

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **BENSHAM MANOR SCHOOL**

Ecclesbourne Road

Thornton Heath

Surrey

LEA area: Croydon

Unique reference number: 101851

Headteacher: Mrs. E.J. Green

Reporting inspector: D. Smith  
17323

Dates of inspection: 26.06.2000 – 28.06.2000

Inspection number: 191790  
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school:              | Special                                       |
| School category:             | Community Special                             |
| Age range of pupils:         | 11 - 16                                       |
| Gender of pupils:            | Mixed   |
| School address:              | Ecclesbourne Road<br>Thornton Heath<br>Surrey |
| Postcode:                    | CR7 7BN                                       |
| Telephone number:            | 020 8684 0116                                 |
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| Appropriate authority:       | Governing Body                                |
| Name of chair of governors:  | Mrs. A. Addison                               |
| Date of previous inspection: | 03.02.97                                      |

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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|--------------|----------------------|
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## REPORT CONTENTS

|  | Page      |
|--|-----------|
| <b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>   | <b>7</b>  |
| Information about the school   |           |
| How good the school is   |           |
| What the school does well  |           |
| What could be improved   |           |
| How the school has improved since its last inspection  |           |
| Standards  |           |
| Pupils' attitudes and values   |           |
| Teaching and learning  |           |
| Other aspects of the school  |           |
| How well the school is led and managed   |           |
| Parents' and carers' views of the school   |           |
| <br>   |           |
| <b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>  |           |
| <br>   |           |
| <b>WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL</b>   | <b>13</b> |
| <br>   |           |
| Pupils make very good progress in English; the subject is a strength of the school because of the very good teaching and planning.   |           |
| <br>   |           |
| Pupils achieve well because teachers are thoroughly prepared and use their specialist skills very effectively to motivate and challenge pupils.  |           |
| <br>   |           |
| The quality and range of the curriculum is good overall and very good at Key Stage 4 and promotes pupil achievement. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection, especially for the pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. |           |
| <br>   |           |
| Careers education and guidance make a very important contribution to pupils' developing independence and preparation for life after school.  |           |
| <br>   |           |
| Significantly enriches the curriculum by the provision of residential trips, educational visits and clubs.   |           |
| <br>   |           |
| Pupils are cared for well and receive good support and guidance.   |           |
| <br>   |           |
| <b>WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED</b>  | <b>19</b> |
| <br>   |           |
| Formal monitoring is not established in the school and therefore the headteacher and governing body are not sufficiently well informed to carry out their strategic responsibilities effectively.                                      |           |

Pupils' attendance at school is poor and this limits the achievements of some pupils.

The working relationship between school and home to improve the schools' partnership with parents.

|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| <b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b> | <b>23</b> |
| <b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>            | <b>24</b> |

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Bensham Manor Community School is a large, mixed, day special school for secondary age pupils and of these, 143 pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The majority of the pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The school also admits pupils with additional needs and, in particular, a growing number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school has a unit for 12 pupils with autistic spectrum disorder (the range of pupils who have symptoms of autistic spectrum disorders) integrated into the school. Approximately 20% of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and there are 12 pupils for whom English is an additional language. Fifty-five pupils are entitled to free school meals.

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

Bensham Manor School is an effective school with a very good range of external accreditation available to pupils at the end of Key Stage 4. The majority of pupils behave very well in class and around school and demonstrate a good attitude to their learning. The school's previous very high rate of exclusion has been drastically reduced during this academic year. Pupil attendance is poor and this reflects the negative attitude, of some pupils, towards school. The school meets statutory requirements in their provision of the National Curriculum and religious education. English is a strength throughout the school. Careers education and guidance continue to be a strength of the school and makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development. The curriculum provided to pupils with autistic spectrum disorder is good, supported by the very good assessment of academic progress. The wide range of visits organised by the school significantly enrich the pupils' curriculum. Opportunities are lost at lunch time to offer a sufficient range of extra-curricular activities. The quality of teaching is very good in just under half of the lessons and is good in most of the others. Nearly all of the teaching at Key Stage 4 is good or better. Leadership and management of the school is satisfactory overall. Day to day management of the school is good but strategic management of the school is unsatisfactory, as is the school's relationship with parents. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils make very good progress in English; the subject is a strength of the school because of the very good teaching and planning.
- Pupils achieve well because teachers are thoroughly prepared and use their specialist skills very effectively to motivate and challenge pupils.
- The quality and range of the curriculum is good overall and very good at Key Stage 4 and promotes pupil achievement. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection, especially for the pupils with autistic spectrum disorder.
- Careers education and guidance make a very important contribution to pupils' developing independence and preparation for life after school.
- Significantly enriches the curriculum by the provision of residential trips, educational visits and clubs.
- Pupils are cared for well and receive good support and guidance.

### What could be improved

- Formal monitoring is not established in the school and therefore, the headteacher and governing body are not sufficiently well informed to carry out their strategic responsibilities effectively.
- Pupils' attendance at school is poor and this limits the achievements of some pupils.
- The working relationship between school and home to improve the schools' partnership with parents.

