

# INSPECTION REPORT

## THE MARK WAY SCHOOL

Andover

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116641

Headteacher: Mr A Oakley

Reporting inspector: Sarah J Mascall  
20536

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> April – 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2002

Inspection number: 192483

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Batchelors Barn Road Andover Hants
Postcode:	SP10 1HR
Telephone number:	01264 351835
Fax number:	01264 366276
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D. Eagles
Date of previous inspection:	17/02/1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20536	Sarah Mascal	Registered inspector	Mathematics French	What sort of school is it?  The school's results and pupils' achievements  How well are pupils' taught?  How well is the school led and managed?
11437	Tony Anderson	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
14691	Jenny Hall	Team inspector	Science Religious education	How good are the curricular opportunities and other opportunities offered to pupils?
19386	Trevor Watts	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Music Design and technology Personal, social and health education	
18461	Vanessa Wilkinson	Team inspector	Art and design Physical education Special educational needs	

20024	Paul Wright	Team inspector	English Geography History	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development  How well does the school care for its pupils?
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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	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>28</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Mark Way School educates boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 16 who have moderate learning difficulties. As at the time of the last inspection there is a small but significant number of pupils who have behavioural difficulties. At present there are 73 pupils on roll, nine of whom have an autistic spectrum disorder. On entry to the school pupils' levels of attainment are low and all have statements of special educational need. The ratio of boys to girls is approximately three to one. No pupils have English as an additional language and none are from multi-ethnic backgrounds. 15 per cent of pupils have free school meals which is low for this type of school. Although the vast majority of pupils are from Hampshire, there are a small number from Wiltshire and one pupil from Berkshire. The school has gone through a period of instability in terms of staffing but has, in the past two years, had a full complement of permanent teaching staff. Last year the school achieved the "Investors in People" Award.

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

The Mark Way provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership. He is very well supported by his deputy. As a result, the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress because teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. The strengths of the school outweigh the weaknesses and as, a consequence, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Provides good teaching in English, humanities, French, music and religious education. The teaching of practical subjects including art, food technology and design and technology are strengths of the school.
- Provides a structured learning environment as a result of the skilful management of the deputy head teacher.
- Develops in the vast majority of pupils a good attitude to their work.
- Establishes good links with local schools and colleges which extend pupils' learning opportunities.
- Effectively uses the community, which, together with good careers education and work experience ensures that pupils are prepared well for leaving school.
- Provides good accommodation for pupils' learning.

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

- Planning for whole school improvements and ensuring there is effective communication and consultation with staff.
- The teaching and progress of pupils in information and communication technology.
- The management of behaviour of those pupils who have behaviour difficulties.
- The use of information gathered from assessing pupils' achievements to establish whole school and individual targets.
- The attendance of a small number of pupils.

*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**

Improvement since the last inspection in February 1997 has been unsatisfactory. Although over the last two years, areas of weakness, identified then, have been rectified the pace of change is slow. As a consequence teaching standards in a number of subjects remain similar to that which existed at the time of the last inspection. There still remain weaknesses in science and standards have dropped in mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education. In addition pupils' IEPs are still not used effectively by teachers to plan and gauge the success of their lessons on pupils' achievements. On a more positive note, national initiatives including the literacy and numeracy strategies have been adopted and performance management has been introduced effectively.

## 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 16	Key	
speaking and listening	B	very good	A
reading	B	good	B
writing	C	satisfactory	C
mathematics	C	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	C	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C		

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

Pupils make satisfactory progress. By the time they leave school all achieve accreditation through Certificates of Educational Achievement and the Youth Award Scheme (YAS). Those pupils with autistic spectrum disorders make satisfactory progress. For those pupils with behaviour problems progress varies but is satisfactory overall. When their behaviour is managed well they make satisfactory and sometimes good progress. However, in a small number of subjects their achievements are adversely affected by their behaviour. Most pupils make good progress in reading and speaking and listening, art, humanities, design and technology, French, music and religious education because teaching is effective. In all other subjects, except ICT, progress is satisfactory. There is no effective way of ensuring that pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 develop their skills in working with computers, and as a result, by the end of Year 11 pupils' achievements in ICT are unsatisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to the targets set in their IEPs. Girls and boys make similar progress. The school is still at an early stage of setting whole school targets for improvement. Those currently set are not sufficiently challenging and consequently do not contribute effectively to improving pupils' achievements.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The vast majority of pupils like school and are keen to work. They concentrate well in lessons and are proud of their achievements.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils behave well in class. There are occasions though when the inappropriate actions of those pupils with more challenging behaviour influences others to behave poorly. There are a few incidents of bullying although these are dealt with well by staff.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Pupils have limited opportunities to exercise responsibility. However, they make the most of the chances provided for example those on the school council carry out their responsibilities well and with enjoyment. Pupils are very supportive of those pupils whom they see as having special needs. They work well together in lessons.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory overall. For a minority of pupils it is poor. Attendance is satisfactory for the majority of pupils. However, there is a significantly high amount of authorised absence and unauthorised absence is also high for a small number of pupils. Attendance in lessons varies because a small minority of pupils will remove themselves from class.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-16
Lessons seen overall	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 and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching is good in English, art, humanities, design and technology, food technology, French, music and religious education. In all other subjects teaching is satisfactory. Teaching in ICT lessons is satisfactory; however teaching of computer skills across the curriculum is unsatisfactory and as a result pupils' learning is unsatisfactory. Literacy and numeracy are developed appropriately across the curriculum. However, opportunities for writing at length are very limited because there is an over reliance on worksheets in nearly all subjects. Teachers ensure that girls' needs are met well and as a result they make the same progress as boys. The needs of those pupils with autism are also met appropriately and they are given effective support in lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge ensures that pupils develop a range of skills particularly in the areas of design and technology, food technology, art and religious education. Less effective teaching is the result of difficulties in managing pupils' behaviour. The planning of lessons is satisfactory, however not all teachers ensure that the work is matched to pupils' ability. At times more able pupils are not challenged by the work whilst those who are less able struggle to complete the tasks set. In addition teachers do not always plan a sufficient variety of tasks that will keep pupils interested in their work for the whole lesson. Teachers rarely provide pupils with homework and as a result there are limited opportunities for them to practise the skills they have learnt. Learning support assistants are effective in working with pupils and helping them learn; most have established very good relationships with pupils which supports their learning well.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum meets the needs of its pupils. The development of a more work related curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is appropriate. Careers education and work experience opportunities are good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. Opportunities are taken to promote spiritual development in a number of subjects, including art and music. Pupils are clear about the difference between right and wrong and staff act as appropriate role models. However, pupils are not always encouraged to think through the results of their actions. Opportunities for pupils' social development improve as they get older and they are able to go on work experience and attend college. The range of activities and visits out of school support pupils' cultural development appropriately.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. There are suitable arrangements for child protection. However, there are a few safety concerns such as the lack of risk assessments for activities in lessons, visits out of school and arrangements for Year 10 pupils at lunch times. The information gathered when pupils' work is assessed is not used well for setting individual targets or improving what the school offers to all pupils.

Opportunities for work experience and the contribution of the community to pupils' learning are good. Effective relationships have been developed with local schools and this has enabled pupils to have lessons in mainstream schools and for a small number of mainstream pupils to attend Mark Way. The school has satisfactory links with parents, who appreciate the contact they have with most staff.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher has been effective in introducing a number of national initiatives. The deputy headteacher ensures that the daily routines of the school operate smoothly. The senior teacher carries out her responsibilities effectively and the roles of subject leaders are beginning to be developed. There is, however, low staff morale on the part of some staff because of a perceived lack of consultation and communication from the headteacher.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors fulfil their responsibilities appropriately and have established an effective group of committees. Governors are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision but they have not always taken action to rectify weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. There has been good checking of teaching and a range of data has been collected concerning aspects of the school's provision. However, this information has not been used effectively to improve what the school offers. Although the planning for developments is checked on a regular basis, dates for completion are changed and subject development plans are not monitored.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Development planning recognises where resources are needed and subject areas have been given sufficient resources to support pupils' learning.

The delegation of staff responsibilities is unsatisfactory and as a result the deputy headteacher has too many responsibilities. There is a good number of staff to meet the needs of pupils and teachers are well qualified in their subject areas. There is an effective programme for training and learning support assistants are appropriately involved in this. Accommodation has been improved and is now of good quality. Resources are satisfactory overall. Governors are aware of the principles of best value and work hard to ensure that purchases are well considered.

