

INSPECTION REPORT

THE POLYGON SCHOOL

Southampton

LEA area: Southampton

Unique reference number: 116624

Headteacher: Mr L Gent

Reporting inspector: Mr Tom Smith
21044

Dates of inspection: 22-25 April 2002

Inspection number: 192769

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, emotional and behavioural difficulties

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11-16 years

Gender of pupils: Boys

School address: The Polygon School
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The Polygon
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr J Rawson-Smith

Date of previous inspection: March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21044	Mr Tom Smith	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education English as an additional language	What sort of a school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9646	Mrs Geraldine Osment	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18206	Ms Elizabeth Mildner	Team inspector	English Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
27058	Mrs Kathleen Cannon	Team inspector	French Music Religious education Special educational needs	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
22729	Mr Robert Arnold	Team Inspector	Mathematics Art Design and technology Equality of opportunity	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Polygon is a 56-place, community special day school for boys aged 11-16 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). Not all pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need; this follows the policy of the local authority. Pupils travel to the school from within the unitary authority of Southampton. Some are brought to the school by taxi while others travel independently. As the only school of its type within the authority the school is obliged to admit almost all pupils referred to it by the authority. This has a noticeable effect on the composition of the role, particularly in Years 10 and 11. The population of the school, unlike at the time of the last inspection, now includes pupils excluded from pupil referral units as well as those previously detained under the youth justice system. Pupils who are currently in Youth Custody remain on the roll of the school because it is intended that they return to the school when released. There are 46 pupils on roll, all of white European origin and none with English as a second language. In addition to pupils who attend on a daily basis the school also provides and manages an alternative curriculum for individual pupils in the final two years of education. Forty-four per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The majority of pupils admitted to the school have below average attainment when compared to their age. This is largely the result of disruption in their previous education. Although the school has sufficient teachers, the school management has had difficulty in filling the posts of music teacher and French teacher with people who have appropriate expertise.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The Polygon successfully addresses the main behavioural and emotional needs of its pupils. Pupils do well in their personal and physical development and the majority leave the school with academic qualifications that on admission would have appeared unlikely. Standards are rising in English. The support that teachers receive and the good team spirit they show ensures that pupils' behaviour is managed fairly and consistently. Consequently, pupils respond with understanding and by the time they leave they have developed into mature young adults. Teaching is at least satisfactory throughout the school. Taking these factors into account, the school is effective in what it does and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides good leadership for improving the behaviour of pupils and ensures the consistent application of the behaviour policy throughout the school. Because of this pupils respond well and the culture of the school is one that understands their difficulty yet sets expectations for improvement.
- Because the behaviour of pupils improves they develop good respect for others. This is most noticeable in pupils who have been at the school for the longest time.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is good and results in pupils considering the needs and feelings of others.
- There are good procedures to monitor the improvements in pupils' behaviour as well as their personal development. These give good information to pupils that encourages them to greater effort in managing their behaviour.
- Pupils view staff actions as fair and reasonable and while they do not always agree with the outcomes of these they are glad to be at the school.

What could be improved

- The achievement of pupils in mathematics, French and music.
- The quality of teaching and learning, by making better use of assessment, improved planning and use of homework.
- The management of the school, through more effective deployment of teachers, more rigorous monitoring of teaching standards and improving the strategic function of the governing body.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1997. Since then satisfactory improvement has been made. A full curriculum is now provided and teaching standards are subject to more regular and planned scrutiny. As a result, pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. Attendance rates have improved even though some pupils travel independently to the school. Staff now have clearer subject responsibilities and in subjects, such as English and information and communication technology (ICT), standards have risen. However, this is not the case in all subjects as the quality of their management is inconsistent. The governing body has established a finance committee to oversee major spending decisions. All statutory requirements are now met.

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

* Individual Education Plans

The majority of pupils achieve well in learning to control their behaviour. This outcome is the result of consistent application, by staff, of the school's behaviour policy and the support they receive from senior management. For many pupils the school is successful in raising the frequency of their attendance and this improves the rate at which pupils learn and achieve. The school has set itself appropriately challenging targets to raise standards and is meeting these successfully. The latest available results of National Curriculum tests for 14-year-olds indicate that pupils attain standards in English, mathematics and science that are similar to the national average for EBD pupils. GCSE results for 2001 show that 100 per cent of pupils who entered examinations attained at least one GCSE grade A*-G. Fifty-six per cent of all Year 11 pupils attained at least one GCSE grade A*-G and this figure is slightly higher than the national average for EBD schools. This is good achievement for those pupils in Key Stage 4. Pupils in Key Stage 3 achieve satisfactorily in science and English. Year 9 pupils are doing better in the latter because of the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils in Key Stage 4 achieve satisfactorily in English and science. The achievement of all pupils in mathematics is unsatisfactory. Pupils in Year 9 benefit from the recent introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. This has still to be introduced throughout the school where the achievement of other pupils is lower. Pupils achieve well in art and this is reflected in the outcomes of success in GCSE. Pupils' achievements in French are unsatisfactory, but satisfactory in design and technology, geography, history, ICT and physical education. Music is provided to only a few pupils, but these pupils achieve well. All pupils achieve well in personal and social development.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; pupils enjoy being involved to the extent that many overcome their previously negative attitude to learning. They are proud of their school and look after it well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good; pupils behave well and even when negative incidents occur elsewhere they concentrate on what they need to do.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory; relationships with staff are good and through this pupils are learning to respect others.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory when compared to the national benchmark, but the attendance of many individuals has significantly improved.