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

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

The school has made satisfactory improvements since the last inspection in February 1997. In three of the four key issues identified the weaknesses have been dealt with. The current situation is that:

- the school meets health and safety glazing regulations;
- all pupils receive their entitlement to a broad balanced and relevant curriculum, including the national curriculum and religious education.
- a staff rota has been established to ensure that the school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship. There is a daily assembly, which during the week, includes whole school, key stage and class assemblies, all of which have a spiritual content;
- there is an improved system for the monitoring and encouragement of pupil attendance, but the level of pupil attendance is still poor.

The good and very good quality of teaching seen at Key Stages 3 and 4 is a significant strength of the school, an improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum continues to improve and in particular, the opportunity for external accreditation at Key Stage 4 and the curricular access for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. Careers and education guidance in the school has been improved by some well-considered developments.

### 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<br>5 | by age<br>11 | by age<br>16 | by age<br>19 | Key              |
|--|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------------|
| Speaking and listening                                   |             |              | A            |              | very good A      |
| Reading  |             |              | B            |              | Good B           |
| Writing  |             |              | B            |              | Satisfactory C   |
| Mathematics  |             |              | B            |              | Unsatisfactory D |
| Personal, social and health education                    |             |              | C            |              | Poor E           |
| Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs* |             |              | D            |              |                  |



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

Standards of work seen are lower than age expectancy because of the considerable learning difficulties of some pupils.

Pupils' achievements at the end of Key Stage 3 are, based on the available data, comparable with similar schools. The school has an abundance of well-documented evidence showing a good level of pupil achievement, at Key Stage 3, in most foundation subjects. Pupils achieve well at the end of Key Stage 4, as for example, in last years' GCSE results 93% of the pupils gained at least one A – G. In particular the art results are exceptional, with the majority of pupils attaining grade E or above. The average points score for pupils was 4.8, compared to 0.69 in similar schools. High expectations are placed on developing pupils speaking and listening skills and this is evident across the curriculum. Good reading and writing skills are targeted to support the examination courses and pupils' independence skills. Pupils achieve good results in their Certificate of Educational Achievement for mathematics showing the development of their numeracy skills. The management of pupils' personal, social and health education is not sufficiently organised to reflect the progress pupils make in this aspect of their curriculum. Targets set at annual reviews and in pupils' individual education plans are unsatisfactory.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

| <b>Aspect</b>                          | <b>Comment</b>  |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school                | The majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and show interest in school life. A minority do not attend regularly, show little interest in school activities, and fail to keep up with their peers.  |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms    | Most pupils behave well in class, stay on task and are enthusiastic about their work. However, in a few lessons, behaviour causes concern and can limit the learning of others. This is especially true when teaching is lacking in subject specialism, pace and variety. Poor behaviour out of lessons has resulted in 2 permanent and 14 fixed-term exclusions this year. |
| Personal development and relationships | Personal development is good overall, evidenced by the very successful outcomes at Key Stage 4, in work experience, and routes taken after school. Relationships between pupils and staff and pupils and their peers are, for the majority, very good. The relationship between parents and school is an area for development.  |
| Attendance                             | Pupil attendance is poor across the school with very poor attendance by pupils in year 11.  |

The majority of pupils have a good attitude to school and this is clearly shown in their behaviour. However, pupil attendance is poor across the school and this reflects a negative attitude towards school by a small number of pupils. Pupils' personal development is good and they are able to form constructive relationships with staff and other pupils. Pupils take pride in their work and respond well to the praise and celebration of their achievements. Pupils are polite and helpful to visitors.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

| Teaching of pupils:  | Aged up to 5 | Aged 5-11 | aged 11-16 | Aged over 16 |
|----------------------|--------------|-----------|------------|--------------|
| Lessons seen overall |              |           | Good       |              |

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and at Key Stage 4 it is very good. There is an infectious keenness and confidence that helps pupils to learn well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and provision for external accreditation at Key Stage 4 is extensive. Lessons are well planned and resources and specialist accommodation are used effectively. Questioning skills are usually very effective in challenging pupils to think. Relationships are very good and this motivates pupils to achieve well. Support from the learning support assistants is very good. The small amount of teaching that is less effective is the result of, for example, poor lesson planning, use of a narrow range of teaching methods, un-stimulating tasks and insecure management of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

| Aspect  | Comment  |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum   | A good quality curriculum is in place which has improved since the last inspection, especially for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. Curricular provision is very effective at Key Stage 4, where pupils are prepared very well for the next stage in their education. Careers education and guidance are very good. Planning for health education is also very good; but the planning, co-ordination and monitoring of personal and social education from Years 7 to 11 is unsatisfactory. A wide range of off-site activities and visits enrich the curriculum; and provision for extra-curricular art and design and technology is very good before and after school. The range of extra-curricular provision at lunch time is, however, too narrow to interest all pupils. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language                                 | Provision for English as a second language is good. A translator has been provided for one boy from Kosovo. Two pupils have been disapplied from French, one for additional signing and one for communication development.   |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, and very good for moral and cultural development. Pupils benefit from the wide range of activities and visits, which improve the curriculum, especially in art, music, English, religious education, physical education, and careers.   |
| How well the school cares for its pupils  | The school cares for its pupils well. Daily support and guidance is good and pupils' personal development is good. The procedures for monitoring and improving behaviour are very well set up. The annual review procedures for setting personal and social targets and the planning of activities to meet these   |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  | targets are unsatisfactory. These targets are too broad and general and they are not put into individual education plans and reviewed during the year. |
|--|--|