## 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>• Improvement in their children's self-esteem and confidence</li> <li>• Regular 'phone calls from the school that keep them informed</li> <li>• The quality of reports</li> <li>• They can talk to staff easily if they have concerns</li> <li>• The school building</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour of pupils</li> <li>• Homework</li> </ul>

The team agrees with parents' positive views and shares their concerns about homework and the management of the behaviour of pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Overall pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. Achievements reflect the quality of teaching and learning which is also satisfactory. As at the time of the last inspection, there are a small but significant number of pupils with difficult behaviour. Evidence suggests that pupils' behaviour has become more challenging. This has had an impact on standards in some subjects where teachers are not effective in managing pupils' behaviour. In the majority of subjects standards remain the same as at the last inspection but in mathematics and physical education they are now satisfactory rather than good and in information and communication technology they are now unsatisfactory. In science there are still weaknesses in pupils' achievements. There is no longer a variation between the progress of those pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 and Years 10 and 11 and pupils' achievements are similar throughout the school.
2. Pupils start school with low levels of attainment and achieve well in reading, speaking and listening, art, humanities, design and technology, French, music and religious education. In all other subjects except ICT progress is satisfactory. As pupils are not taught computer skills in Years 7, 8 and 9 through a planned course of work they cannot make effective progress. Although they have one lesson a week in Years 10 and 11 this is not sufficient for them to catch up with all that they have missed.
3. In English pupils make good progress in nearly all aspects of the subject. There is an effective focus on developing pupils' skills and they have good opportunities for expressing themselves. This is particularly evident in years 10 and 11 where pupils benefit from good and sometimes very good teaching. There is very little evidence of drama and this is an opportunity that is missed. Pupils' skills in imaginative and extended writing are limited because of the use of worksheets in nearly all subjects. In mathematics pupils develop their skills in all areas of the subject and the work becomes more challenging as they move through the school. However, the unsatisfactory management of behaviour of pupils in years 9, 10 and 11 often affects their ability to achieve. Pupils' progress in science is just satisfactory; the pace of learning is slow and physics and chemistry are not as well promoted as biology. Progress in personal, social, and health education is satisfactory because a new co-ordinator has recently been put into place who is working hard to ensure that pupils develop their skills as they move through the school.
4. Those pupils with autistic spectrum disorders make the same progress as their peers. They attend nearly all the same lessons and receive good support which enables them to achieve at the same rate. Teachers are very aware that there are a small number of girls in each class and make sure that they achieve at the same pace as the boys by ensuring that they are fully involved in question and answer sessions.
5. Whole school targets have been set in the last two years. However, the school recognises that these have not been challenging for the present cohort of pupils. For example last year a target was that 70% of pupils would improve their reading. The school has now set a target of 85% for this year which is more appropriate but there was no indication, as with last year, as to how much the school plans for them to improve by. Targets have been set in mathematics for an improvement of 80% but not all pupils have undergone testing. As a result the target only refers to Years 8 and 9 and is not a whole school target for improvement in numeracy. Pupils achieve accreditation through the Certificate of Educational Achievement and the Youth Award

Scheme and the school is appropriately considering entering pupils for GCSEs in a few subjects including design and technology and art. Evidence suggests that in some subjects such as English and mathematics more able pupils could be entered for GCSEs as well.

6. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to practise and apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum and this supports the work they do in English and mathematics. Teachers use the start of the lesson to recap on learning and in some subjects such as humanities pupils develop their skills in discussions. However, this is not consistent in all subjects. There are clear expectations that pupils will read independently and respond to questions in the worksheets they are provided with. Pupils practise their numeracy skills in a number of subjects particularly those that are of a practical nature including design and technology. Opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in ICT across the curriculum are limited although pupils are confident in using computer software in English and mathematics to extend their basic skills.

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

7. The vast majority of pupils' attitudes to learning are good. In most lessons they are interested in their work and respond positively. They are keen to do well and are pleased by their successes. Pupils concentrate well when they are actively involved in their learning, for example when designing a plaster mural in art, playing indoor cricket and completing an assignment in design and technology. Older pupils have developed the ability to work independently and can produce project work of good quality in subjects such as English. They enjoy their work, gaining a sense of achievement in what they do.
8. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. At the time of the last inspection pupils' behaviour was generally good in lessons and around school. However, whilst this is still the case for the majority of pupils, the behaviour of a small but influential number of pupils with behavioural difficulties has had an adverse effect on behaviour in and out of the classroom. These pupils leave class or refuse to work and can be abusive and aggressive to each other. Unfortunately this behaviour has an impact on others who copy inappropriate behaviour and follow them out of class. However, there are equally a number of pupils who will get on with their work and ignore such behaviour. Parents raised concerns about bullying and some pupils clearly pick on others - examples of bullying were observed during the inspection - but these occasions are not common and are always well tackled by the staff. Most pupils play well together at break and dinner times. The rate of exclusions is high but the school is appropriately working to address this by adopting a policy of "internal" exclusion.
9. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Most play a part in the daily routine of lessons that include giving out worksheets and making sure chairs are collected and stored after assembly and returning registers to the school office. With encouragement pupils reflect on the impact of their actions on others. Relationships between pupils and pupils and teaching staff are usually satisfactory. Pupils often support each other in class and are tolerant of the wide range of abilities that exist in some classes. Those on work experience behave responsibly. School council members accept the responsibility of speaking for their classmates and then reporting back to them on council discussions. This is one of the ways in which pupils learn about citizenship. However, opportunities to take on responsibilities are limited.
10. Pupils' attendance at the school is unsatisfactory. The published attendance figure at the school (81.60%) is unsatisfactory and for a minority of pupils it is poor. A certain

amount of the authorised absence is accounted for through educational visits off site and regular Friday afternoon sports sessions (also off site). However, the incidence of unauthorised absence is high and is significantly above the national average. A small number of pupils absent themselves from lessons on a regular basis and this is unsatisfactory. The level of pupil lateness is also high although the arrival time of over half the pupils on site is controlled by the timing of designated external transport.

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

11. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. This is similar to the judgement at the time of the last inspection. Teaching is now consistent for all pupils whereas in the last inspection it was better for Years 10 and 11 than for those in Years 7 to 9. A number of weaknesses were raised at that time and some of these still persist; for example, planning does not always ensure that there is a range of activities to cover the full length of the lessons. Although day to day assessment has improved, pupils' individual education plans are still underused. The teaching of religious education, geography, history and design and technology has improved since the last inspection. Standards have been maintained in English, history, science, French, art, food technology, ICT and music but have dropped in mathematics and physical education. The teaching of personal, social and health education is satisfactory – there were no judgements made in the last inspection concerning this subject.
12. Teachers' knowledge of their subjects is a strength of teaching. This is because the school works hard to ensure that every subject has a subject specialist and apart from ICT this has been effective in ensuring pupils' learning is appropriately supported. As a result teachers are confident to answer pupils' questions and subject knowledge is used well. For example, in a Year 7 science lesson pupils used bioviewers to look at different cells and they were encouraged to "Describe what you can see". Subject knowledge was used well to provide good explanations of what the different cells did. In practical subjects teachers' expertise comes to the fore and they use their knowledge well to ensure that pupils learn a range of skills. In design and technology for example pupils learn to make templates of their products so that they can test out whether their designs will work. As a result they change and adapt their models so that for instance they can produce pyramid clocks made from hard plastic, which not only work but also look very professional.
13. Teachers know their pupils well and are aware of the different abilities in the class. However, they do not always plan adequately for the wide range of attainment in many classes. In one Year 9 class, for example, the lowest attaining pupil is working towards National Curriculum attainment level 1, whilst the higher attaining pupil is working within attainment level 4. Where teachers use their knowledge well they adapt their questioning to ensure, for example in a Year 8 maths lesson, that individuals are challenged by the questions. In subjects such as humanities planning is good and work is well matched to ability with different activities to support pupils' learning. However, this is not the case in all subjects and there is evidence of pupils being given worksheets, for example in a Year 7 science lesson, that the less able pupils could not read. Teachers do not always use time well and their planning does not ensure that there are sufficient activities for the whole 55-minute lessons. As a result pupils do time filling activities such as colouring in at the end of the lesson.
14. Teachers are aware of the small groups of girls in each class and make sure that they are given a chance to answer questions. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorder are supported well in lessons and teachers use appropriate strategies to develop their skills.

15. Learning support assistants are very committed to the school and its pupils and provide good support to teachers. They know pupils well and are often very effective in defusing a situation before it gets out of hand. They use their initiative well, for example, when not required in a lesson they will go and support in another, where they feel their help is needed. Those working with the pupils with autistic spectrum disorder are very aware of their pupils' needs and support them well in lessons.
16. However, teachers do not always make best use of the learning support assistants and they are not involved in the planning of lessons or given sufficient information before the lesson. As a result they do not always have the right solutions to the tasks pupils are doing. For example in a science lesson the teacher had not ensured that the learning support assistant knew the answers to the worksheet beforehand and at one stage this resulted in pupils being told their work was correct when it was not. Where they are used well, for example in food technology and design and technology, there is good teamwork and staff support each other well.
17. The teaching of practical subjects including design and technology, textiles and art is good and in food technology it is very good. This is because teachers ensure that there is a range of activities that will keep pupils interested. Planning is generally detailed to ensure that lessons are well prepared. In food technology pupils' knowledge of a wider range of aspects is extended and the cultures of different countries are shared with the pupils in an interesting and entertaining way. They listen well, hanging on to every word and clearly enjoy these lessons. It is this variety of tasks that holds pupils' attention.
18. The teaching of basic skills is satisfactory overall. Literacy and numeracy are promoted in most subjects. There are high expectations in some subjects such as in food technology that pupils will read menus and follow instructions. However at times books selected by teachers for use in lessons can be too difficult for pupils to read, and where pupils are using computers the text on the screen can be too challenging for pupils to gain a good understanding of what they are reading, for example, in a Year 11 religious education lesson on Judaism. The overuse of worksheets in nearly every subject limits pupils' ability to develop their skills in imaginative and extended writing. The development of speaking and listening through the language group lessons varies. Where tutors have good relationships with pupils and the tasks are challenging then pupils respond well. However a small number of teachers are not confident to teach the skills required and there is a lack support to extend their skills. Some of the work too is not age appropriate. For example a teacher rightly had to adapt a worksheet based on an invitation to a tea party for Year 7 so that it was more relevant to the class. In a number of subjects numeracy is well promoted; pupils are expected to estimate and measure in design; calculate dates in history and weigh materials in food technology.
19. The use of ICT across the curriculum is a weakness. On occasions it is employed well such as in French using the interactive white board and the use of the Internet to visit a mosque in religious education. However, not all rooms have a computer or have sufficient computers to enable a number of pupils work on a project at the same time.
20. Teachers' expectations of what pupils will achieve vary. Where they are high such as in English, French and humanities pupils are challenged by the work and achieve well. In French for example pupils will repeat phrases in French without any self-consciousness. They will attempt translations and are keen to answer questions. In English Years 10 and 11 respond very well to the teachers' expectations that they will draft out stories or list, for example, the differences in an assembly at The Mark Way to

the one portrayed in “Kes”. However, on occasions tasks are not challenging and evidence from pupils’ work shows that they repeat simple tasks such as adding and subtracting and complete worksheets that require them to colour in without developing their skills appropriately.