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.

In nine out of ten lessons during the inspection the quality of teaching was at least satisfactory and in the view of inspectors this meets the requirements of all pupils, irrespective of their particular circumstances – particularly with reference to their emotional and behavioural needs. All teachers teach across the key stages. Good teaching was observed in 37 per cent of lessons, with very good or excellent teaching seen in a further 13 per cent of lessons. Teaching of English, although never less than satisfactory, was frequently good. It was also good in art, religious education (RE) and music. Teaching was satisfactory in science, design and technology, geography, history (only taught to Key Stage 3 pupils), ICT, PE and personal and social education. Teaching of French and mathematics is unsatisfactory. The overall quality of teaching could be higher. There is sometimes not a good match between teachers' expertise and the number of subjects they are expected to teach. Currently these are too many. The significant strength of teaching is the consistent and successful way in which pupils' behaviour is managed. Because teachers rigorously follow the school policy on this, pupils accept the outcomes when teachers respond to misbehaviour. This impacts well on learning and creates an ethos in which pupils are expected to work. Teaching of literacy is developing well within Year 9 and the techniques used here have yet to spread throughout the school. Literacy and numeracy skills are used satisfactorily within other lessons, but the expectation on teachers to develop these is not applied with sufficient rigour.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory; it is relevant to pupils' needs with clear links to social and emotional development.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall; spiritual and moral development is good. Opportunities for cultural development are satisfactory although more could be done to prepare pupils for life in multicultural Britain.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall, but there are strengths in the provision that monitors and responds to the emotional and behavioural needs of pupils.

Although informal contact with individual parents is good the school does not do enough to involve them in the education and social development of their children. The quality of information provided to them is satisfactory.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory; the headteacher provides good leadership to his staff and enables them to carry out their duties to the benefit of pupils. He sets a good role model for other staff.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Unsatisfactory; governors support the school enthusiastically, but they do not provide challenge and rigour to the work of the school, which would raise standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory; governors have a superficial view of the school's performance and have no formal procedures by which they can evidence or determine outcomes.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory; money is spent prudently, but this is not based upon a well constructed plan for school development.

The levels of staffing and financial resources are satisfactory. The accommodation is generally satisfactory, although it does not support a complete PE curriculum. Pupils respect the school and show this in the way they care for it. Learning resources are adequate. The governors ensure that money is spent prudently, but the principles of best value are not fully recognised. However, the school does compare its academic performance with other similar schools. It also has satisfactory links with parents.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children like the school and are prepared to attend. The effort made by teachers to help their children. School staff are approachable and listen to parents. Children are expected to work hard and do their best. When pupils leave they often go on to training or employment – because of the efforts made by the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The amount of homework that is given. Behaviour in the school. Activities that take place outside school times.

Inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by parents. They also agree that homework could be provided more readily, especially to older pupils. In the context of the school, as well as individual pupils, inspectors found the behaviour of pupils to be good and cannot therefore agree with the view expressed. Activities outside school time are difficult to arrange because of the distances that some pupils need to travel.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils enter Polygon School with levels of attainment that are below the national expectation for their age. This is largely due to pupils having missed significant parts of their earlier education. For many, this has resulted in significant difficulties in reading and other literacy skills. This has had a detrimental effect in other areas of learning.
2. The majority of pupils make good progress and achieve well in learning to manage their behaviour. This is largely due to consistent use of the school's behaviour management policy as well as the way in which it is implemented by all staff. Hallmarks of this response are calmness and fairness, to which pupils respond with growing maturity. Incidents of poor behaviour are rare among many older pupils and it is in this age group that the most significant progress is evident. In communal gatherings, such as lunch-times, the calmness and good example set by these pupils provide positive role models to younger pupils, consequently, lunch-times are pleasant social occasions. Pupils have clear targets to improve their behaviour and these help to focus their attention when things occasionally go wrong. The targets are effectively tracked by all staff and pupils are kept keenly aware of the progress they make. This good achievement by pupils is reinforced by staff who consistently point out to pupils that which they do well – rather than always urging them to do better. Parents are routinely informed of the progress in behaviour made by their children. Those parents who met with the inspection team expressed considerable satisfaction at the ways in which their children have changed for the better. The school is also successful in changing the once negative attitudes that pupils had to learning. This is seen in the improved attendance by many pupils. Although the figure overall remains below the national benchmark of 90 per cent, that for individual pupils has considerably improved. For example, during the time of the inspection, some 12 per cent of the pupils were in line for a school award for attendance rates of higher than 90 per cent. Many other pupils routinely have attendance rates of over 60 per cent – often from a low base or even non-attendance at previous schools.
3. The school has set itself appropriate targets in order to raise standards. These are:
 - to improve the literacy skills of all pupils in Key Stage 3 by at least one level (*indicators suggest that the school is unlikely to reach the target this year, although at least one half of the pupils are on course to achieve this*);
 - to improve the percentage of pupils in Key Stage 4 who attain levels above the national EBD average in literacy and numeracy (*the school estimates that it should reach the national average figure for EBD schools*);
 - to increase the range of external accreditation opportunities for Key Stage 4 pupils (*although there are few pupils currently in Year 11, the range of accreditation has widened to include religious education and design and technology*);
 - to ensure that 100 per cent of all pupils gain a pass in at least one GCSE;
 - to increase the proportion of pupils with 90 per cent attendance rates to over one half of all pupils (*the latest school figures indicate that 45 per cent of all pupils had significantly improved their attendance rates*).
4. Since the last inspection there has been varied performance in National Curriculum tests by pupils aged 14 years. The following table*, provided by the school, summarises these.

Standard Assessment Tests	1998	1999	2000	2001	National comparative percentages for EBD schools (2001)
English % at Level 4 or above	0	44	14	8	16
Mathematics % at Level 3 or above	59	66	71	54	65
Science % at Level 3 or above	58	77	71	62	59

*Figures are supplied by the school

5. These figures show that performance in national tests is variable. However, caution should be used when interpreting these figures because the actual number of pupils who sit these tests is small. They do, however, illustrate the appropriateness of the school's targets in raising standards because year-on-year performance by pupils is too variable. A similar comparison of achievement in GCSE accreditation by pupils, who leave the school aged 16 years, indicates that since 1998 the percentage of pupils to have gained one or more passes has gradually increased. Whilst there is variation year on year, depending on the average overall ability of each year group, the general picture is one of steady improvement, with the proportion of pupils gaining one or more passes exceeding the national average for EBD schools in 2001.
6. Inspection evidence broadly matches the findings from national test data. In English and science pupils achieve satisfactorily in both key stages. However, in mathematics achievement is unsatisfactory. The standards seen at the last inspection have slightly improved. The current achievement is due to the effective implementation of the National Literacy Strategy, particularly for pupils in Years 7 to 9. These pupils make satisfactory gains in speaking and listening as well as reading. Higher attaining pupils indicate that they are beginning to read books for sheer pleasure, while others are improving to the extent that their achievement is having a positive spin-off in other subjects of the curriculum, such as information and communication technology, where they accurately read on-screen instructions. Some individual pupils achieve well in their skill of speaking and listening and, where they find the subject matter challenging, such as personal and social education, they show considerable insight and sensitivity into complex emotions. Pupils in Years 10 and 11, because of the wider range of attainment, are not doing as well as those in Years 7 to 9. Using a greater maturity, brought about by better behaviour, they discuss issues with sensitivity, but they have more noticeable weakness when required to read or commit their thoughts to paper.
7. Standards in English and mathematics are below national expectations, which is to be expected given pupils' low starting point on entry as well as their previously interrupted education. However, whilst standards in English are only marginally below expectations and improving standards in mathematics, whilst not poor, are below those in English and not improving at a sufficiently fast rate. This is because the National Numeracy Strategy in Year 9 is not sufficiently well embedded and so standards lag behind. It is evident that the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy in Year 9 is starting to have a beneficial effect on pupils' achievement, but this approach is not sufficiently well used to raise standards throughout the school. Achievement, generally, within Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory. In Years 10 and 11 the wide range of attainment in mathematics affects learning outcomes. Higher attaining pupils show a secure knowledge of mental mathematics and use this skill in other situations. Others, of lower attainment, continue to have difficulties with times tables and are often unaware of when answers could be wrong because they have little concept or estimation of what the correct answer could be.
8. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in science. Much of this is derived from the secure learning undertaken in Years 7 to 9, where they develop good habits in establishing how to carry out experiments. As in mathematics, the attainment of pupils shows a correlation between the quality of outcomes and the ability to read and process information. Some pupils in Years 10

and 11 are still failing to accurately record the results of their investigations and the quality of learning they undertake is degraded. In part this reflects a lesser expectation in these classes to formally record their work. The presentation of work, particularly by pupils in Years 10 and 11, does not provide a record for any future revision prior to an examination. In part this is due to an inconsistent use of the school marking policy. Some of the marking is good and includes pointers for improvement; other marking is unsatisfactory consisting as it does of ticks or crosses.

