. Pupils are generally well behaved and are always eager to do practical work. Relationships between pupils and staff are good.
92. A system for assessment is in place, but it is too complex, time consuming, and underused to be reliable. Pupils are not aware of their progress and no idea of what they need to do to improve. Learning support assistants make a significant contribution to pupils learning. The teacher is aware of the need to improve standards, make more use of computers, and put in place a curriculum that is continuous and encourages pupils to make better progress that can be shown through using a manageable assessment scheme.

## **FOOD TECHNOLOGY**

93. Pupils achieve good standards in food technology, over the time they are in the school. They are taught well and make good progress, achieving high standards of organisation and management skills. Pupils at Key Stage 4 are on target to attain certification in the courses they follow including, for the most able, Edexcel accreditation. This course recognises pupils' attainments at National Curriculum Levels 1 to 3.
94. In Key Stage 3, pupils in Year 7 know the working routines and basic methods and can follow orders of work. They use resources effectively to help focus their ideas, make decisions and evaluate how well they are doing. In Year 9, pupils have built up their knowledge and confidence to work with more independence. Their knowledge increases and further informs how they handle and process different foods, and where they should store them. Preparation skills, including accuracy when cutting, increase. In Key Stage 4, all pupils demonstrate increasing knowledge and show a keen regard for health and safety, especially when handling foods in the kitchen.
95. At the last inspection, standards were satisfactory in both key stages. The standards achieved are now good. Pupils have been assisted well to develop their own evaluation skills. The schemes of work are good and clearly identify planned opportunities for pupils to extend their design skills and make progress through thinking of peoples' needs. Pupils can now gain certificates that recognise their achievements in Key Stage 4. These developments have been effective in raising standards, promoting progress and improving the quality of teaching.
96. The quality of teaching is consistently good and lessons are planned well so that they have direction and meet the learning needs of the pupils. Time is well used and the teacher is alert to pupils completing tasks quickly and moving them on to the next activity. For example in the Year 7 lesson, making healthy sandwiches, the teacher's continued monitoring of progress and good use of praise sustained the pupils' motivation to do well. The teacher's questioning techniques challenge all abilities and encourage pupils to remember what they have learned and to show what they can do. A great deal of emphasis is placed on focusing questions on specific pupils to encourage confidence and self esteem. For example, with a Key Stage 4 group, the questioning style during the demonstration encourages pupils to say, in turn, what they know about the garlic and coriander, how to use and prepare them and, for some pupils, to demonstrate to other members of the class how to prepare foods to be used in the vegetable curry. Here again, the teacher and learning support assistant motivated the pupils with selective praise, carefully monitored the progress made and moved them through the tasks to give a good pace to the lesson. The teacher sets high expectations and provides good teaching aids to give pupils ideas and to support them when they are

describing what they have done. In a Year 10 lesson these aids included written phrases, pictures and diagrams and all pupils could record what they were doing with confidence. As a result, pupils are always eager to do practical work. Behaviour overall is very good. Relationships between pupils are good and the relationships between all staff and pupils are very good.

97. The progress pupils make is assessed satisfactorily in both key stages. Pupils are kept informed of the progress they are making and how they can improve on their achievements. The teacher uses the information recorded to inform the next stage in the pupils' learning. Learning support assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The teacher has in place effective mechanisms for the promotion of higher standards, broadening the range of materials studied and ensuring the consistently good standard of teaching.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