21. It is teachers’ expectations of behaviour that really makes the difference between the successful and unsuccessful lessons. In a number of subjects teachers have good strategies to manage pupils. This is particularly evident in English and food technology where even the most difficult pupils settle quickly to quite challenging tasks. This is because the teachers know them well, are prepared to listen to them but, above all, have very clear boundaries of what they will and will not accept in terms of behaviour. They use humour well and have established very good relationships with the pupils. Where these relationships are not well established and strategies for managing behaviour are not successful pupils’ behaviour deteriorates rapidly and their learning as well as that of those around them is affected. This is particularly so in science, physical education and in mathematics for Years 10 and 11. The rewards and points system are not used to encourage pupils to adapt their behaviour and there is little reference to the consequences of poor behaviour. Swearing goes unchecked and pupils will sit and do nothing for a whole lesson without being challenged effectively.
22. Parents raised lack of homework as a major concern and the inspection team agrees with this. There is no policy for providing pupils with work that will support their learning or give them the opportunity to develop independent study skills. Reading books are not sent home and extension work that would enable, for example, the more able pupils to take on GCSEs is not given. Although pupils are encouraged to attend mainstream schools and go on to college they are not being given the strategies to cope with the same expectations that schools and colleges have of their pupils in terms of working at home and this is unsatisfactory.

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

23. The school provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities that meets the statutory requirements for the National Curriculum. There is very good quality provision in design and technology, especially food technology and provision for English, French, art, religious education and careers and vocational education is good. There is some very good provision in the Youth Award Scheme, when in Year 11, for example, the teachers of geography and food technology plan and teach a very good course on food from around the world. The curriculum for geography and history for Years 7, 8 and 9 pupils is good. In all other subjects provision is satisfactory except in ICT where it is unsatisfactory. There is a satisfactory programme of personal, social and health education, including sex education and drugs education.
24. Pupils have access to a satisfactory range of accredited courses in Years 10 and 11. The Certificate of Educational Achievement is offered in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, religious education, physical education and art. All pupils study for the Youth Award Scheme, mainly to bronze standard, and a basic food hygiene certificate. The school has been slow to introduce GCSE but there is a possibility that pupils in Year 10 will have access to GCSE art and design and technology; and a Year 10 boy is studying for GCSE science and geography in a local mainstream school.
25. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection, most notably in religious education, where an increase in teaching time has contributed to pupils achieving well

in the Certificate of Educational Achievement. The allocation of teaching time for science has also increased, but without the same impact on standards as in religious education because, until very recently, the school did not have a laboratory to develop and extend practical work.

26. Over 50 per cent of special schools of this kind provide more teaching time each week than The Mark Way School. The amount of teaching time for Years 7, 8 and 9 is one hour less than is recommended nationally; and two hours less for Years 10 and 11 pupils. This is because there is reduced teaching time on Fridays when pupils choose activities, as part of the school's reward system. These activities are not sufficiently linked to the taught curriculum.
27. Pupils have access to a small range of clubs at lunchtime and after school, for example, computers, videos, drawing, colouring, and board games. There is little structure to the playground activities at lunchtime. After school there are a few activities including football matches against other schools and an Aikido club.
28. The use of the community adds richness to the school curriculum. There are, for example, visits to museums, theatres, art galleries and residential camps. The older pupils are given a good range of work experience placements. There are regular visits from the clergy of two local churches, who lead assemblies and special events such as Christmas and harvest festival. Other frequent visitors include members of a professional football team who give coaching sessions. A local artist has run a workshop for the pupils, and so have members of a symphony orchestra.
29. The school has established good links with the schools from which the pupils transfer at 11 years to smooth the transition to secondary school and to prepare a suitable curriculum plan for each pupil. Good relationships also exist with the near-by secondary mainstream school to promote opportunities for pupils to learn and socialise in a mainstream setting. The deputy headteacher is working very effectively with the co-ordinator for special educational needs from the mainstream school to develop a two-way inclusion programme where pupils from the mainstream school who have learning difficulties can also attend The Mark Way School.
30. The school promotes equal opportunities well. Girls and boys have equal access to the full range of learning opportunities irrespective of their learning needs. Classrooms are organised and managed so all pupils can achieve, with withdrawal at times for individual pupils who benefit from such provision. Pupils have the opportunity to work in different groupings, and teachers are careful to consider the needs of the smaller number of girls on the school roll. There are good examples of planned teaching about discrimination, prejudice, stereotyping and cultural diversity, in religious education, careers education and the Youth Award Scheme. The school does not monitor the separate attainment of girls and boys to check that pupils are making equally good progress.
31. There is a well established programme of careers and vocational education to prepare pupils for the next stage in their lives; the school enjoys good links with the careers service. The introduction of a careers education unit of work to the Year 9 personal, social and health education programme, and visits from the careers service, ensures that the statutory requirement for careers education from Year 9 is in place. Year 10 pupils have the opportunity to participate in community service, for example assisting in a pre-school play group. Year 11 pupils have two weeks of work experience, well planned and managed by the deputy headteacher. In addition they attend an interesting range of courses at local colleges including food hygiene, motor vehicle maintenance, pre-driving, drama, and child development/baby sitting.



32. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, both through organised lessons and courses, and through the whole atmosphere of the school and conduct of the staff. However, this is not as good as at the time of the last inspection and the school does not have a way to check how well pupils are developing in these various areas.
33. The school makes satisfactory arrangements for pupils' spiritual development, and they make sound progress in this area. Assemblies often provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on their experiences and pupils gain a sound understanding of the Christian faith. However, there is not a plan of what themes will be looked at each term. There is a range of opportunities in some subjects for pupils to develop their spiritual awareness. For example in religious education lessons, pupils gain some awareness of other religions and their beliefs. Art and music do much to encourage pupils' understanding of different forms of beauty around them whilst English and personal and social education lessons encourage pupils to look for the truth in what people are likely to say to them, or how advertisements are worded, for instance. Pupils have been involved in a lot of fund-raising for charitable organisations locally and abroad, encouraging them to think of others, instead of just thinking of themselves.
34. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their moral development because they are encouraged to understand the need for rules and codes of conduct. Pupils learn to distinguish right from wrong in different situations, in lessons such as some recent ones about civil and criminal law in personal and social education, and from the way that members of staff behave. Staff take many opportunities to explain *why* pupils have been behaving well or badly. The school council plays an important role in developing the self-confidence and wider awareness of the pupils involved. Many pupils have been on residential visits, such as on a sailing ship, and these events do much to develop their ability to live together harmoniously. In drama lessons, pupils explore different sets of rules and ways of behaving. They are encouraged to think things through when they are faced with problems in their lives, although they are sometimes not ready to look carefully at their own beliefs and ways of behaving.
35. Pupils' social development is soundly helped by the school's programme of personal and social education. Pupils are often encouraged to work co-operatively, such as in food technology, or in teams in physical education. The more able pupils will help the less able ones with their work, or with their understanding of something a teacher has said to them. The community work that some pupils undertake is beneficial to their social development, giving them a clear sense of doing something for the society that they live in. Information visits by the police, or visits to the fire station, have also helped pupils to become more aware of their local society. Fund-raising events such as Red Nose Day, and a Magpie appeal for a scanner for a nearby hospital do much to develop pupils' sense of being responsible and sociable members of a world community. The school does not encourage pupils to be independent and take the initiative very well: pupils are more encouraged to remain in their seats and wait for help, rather than being encouraged to go and find things out for themselves. There is scope to broaden pupils' opportunities to be self-responsible in positive ways.
36. The school also makes satisfactory efforts to encourage pupils to be aware of their own local culture, and the cultures of other countries. Pupils know the local area through trips to museums and art galleries, farm visits, and a trip to an Iron Age fort. In art, music, and religious education lessons, pupils develop an understanding of the cultures of other countries as well as English culture – how people live; the work they do; their art, music and beliefs; the kind of lands they live in. In food technology, for

example, pupils are routinely taught about the culture of the country from which their meal comes, such as the French way of life as they make and eat a French breakfast, or about the life of Indians in Gujarat, when making a curry. What they do not develop well is a sense of living in England as a multi-cultural society.

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

37. Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory. The school has a number of good health and safety procedures. Pupils in years 7 to 9 and those in years 10 and 11 who choose to stay on the school grounds at lunchtime are well supervised by staff at break and lunchtimes. Detailed accident and incident report records are maintained. The school relies on the local education authority to carry out risk assessments on residential trips and those linked to outdoor education. However, it has not yet undertaken risk assessments for all curriculum subjects or for journeys out of school linked to the curriculum. There has been no assessment of the arrangements for Year 10 pupils at lunchtimes. The school has successfully addressed the health and safety issues raised in the last report.
38. The procedures for child protection are satisfactory. The school follows the local authority child protection guidelines. Staff are aware of who is the nominated child protection officer and understand the procedures to follow if the need arises. Staff ensure that pupils learn about drugs and sex education, and are able to make choices about their lives. The school has good procedures for ensuring that their child protection arrangements meet the requirements of the local area child protection committee. This is similar to the finding of the last inspection.
39. Pupils' statements appropriately reflect their moderate learning difficulties and identify those pupils who have additional special educational needs, such as challenging behaviour and autistic spectrum disorders. These difficulties are appropriately highlighted in their annual reviews and in the targets in pupils' individual education plans. The local education authority has worked with the school to address the needs of both these groups and some good work has been done to develop provision to meet the needs of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. The needs of pupils with challenging behaviour have not yet been addressed successfully. There has been effective collaboration with the speech and language therapy service to develop extra support for some pupils who need more specific learning in the area of language and communication. Physiotherapy, occupational therapy and support for pupils with sensory impairment is provided when necessary and is efficiently managed and delivered.
40. Overall, the school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are satisfactory. The school has a comprehensive behaviour policy which is successful in monitoring and promoting the good behaviour of the majority of pupils. Lessons end with an assessment of each pupil's behaviour, attitude and achievement. Pupils are required to consider their behaviour and judge it against personal, class and school targets. The reward system ensures that there is a positive approach to behaviour management which is understood by pupils and staff. However, a significant minority of pupils with behavioural difficulties do not respond to the current procedures. They are set too many targets and are not fully involved in the behaviour target setting process.
41. At the time of the last inspection assessment procedures were judged to be satisfactory with good examples in mathematics, art, food technology and physical education. The school has made satisfactory improvements and has established good

systems for assessment. Assessment systems have been appropriately developed to reflect the specific needs of each curriculum area. Suitable learning objectives have been established for all subjects against which teachers can assess pupils' attainment.