The curriculum offered to pupils at Key Stage 4 is very good in both academic and vocational terms. A challenging range of external accreditation is complimented by very good careers, education and guidance. The pupils with autistic spectrum disorder receive a broad curriculum that is well matched to their individual needs. A wide range of visits improve the curriculum but extra-curricular provision at lunch time is too narrow to interest all pupils. Pupils' moral and cultural development is very good. Daily support and guidance for pupils is good, helping to promote effective personal development. Target setting in the annual review and individual education plans is unsatisfactory.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect   | Comment  |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Satisfactory. The headteacher puts a great deal of time and energy into making sure that the day-to-day management of the school is effective. She is well supported in this role by heads of department, key stage co-ordinators and the chair of the governing body. There are well-developed communication systems within the school. The school does not carry out formal monitoring or teacher appraisal. |
| How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities  | The governing body is in the process of change. There is an appropriate range of committees but some governors find it difficult to give sufficient time to their work in school. The governing body do not fulfil their strategic role in the school effectively.   |
| The school's evaluation of its performance                       | Unsatisfactory. Formal monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school to effectively identify priorities and targets to form the basis of future planning.   |
| The strategic use of resources                                   | Satisfactory. The school's very good specialist facilities are well used to improve the curricular entitlement of pupils. Specific grants are generally well used but the school has failed to take advantage of the New Opportunity Fund for the training of teachers in information and communications technology.   |

The headteacher, heads of department, key stage co-ordinators and chair of the governing body work very hard to make sure that the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Improvements in the quality of teaching and the curriculum have taken place since the last inspection as a result of the specialist expertise and the high expectations of the staff. Not enough time and expertise is devoted to formal monitoring and management lacks the necessary vision to provide a strategic plan as the basis for continual improvement. The governing body has adopted a positive approach in their procedures to ensure bestvalue for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| <b>What pleases parents most</b>  | <b>What parents would like to see improved</b>   |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The high expectations for pupils' achievements at the end of Key Stage 4.</li><li>• The very good careers education and guidance, which helps promote pupils' personal and independence skills.</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The quantity and quality of homework in general.</li><li>• The activities during lunch time to make sure that the wide range of pupil needs are met and pupils are positively occupied.</li><li>• More involvement with the school by a greater number of parents.</li></ul> |

Inspectors' judgements confirm the positive comments from parents. The headteacher recognises the need to further develop home school liaison. The school has a number of projects soon to be carried out, designed to improve school parental liaison, for example, a new homework system.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**Pupils make very good progress in English, the subject is a strength of the school because of the very good teaching and planning.**

1. The co-ordinator is well-qualified and experienced in the teaching of English. He supports staff very effectively in the department and in the provision of literacy across the curriculum. Long, medium and short-term planning is very good, and well managed to make sure that there is effective continuity within and through the key stages. The very good assessment procedures, and thorough, detailed recording, are well used to inform planning. The use of well targeted, individual education plans, in use at Key Stage 3, provide good reference to the strengths and areas of development for each pupil. Pupils are grouped in relation to their achievement and this is effective in challenging the high attaining pupils and providing very good support for pupils who need more help to understand new ideas. Group work is creatively used in ambitious projects, such as the writing of poetry and the pupils then present their collaborative work to the rest of the class. Very good levels of responsibility and decision making are given to older pupils, whilst they video record their group presentation. This enables them to discuss and evaluate the quality of their presentation in a confident and mature manner. A good range of resources is added to by very high quality teacher produced texts, which are cleverly adapted and presented in booklet form. The development of literacy skills for pupils' with autistic spectrum disorders is effective and carefully monitored to provide the basis for future planning.
2. Pupils are encouraged to value their work and they gain a genuine pride in their achievements. An excellent means of raising pupils' self-esteem is the way that bound copies of pupils' prose and poetry, are prominently displayed in the library. Pupils clearly enjoy their time in the library which is a very attractive, well organised, and well used facility. Pupils study a good range of texts. Recent examples include, 'A Christmas Carol', 'Goodnight Mr Tom', 'Of Mice and Men', 'Kestrel for a Knave', and 'Romeo and Juliet', which provide pupils with a rich experience of literature.
3. Teaching of English is very good throughout the school and this reflects the strength in depth of subject expertise. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and the organisation of teaching bases into subject areas enhances the identity of individual subjects. The English classrooms are clearly focused on the subject and provide a stimulating working environment. The learning support staff make a significant contribution to pupils' achievements and share in setting high expectations in all of the lessons. The very good relationships between pupils and their interaction with staff helps to build mutual respect. Enthusiastic encouragement, raises the self-esteem of pupils, enabling them to have high expectations of themselves and the confidence to be ambitious in their learning. The school's summer literacy programme is very successful.
4. Analysis of written work, and detailed records, including reading records, indicate clear progression within and through the key stages. Pupils achieve very well in speaking and listening and well in reading and writing across the curriculum. Pupils are keen to contribute to class discussions and yet are also willing to wait their turn

and listen to the views of others. Some pupils do require skilled intervention to give them the confidence to contribute, but this is well managed. Pupils make good progress in reading, appropriate to the level of ability, and most will volunteer to read aloud in class. There is evidence, in written work, of drafting and redrafting, use of word processing, and an emphasis on good presentation, encouraged by the practice of work being displayed in the classroom. Writing by more able pupils at Key Stage 3 is impressive, including good use of vocabulary to produce detailed descriptions. During Key Stage 4, pupils learn to write letters, retell stories, undertake comprehension exercises, and write poems.