9. Pupils achieve well in art and are taught well. As a result, many produce work that matches national expectations. It is anticipated that levels of success in GCSE examinations will increase. The teaching of French is unsatisfactory and this leads to below average levels of success by pupils. Achievement in other subjects of the curriculum is satisfactory, although that in music is more limited because it is taught to relatively few pupils. Standards in information and communication technology are rising because of the way in which the subject is taught and pupils' progress is recorded. Skills are systematically built, one on the other. Achievement in religious education is good because of the good teaching. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on moral issues and evidence from the inspection indicates that many are developing mature viewpoints through this means.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

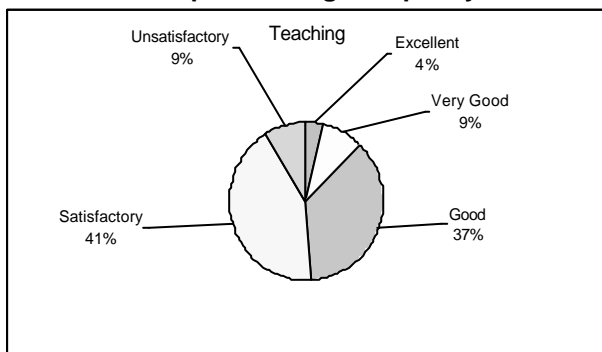
10. The attitudes of the pupils are satisfactory, as they were at the last inspection. This is the case for all pupils, irrespective of their individual needs or age. Most are happy to be in the school and enjoy their lessons. They know and accept the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and they feel staff are fair in dealing with misdemeanours. There is no evidence of graffiti or vandalism, and the school provides a calm atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, which creates a positive learning environment.
11. On admission, the pupils have a history of poor behaviour, with most having a Statement of Special Education Needs for emotional and behaviour learning difficulties. The school provides good support to help pupils manage their own behaviour and control their anger. The behaviour policy is carefully constructed to ensure that behaviour patterns are consistently monitored and pupils have the opportunity to discuss problems before they become unmanageable. This has resulted in a significant increase in the pupils' good behaviour and improved self-esteem. Behaviour, overall, is good. Pupils are a pleasure to speak with. They are polite and respectful and engage in day-to-day pleasantries and humour with staff and visitors alike. They are proud of their achievements and eager to share these with others. For example, one student made cakes for the inspection team, while another volunteered to cut a piece of freshly prepared pizza for the inspector to taste. Pupils in other lessons were also keen to show off what they had achieved.
12. The schools' good system of behaviour management includes an informal incentive award scheme, and pupils respond positively to the opportunity to gain points towards certificates, whole-school recognition or other more tangible rewards. They have a good understanding of the rules, which are clearly displayed in all classrooms, and the majority are happy to abide by these. All pupils have personal behaviour target-sheets that they carry between lessons. Good behaviour results from these because pupils know that teachers monitor and evaluate the sheets at the end of each day. Pupils also take note of the individual behaviour targets written on the sheets and modify their behaviour accordingly. When asked, pupils readily identify what their target is either for the day or for the week. In addition to this, individual targets are clearly displayed in the pupils' tutor rooms and provide a good reminder at the start of the day.
13. Temporary exclusion is used in extreme cases of violence or antisocial behaviour, but is seldom for more than one or two days. The school has a policy of not giving permanent exclusions. Because of this pupils appreciate the effort the school makes on their behalf and realise 'You won't be chucked out if you do something wrong'.

14. Some excellent wall displays throughout the school celebrate the pupils' achievements and give value to their work. This strongly promotes their self-esteem and personal achievement. Although they have few opportunities for using their initiative, they organise themselves well at lunch and break times, playing football and basketball. In conversations with Year 10 pupils, they express the view that they would not have succeeded in mainstream school. They are unanimous in saying that their attendance and attitudes towards school have significantly improved. The school has given them stability and purpose, and all hope to gain national accreditation before leaving. They are currently looking forward to their work experience placements. In terms of personal development, the pupils make good progress.
15. The current attendance rate is unsatisfactory and lower than that reported at the last inspection. However, when the figures are analysed in more detail the trend is encouraging and, for a significant number of pupils, attendance rates are good. The figures for these pupils compare very favourably with other similar schools. Almost one half of all absences since the start of the school year are attributable to two boys in Key Stage 3 and 4 boys in Key Stage 4. It is not unknown for pupils who are admitted to the school roll to never actually attend. This reflects the requirement on the school to admit almost all pupils who are referred. Most pupils arrive punctually for lessons, assemblies and meal times. The school has set itself a challenging target to achieve 90 per cent attendance for this academic year but, based on current information, it is unlikely that this target will be met. Regular attendance is having a positive impact on the learning and personal development of the majority of pupils.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, as it was at the time of the last inspection. In all the lessons seen during the inspection, 37 per cent evidenced good teaching, a further nine per cent were very good and four per cent excellent. Forty-two per cent of lessons were satisfactory and nine per cent unsatisfactory.
17. All teachers teach throughout the school. The unsatisfactory teaching was observed within both key stages and within three subjects; mathematics, personal and social education and French. These lessons totalled five out of the 57 sessions seen. The best teaching was seen in English, art, religious education (RE), music and history and these totalled 13 lessons. The quality of teaching in general can be seen in the following graph.