98. Pupils achieve above expected standards in geography over the time they are in school. In Key Stage 3, the quality of teaching is always good and often very good; this combined with a stimulating learning environment enables pupils to make good progress. At Key Stage 4, progress is good and pupils are on target to achieve appropriate certification in the ASDAN Youth Award Scheme.
99. During Key Stage 3, pupils make effective use of maps and co-ordinates to locate their environment locally, nationally and within the World. A study has been made of world geography and the earth's structure. Pupils learn and talk knowledgeably about cultural customs in Japan and every day life in the Brazilian rain forests.
100. At Key Stage 4, pupils develop an appropriate understanding of their community. They study how man responds to different environments. A study of appropriate clothing enables pupils to discuss and appreciate the different structures and qualities of clothing and how well it is suited to climate and weather conditions.
101. Progress in geography since the last inspection has been very good. At the last inspection, standards were satisfactory while progress in lessons was unsatisfactory in half of all lessons seen. Teaching was unchallenging, showed little matching of work to ability and no consolidation of pupil learning. Planning was unsatisfactory and the curriculum did not provide full National Curriculum entitlement. All of these issues have been addressed very well and teaching is now consistently good and often very good. Planning and assessment are now good and guide delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum.
102. The quality of teaching is always good and often very good. Teaching at Key Stage 3 is very good. The teacher's good subject knowledge and enthusiasm captures pupils' interest and impacts very positively on their learning. A rich environment for learning has been established. Care is taken to build on previous learning and great attention is paid to providing relative visual reinforcement to key learning points. A lesson on Japanese customs involved construction of a classroom in Japan, the class observing Japanese custom and etiquette. While they prepared a Japanese meal, photographs, maps and artefacts were shared and discussed. Following a discussion on differences in eating habits the class reflected on their learning as they used correct utensils to eat a Japanese meal. Good use is also made of audio visual aids with information technology used to develop research skills.
103. Pupils' attitudes, respect and behaviour are always very good in geography. They are interested in their work and listen carefully to teachers' explanations. The rich classroom environment greatly aids pupils' attitudes and responses. Study of the South American rain forests was preceded by examination of forest samples that pupils could observe, smell and feel, including broad leaf plants typical of the region. The supportive ethos of the classroom enables pupils to have the confidence to ask questions, contribute opinions and give relevant factual answers. Pupils also work successfully together and are polite to each other and adults.
104. Pupils' progress is assessed in detail in both Key Stages 3 and 4. The policy for geography is good and has recently been reviewed and updated. The curriculum is now designed appropriately and attention is currently being given to increasing parental involvement in the pupils' learning of geography.

## **HISTORY**

105. It was possible to observe only three history lessons during the week of the inspection. Lesson observations, a scrutiny of pupils' work, displays, teachers' plans, records and discussions, indicate that pupils achieve good standards and make good progress in history.
106. History is taught to pupils in Key Stage 3. Pupils have studied Medieval England and are now studying Tudor Britain. From discussion, pupils show a good subject knowledge of Tudor Britain and the relationship between the Church and Monarchy. Study of the Spanish Armada involves careful, staged introduction to the context and facts of the Armada, using maps, atlases and photographs. A sequence of boats is attached to a map to show progress of the Armada, with the classroom assistant adding important information on the historical and local use of fire beacons. Consolidation of learning is provided by a video extract and plenary session, re-visiting and encapsulating key learning points. Such careful groundwork and sequencing enables all pupils to make good progress. Pupils are also able to discuss, record and recount historical events.
107. Progress in history since the last inspection has been very good. At the last inspection, the teaching of history was unsatisfactory and characterised by poor planning, marking and use of a limited range of teaching strategies. Little work was recorded and pupils had few opportunities to develop enquiry and interpretation skills. These skills are now addressed and the pupils' attitudes are now good and at times very good.
108. Teaching is now always good and often very good and utilises a wide range of styles and strategies. Planning is good but marking, while up to date, gives little constructive or evaluative comment. Lessons build carefully on previous learning, prompts and questions explore and extend pupils' learning and positive reinforcement ensures good participation. Work of previous pupils is used effectively to show pupils what to do, and this raises their confidence and insight. Firm and clear outlines and guidance help insecure pupils to focus on their learning. The rich learning environment provides good visual reinforcement and an illustrated time line demonstrates a clear reference to chronology. Teachers include a carefully constructed plenary session, which allows pupils to reflect on and encapsulate key learning points. Information technology is used to research the route of the Armada and video sequences are used effectively to consolidate learning.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

109. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 achieve good and often very good standards in the technical aspects of operating computers and software. Pupils receive good teaching in information and communications technology (ICT) lessons and have good access to modern computers both during and outside of lessons. A control technology option for pupils in Key Stage 4 shows them achieving very good standards in their command of the equipment and their knowledge of aspects of control software, and three pupils have been entered this year for GCSE ICT. However, there are aspects of the ICT curriculum that are not taught, such as control technology and monitoring at Key Stage 3 and other aspects, such as handling information, that are not taught sufficiently systematically. Hence, despite the good teaching, achievement is only satisfactory for most pupils.
110. By the end of Key Stage 3, almost all pupils are confident and competent computer users, working independently to load, run and print files, using good mouse skills and finding commands from pull down menus. Some need verbal support to save work in appropriate places. They are familiar with the keyboard and copy-type accurately using a full range of editing keys, although most pupils still only use one hand for typing. The stools that pupils have to sit on, rather than proper office chairs, discourage good posture and a good position at the keyboard. Pupils develop a good command of a desktop publishing program. They use a template, combining WordArt, pictures and text to create attractive leaflets and posters. Most pupils are familiar with some CD ROM encyclopaedias and search these to find text and pictures for their work. Lower attainers often require more support but also achieve good standards in relation to their abilities. Pupils also use ordinary office software and enter data into tables, using this to create simple bar graphs and pie charts. This work, however, is not sufficiently planned to develop skills over the course of

the key stage. The work done in Year 9 is too similar to the work done in Year 7. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to decide for themselves what software they should use for a particular task, to think about amending and presenting work for different audiences, or to look at uses of technology in a wider context. Neither are there sufficient planned activities to develop knowledge and understanding in the areas of control, monitoring and modelling.

111. During Key Stage 4 pupils continue to develop their skills and many have impressive technical command of the software that they use. They are beginning to use the Internet for some research. Many activities are still very heavily teacher directed, such as the copying of nitrogen and carbon cycles, so that opportunities to develop valuable wider ICT, creative and literacy skills are lost. They use spreadsheets and enter data quickly and accurately. They understand that cells can contain calculations but need support to analyse a problem and what formulae to enter. The control technology group are skilled Lego builders and follow complex instructions carefully, evaluating and refining their models with a little support. When demonstrating an automated fairground ride they show that they have an overall understanding of the programming needed for a control task. They show which lines in a program relate to which stages in the process and identify repeat loops, and explain the basic operation of touch and tilt sensors. They can, with good support, build a complex procedure by adding on elements a small step at a time. The lower attaining pupils in Key Stage 4 do not have discrete ICT lessons. The ICT work that they do in other subjects is not sufficiently planned to deliver the full appropriate curriculum, or to develop ICT competence systematically.

112. Since the last inspection, teaching, equipment, and the computer operating skills of pupils have kept pace with new advances in technology. However, improvement in the provision and curriculum for ICT since the last inspection is unsatisfactory since some of the weaknesses identified in the last report are still to be addressed:

- the provision does not yet meet statutory requirements in full;
- there is undue emphasis on teaching skills at the expense of how to apply these skills to solving other problems;
- some pupils in Key Stage 4 do not have formal lessons in ICT; and
- schemes of work in other subjects do not sufficiently identify ICT opportunities.

113. During the inspection, the subject specialist teacher was absent. Judgements on teaching are based on the lessons seen, covered by other members of staff, and the pupils' work over longer periods of time. Teaching in ICT lessons is good. The atmosphere is focussed and purposeful with pupils well briefed so that they know what they should be doing, and work with sustained concentration for full double lessons. Work is very well monitored and assessed on a day to day basis, so that errors or misunderstandings are usually quickly corrected. Relationships are very positive, staff like pupils and know them well, giving each one appropriate individual support. This motivates and involves pupils very well and they work hard to produce good work and are proud of what they do. They also follow these good models of support when helping each other, effectively consolidating their own knowledge as they explain to their friends what they need to do too. A weakness in teaching is the heavy direction from teacher or worksheet, which severely limits opportunities to develop numeracy, literacy and a range of ICT knowledge and understanding. Across the school, teachers in most classes do not use ICT sufficiently to support work in other subjects. There is much too little use of ICT to help pupils overcome their special needs or access the curriculum more effectively, for example through the use of talking wordprocessors, whole-word wordprocessing or multimedia software. The Fieldview Unit provides a good model of practice, making good use of computers to motivate pupils and to provide support for independent reading and recording through symbol systems.