5. Teachers use imaginative ways to encourage careful listening and confident speaking. Audio and video tapes made by the teacher, produce good results in lessons, as does the experience of performing on camera. Pupils are happy to enter into conversation with visitors, speaking confidently and politely. During the inspection, pupils showed a good understanding of words beyond the literal. They recall past work accurately and can relate it to current exercises. They are able to understand and make conclusions about what they are watching. Pupils display a sensitivity when empathising, for example, with characters in Kes and can verbally express that empathy. The contributions of the teacher from the Hearing Impaired Service, the Speech and Language Therapy Department, and the signing support worker, enable pupils with difficulties to be fully involved.

**Pupils achieve well because teachers are thoroughly prepared and use their specialist skills very effectively to motivate and challenge pupils.**

6. The quality of teaching is good overall and very good at Key Stage 4. The proportion of very good quality teaching is high, about four in ten lessons, and there is a very low percentage of unsatisfactory teaching. The quality of teaching and learning in English is a strength of the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations and in design and technology there is a genuine enthusiasm for the subject, which in turn enthuses the pupils to achieve well. Pupils are challenged very well to succeed in externally accredited courses by the end of Key Stage 4. Lessons are usually conducted at a good pace and they start and end promptly.
7. The management of most pupils' behaviour is effective and the great majority of pupils exercise high standards of self-discipline and want to learn. Time is therefore used productively, and as a consequence pupils achieve well. Teachers are occasionally less successful in managing pupils with additional emotional and behavioural difficulties, about a fifth of the pupils on roll. The strategies used are narrow and can unnecessarily disrupt the learning of others in the class. Teaching methods are very effective in promoting pupils' personal and social development, as well as their subject knowledge and skills, although such developments are not specifically featured in lesson plans. Significant strengths are the quality of teachers' questioning skills and their assessments in lessons that provide them with clear knowledge of pupils' progress. Assessments in lessons are supported by very thorough assessment procedures; and assessment records help in the monitoring of progress over time. Unfortunately the annual subject reports then provide parents with so very little information about pupils' progress in knowledge, understanding and skill in the subjects. Some homework is given to the pupils but does not always provide a challenging development to learning in school. In some subjects there is insufficient homework to effectively support pupils in Key Stage 4 who are working

towards external accreditation. However the staff responsible for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder are thorough in setting homework for their pupils.

8. Support staff are used effectively, especially for the hearing impaired pupils. The school is well resourced and accommodation is spacious with very good specialist facilities, helping teachers to use methods that interest and motivate pupils. Lessons are well planned with learning objectives for the whole class clearly communicated to the pupils. Less well developed is the planning of individual learning objectives linked to targets set in annual subject reports and at the Annual Review. Teachers rarely set subject specific targets in their annual reports, and the targets that are presented on these reports are not transferred to lesson plans.

**The quality and range of the curriculum is good overall and very good at Key Stage 4 and promotes pupil achievement. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection, especially for the pupils with autistic spectrum disorder.**

9. The quality and range of the curriculum is good overall and very good at Key Stage 4 where it significantly contributes to pupil achievement. The statutory requirements are met for National Curriculum subjects. Although not required to do so, the school follows the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection.
10. Pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 3 is broadly similar in the core subjects and comparable with similar schools. The school has an abundance of well documented evidence showing a good level of pupil achievement in some foundation subjects i.e. design and technology, geography, history, information and communications technology and modern foreign languages.
11. The school is energetic and forward looking in making sure there is a dynamic range of accreditation at Key Stage 4. Pupils are given every opportunity to achieve and this focus continues to progress. This excellent range of external accreditation, both academic and vocational is shown to be successful when, for example, 93% of pupils in 1999 GCSE's achieve at least 1 A-G, which is very good indeed when compared to the national average of 16.5% for similar schools. The average point score in the same exams was 4.8 compared to 0.69 in similar schools; this reflects very well on the wealth of opportunities and high expectations that Bensham Manor places on the pupils. In particular, the art results are exceptional with the majority of pupils achieving a grade E or above. There is clear evidence around the school to support the judgement that art is a very strong subject in the school. The results in design and technology are also very impressive with nearly half of the pupils achieving a pass. These results reflect the dedication, specialist knowledge and high expectations of teaching in art and also in design and technology .
12. Pupils do well in their Associated Examining Board Basic Tests in numeracy and basic science. Pupils achievements in their Certificate of Educational Achievement in English and science are good, whilst the mathematics results in this particular form of accreditation are very good indeed. The core subjects are well supported by an impressive array of pupil passes in the Certificate of Educational Achievement. Pupils achieve 100% success in their NVQ units, which prepare them well for this form of study at college.