42. However, the use of assessment information to plan work for pupils and set targets for the school is unsatisfactory. Teachers do not use the systems or the information they have about pupils' achievement effectively to plan what they need to learn next. Teachers do not plan sufficiently for the needs of individuals. Each pupil has a support book, which contains his or her individual education plan. These are used to monitor pupils' progress. They could provide useful information about pupils' achievement but the anecdotal comments made in them after each lesson are not sufficiently related to the targets in pupils' individual education plans. It is not always possible to identify what a pupil has learned or what experiences they have had to support their progress towards their target. Pupils' individual education plans are of good quality and clearly reflect the learning targets established at the annual review meeting. Targets are generally well written. They clearly identify what a pupil needs to learn and they provide success criteria that enable teachers to monitor progress. However, because there is insufficient emphasis on these learning priorities in the work pupils do, targets often take too long to achieve. For example a target set for a pupil in Year 7 'to use joined writing', was not achieved until the pupil reached Year 11. The school does not analyse the progress records and achievement information it has effectively, to establish if it is setting the right targets, or to check if enough progress is being made or to ensure that pupils are learning sufficiently quickly.

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

43. Parents' views of the school are satisfactory, as are the school's links with parents. The impact of parental involvement with the school and the information provided to parents about pupils' progress is also satisfactory. This remains similar to the findings of the last inspection.
44. Many of the parents who completed the questionnaire are supportive of the school. However, during the meeting with inspectors a majority of parents felt that the school did not provide enough homework and a significant minority felt that their child was not making sufficient progress. Parents also expressed concern about the behaviour of pupils.
45. Reports provide a good level of information to parents in terms of the general details of what their children have been studying over the past year and of the progress they have made. However, there was little evidence of any future targets for improvement. The school also sends out occasional newsletters to keep parents informed and these provide a satisfactory level of detail covering future events and other relevant domestic issues. Parents value the regular contact from teachers who telephone, not only when something bad has happened, but also when their child has done well. They are kept well informed about their child's targets through the annual review system and appreciate the support they get from staff.
46. A very small number of parents are occasional visitors to the school in terms of providing classroom support to the teaching staff. Parents are always welcome to visit the school and to discuss any particular areas of concern in relation to the progress of their child.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. This is not as good as at the time of the last inspection when leadership was judged to be positive. The school has gone through a turbulent time in terms of retaining staff. It is only in the last two years that there has been a permanent and stable staff. The headteacher has been effective in developing a teaching team who are good subject specialists and this has supported pupils' learning. He is very well supported by his deputy who manages the day to day running of the school effectively and staff appreciate the support the deputy headteacher provides.
48. The headteacher is keen to improve the school's provision and as a consequence he ensures that staff have opportunities for training. He uses the local education authority (LEA) and advisors well to develop teachers' knowledge. For example in order to introduce subject development planning he arranged for a whole school training day led by an advisor to ensure teachers had an understanding of what was involved. Performance management has been undertaken well and all staff including the learning support assistants (LSAs) have been involved in the process. There has been a considerable focus on monitoring teachers and improving their skills. To some extent this has been successful, however, the information gathered from all this work has not been used effectively to improve teaching where there are weaknesses.
49. The headteacher has a clear vision of where he sees the school heading but he does not always share this with the senior management team and at present there is no clear planning for long term developments. Staff morale is low as communication is not always effective and a number of staff do not feel supported by all in the senior management team. Decisions are made which do not involve the relevant staff and this leads to confusion at times and a resentment to change. For example "Successmaker" and "Destinations" software were bought without appropriate discussions with staff and without their agreement to use the materials.
50. There is not a clear delegation of responsibilities and the deputy head has far too many responsibilities. This is not appropriate as, despite all his efforts, he cannot fulfil all the roles as well as he would wish. Subject managers are just developing their roles and have recently produced subject development plans. However, these are mainly focused on the purchase of resources rather than on how their subject will develop over the next few years. There are limited opportunities for staff to share their expertise. This is particularly so in the case of the management of behaviour where some staff are very effective in this area. There are few opportunities for teachers to share skills for example by team teaching or watching others' lessons.
51. Planning for improvement is unsatisfactory. The school has received a lot of support from the LEA in establishing priorities and the targets set are appropriate and highlight areas of concern. However, the present plan is short term and is only up to the end of the summer term. It was not completed until November of last year and there is a tendency to delay improvements and add to the plan without consultation such as in the case of the numeracy plan. This has caused concern amongst the governing body and teachers do not feel they have ownership of the developments. It is also of concern that there has been little planning for the next stage of developments. At present the subject development plans do not effectively link into the whole school improvement plan and there has been no monitoring or evaluation of how these are going.

52. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities satisfactorily and is committed to improving the school's provision. They have established an effective range of committees and some, such as the curriculum committee, have developed good links with staff. It is of note that the chair of the curriculum committee has been spending time in school in order to get a better picture of what happens. Governors recognise that they need to visit classes more and have established a programme of visits. In order to ensure a better overview of improvement planning, the chair of governors and vice chair meet regularly with the headteacher to discuss and monitor planning. They have not yet, however, considered future planning and there is not a shared vision for the school. Governors fulfil nearly all their statutory requirements well. However, they do not have a named person responsible for special educational needs. Governors are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision and have worked hard to ensure that the school's interests are best met. However, where they identify weaknesses they have not always been effective in addressing them. For example they are aware of the uneven distribution of responsibilities within the senior management team but have not effected any change to improve the situation.
53. Although plans for improvement are costed it is unclear how educational priorities are supported through financial planning. For example the costings on subject development plans are not considered closely and there is no process for establishing which subject areas should be prioritised. As a result a number of subject managers feel their resources are only satisfactory and some such as mathematics and food technology consider they would benefit from better funding. This is of concern when there has been a large underspend which is being carried forward. This sum of money has accrued as a result of the fact that the school has had temporary staff until recently. It has decided to keep the funds to cover the costs of permanent staffing. Although the underspend is unsatisfactory the school is gradually reducing this now that there is a full complement of staff.
54. Governors are very clear about the principles of best value and try to ensure that they get quotes to ensure that they get best value for money. However, there have been large purchases recently by the headteacher that have been made without consultation or an evaluation of whether they will be effective. Equally there is no process by which the governing body can assess the impact of the purchases they have made. For example they have not considered whether the recent purchase of a large number of computers has improved pupils' learning. The day to day management of finances and the monitoring of the school's expenditure by the administration officer is very good. She is very clear about the spending and produces regular updates for the governing body. Management information systems are used well and support school administration effectively.
55. The provision of teaching staff is good and their experience and qualifications match the needs of the school well. The provision of staff who support individuals or assist in class is also good and they undertake a wide range of responsibilities. Staff have undergone a good range of training, for instance to enable them to lead literacy and numeracy groups. Staff work as a team in and out of the classroom and support each other well. Procedures for inducting new members of staff are good. There are good systems to determine training needs and staff, both teaching and non-teaching have good opportunities to take part in appropriate training. However, procedures for evaluating and reporting back their content to other staff are currently unsatisfactory.
56. Classroom accommodation is good overall. The building is well maintained and cleaned to a high standard. There are a good range of well presented displays in classrooms and corridors providing general school information and celebrating pupils' work. The school has worked hard to make the best of the accommodation and the various study rooms around the school are used appropriately. The library has a wide

selection of books and occupies a prominent position near the school entrance; however it is kept locked for large parts of the school day thereby reducing its accessibility for pupils to undertake individual study. Outside accommodation is good, offering pupils a wide range of relaxation areas.

57. Resources for subjects are satisfactory overall. They are good in art, information and communication technology and English. The newly constructed science room is in need of stocking with more basic scientific equipment to maximise the impact of the new accommodation.

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

58. In order to raise standards the governing body, headteacher and staff should

**I** Improve planning for whole school improvements and ensure that there is effective communication and consultation with staff by:

- Establishing a clear timetable for initiating planning
- Ensuring that school improvement planning recognises long term developments
- Ensuring that relevant staff are consulted before changes are made to plans
- Monitoring and evaluating improvements more effectively
- Improving subject plans so that they are longer term, properly reflect subject developments and are taken into consideration when planning whole school developments
- Improving communication with staff so that they feel involved in decision making processes.

(Paragraphs 49, 50 and 51)

**II** Improve the teaching and progress of pupils in information and communication technology by:

- Ensuring that there is a structured plan of work that will enable all pupils to develop their skills appropriately.

(Paragraphs 2,19, 23, 92-96)

**III** Improve the management of behaviour of the significant minority of pupils whose behaviour is challenging by:-

- Developing a more effective approach to managing the behaviour of these pupils.
- Ensuring that there is consistency amongst all staff in the systems that are used
- Providing effective support for those teachers who lack confidence in managing pupils' behaviour.

(Paragraphs 21,40)

**IV** Improve the use of information gathered from assessment to establish whole school and individual targets by:-

- Evaluating the data that has been collected and use the information to set more challenging and specific whole school targets.

- Ensure that teachers make better use of pupils' IEP targets when planning their lessons.

(Paragraphs 5,42)

**V** Improve attendance of the small but significant group of pupils by:-

- Developing more effective systems for encouraging pupils back into school
- Monitoring the number of pupils out of class during the school day and develop strategies to improve in-class attendance.