114. The school has been very slow to respond to the new, now superseded, National Curriculum orders for the subject. The programme of work and assessment is still based on old orders, so although it provides a basic structure to measure progress, it does not sufficiently relate to what is done in other schools, or the standards that are attained elsewhere. There have been extensive and very positive developments of resources, but this has not been matched with curriculum development in ICT and its use in other subjects, or the development of appropriate facilities for the off-site FE group, which are poor. Useful training courses are being offered by the department to people from outside the school, and the centre is accredited for this purpose. This has not yet, however, had an impact on classroom practice at Bradfields. Consequently the effectiveness of the use of new technology in all subjects, and to support individual

learning, is not yet satisfactory.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

### French

115. Overall, pupils achieve well in French, and make good progress in their lessons. Progress over time is satisfactory overall as pupils find it difficult to remember from week to week what they have learnt.
116. By the end of Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils are confident in reciting French words that are familiar to them; for example, numbers and colours. They listen carefully to one another and their teacher, and follow instructions successfully. Higher attaining pupils can answer a limited range of questions in French. They build up a vocabulary of French words and short phrases, which they read and write correctly, taking care with pronunciation. Pupils are consolidating the vocabulary associated with the classroom and can identify everyday objects; for example, *la confiture and un bol de chocolat*. Lower attaining pupils in this key stage understand and respond to greetings and some everyday phrases. By the time they are 14, higher attaining pupils are able to speak some familiar, well-rehearsed sentences confidently; for example, they respond to questions about the weather.
117. In Key Stage 4, pupils build on previous learning and combine phrases to construct longer sentences. They study a variety of topics and are able to select and speak relevant sentences based on illustrations. In selecting pictures to depict spare time activities they talk about listening to music, playing football and watching television; for example, *Je regarde la television* and with some support, write it accurately. They enjoy French songs and the use of these helps them to build up their vocabulary. By selecting given words they build sentences and ask each other questions answering in complete sentences; for example *"Comment t'appelles-tu?", "Je m'appelle Craig"*. Pupils at both key stages achieve well and make good progress in lessons. They begin the course with no knowledge of French and are self-conscious in speaking. In Year 11, pupils broaden their vocabulary and increase the accuracy of their pronunciation and writing.
118. Since the last inspection, assessment has improved and is now satisfactory and visits to France are used effectively to reinforce teaching about the country and European culture.
119. Teaching is very good in a third of lessons and good in all others. Effective use is made of French language skills and the good relationships between the teacher and pupils enables pupils to participate confidently, and persevere with their efforts. Humour is well used to gain pupils' interest and help them to gain confidence when speaking in French. In the best lessons, French is spoken for a large proportion of the lesson and the teacher is consistent in requiring and encouraging pupils to use and understand it. However, insufficient thought has been given to the use of information and communication technology in this subject.
120. The subject is well managed although, insufficient time is allocated to the teaching of French. Pupils only receive one lesson each week, this means too much time has to be spent reinforcing what has already been learned the previous week. This is preventing pupils from making good progress over a longer period of time.

### MUSIC

121. Standards in music are too low. The school is currently without a permanent specialist teacher and an appropriate topic is planned for an Easter performance as a short-term measure while an appointment is made. However, the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory, resources are poor and pupils are missing the opportunity to develop their musical skills and extend their appreciation of the music they hear in life.
122. When pupils are motivated by good quality songs and teaching they sing well. For example, Year 9 pupils

gave a spirited rendition of a song about 'Scrooge' they had helped to write and demonstrated clear enjoyment for performance with expression. However, other songs were poorly sung as the lyrics were too difficult for them to read and insufficient attention was given to teaching them. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 play tambourines and clap to keep a steady beat, but are unable to hold their part when another rhythm is set against it. Pupils in Year 7 sang a round, keeping to their section reasonably well. In art, pupils listen carefully to music being played and respond to the mood with added concentration in their painting.

123.The previous inspection judged standards and progress to be unsatisfactory and that a relevant and appropriate curriculum was not in place. This is still the case and represents poor development of the subject over time.

124.Teaching is unsatisfactory. A temporary teacher is in post, who is appropriately qualified and experienced to teach music in mainstream secondary schools. However, expectations are too high for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Much of what is said is at too high a level for the linguistic needs of a significant number of pupils. Lessons are not planned so that pupils follow small steps in their learning to achieve the objectives, and activities are chosen that are unsuited to the needs and interests of the class. For example, in one lesson, pupils who had just been learning basic vocabulary with the speech and language teacher were suddenly expected to understand terms such as 'graphic notation' without sufficient explanation. In another lesson, pupils were expected to write down the pattern of notes for the rhythm pattern of a complex melody without first recognising and writing simpler patterns. In a lesson with Year 9, the activity was set of improvising a melody on the keyboard and singing Easter songs at first reading of difficult text. There was one instance when high expectations were successful and in one lesson one pupil recognised successfully which phrases of a melody were repetition and which were different to the initial theme. Lessons are currently supported by another member of staff, making use of his considerable musical and performing talents. This teacher works very hard to support pupils, to help them to understand what is required, to keep them motivated and to reduce frustration and keep behaviour calm. These efforts are rewarded and pupils try hard to do what is expected of them as a result. On the occasions when this teacher is not present, behaviour deteriorates and pupils disrupt the learning experience.