13. The school sets reasonable statutory targets and pupils achieve at least the projected levels. The poor attendance of a significant minority of pupils contributes to their under-achievement at Key Stage 3, which is compounded at Key Stage 4 where pupil attendance is close to 80%.
14. The curriculum for pupils with autistic spectrum disorder has improved since the last inspection and the quality of the curriculum is good. The pupils in the unit now receive a broad curriculum that is well matched to their individual needs. The very effective use of age appropriate relevant resources and content is a particular strength. The subjects of the National Curriculum are now clearly in evidence on the timetable and in pupils' work files. The targets in individual education plans are very effective. Small steps in progress are monitored and celebrated. Procedures for assessing and monitoring academic progress are exceptionally thorough. Assessments are used very well when planning the next steps. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder who are able to benefit from working with other pupils in the main school are given the opportunity to do so in, for example, English, mathematics, art and physical education. These opportunities for integration promote the social development of both the pupils with autistic spectrum disorder and pupils in the main school. The learning support assistants in the unit have a key role in recording pupils' achievements. The academic progress of pupils studying subjects in the main school is not as well monitored as in the unit. The higher attaining pupils are successful in achieving independence skills, and can, for example, shop independently.

**Careers education and guidance make a very important contribution to pupils' developing independence and preparation for life after school.**

15. Careers education and guidance and vocational education were identified as strengths of the school in the last inspection. The high profile of this programme has not only been maintained but imaginatively strengthened and provides a good framework for preparation for life after school. Pupils are prepared very well for the next phase in their education and training encouraged by well established college links. The school spends considerable well directed time on helping pupils to become independent travellers, parents are appreciative of this and they are at times quite amazed at the progress their child makes in travelling independently. This independent travel not only relates to travel between school and home but also at times between home and college. Some parents would appreciate the opportunity of a flexible post-16 arrangement in the school. Taking into account the school's strong vocational system the headteacher is in a strong position to consider providing opportunities for post-16 students in the school.
16. Health education is provided in each year group and it effectively covers sex and drugs education. Careers and health education make a very important contribution to pupils' personal and social education. Pupils in Years 7 and 9 have additional personal, social and health education lessons. There is, however, no overall co-ordination of the personal, social and health education provision in the school and this is a significant weakness. There is no overall policy for personal education, some provision is made to fill out teachers' timetables, there is no scheme of work, an over reliance on published materials and no monitoring of the whole provision to secure planned progression from Years 7 to 11.



17. Work-related learning activities are a major strength of the school. This includes an extensive programme of work with mock interviews and a business simulation project. There is also a very effective mentoring programme with key staff from one of the big 5 banks. Pupils enjoy a job wise course, which develops their presentation skills. They are provided with very good preparation for their education based work experience, which includes a key skills workshop. The status employment project is particularly successful in providing short work experience for Year 10 pupils. Staff from Status clearly notice the developing confidence and independence of the pupils as they move through Key Stage 4. Pupils from Year 11 attend three weeks work experience at carefully chosen companies known to be welcoming to special needs children. During the inspection Year 11 were taking part in work experience, they were thoroughly enjoying their placements as well as gaining a valuable insight into the workplace.

**Significantly enriches the curriculum by the provision of residential trips, education visits and clubs.**

18. The school has made a clear commitment to provide the pupils with a wealth of opportunities to extend and enrich their curriculum. The success of this provision is a strength of the school and is made possible by the hard work of some dedicated staff. The extension of the curriculum makes an effective contribution to the pupils' good social development in the school and has a significant impact on their very good cultural development.
19. Pupils at Key Stage 3 are keen to describe their enjoyable residential stay in Worcestershire. They recall their experiences with enthusiasm. Photographs of the trip are prominently displayed and clearly show the benefits of the trip and in particular the pupils' having access to a very good range of leisure activities. Older pupils have the opportunity to take part in a residential trip to Belgium. Ski trips to the continent are also popular with pupils. This is an ambitious and well-planned visit, which makes a positive contribution to all aspects of the pupils' curriculum and in particular broadens their cultural experience. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder are provided with some carefully planned and very good quality residential visits. They have the opportunity to develop their life skills training and take responsibility for day to day living in an activity centre. They share the domestic duties, including shopping and cleaning. A crucial aspect of this venture is that pupils work as a team, are involved in decision making and gain the confidence to participate in a challenging range of leisure activities. Residential visits are certainly a very positive feature of the schools' provision for the pupils and enhance the quality of education provided.
20. The comprehensive range of day visits, have a very positive impact on the pupils' curriculum. Theatre visits are skilfully interwoven with the rich experience of literature provided in the English department. These experiences of literature and drama are enhanced by good quality drama workshops. There is a clear sequence in the planning, beginning with work in the classroom, built upon by drama workshops, given relevance by theatre visits, culminating in pupils presenting their own production to the public. Pupils enjoy performing in public and video evidence of a recent production records the high degree of enthusiasm and confidence that the pupils display. A similar sequence is also planned in music. The school hosts classical musicians, the pupils then have the opportunity of going to a musical. Pupils enjoy singing, this is very effectively encouraged and developed in the

school. The school choir enjoy performing in public. Visits to art galleries encourage pupils to produce high quality art work as they are provided the opportunity to see and appreciate the art work of others. These visits serve to raise the aspirations of the pupils and certainly their artwork displayed in the school is of a very high standard and professionally displayed. The week long visit by a technology bus was a great help to the Year 10 pupils who were doing a marketing project. Pupils' work is valued and the celebration of achievement is an integral part of school life. The physical education curriculum is enhanced by pupils' opportunities to compete and spectate in the wider community.