(Paragraph 10)

***The head teacher, staff and governors should also consider incorporating the following minor issues into their action plan:***

- Improve health and safety by:-

Carrying out risk assessments in all subjects and when groups are taken out of school

Carrying out a risk assessment of arrangements for allowing Year 10 pupils out of school at lunchtimes.

(Paragraph 37)

- Provide homework by:-  
Ensuring that the homework policy is implemented  
Establishing a timetable that will ensure pupils are given homework that will support their learning on a regular basis.

(Paragraph 22)

- Revise the roles and responsibilities of the senior management team so that there is better parity of responsibilities.

(Paragraph 50)

- Ensure that there is a named person responsible for special needs.

(Paragraph 52)

- Ensure governors have a clearer view of what is happening in school and act where they have concerns.

(Paragraph 52)

- Increase the amount of taught time pupils have so that it is more in line with similar schools.

(Paragraph 26)

- Continue with plans to develop higher accreditation for the more able pupils.

(Paragraph 5)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	45

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	6	22	22	5		
Percentage	2	11	39	39	9		

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	73
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	13.7

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	5.58

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 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000			

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	13	13	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	3.8	6.1	3.0
	National	DNA	DNA	DNA
Percentage of pupils at NC level 3 or above	School	5.4	2.3	3.1
	National	DNA	DNA	DNA

At Key Stage 4 pupils are entered for ASDAN , WJEC Certificate of Educational Achievements and Edexcel Certificate of Education.

In 2001 there were 20 pupils entered for accreditation in The Certificate of Educational Achievement in a range of subjects

Subject	Number entered	% of passes
English	20	100%
Art	19	95%
Design and Technology	14	100%
Religious education	18	100%
Science	19	95%

In mathematics 9 pupils achieved merit passes and 3 achieved passes in the Edexcel Certificate of Education

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	73
Any other minority ethnic group	

### Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	49	1
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 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.3
Average class size	12.2

### Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	260

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	582997
Total expenditure	552833
Expenditure per pupil	7471
Balance brought forward from previous year	50633
Balance carried forward to next year	80797

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

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

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	73
Number of questionnaires returned	28

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	32	50	4	14	0
My child is making good progress in school.	36	43	11	11	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	18	57	7	11	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	11	11	50	25	4
The teaching is good.	46	43	0	11	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	39	50	7	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	32	0	11	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	29	7	11	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	46	7	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	50	29	14	7	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	29	11	11	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	39	14	4	21

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

At the parents' meeting concerns were raised about the behaviour of pupils and incidents of bullying. The main concern, however, was the lack of homework.

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

### **ENGLISH**

59. Pupils' overall achievement and progress in English are good because teaching is good. The national literacy scheme has also been introduced and this has been effective in improving teachers' planning, ensuring that tasks are such that pupils build on what they have already learned. All pupils including those with autistic spectrum disorders achieve well. Since the last inspection there has been effective improvement in reading which is now good, although concerns about writing are similar.
60. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening and their progress in this area is good. All pupils and students listen carefully and respond to questions asked by teachers and support staff. This is most noticeable in years 10 and 11, where the teacher's skill ensures that pupils are confident in making contributions. Also, her knowledge of the pupils enables her to direct questions appropriately. For example, Year 11 pupils talk and listen confidently in different contexts, with more able pupils engaging the interest of the listener by varying their expression and vocabulary. Younger pupils in Year 7 are given good opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills in the tutor language groups. Pupils listen carefully to one another describing events that occurred over the previous weekend, make appropriate comments and ask relevant questions. However, language groups are not always effective because not all teachers have the skills to encourage conversation.
61. Achievements in reading are good. There is a clear focus on developing pupils' understanding of text and there are specific lessons for literacy. Pupils are given the opportunity to study a variety of texts ranging from "Gulliver's Travels" in Year 8, "Romeo and Juliet" in Year 9 and "Buddy" in Year 9. Teachers read stories aloud very well. This encourages pupils to be expressive. For example, in a good Year 8 lesson pupils read with suitable expression. They benefited from being given the opportunity to read from "Gulliver's Travels" with more able pupils reading the more complex sentences. Pupils show great pleasure in books because they have been exposed to such a wide range of contrasting literature and reading has not been allowed to become mechanical. Less able readers are effectively supported and encouraged by following an appropriate reading scheme. The library is well situated at the centre of the school and is well stocked with a comprehensive range of fiction and non-fiction books. However, it remained locked during the inspection and could not be used by pupils to pursue individual studies.
62. Pupils' achievement in writing is satisfactory overall. More able pupils' writing is often organised, imaginative and clear. For example pupils in Year 7 have produced a series of "Our Cinderella Stories" linked to work undertaken in class. As part of their Certificate of Achievement coursework older pupils in Year 10 have produced a brochure for a well-known amusement park. They are given the opportunity to redraft pieces of writing and produce work of a good standard. However, the range and opportunity to develop creative writing skills is limited and there is scope for pupils to use computers more regularly to help them with their work. The school has invested a large amount of financial resources in "Successmaker" although planning does not yet ensure that pupils experience relevant opportunities to practise the basic skills they have learnt.

63. Teaching is usually good and sometimes very good in English lessons. The high quality of relationships and teamwork is a very important factor in the progress that pupils make. Pupils work independently on some tasks and are confident to ask for help if they need it. For example, Year 8 pupils worked well with support in a lesson involving sequencing the events of a story. They showed understanding of the characters and how they fitted into the plot. The English co-ordinator has high expectations for pupils and chooses an appropriate variety of authors to develop an interest in a wide range of literature. Pupils in Year 11 make very good progress in studying "A Kestrel for a Knave". They watched extracts of the film version of the book and this provided inspiration for them to discuss their ideas about how the film version differs from the book. The teacher's expectations were very high as each pupil had to put forward ideas and this enabled them to learn from each other's contributions. The pupils were secure in the knowledge that their ideas would be acknowledged and valued.
64. The co-ordinator manages the subject very well. Good policies and guidance have been developed to support teachers and to ensure that pupils develop their skills as they move through the school. Skills such as spelling and reading strategies are taught effectively. However, external accredited examinations do not challenge the more able pupils.

## **MATHEMATICS**

65. The teaching and overall provision for mathematics is satisfactory leading to pupils making satisfactory progress throughout the school. This is not as good as at the time of the last inspection when teaching and progress were judged to be good and at times very good. The change can partly be explained by the fact that the subject has only recently had a co-ordinator and has been taught for some time by temporary teachers.
66. In Years 7 to 9 pupils learn about all the required aspects of mathematics. There is a particular focus on developing their number skills and although this is appropriate the work is sometimes very repetitive and does not always develop pupils' skills sufficiently. However, the teacher has adapted aspects of the numeracy strategy well and a strength is the development of mental arithmetic at the start of each lesson. Pupils clearly enjoy this and the use of white boards for each pupil adds a diversity to the lessons which pupils appreciate. The teacher knows his pupils well and often uses questioning effectively to challenge pupils. At times though more able pupils become frustrated when they can do the sums quickly in their head and do not need to write them down. Pupils know how to calculate the perimeter of a square and recognise a range of different shapes. They work on telling the time and are beginning to use calculators. By the end of Year 9 many are doing more complex sums such as  $213 \times 3$ ;  $232 \times 3$ , working on fractions and making use of data such as in bar charts. At present the curriculum for these pupils focuses on work from reception to Year 4 and although appropriate for some this does not challenge all pupils. Evidence from pupils' files shows that at times they are working below the level they were achieving in primary school and this is unsatisfactory.
67. In years 10 and 11 pupils continue to make satisfactory progress so that by the end of Year 11 most pupils achieve passes in the Certificate of Educational Achievement. Pupils extend their knowledge of basic skills and mathematics is used well to support problem solving. For example pupils learn to use the 24 hour clock to understand bus timetables. Their work with money is made more meaningful by looking at the price of bicycles in a sale. Traffic surveys enable them to make use of data and they show an understanding of pictograms and bar charts. The teacher is confident in his subject knowledge and he is keen to set pupils on their individual tasks, working well with them

on a one to one basis. However, on occasions this is at the expense of whole class teaching. Explanations and examples are brief although the teacher encourages pupils to think in everyday terms for example “how would you weigh a postage stamp?” The management of behaviour is a weakness for these older pupils and strategies which are used effectively with younger pupils are not evident. For example the aims of the lessons are not made clear at the beginning and not written up on the board. Pupils who should not sit together are allowed to do so and inappropriate behaviour and swearing is ignored. However, where the teacher does settle the group pupils work hard. For example, the more able Year 9 group worked solidly for the whole lesson on grammes and kilograms. Planning ensured that the work matched pupils’ ability and there was a range of worksheets and text books that supported pupils’ learning well.

68. Both teachers ensure that pupils with autism make the same progress as their peers as they are well supported in lessons and work is planned to meet their needs. They also ensure that girls receive the same attention as boys who at times dominate question and answer sessions. This is more evident for younger pupils than older pupils but during the week there were good examples at the end of the lesson such as with Year 9 when the teacher ensured that two very quiet girls were involved in the recap of the lesson.
69. There is little doubt that the two co-ordinators for mathematics have worked extremely hard to establish a curriculum and criteria that can be used for assessing pupils’ progress and have made good progress in a short amount of time. They are very aware of what they need to do in some aspects of their work. For example in making better use of testing. At present they use the NFER testing, assess pupils based on the National Curriculum levels and assess their progress on “Successmaker”. The co-ordinators recognise that there is not the need for all these tests and are actively questioning the purpose of carrying out NFER testing. They do however need support in developing their subject. They have established a development plan for numeracy but there is not one for mathematics. As a result they have not been able to budget for the fact that there are now two co-ordinators and therefore more equipment is needed nor have they had the opportunity to look at the implications of their plans to introduce GCSE. The National Numeracy Strategy has been adapted satisfactorily although better use could be made of the ideas that it recommends – for example lively warm up sessions at the start of lessons for in all year groups. Computers are used by pupils for “Successmaker” and “Destinations” but there is little evidence to show that pupils’ skills in using computers in mathematics have been developed further such as by representing statistics on spreadsheets.