a. Graph showing the quality of teaching



18. The timetable is constructed so that all class tutors teach English and mathematics to their own group. This is a disadvantage for some teachers who have weaker expertise in these subjects. They are unable to provide a good level of challenge to pupils and, consequently, the learning that pupils undertake is adversely affected. In English; for example, teaching is most effective where teachers know their subject well and cause pupils to think in greater depth about the issues under discussion. In contrast the teaching of French was unsatisfactory

because, due to limited expertise, the teacher was unable to offer appropriate challenge and interest to the pupils. In other subjects, for which this teacher had expertise, the quality of teaching was good.

19. In English lessons, the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and the lesson format this provides is resulting in lessons that are challenging to pupils; they concentrate well and enjoy the learning their success brings. For example, in a lesson for Year 7 pupils, in which they were required to write about their feelings, the teacher developed the theme of the previous lesson in which they discussed Icarus and his flight towards the sun. Her enthusiastic presentation, as well as good use of a video tape resource, ensured that pupils became fully involved. Rapid

question and answer segments within the lesson kept the concentration levels high. All pupils completed the lesson with a complete understanding of what it was that they had to learn.

20. Teaching of mathematics is unsatisfactory because of ill-directed planning and teachers' insecure subject knowledge. Although the National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced only this year to Year 9 pupils, the effects have yet to be seen. However, the effect on planning for this particular year group is already evident. For example, in a lesson given to this group the teacher included a warm-up activity that immediately encouraged the pupils to become involved. In order that everyone could be fully included, she used the technique of getting pupils to write their answer on small whiteboards; at a glance she could tell if the pupils were correct and also that all were taking part. This lesson was good because it included a range of different techniques, (worksheets, use of ICT, question and answer and mental arithmetic) that obliged the pupils to remain fully involved. A level of challenge that also considered pupils' prior knowledge was a strong feature.
21. Science teaching is satisfactory throughout the school, although the quality of some lessons was better in Years 7 to 9. These lessons were characterised by better planning and clearer learning opportunities for pupils. The structure of these lessons was such that there was a clear expectation on all pupils to write up the results of their experiments. Neither of the teachers has significant expertise in the subject and this has a detrimental effect on standards overall, but lessons are purposeful and pupils respond positively in their learning. The most significant weakness of teaching in this subject was the timing of some lessons. Too many lessons ran out of time before any clear conclusion was reached and pupils left the classroom without firm notions of what they had learned. The emphasis on practical work means that, occasionally, the outcomes of learning fail to be recorded. Unwittingly, teachers are allowing pupils to drag out the time they take on experiments and so avoid having to record their findings.
22. The atmosphere in the school, particularly during the time for lessons, is one of productivity and intent to learn. This mainly results from the good behaviour management techniques used by all teachers. This is a strong feature of all classes and year groups and provides an environment in which pupils work undisturbed. Where disturbances occur, immediate support from the senior management team ensures that lessons continue with minimum interruption.
23. Pupils enjoy and gain most benefit from lessons that are well planned and in which they are fully involved. Many such lessons are found within the teaching of English and art. Not all English lessons are of a high standard because some teachers lack the expertise necessary to challenge and inspire their pupils. Where teachers rely too heavily on completion of worksheets by pupils the response is one of boredom and occasional misbehaviour. Discussion with pupils shows that they find filling in worksheets uninspiring and tedious. The inspection team agrees with these views. Worksheets are generally used to cover gaps in teacher expertise.
24. Features of the best teaching and those that capture pupils' enthusiasm are:
 - use of good resources that add to the quality of the subject matter; for example, appropriate video material and use of interactive whiteboards;
 - involving pupils more closely in their own learning through a series of challenging tasks - as seen in a Year 7 English lesson;
 - well directed discussion in which teachers develop personal experiences – as in a religious education lesson for Year 9 pupils;
 - high expectations by teachers of what their pupils will achieve in both learning and behaviour.