125.Some work has begun on preparing a scheme of work for how and what to teach in music in the school. This has, as yet, not taken sufficient regard of the musical interests of the pupils, the inclusion of modern technology and how to enthuse pupils to enjoy developing their musical skills.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

126.Pupils achieve higher than expected standards in physical education; they have maintained the very high standards and very good progress reported in the last inspection. In Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils of all abilities are taught very well and make very good progress so that some pupils are reaching standards in line with national expectations.

127.At Key Stage 3, pupils can play games using a variety of skills. They can throw and catch a ball whilst running and change direction on command, improving the control and accuracy of their movements. In one Year 7 lesson, many pupils were making very good progress in a football skills training session. They are able to control the ball and make a good effort to improve their passing and shooting skills. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 make very good progress in the gymnasium, improving their hockey skills. Higher attaining pupils were able to shoot with accuracy and lower attaining pupils were fully involved in a series of short unihoc games. At Key Stage 4, the emphasis is on leisure and choice, bringing together skills learned in previous years. Older pupils can play a number of games including football, using good individual and team skills and are beginning to learn the techniques associated with ice skating and trampolining.

128.In swimming at Key Stage 4, pupils' confidence and ability to move in the water are developing well. Their performance in the water shows a wide range of standards. Some are swimming a length with efficient strokes and the most able can swim at least fifty metres front crawl. Less able pupils who use shallower water in another pool, still lack confidence and need encouragement to swim using a variety of aids and one to one teacher support.

129.At the last inspection it was reported that pupils in both Key Stages make very good progress and achieve



high standards. The position is still the same and the good procedures for assessment and recording of pupils' achievement have been strengthened by the selected use of video records to improve the evaluation of lessons, pupils' skills and achievements, in order to maintain and raise standards.

130. The quality of teaching is very good. Activities are well planned and pupils' achievements are assessed throughout the lessons and recorded in individual records and reports. Organisation and grouping of pupils are carried out effectively and recognise the wide range of attainment among pupils. Teachers and support assistants have very good subject knowledge and an accurate knowledge of what pupils can do, and they use praise and encouragement very effectively to raise the achievements of all pupils, including a few who are initially nervous and reluctant to join in. In all lessons seen pupils responded well to the planned activities. They listen well and behave very well. Teachers manage pupils very well and despite the difficulties which some pupils have with physical co-ordination, they are keen to do well and improve their skills.
131. Planning of the curriculum is very good with good use of resources and facilities, supplemented by visits to local swimming pools and activity centres. The curriculum meets statutory requirements, a good range of different activities is included and clear links are made with the National Curriculum programmes of study. There are good opportunities for pupils to experience a variety of additional and outdoor activities during the summer activities week, which includes a visit to a residential centre at Halls Green in Kent. Pupils compete in local sporting events with other schools and enjoy the weekly games and gym club, which attracts an enthusiastic group of older pupils. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and sets targets for pupils at each key stage covering all aspects of the subject. Facilities for the subject are very good. The gymnasium is well equipped with good changing facilities. The areas available outside are extensive and provide a good games environment. The school makes good use of its minibuses to transport pupils to local swimming pools and activity centres, where the additional expertise of sports development officers strengthens the learning opportunities of pupils, for example extending skills in gymnastics trampolining and ice skating.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