21. The school has good links with local colleges and these effectively help to prepare the pupils for their post-16 move into college. This transition is also assisted by very good work experience links and the high profile of careers education and guidance in the school. There are some very good careers displays in the school which promote and stimulate the pupils' interest in this aspect of the curriculum. The schools' links with mainstream schools are still at an early stage of development and opportunities are therefore limited for pupils to be involved with their mainstream peers. The contribution of visitors is effectively managed and they make a good contribution to enrich the pupils' curriculum. The visit by a health education caravan provides pupils with access to a wide range of resources and provides a good stimulus to raise their interest and awareness. Pupils' social and moral development is encouraged by visiting local community police and railway safety personnel. A lunchtime 'drop in' club organised by the English department is popular with pupils and contributes to the very good learning for pupils in English. The design and technology teacher offers an exceptional level of support as senior pupils are given the opportunity to work with him in the workshop before and after school. This extended time is used very productively to enhance the design and technology curriculum and helps to establish very good staff pupil relationships. A good level of support is also provided by the art and design teacher and the art produced by the pupils significantly contributes to the attractive school environment. Some extra curricular activities are provided at lunch time, but there is scope to extend the range to interest more of the pupils.

### **Pupils are cared for well and receive good support and guidance.**

22. The school is a caring and supportive learning environment. Staff know the pupils well and are trusted and respected by them. This contributes to the very good relationship that exists between pupils and staff. The strong relationships help to promote an ethos which gives the pupils the confidence to respond positively to the high expectations promoted by staff. The majority of pupils talk to the staff in a relaxed, yet respectful manner. Thorough day to day assessments are effectively directed towards raising pupils' achievements, particularly at the end of Key Stage 4.
23. Systems for monitoring pupils' personal development and behaviour are well managed. The co-ordinated involvement of the headteacher and pastoral co-ordinators for Key Stages 3 and 4 ensures that senior managers are very supportive of the pupils. Pupil achievement is celebrated throughout the school and the house system effectively promotes positive involvement by the pupils. All pupils are organised in class groups and this is the first point of reference for support. Assemblies give the pupils the opportunity to effectively share in celebrating each others achievements.

24. The school is a safe place and the staff have an acute awareness of safety issues. Health and safety aspects of the school are given a high priority. The resident caretaker is very involved in the life of the school and makes a significant contribution to the security of the school site. The named person for child protection in the school is the headteacher and there are good procedures in place. The number of pupil exclusions during this academic year has significantly reduced from the very high levels of the previous year. The school are aware of the need to make sure that the number of pupil exclusions continues to reduce. The school has a well-considered behaviour management policy and staff are aware of the need to apply this consistently. The policy is well supported by good classroom practice and the pupils are made very clear as to the rules and procedures for achieving good behaviour. Procedures for the daily monitoring of behaviour are especially effective and the options initiative at the end of the week effectively motivates pupils and promotes good standards of behaviour. A minority of pupils do challenge the behavioural systems within the school, but staff work hard to minimise the bullying and adopt a unified approach to the prevention of harassment. The low level of supervision during lunch is one aspect of school organisation where the opportunity is lost to share a meal with pupils and therefore offer support and guidance in an informal manner. New year six pupils are effectively inducted into the school and provided with very good mentoring by older pupils on their initial visit.
25. Pupils' academic progress is very well monitored across the curriculum. Pupils are provided with a very good level of support and preparation for their external accreditation at the end of Key Stage 4. Pupils are provided with exceptional support by the design and technology teacher. He has established a series of early morning and after school sessions, where pupils are offered support and guidance as well as a high level of personal support when extending their knowledge skills and understanding in design and technology. A very good level of support is also offered to the pupils, after school, by the art and design teacher. The impact of this additional support in both subjects is evident in pupils' positive attitude towards the subject and the excellent standard of work on display.
26. Pupils with additional problems are well served by speech therapists and the visiting nurse. Support is also provided for pupils' who have particular problems in using English as an additional language. The school's nominated Education Welfare Officer is actively involved in the life of the school and is well known by the pupils and the staff. Pupils' with autistic spectrum disorders are provided with a very good level of support and are integrated appropriately into the schools' curricular and extra-curricular activities. Careers education and guidance makes a significant contribution to the curriculum at Key Stage 4.
27. The annual review procedures for setting personal and social targets and the planning of activities to meet these targets are unsatisfactory. These targets are too broad in general and they are not incorporated in the individual education plans and the reviews at the end of the year.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**Formal monitoring is not established in the school and therefore the headteacher and governing body are not sufficiently well informed to carry out their strategic responsibilities effectively.**