## **SCIENCE**

70. Girls and boys achieve a satisfactory level of knowledge, understanding and skill in science although the pace of learning is rather slow, and the girls in Year 11 have a particularly negative attitude to their studies. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.
71. According to the school's science policy, pupils are expected to achieve National Curriculum science levels 3 and 4 by the end of Year 9. In practice, attainment ranges from as low as working towards level 1, where pupils still struggle to identify the ankle, for example; to level 4, where there is some awareness of the scientific term ‘photosynthesis’, and that enzymes digest food. By the end of Year 11, the great majority of boys and girls pass the Certificate of Educational Achievement in single science. In the last three years the proportion of pupils gaining merit and distinction in the Year 11 examination is gradually increasing. There is no GCSE science provision in school for the highest attaining pupils. One Year 10 boy is attending a local

mainstream comprehensive school for science lessons and could be entered for GCSE through that route next year. The life skills gardening course, provided in the summer term before Year 11 pupils leave school, is not challenging enough and does not motivate the girls.

72. Teaching is based on good knowledge of the science course, especially the biology units, and a secure understanding of requirements for national tests in Year 9 and examination requirements in Year 11. As a result pupils learn to describe what they see in experiments; and what they know, especially about the human body. To a lesser extent they can describe the properties of materials; the differences between solids, liquids and gases; the different pH values of acids and alkalis; and some physical processes like electricity, magnetism and forces. There is good awareness of the range of science investigation skills to be promoted but planning for the full range of these skills requires further development. Year 10 pupils are beginning to think about and write their own predictions, in an experiment to test the grip of sports shoes on different surfaces, for example, but have little understanding of the newtonmeter to be used in the experiment. Neither the boys nor the girls make enough progress in the skills of analysis, comparison, conclusion and evaluation, because there is not enough emphasis on these more challenging skills when writing lesson plans.
73. One to one teaching provides valuable individual attention for pupils who generally find it difficult to work independently without the support of the teacher or learning assistants. Lessons have clear objectives and a sense of purpose. Resources, although not extensive in range, are prepared well. There is no technical help and this is a concern as the amount of practical work begins to increase with the opening of the new laboratory. The quality of whole class teaching is less successful because the management of behaviour is unsatisfactory. Year 9 lowest attaining pupils concentrate well when learning the parts of the body. They are supported effectively by an assistant, using materials well chosen by the teacher to match their stage of development. Planning for the wide range of pupils' needs is, however, not always so well developed and the highest and lowest attaining pupils in a class are frequently given the same tasks. Homework is not provided on a regular basis to extend the curriculum. Planning for the fifty-five minute lesson is not effective and the last fifteen minutes is not yet taught as productively as the first forty minutes; pupils lose concentration and become disruptive.
74. Pupils make very little use of numeracy in science lessons, and rarely plot and explain line graphs and bar charts. Pupils have few opportunities to use and apply their ICT skills, nor are they encouraged sufficiently to write more than a few sentences independently.
75. The school has responded positively to the concerns raised about science provision at the time of the last inspection. There is now a new laboratory and the amount of teaching time for science has increased. The new laboratory was opened only four weeks before this inspection so has not yet had an impact on standards in science. Pupils' progress in learning chemistry and physics safely and effectively through practical activities has, therefore, continued to be very limited since the last inspection. Consequently pupils have a wider knowledge of biology than chemistry and physics. The whole process of development planning, and performance monitoring in the science department is unsatisfactory, holding back the pace of improvement. Plans for the teaching of the full range of enquiry skills are not well defined in schemes of work. There has been unsatisfactory progress in meeting targets set last year to develop health and safety procedures for science lessons, to develop an effective system to track pupils' progress in science, and to improve the use of ICT to support learning in science. Financial planning to extend the range of science resources for use in the

new laboratory is ineffective. Plans are not well developed to provide technical support and staff training to ensure that the new laboratory is utilised to best effect. These are all areas for development now that the new facility is in place.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

76. Teaching and learning are good and there are high expectations for boys and girls to achieve. Autistic pupils are supported well and make the same progress as their peers. This enables pupils to make good progress and achieve well. This reflects the findings of the last report.
77. During years 7 to 9 pupils are taught an effective range of skills and become increasingly competent and aware of different techniques. For example, pupils in Year 8 are at the early stages of a project about water. The teacher provides good opportunities for pupils to look at illustrations by Hockney and Hokusai. From this starting point, pupils are asked to create a 'resource sheet' showing different water related images and to create a blue palette. Pupils, a few with support, choose the images they like best. The teacher works effectively with pupils leading them through the process of mixing a range of blue tones and they learn well.
78. Instructions are clear and precise. For example, in a Year 9 lesson the teacher provides very clear directions about how pupils can transfer an image from their Egyptian paintings to a plaster tablet. As a result pupils are successful in carrying out the task. The constant monitoring of pupils as they work enables the teacher to provide effective support for any pupils experiencing difficulty. This reinforces pupils' learning and boosts their self-esteem. Pupils receiving support accept advice and are able to improve their work. Pupils' work is of good quality and they are clearly proud of their achievements. At the end of most lessons the teacher provides appropriate opportunities for a brief discussion. This leaves pupils aware of what they have achieved and what they need to do next week.
79. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 currently have opportunities to work towards a Certificate of Achievement. The school is appropriately introducing GCSE opportunities this year. Pupils achieve well because good teaching is frequently complemented by pupils' very good attitudes. In one lesson, pupils' concentration is intense, as they focus on designing an Icon. They effectively use the wide range of resource images provided by the teacher. Pupils make good progress in their pencil control and in the use of watercolour paints. As a result, they become increasingly able to create effective images and their use of paint indicates that they are developing 'a personal style'. The teacher gives good technical advice, such as taking care when applying paint by not putting two wet colours next to each other. The teacher or learning support assistant gives each pupil individual support, so they are quite clear about what they need to do in order to improve. Pupils respond well to the teacher's high expectations, they accept constructive criticism and try to apply the advice they have been given.
80. Art is well led and managed. The introduction of additional accreditation is appropriate, however, the art room will not provide enough space to support the type of work that pupils will have to complete for GCSE. Computers play an appropriate part in pupils' learning. Opportunities to use them are structured and planned into lessons.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

81. Boys and girls make good progress in this subject. They achieve well in each of the three strands – workshop skills, textiles, and food technology because teaching is good and sometimes very good. Pupils' progress, achievements and attitudes are



especially good in food technology, where they are particularly attentive, keen, and sensible. This is good improvement since the last inspection.

82. Pupils learn to use a good range of tools, equipment and utensils, from lathes, sanders, drills, vacuum formers and strip heaters – to scissors, cookers, knives and dishwashers. They work in a wide range of materials, such as wood, card, paper and acrylic in the workshop; and a range of fabrics, wools, plastic and dyes in the textiles lessons. In food technology, they use a wide selection of ingredients from all over the world to make meals and snacks in great variety. Pupils learn to use the equipment safely and hygienically. They work with care, and very good attention to detail and the quality of the finished product, whether it is a silk cushion dyed in Japanese style, or a clock face made in acrylic plastic, or a potato and tomato bhaji.
83. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons very well, often including well-structured activities that involve clear explanations and demonstrations at the start, and at key points through the lesson. The support assistants in each lesson are very capable: they have good skills in the different aspects of the subject, good awareness of the pupils' needs, and they work very well in support of the teaching. Teachers have a good focus on teaching pupils particular skills, such as how to use a clamp-mounted saw safely, how to weave in different styles or how to slice and dice vegetables for a salad, or how to crack and whisk eggs. In the workshop, pupils make items such as ball-bearing games, decorative surrounds for mirrors, CD racks, shelving units, model vehicles, and "dioramas" of waterfalls and underwater scenes. In textiles, pupils have made T-shirt logos, lampshades and soft toys for young children, and have created their own designs for different rooms in a house. Many of these projects are long and complex, but pupils apply themselves well. They concentrate on the design work, are very careful in the making stages, and afterwards they consider how well they have done, and what they would do differently another time. In food technology, pupils have learned many skills in cookery and hygiene as they have learned to make meals such as a French breakfast, corned beef burgers, cheese straws and Swiss onion soup.
84. Staff have positive relationships with pupils, sometimes joking, and often firm with occasional incidents of silly behaviour. One excellent lesson, for example, saw pupils in Year 7 making an American breakfast of pancakes with maple syrup and coffee. In a very lively and enthusiastic style, the teacher demonstrated each stage of the preparation and cooking. She allowed the pupils a lot of freedom in getting the utensils out, preparing the food and the coffee, laying out the table, eating the meal together in a very sociable group, and clearing away afterwards. The pupils were extremely well motivated: they hung onto every word, followed instructions to the letter, and behaved perfectly. Throughout the lesson, the teacher was bringing up a host of additional information, such as about how the maple syrup is harvested, why the maple leaf is on the Canadian flag, the importance of the syrup to the native Americans, and showing pictures of the New England forests where the syrup comes from. This was typical of the food technology lessons: each one brought in many extras of a cultural and social nature. Computers are not available in the workshop or food technology rooms, although one teacher has begun to use the computer suite well, with pupils making drawings of their woodwork items.
85. Pupils' work is accredited within the "Youth Award Scheme". Pupils look forward to these lessons; they enjoy them, behave well, and concentrate very well on each task. The less able pupils receive a lot of support and additional guidance, but do not have the work done for them. They are expected to do their best, perhaps not completing as many trial sketches, for example, or not writing such a detailed review of how well they have made their wooden container.