25. In contrast, weaker teaching was characterised by:
- unmerited praise for unsatisfactory work or, at worst, praise for answers that were incorrect;
 - lessons based on inadequate planning and which were unclear about what pupils had to learn and to what level this should be;
 - unsatisfactory use of assessment opportunities – which left pupils unsure of whether they had learned the correct content or not;
 - ignoring of opportunities to further develop pupils' understanding of the subject.
26. The use of ICT is insufficiently well developed in providing opportunities for pupils to extend their learning. Its absence in most planning is noticeable and reflects a reticence by many teachers to use it in pupils' learning, because of their own weak expertise in understanding its potential. This situation is currently being remedied through staff involvement in ICT training using New Opportunities Funding (NOF). Where ICT is used, such as in some English lessons for younger pupils, it adds not only to the presentation of work, but also inspires pupils to consider its content. The learning undertaken by pupils in specific ICT lessons indicates that many have skills that are generally underused in other areas of learning.
27. Learning support assistants (LSAs) provide effective and good support for pupils and teachers in the management of lessons. There were numerous occasions when these staff enabled lessons to proceed because of their focused support for individual pupils, who might otherwise have caused disturbance. Additionally they also provide support to groups of pupils and, because the LSAs have such good expertise, they extend and enhance the learning done by these pupils. For example, in an English lesson for Year 10 pupils, the LSA was very aware of the needs of individual pupils and, because she had been well briefed by the teacher, she was able to focus her attention in the most appropriate areas. Consequently, her effort added to the learning undertaken by the pupils.
28. Parents have expressed a range of opinion about the provision of homework. This is understandable because it is not routinely provided by teachers and only given when pupils ask. Very few pupils were heard to ask, during the course of the inspection. This situation is unsatisfactory in some cases because it fails to capitalise on the good working ethos in classrooms. Older pupils particularly are not provided with, and expected to complete, homework each week, concentrating especially on those subjects in which they will be accredited. Teachers are sensitive to the home circumstances of pupils and, in their view, making homework compulsory for all pupils could jeopardise other areas of improvement, such as gains in pupils' behaviour. The school has not explained this policy sufficiently carefully to parents; inspectors believe that homework has not been used enough.
29. It is a measure of the school's success in its major task of managing pupils' behaviour that when lessons are not stimulating the pupils continue to behave well. All teachers and LSAs are keenly aware of the behavioural targets set within individual education plans (IEPs) and focus on these during the course of lessons. Because pupils are also aware of these targets they are keen to know how they have scored within each lesson. Each lesson concludes with an award of points – with the desired behaviour being the focus. These points are given for objective reasons and where a low score is awarded it is accompanied by an explanation. Pupils invariably accept the reason. Regular reviews of pupils' behaviour targets enable them to form a view of their progress over time and, although teachers know the pupils well, they do not always match their academic assessment to the same quality as behaviour assessment. As a result, teachers are not as well informed about how pupils go about their learning. For example, some pupils may require additional practise at skills, or to learn through practical demonstration while others may only need to read about what they are learning. This means that some lessons are not taught to the benefit of all pupils and, as a result, some are unaware of what they are learning, or what they need to learn. This is not the case with pupils' behaviour, where the quality and degree of feedback is good. The school has not harnessed the potential of academic assessment to improve standards

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

30. The school has achieved a satisfactory level of improvement since the previous inspection in developing and enriching the curriculum. Pupils are taught a curriculum that has the National Curriculum 2000 as its basis and the school extends the potential of that curriculum, particularly for older pupils, by using the flexibility now allowed for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Hence the school is becoming successful in preparing pupils for their life after school.
31. The quality and range of learning opportunities is satisfactory at both key stages. The curriculum has a satisfactory level of breadth, balance and relevance for all pupils. Equality of access and opportunity is ensured and provision for pupils with any additional special educational needs is satisfactory. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught apart from music where only a limited amount of instrumental music is available. Religious education is taught to all classes, as is personal, social and health education (PSHE). Pupils up to Year 9 experience this full range with time allocated sensibly to give priority to literacy and numeracy. All pupils can take examinations towards the AQA Certificate of Achievement in literacy and numeracy and many pupils have been successful in this.
32. The curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11 satisfactorily prepares them to take national examinations in science, art, English and mathematics. The majority of pupils have the opportunity during Years 10 and 11 to take part in a college experience of half a day per week at the City College. Here they work in a range of college departments. This gives them the experience to make knowledgeable decisions for their future when the time comes. For some pupils at the school an alternative curriculum is more appropriate and an individual learning package is organised for them. This includes a successful mixture of academic work focusing on literacy and numeracy as well as a high proportion of time in the further education college and on work experience. This is an effective provision that the school is seeking to expand.
33. Curriculum planning for each subject includes medium and short-term plans that cover the chosen area of that subject's Programme of Study. These documents include the activities and methods teachers may use to teach the module, but do not have sufficient detail of how much should be covered or what is the expected level of attainment for each year group within each module. This degree of rigour is needed to ensure that teachers plan for pupils to maximise their progress as they progress through the school. Whilst the majority of these plans include opportunities to assess pupils' success in each module, these are not satisfactorily linked to National Curriculum Level descriptors and so pupil progress cannot be measured against nationally agreed criteria.
34. The school regards PSHE as an important element in nurturing pupils' social and personal development. The provision for PSHE is satisfactory. The teacher's planning for this is adapted from National Curriculum 2000, ensuring that pupils are aware of health issues as well as citizenship. This includes sex education and drugs awareness.
35. The strategies for teaching literacy are satisfactory. The school has made a start on implementing the new Key Stage 3 literacy strategy, mainly in Year 9, and its benefits are becoming evident within these classes. The provision for numeracy is not as far advanced and strategies for teaching this are, at present, unsatisfactory.
36. The provision for careers education is satisfactory. Elements of understanding the world of work are included in the Key Stage 3 PSHE programme as well as the careers lessons provided for Years 10 and 11 pupils. The careers service gives good support through interviews and discussions with pupils as well as advice to the class tutors of these senior years. College and work experience are integrated into the final years in school and, as a direct result of this involvement, many pupils move on to the college when they leave.
37. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory. Since most pupils live a distance from the school it is difficult to arrange after school activities. Despite this some educational visits may extend out of the school day and pupils have the opportunity for occasional theatre visits. The