132. Progress and standards in religious education are at least satisfactory in all key stages and meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In Key Stage 3, pupils show appropriate understanding of Christianity. Pupils talk knowledgeably about baptism, the font, and show some understanding of the meaning of consecrated water. Pupils develop their knowledge of religious celebrations, beliefs and traditions and relate them to family experiences for those of Muslim, Jewish, Christian and Hindu beliefs.
133. At Key Stage 4, pupils follow the ASDAN Youth Award Scheme. They carry out an in-depth study of a moral issue. For each of these issues, pupils research how the major world religions regard and address such matters. Students post 16 receive satisfactory provision, know about the life of Christ, that he is the key figure in Christianity and that Easter is when he rose from the dead.
134. At the last inspection, standards and progress were satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and unsatisfactory at Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 4 the major emphasis was placed on personal and social education with insufficient attention given to religious aspects. Standards and progress are now satisfactory or better overall and good at Key Stage 4. At Key Stage 4, when studying moral issues, there are now clear and explicit references to Christianity and principal world religions. Pupils research these religions from detailed data and document collections; however, written work does not always reflect the importance given by the school to religious content.
135. During the inspection, the specialist teacher for RE was absent. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen is satisfactory overall. At Key Stage 3, the most successful teaching is characterised by a clear start to the lesson building carefully on previous learning. Careful prompts and questions help to challenge and extend pupils' knowledge, drawing out answers and opinions. Pupils are encouraged to share their own experiences as they discuss celebrations and recount differences and similarities of major world religions. Teaching suffers from a lack of visual reinforcement and lack of relevant artefacts for pupils to examine. Tasks are not always matched to the ability of each pupil and are often time consuming.

136. At Key Stage 4, the quality of teaching is good. Clear instructions are given and pupils have a good idea of the aims and objectives of the lesson. Pupils are encouraged to use information technology to research and word-process their work, they appreciate the mature approach and responsibility they are given. Carefully run plenary sessions enable key learning points to be revisited and consolidated. Pupils' response to religious education is always satisfactory or better. At Key Stage 3, pupils settle quickly and are confident and keen to contribute to lessons. Most pupils are interested and motivated, however, a small minority of pupils sometimes seek to undermine progress. At Key Stage 4, all pupils are polite, confident and keen to support each other. Pupils respond well to instruction and are keen to research and discuss the response of major religions to the moral issue they have chosen.
137. Religious education within the school is based on the locally agreed syllabus and meets its requirements. The co-ordinator has produced a sound policy and scheme of work. The school has an appropriate range of resources to support pupils' learning including artefacts representing the major religions, and a video collection. Some very good links have been made between religious education and pupils' personal, social and health education.

## **PERSONAL SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION**

138. In personal, social and health education (PSHE) pupils achieve above the levels expected for their age. They follow a relevant curriculum for personal and social development that contains sex education, substance misuse, health education and careers advice. In Key Stage 3, achievement is good. Pupils show a positive attitude to their work and behave well in response to the enthusiasm of their teachers. At Key Stage 4, a developmental curriculum enables pupils to revisit areas of learning such as drug and sex education, in a way suitable to the age and stage of development of pupils. Pupils follow accredited courses that ensure they follow a broad and balanced curriculum. A study of conservation and recycling helps pupils to mount a local environmental project and consider the value to their community of such action. Cross curricular opportunities for literacy are also developed as pupils are helped to write letters and develop publicity materials for their project.
139. At the last inspection PSHE was a strength, it was noted as having a high priority in school with an emphasis on building self esteem and confidence through a programme of life skills. Standards have remained high with pupils still receiving quality guidance in a range of life skills and help with developing their self esteem.
140. The school has a specialist teacher for PSHE who was absent throughout the inspection. In the lessons seen, the quality of teaching is always satisfactory and often good. Prompts and clear questions are used to develop learning and positive reinforcement is effective in supporting insecure pupils. Teachers exhibit good subject knowledge and understanding. By linking learning to local incidents and locations relevance and motivation are enhanced. For example, one lesson was led by a local police officer who presented relevant cases of alcohol and drug misuse. These resulted in pupils listening attentively and asking searching questions to find out about the laws relating to alcohol use. Pupils respond well to PSHE and make good progress in their learning as a result. They like the rich and varied curriculum and respond well to the use of films, role play demonstrations and discussions. Pupils respond positively to the use of humour.
141. Resources for PSHE are satisfactory, a detailed scheme of work and good policy have been developed over time. Monitoring and assessment are good, and each pupil's progress is measured against pre set targets. There are effective links between PSHE as a taught subject and the strong network of pastoral support in the school. For example, one lesson for Year 9 on the value of personal space was based on why other pupils may become angry and aimed at improving relationships in the school as well as furthering knowledge of personal development.