86. This subject is well led and managed. The plans for what is taught in the long term are very good for each aspect, and extend throughout the school. They cover a wide range of skills, materials and tools, but do not include very much use of people and places outside the school. The time allocation to this subject is very good, and it is used very well. The accommodation is good, with specialist rooms that are well equipped with large and small furniture, power tools and equipment, and hand tools and utensils. The workshop is too small to allow a full class in at once, but the school is beginning to develop plans to improve this room. Other plans to develop the subject further are not well advanced yet, either, although the school intends to extend the level of outside examinations to include GCSE work. This subject makes a particularly good contribution to pupils' wider development through for instance, the social and moral lessons to be learned in working co-operatively and eating closely together. Pupils practise their reading skills through following instructions and recipes; they write their plans for each piece of work, and their reviews afterwards; they measure wood and plastic accurately, and gather their ingredients together in cups, spoons, grammes, fluid ounces and millilitres. Design and technology is a strength of the school.

## **HUMANITIES**

87. The achievements and progress of boys and girls are good because teaching is consistently at least satisfactory and sometimes good. This is good improvement since the last inspection.
88. History and geography are taught as humanities in years 7, 8 and 9. Due to timetabling arrangements only a limited number of lessons could be observed. However, analysis of a range of pupils' work and teachers' plans and records confirms that pupils make good progress. Good planning ensures that the appropriate statutory curriculum is in place for both subjects.
89. Overall there are high expectations of what pupils can do so that by the end of Year 7, pupils have an understanding of chronology. They have studied aspects of life in the Roman Empire and the important changes that the Roman occupation brought to Britain. Pupils have compared the climate and vegetation at the equator with other parts of the world and how the "greenhouse effect" affects the world's climate. As part of their study on medieval realms, pupils have looked at the way law and order was maintained in medieval times and the way in which people were punished for disobeying the law. For example, in one lesson pupils were able to see how harsh the punishments were in medieval times in comparison with modern times. Pupils are given the opportunity to extend their understanding of historical and geographical concepts. For example, in a Year 7 lesson pupils were encouraged to role play a scene depicting the murder of Thomas Becket. The pace of the lesson was good and pupils enthusiastically participated. The teacher and support staff use praise and encouragement well which gives pupils confidence to try.
90. The teacher's good subject knowledge encourages Year 8 pupils to look at aspects such as the causes and effects of the English Civil War and undertake a comprehensive study of the mountains, rivers and cities in France. Pupils study life in Elizabethan England and the gunpowder plot. They can recognise the historical figures and the importance of a king, queen or head of the church in relation to the life of ordinary people. By the end of Year 9 pupils have a good knowledge of aspects of the lifestyle of the plains Indians of North America. They have also investigated the causes of the First World War and its effect on mainland Europe. As part of a study on a national park, pupils have looked at the environmental issues that arise out of different demands on natural resources and they are able to put forward suggestions as to how

resources can be shared for the benefit of all. For example, one more able pupil proposed that the lake could be used for breeding fish and for recreational uses.

91. The co-ordinator has a good awareness of the needs of the pupils and appreciates the importance of increasing the use of information and communication technology in lessons. As in the previous inspection the subjects suitably support social, moral, cultural and spiritual development by looking at the development of peoples and environmental issues.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

92. Pupils do not make satisfactory progress in this subject, and their achievements are unsatisfactory. This is because although the teaching in the discrete lessons is satisfactory, it is unsatisfactory across the curriculum as a whole. Many teachers do not bring ICT into their lessons in a structured and routine way, even in the last two years that pupils spend in school. Standards are not as good as at the time of the last inspection.
93. In years 7, 8 and 9, pupils are expected to learn about computers and other forms of high technology equipment through using them in the other subjects of the curriculum. What they learn, however, is patchy. Pupils do not develop their knowledge of any aspect of this subject in a structured way that covers all of the required aspects. Instead, they gain a little understanding about graphic work through an occasional art or design and technology lesson, for instance, or about how to make and analyse tunes in a music lesson. In English lessons, they sometimes use the computers for spelling practice, or to re-write their work, or to produce a small "newspaper front page". The more able pupils produce some passages of text that have an ornate title, different font styles, and a small clip-art picture or photographs from a digital camera. In mathematics, the more able pupils have produced very simple graphs from surveys that they have carried out, such as about shopping habits, but they do not have opportunities to create and interpret different kinds of graphs, spreadsheets or databases. In a few lessons, pupils have gained information from CD ROMs and from the Internet, such as about a mosque, or about slavery, but these are rare instances. They do not have opportunities to use email, or to use control mechanisms, or to take part in simulations of real situations. One program designed to develop and test skills in English and mathematics is used too often, at three times each week. Some of this time could be better spent on direct teaching of computer-based skills.
94. Pupils in years 10 and 11 *do* receive direct teaching of ICT skills in one lesson each week. Their progress is satisfactory in these lessons, but is unsatisfactory in the long term because what they learn is not well reinforced and extended in other subjects. The plan of what is to be taught is not well followed in the long term, with progress falling well behind what has been planned for. Pupils make use of a scanner and a digital camera. They learn how to use some programs and facilities such as WordArt and Publisher, but only to a basic level. In producing posters or party invitations, for instance, pupils create a small passage of text, try different font styles and sizes, and add a WordArt title and a small picture. But the work is very simple, and many pupils need a lot of help: they do not, for instance, put a border round their work, or try to vary the lettering within WordArt. They do not routinely use the Internet or CD ROMs to gain information about a range of topics.
95. Lessons are structured, although the aims are not always high enough to challenge the more able pupils sufficiently. The resources are well used, with sufficient computers for one for each pupil, and the teacher makes good use of the "Smartboard" – a computer linked to a large white board for whole-class displays. The

teacher explains each step of a lesson clearly, with occasional further use of the Smartboard when pupils have reached an important stage of their work. The classroom assistant knows the equipment, the software and the pupils well, and is a great help in supporting the less able pupils. In one lesson, for example, the teacher showed the pupils how to use "Publisher". The lesson began well with a good brainstorm of ideas of what should be included in a party invitation, and all the different kinds of party that people might have. But then the teacher had all of the pupils doing a Halloween invitation in the same style and colour scheme, instead of giving the more able ones, at least, more scope to try their ideas out and put their own wording and colours in. The teacher and the support assistant were good at helping pupils who got into difficulties with their work, but the pupils tended to sit and wait for help to arrive, rather than trying new things for themselves. Mostly, pupils are interested in the work; they pay attention to what they are being told and shown, and they concentrate well when they are using the computers.

96. The leadership and management of ICT are unsatisfactory. The plans for what is to be done across the school have largely been finished, but they have not resulted in a good standard of teaching and learning. There are good computers and other equipment, for instance, but they are not all used effectively. Pupils are being entered for externally accredited certificates, but they are not achieving the levels that they could. Teachers have had training in how to use the equipment, but many still lack the confidence to use the computers in lessons. The timetables do not include sufficient separate time to use the computer suite. The plans of what is to be taught across the curriculum are broad, but do not include all of the relevant aspects that they should. The quality and frequency of teaching has not yet been checked in a formal way and there is a need to make the teaching and learning more effective. Teachers need to gain more confidence and expertise in using the computers across the school, and to have higher expectations of what pupils can be challenged to do. A lunchtime computer club is popular with a small number of pupils.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

97. Pupils make good progress in French which they study in Years 7 to 9 because teaching is effective. There has been an improvement in standards since the last inspection although links with a school in France are no longer available.
98. Pupils are confident to speak in French and repeat phrases such as "je vais a la piscine". They benefit from listening to the teacher's own use of French and his good accent. They are not self-conscious about speaking in front of their peers and make good progress. Pupils recall work from previous lessons, for example a less able pupil quickly recalled that three was "trois" in French. A strength of the teaching is in the different activities that pupils are offered. These may include watching a video, repeating phrases and playing a game based on "ou vas tu?". Computer technology is used well so that when learning vocabulary linked to days of the week and the weather pupils are able to get actively involved through the use of an interactive white board. They clearly enjoy the session. Pupils understand where France is and aspects of the culture for example the different foods and currency. They count up to 10 with confidence and write phrases linked to their likes and dislikes.
99. The subject is managed well and the teacher has very good subject knowledge. There is an appropriate plan of work. Resources are satisfactory but would benefit from developing to include a greater variety of videos and materials. At present teaching is

based solely on a commercial scheme and there is no opportunity for diversifying. Plans to take pupils to France are appropriate .

## **MUSIC**

100. Music is taught up to Year 9, and all boys and girls including those with autism make good progress and achieve well during this time. This is because teaching and learning are good. This reflects good improvement since the last inspection.
101. Lessons are well planned, prepared and structured by the teacher. More able pupils develop a good understanding of musical terms such as timbre, pitch and tempo. Others attempt to make up their own tunes, but often need more help, if they find it too difficult. Pupils recognise the sounds made by many instruments, and they play them correctly, though not especially musically, at times. Many discuss and recognise the different “layers” created by several instruments in a tune. The teacher has good musical knowledge, and she uses this to motivate the pupils, developing their enjoyment of the subject, as well as their skills and knowledge. One good lesson, for the youngest pupils for instance, was aimed at identifying musical clichés – the different instruments and how each one makes its sound. The teacher began with an activity of passing round metallic eggs that had beads inside them. It began with one egg, and ended with all pupils passing them round at once, with a beat, like a rhythm. A short video film was shown, looking at instruments that “Toot, whistle, pluck or boom”, and music from “The Carnival of the Animals” was used to give examples of different instruments.
102. Resources are used effectively to give pupils practical “hands-on” activities with different instruments. Their use of computers and electronic keyboards to make their own compositions is especially good. They listen to, and discuss, a range of musical types, including music from other cultures such as Spain, the Caribbean and India. Pupils have taken part in singing performances in school, such as at Easter, Christmas and harvest. They sing songs of different styles, from lively sea shanties such as “What shall we do with the drunken sailor?” to calm carols such as “Away in a Manger”. Pupils’ behaviour is managed well, by good use of praise, ensuring that all pupils are involved in the activities, with the able assistance of the learning support assistant. A brief review of what had been learned helps pupils to collect their thoughts, and to tell them what they would be doing the following week. The pupils have a positive attitude, and are very willing to join in with sensible suggestions and ideas, and to listen to the music.
103. The leadership and management of music are good. The subject is well organised, with good staff training recently, and more planned for the near future. Good use is made of outside people and places, such as having members of a symphony orchestra in to run workshops, going out to a nearby cathedral, or taking part in an event for local schools, called “Fairground Attraction”. There are plans to develop some aspects of the subject, although these are not detailed. They include building up the resources more, such as by purchasing more percussion instruments, and instruments from different countries. The plans also include extending the range of the curriculum, and looking for a simpler way of assessing the pupils’ progress. All of these aspects are satisfactory at the moment. The variety of musical styles, and the pupils’ interest in them, means that music contributes well to pupils’ cultural and spiritual development.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