28. The headteacher is very hard working and a central figure in the school, but concentrates too much of her time and energy on managing the day to day aspects of the school. The chair of the governing body provides very good support to the headteacher in this aspect of her role. There is insufficient delegation of day-to-day tasks and management responsibilities to the deputy headteacher. Oversight of the current deputy headteachers' role lack rigorous accountability and challenge. This is illustrated by the fact that the deputy headteachers' role as the special education needs co-ordinator is not fully understood or established in the school. The faculty heads provide competent support within an eight strong, effective senior management team. They carry out their role with enthusiasm and a commitment to support the headteacher in achieving the aims of the school. Staff are equally keen to ensure that the school is a secure, caring, yet challenging environment for all pupils. There is a good range of meetings and these are well managed to ensure that staff are aware of the academic and pastoral needs of the pupils. The discussions within these meetings do demonstrate the in depth knowledge that staff have of each individual pupil. The majority of staff are keen to contribute to the meetings and play an active part. A relaxed approach encourages a professional discourse and yet helps to promote good staff relations.
29. The governing body do, as required, operate an appraisal system for the headteacher and set appropriate targets. The statutory, formal appraisal of teaching staff has not been carried out and also the formal monitoring of teaching is not carried out by the headteacher or other appropriate staff. The headteacher and other senior staff are generally aware of what is happening in classrooms but where teaching is unsatisfactory or there are areas for particular staff development, this informal system is not effective. This is demonstrated in information and communications technology where some staff lack the expertise or confidence to teach the subject across the curriculum. The school has not been pro-active in providing the essential staff training which is available through New Opportunity Funding. The teaching by subject specialists and good teaching skills are strengths of the school and therefore it is surprising that the deployment of some staff for the teaching of mathematics does not reflect the essential core status of the subject. The school, therefore, is ineffective in certain key aspects of staff development and training. This in particular effects the impact of information and communications technology across the curriculum and the quality of teaching in mathematics.
30. The governing body are aware of the need to develop a systematic approach to ensure that they are, as a critical friend, fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. However, they are currently in the process of transition and some governors find it difficult to devote sufficient time to their work in school. Both of these factors limit the governing body's effectiveness in establishing the strategic direction of the school. The process of subject planning which is linked to financial allocation, is effectively managed in most subjects, however, both information and communications technology and personal social education are areas of the curriculum which are lacking in leadership and are therefore not effectively managed. The two year school development plan concentrates on tasks to be carried out, rather than providing the framework for the vision and future direction of the school. In particular the success criteria do not provide an objective measure on which the Governing Body can gauge the effectiveness of its targets

and spending decisions on raising quality and standards throughout the school. The school has carried forward a large underspend and although there are identified areas which would easily account for this finance, the rationale for an underspend is subjective. Day-to-day financial management is effectively carried out by efficient administrative staff. The headteacher and chair of the governing body are fully aware of the need to have a significantly greater focus on the strategic management of the school, ensuring that there is a plan and vision to drive the school, in its quest, for dynamic and continual improvement.

**Pupil attendance at school gives rise for concern and this has a significant impact on the progress of some pupils.**

31. The overall level of pupil attendance in the school is poor. Pupil attendance has deteriorated this academic year and currently the attendance figure is 87%, which is 2% lower than the average in similar schools. The levels of both authorised and unauthorised absence have increased since the last inspection. Pupils' attendance is poor across the school but is very poor in Year 11 where in the current year the pupil attendance level is only 81%. The impact of low levels of attendance is that a minority of pupils significantly under achieve during and at the end of their education. The Year 11 figures demonstrate that far too many pupils do opt out of the very good range of opportunities provided. There are examples of pupils on role who have the potential to achieve well in their GCSE's but because of poor attendance are not entered for their exams.
32. The poor pupil attendance at the school is the consequence of a number of factors, which the school is actively analysing. Croydon is a large borough and a number of pupils have a relatively long and time consuming journey into school, but this is a factor in many other special schools and therefore not a major reason for poor attendance in this particular school. Parents of some pupils do condone their absence and the school realises the necessity to improve their working relationship with all parents in an attempt to gain support for their child's education. Some pupils have a negative attitude to their schooling and even though Bensham Manor has improved the attendance record for some of these pupils there is a hard-core of pupils who are persistent non-attenders. The growing number of pupils with emotional behaviour difficulties provides a clear message for future planning and therefore the lack of precision in individual education plans contributes an ill fit between need and provision.
33. A new system of electronically recording attendance was installed in September 1999 and its greater accuracy makes the school more aware of attendance figures. The Education Welfare Officer is very actively involved with the school and works hard to encourage and support pupils' attendance in school. She visits school on a regular basis and has a good system of liaison with staff in the school. The school is alert to pupil non-attendance and has a rapid response system in attempting to minimise pupils' absence. Parents are contacted in an attempt to encourage their child's attendance in school but this has a varying range of success. Poor pupil attendance at the school is a major concern which has a negative impact on the overall effectiveness of the school.

**An increased involvement with and greater commitment to the school by a larger number of parents.**

34. There are aspects of the schools' working relationship with parents that require some attention. The headteacher is aware of the need to improve the schools' partnership with parents and is planning to use the information gathered during the inspection as the basis for future planning. The effectiveness of home-school contact on a day-to-day basis is mixed. Parents are happy with the home school diary for pupils at Key Stage 3. They see the diary as a useful way of finding out about what is going on in school. It is the view of some parents that the same system would be useful for the more forgetful pupils at Key Stage 4. Parents feel that the difficulties in communication are particularly highlighted in the management of pupils' homework. Many parents feel that the quantity and quality of pupils' homework is unsatisfactory. When homework is set parents are often unsure about the requirements of the homework and this makes it difficult for them to help their child. Some poor quality resources, for example, scraps of paper are used for homework and this tends to give the impression that homework is unimportant. The headteacher is very aware of the problems regarding homework and is planning to provide every pupil with a homework folder from the beginning of the autumn term. This new arrangement will improve the quality and quantity of homework as well as making contact between school and home more effective. The school are aware that a number of parents need to have a greater commitment to their child's homework.
35. Parents do not feel sufficiently well informed about the progress of their children or that they have a close working relationship with the school. Those who make an effort to make enquiries of the school find teachers helpful and welcoming, but the school does not reach out sufficiently to involve parents who do not take the initiative. The lack of commitment to school by some parents is demonstrated in the poor level of pupil attendance. The school are aware that a small number of parents do condone the non-attendance of their child at school. The school has identified an improved working relationship with parents, as a major way forward in improving pupil attendance.
36. Some parents have concerns regarding the adequacy of activities provided at lunch time. A significant number of parents, responding to the questionnaire, are not well informed as to the range of extra curricular activities provided during the lunch break. Parents expressing a view, recognise the wide range of pupil needs in the school and the challenge posed in meeting all of the needs during the lunch break. Some parents are unhappy about the shortening of the school day with a loss of opportunity for extra-curricular activities at lunchtime. The length of the taught day is too short and some parents would rather have the taught day extended and the length of the school day maintained.

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

The school needs to improve its working relationship with all parents and in particular, ensure an increased involvement with the school by a greater number of parents.

The school needs to increase the level of pupil attendance by improving the attitude towards the school of persistent non-attenders and the recognition by a minority of parents in the importance of their child attending school.

The headteacher and governing body need to introduce the monitoring of the quality of teaching and standards of education across the school. They need to use this objective measure, of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, to form the basis of improved strategic management of the school.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed   | 40 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 19 |

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

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
|           | 43        | 35   | 20           | 2              |      |           |

*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                     | 147          |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | 55           |

### ***English as an additional language***

| <b>English as an additional language</b>                | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 12           |

### ***Pupil mobility in the last school year***

| <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 | 3            |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving           | 3            |



## Attendance

### Authorised absence

|             |     |
|-------------|-----|
|             | %   |
| School data | 7.8 |

### Unauthorised absence

|             |     |
|-------------|-----|
|             | %   |
| School data | 1.7 |

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 4

|  |      |      |       |       |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
|  | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year | 1999 | 24   | 6     | 30    |

| GCSE results  |          | 5 or more grades A* to C | 5 or more grades A*-G | 1 or more grades A*-G |
|---|----------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified    | Boys     | 0                        | 0                     | 20                    |
|   | Girls    | 0                        | 0                     | 5                     |
|   | Total    | 0                        | 0                     | 25                    |
| Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified | School   |                          |                       | 83.3                  |
|   | National |                          |                       | 16.5                  |

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

| GCSE results                  |          | GCSE point score |
|-------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Average point score per pupil | School   | 4.8              |
|                               | National | 0.69             |

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

| Vocational qualifications  | Number   | % success rate |
|--|----------|----------------|
| Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied | School   | 15             |
|  | National |                |

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

|                                 | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage      | 15           |
| Black – African heritage        | 5            |
| Black – other                   | 6            |
| Indian                          | 4            |
| Pakistani                       | 1            |
| Bangladeshi                     | 0            |
| Chinese                         | 0            |
| White                           | 115          |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 1            |

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

|                              | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage   | 3            |           |
| Black – African heritage     | 1            |           |
| Black – other                |              |           |
| Indian                       |              |           |
| Pakistani                    |              |           |
| Bangladeshi                  |              |           |
| Chinese                      |              |           |
| White                        | 72           | 3         |
| 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: Y 7– Y 11**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 21 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher   | 7  |
| Average class size                       | 9  |

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y 7 – Y 11**

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 15  |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week   | 469 |

### ***Financial information***

|                |      |
|----------------|------|
| Financial year | 2000 |
|----------------|------|

|  | £         |
|--|-----------|
| Total income                               | 1,143,095 |
| Total expenditure                          | 1,073,664 |
| Expenditure per pupil                      | 6,316     |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 30,569    |

|                                      |         |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| Balance carried forward to next year | 100,000 |
|--------------------------------------|---------|

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

**Questionnaire return rate**

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 151 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 41  |

**Percentage of responses in each category**

|  | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school.   | 66             | 20            | 10               | 0                 | 5          |
| My child is making good progress in school.  | 55             | 28            | 10               | 0                 | 8          |
| Behaviour in the school is good.   | 36             | 46            | 0                | 3                 | 15         |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.                              | 13             | 36            | 10               | 28                | 13         |
| The teaching is good.  | 54             | 29            | 5                | 0                 | 12         |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.                          | 42             | 37            | 21               | 0                 | 0          |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 51             | 39            | 5                | 5                 | 0          |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.              | 50             | 43            | 5                | 0                 | 3          |
| The school works closely with parents.   | 30             | 40            | 13               | 8                 | 10         |
| The school is well led and managed.  | 44             | 32            | 5                | 0                 | 20         |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.                      | 44             | 46            | 2                | 2                 | 5          |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.            | 41             | 28            | 3                | 10                | 18         |

**Summary of parents' and carers' responses**

Only 28% of questionnaire were returned and five parents attended the parents' meeting. A significant number of parents responding to the questionnaire are unhappy with the amount of homework provided by the school.