104. Teaching is satisfactory and as a result boys' and girls' achievements and the progress they make are satisfactory. Pupils with autism make the same progress as their peers. At the time of the last inspection teaching was good or very good and so standards are not as effective as they were.
105. No teaching was observed for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and the lessons planned for pupils in Years 7 to 9 were affected by severe weather. This term pupils are learning tennis and cricket. During the inspection only three lessons were observed: one lesson of tennis and two of indoor rounders. These were planned at the last minute because of bad weather.
106. The teacher provides a clear explanation of the rules for indoor rounders and pupils in Years 7 and 8 follow instructions well. Learning support assistants are deployed effectively, one to play on each team. This ensures that pupils are provided with good role models. The lesson is busy and purposeful and pupils participate well. There is clearly a good sense of 'team spirit' and pupils cheer each other on and offer team colleagues 'good advice'. The game provides suitable opportunities for pupils to practise fielding skills, such as throwing and catching a ball and they demonstrate good skills with a bat, hitting balls accurately and with force. However, other than the rules of the game there are no new skills to develop. This is partly because the session is not part of the curriculum and the hall cannot comfortably accommodate the number of pupils and staff involved.
107. The control and organisation of pupils in physical activities is not consistently effective. Clear expectations of behaviour and participation have not been established and a significant number of pupils, not just those with challenging behaviour, act inappropriately. In a significant number of lessons this has an impact on the progress and achievement of the whole group. A number of pupils are not developing good attitudes to sport and they do not work hard to improve their performance. The co-ordinator pays very good attention to ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to take part in activities. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to compete in a variety of sporting events outside the school, such as football and kwik cricket matches. There are also satisfactory opportunities for pupils to take part in sports-based training and clubs for sports such as aikido.
108. Pupils clearly improve their skills over time and in Year 9 they use their fielding and batting skills more effectively. However, pupils' attitudes to learning are not as good and this has an impact on the progress they make. In a Year 9 tennis lesson the behaviour of two pupils, constantly disrupts the lesson having an impact on the teaching and support that can be offered to others. Despite this the teacher ensures that pupils have enough opportunities to improve their skills. Sensitive support and encouragement is given to less able pupils and there is an appropriate emphasis on improving techniques. This enables them to develop their stroke technique when they practise volley shots. The teacher challenges more able pupils effectively to combine ground and volley shots. They try hard and make good progress.
109. Assessment of pupils' achievements is good and the co-ordinator is appropriately reviewing and improving the units of work. Risk assessments for activities have not been carried out and this is unsatisfactory.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

110. The achievements of boys and girls are good throughout the school because pupils including those with autism are interested in the topics and the quality of the teaching is good. The subject has improved well since the last inspection.
111. At this time of year the Year 8 pupils have religious education lessons whilst Years 7 and 9 study geography and history. Year 8 pupils make an interesting `virtual' visit to a Mosque. This activity generates good quality, independent writing. They also learn, through observation, thinking and discussion, the significance of rosary beads. Grouping pupils according to their levels of attainment is highly effective in this lesson. The more able pupils, including an autistic boy, discuss and write independently, that the beads might be associated with prayer, confession and Christianity. The standard of spelling is, however, well below average. The lowest attaining pupils, with support, suggest that the beads may be linked to Jesus and prayers. Through their discussions, pupils reveal a good knowledge of the Christian faith and the story of Jesus. Teaching is very effective in promoting pupils' spiritual development. In a Year 8 lesson about the importance of prayer to people who worship, a boy independently writes his own prayer reflecting on the needs of people who are less fortunate than he is, who have no food, no homes and who are beaten. In Year 9 the assessment records show that the less able group of pupils is progressing as well as the higher attaining group in their understanding of worship and why people who worship consider it an important part of their lives.
112. The great majority of pupils pass the Certificate of Educational Achievement in religious education by the end of Year 11. This is good progress given that pupils only have one religious education lesson a week. This is a challenging course requiring pupils to think about moral and ethical issues. They discuss genetic engineering but do find this topic difficult to understand. Pupils understand better when issues of this kind feature in television `soaps'. The course also gives pupils the opportunity to discuss euthanasia, prejudice and discrimination, fairness, racism, and human rights. They also compare different faiths, and their festivals, buildings, artefacts, ceremonies and traditions. In their first lesson on Judaism, a Year 11 boy asks interesting questions about the origins of Judaism. He also knows from previous work who was involved in the Holocaust and what happened. Through their discussions about `women's work' and `men's work', older pupils develop an understanding of gender stereotyping. This part of the religious education curriculum links well to their careers education lessons.
113. Good quality planning, based on secure knowledge of the locally agreed syllabus, together with an enthusiasm for the subject, good relationships with the boys and girls, and secure management of pupils with challenging behaviours, all combine to provide good quality teaching throughout the school. Good links with the local advisory service, the local religious education resource centre and the examination board keep teaching up to date and the subject dynamic and forward looking. Oral assessments in Years 10 and 11 are very effective in encouraging pupils to talk about what they know, and for the teacher to monitor pupils' achievements. The teacher keeps good records of pupils' achievements. Targets are not yet set at the beginning of new units of work to enable judgements to be made about whether achievements are as good as the teacher expects. Effective self-evaluation by the teacher has identified the need to encourage pupils to talk at greater length with each other during group work and to write more independently. Pupils are very reliant on teaching and support staff to guide their discussions and structure their writing. There is some use of ICT in religious education lessons but this is an area for continuing development. The school has recently changed the length of lessons from forty to fifty five minutes. In religious

education lessons the quality of learning in the last fifteen minutes of a lesson is not as effective as in the rest of the lesson.

114. The subject is well managed. The subject co-ordinator is committed to a programme of continuing improvement and has been commended by the examination board for his efforts in this respect. The scheme of work and departmental documents are all well organised. The choice of examination course reveals high expectation that pupils will not just study different faiths but also discuss important moral and ethical issues of the day.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION**

115. Pupils make satisfactory progress because teaching and learning are satisfactory. No judgements were made about this aspect of the curriculum in the last inspection.
116. Lessons are planned clearly so that by Year 9 pupils gain a sound understanding about how to look after themselves in health and hygiene matters. They learn about the dangers of drugs, smoking and alcohol, and think about moral questions such as recycling, human rights and racism. Using their leisure time, and learning how to behave at work are also aspects that pupils study, along with sex education and developing relationships with other people at work, in the community, and at home. By Year 11, pupils have learned about some aspects of democracy, such as in the local elections. They find out what people's rights and responsibilities are in different situations, and they begin to understand some of the situations that are covered by criminal and civil law – such as disputes with neighbours, or causing damage to property. Their knowledge and understanding builds soundly on what they have learned earlier in the school, developing a better idea of what parenthood involves, for instance, or looking after their own money sensibly. However, activities are not always followed well during the actual lesson. Some planned activities are missed out, or not completed, and there is often no review of what has been learned at the end of the lesson. In one lesson, for instance, the teacher did not go over the pupils' answers to a series of printed questions about AIDS, and he completed the behaviour points for the pupils without telling them what scores he was giving them.
117. Pupils take part in college links, work experience and community service projects. These help to develop their independence and initiative, as well as their social skills. Less able pupils have difficulty in understanding some of the aspects, such as in a lesson about AIDS, although they have better understanding when the subjects are closer to their hearts, such as the nutritional value of different foods.
118. Some staff lack confidence and enthusiasm for several aspects of this subject, such as sex education, or the law. In the main, pupils are interested in this subject. They respond positively in lessons, joining in discussions and practical activities well, although they can be immature at times, especially when the teaching is slow, and when it relies too much on videos or worksheets. The learning support assistants are a very good support for the less able pupils, both in managing their behaviour and in explaining topics that are difficult for them to understand. A good lesson during the inspection saw pupils learning about the nutritional values of different foods. Although the display poster was very old, the lesson went well, with the teacher explaining well. She used other resources effectively, such as packets that the pupils had brought in, and many food-related magazines. The pupils sorted the pictures into groups of foods that contained different vitamins, fats and carbohydrates, using a "traffic light" category of "always good for you", "eat sometimes", and "only eat now and again". They were



interested and learned well, although one less able pupil needed a lot of support and attention from the classroom assistant for both his behaviour and his learning.

119. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. A relatively new co-ordinator has begun to make some far-reaching changes to the curriculum. This includes replacing some subjects that are repeated too often, such as “myself”, with others that need to be introduced under official guidelines, such as “citizenship”. The co-ordinator has encouraged staff to use computers more, especially in gaining access to various health-related sites on the Internet, but teachers have been slow to try this. Other resources are satisfactory, but some are old and need to be replaced, especially as the school lost access to some modern books when it decided to discontinue the contact with the library service. There is no clear plan of how the subject is to be developed in the future, and little use has been made of outside people and places until very recently, apart from the “spin-off” benefits of the college links, community service and work experience. The teaching is not monitored formally, although the co-ordinator has worked alongside some staff, and discussed their teaching with them informally.