school also takes part in some inter-school sports. Senior pupils have a worthwhile residential experience in Wales for a week where they enjoy adventurous sports, learn a little of the geography and history of the area as well as take responsibility for the catering.

38. The school's links with the community are satisfactory. The school makes effective use of places of historical and geographical interest to enrich those subjects as well as local museums and libraries. Pupils have taken part in musical events in the local church. The school has a few contacts with commerce and industry who offer placements for work experience and a small group of older pupils visited the local radio and television station as part of media studies.
39. The school's relationships with their partner institutions are satisfactory. When pupils enter the school there is liaison with the primary schools from which they come so that those pupils and their parents have a chance to view the school. The school works well with two local further education colleges so that pupils gain access to the courses that suit them best.
40. An appropriate emphasis is placed on pupils' personal and social education through the daily life of the school as well as within lessons. It is embedded within the whole-school curriculum. PSHE makes a satisfactory contribution to the standards pupils achieve and endorses the aims of the school well. There are appropriate guidelines for work on sex, drugs awareness and health education as well as valuing self and others, safety and the physical and emotional changes during adolescence. The school has plans to assimilate citizenship into PSHE provision by the end of the summer term. The quality of the teaching of the PSHE programme is variable and dependent upon the skills and confidence of teachers. The curriculum is sufficiently flexible to enable issues raised by the pupils to be included and the positive effect of the provision for personal and social development is apparent throughout the school. Pupils are courteous to visitors and meal times are sociable occasions. The positive relationships with staff, along with the personal, social and health education programme make a valuable contribution to helping pupils to become mature and sociable members of the school community.
41. Overall, the school makes satisfactory provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and this is promoted well in most lessons. However, there is no policy on promoting these skills, and few teachers have them built into their subject planning. Teachers are good role models and use every opportunity to encourage acceptable standards of behaviour. The school has a clear moral code and is successful in creating a caring and supportive learning environment.
42. The values and principles set by the school give good support to the pupils' spiritual development. It is particularly strong in religious education, where pupils are encouraged to reflect on different faiths and beliefs, and to consider the thoughts and emotions of others as they pray. In all classes the pupils show respect and reverence for sacred objects. It is further supported in history where; for example, Year 8 pupils consider and discuss the family tragedies and implications of slavery, or at Key Stage 4, in assembly, where older pupils consider the events of the Holocaust. All pupils pay good regard to the practice of saying grace before lunch.
43. Pupils have a good understanding of what is right or wrong, and they make good progress in managing their behaviour. They engage well in discussions on relationships, and have a clear concept of the need for trust and loyalty. The pupils know how to behave and take responsibility to ensure that their behaviour record cards are maintained in each lesson. They understand and accept the consequences of their actions, and will spontaneously volunteer an apology if this is necessary. During the inspection there were a few incidents of inappropriate language, but where pupils were expected to debate moral or sensitive issues, such as slavery, racism or bullying, their understanding and attitude were commendable.
44. To some extent, the pupils' social development is restricted by the wide catchment area and difficulties with transport, which impacts negatively on provision of extra-curricular activities. However, within these limitations, the school gives satisfactory support and encouragement to pupils' social development. The impact of the National Literacy Strategy is beginning to support

the social development of higher attaining pupils, and the recent introduction of citizenship modules, adds further support. Pupils participate in inter-school sporting fixtures both at home and away. Off-site activities provide opportunities for pupils to live and work as a team, such as during a sailing week at Calshot or team-building projects in the New Forest. Older pupils are enthusiastically anticipating a week in Wales in the summer. Assemblies provide occasions for celebrating individual achievement through the presentation of certificates for academic and personal success. Pupils respond well to these and show pride when they are identified as having done well. However, pupils are given few opportunities to use their own initiative, although some organise themselves to play impromptu games during their breaks.

45. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. In some areas such as art, religious education and personal and social education, there is a good level of cultural input. For example, pupils consider the refugees' way of life during the Vietnam crisis or make African and Antipodean masks, which expands their knowledge of different cultures. Prints of famous paintings and religious icons are displayed throughout the school alongside examples of the pupils' own work. However, although classical music is played at the beginning of assemblies, music is not taught throughout the school and this creates a gap in the pupils' cultural development. Additionally, opportunities to develop their knowledge of multicultural issues are missed and pupils are not well prepared for life in a multicultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

46. Procedures for promoting and ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory. Overall, this is a similar situation to that at the time of the last inspection. There is a sound policy for behaviour, which is reviewed annually, and this provides an effective system that values everyone as an individual. Recording of progress fully involves pupils in consideration of their behaviour, and provides further information for the setting of long and short-term targets for improvement. Pupils are very aware of what they have to do in order to be successful in lessons and this contributes to the outcomes of good behaviour. Annual reviews reflect these targets, which are then translated into individual education plans. These more general targets form the basis for weekly targets, which are set on Monday and reviewed on Friday. Success in these targets is rewarded. Teachers score pupils' efforts and behaviour after each lesson. The results of these scores are recorded and provide a clear picture of improvement in behaviour or trends. These are used to inform the setting and reviewing of targets. However, the number of behaviour targets in annual reviews, which are transferred to individual education plans, are too many and these fail to provide sufficiently concise challenges to effect the expected changes in behaviour.
47. For all pupils, procedures for assessing attainment and progress are unsatisfactory. The systems described within assessment and monitoring documents are not applied consistently. If fully deployed, these systems would provide valuable information, which could be used to inform curricular planning. There is regular annual testing of reading, spelling and all elements of mathematics and these are recorded on the pupils' progress profile. Each pupil has a record of achievement, but these are not always properly maintained and some contain little substantial evidence of progress.
48. The use of recorded data for curriculum planning is poor. Teachers' daily, weekly and termly planning contains few references to National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Opportunities for assessment within these are rarely identified. There are very few predicted levels of achievement either for groups or individual pupils. Few targets are set for English and mathematics and only a very small number of individual education plans have any educational targets. During the inspection few links were observed between teachers' planning and pupils' individual needs.
49. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupil's academic development are unsatisfactory. Achievements in behaviour are acknowledged frequently. This is done by the use of praise, the winning of small items in recognition of success in weekly behaviour targets or in the awarding of certificates - mainly for improvements in behaviour. Procedures that would highlight progress within subjects are not firmly embedded within the planning for all subjects. The use of assessment practice that would highlight progress, or lack of it, is unsatisfactory. In some

subjects, such as PE, records are sparse and evidence of progress by individual pupils is purely notional. Staff do know the pupils well and claim to undertake frequent, informal discussion about educational and social provision. It remains, however, that the recording of the quality of academic outcomes does not match the good quality to be found in monitoring and responding to behaviour issues. Meetings are held each term to sample work done by a few selected pupils. In effect this means that the work of approximately 40 per cent of pupils is sampled annually. It was not possible to evidence the outcomes of such meetings because few academic targets seemed to result from these.

50. The school's procedures to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. There is an appropriate health and safety policy, but the governors are not regularly sharing responsibility for risk assessment along with the headteacher or monitoring health and safety practice in school. This needs to be addressed as some minor health and safety concerns were reported to the school during the inspection. Arrangements for medical support have improved since the last inspection. Medicines are now stored appropriately, but the school still does not have a designated medical room, although a spare room could be made available if required. There are sufficient numbers of staff with the required first aid training and appropriate records are kept. Child protection procedures are satisfactory. A special support assistant is the named responsible person and was trained for this role three years ago. Her training is not sufficiently up to date. Staff are provided with satisfactory guidance by the headteacher through the child protection policy.
51. As reported at the last inspection, the headteacher records pupils' attendance each morning and afternoon and this helps him to pick up concerns very quickly. The headteacher has close contact with individual families and carers and works successfully with the educational welfare service to encourage pupil attendance. He issues reminders in assemblies and rewards regular attenders with certificates and vouchers, which they can spend in selected local shops.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. The school is satisfactorily meeting its aims to work in active partnership with parents and carers. There was a low response to both the pre-inspection questionnaire and parents' meeting, but all agree that the school expects their children to work hard, they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems and that the school works closely with them.
53. All the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire feel that they are well informed about how their children are getting on. The information provided for parents about the progress their children are making is satisfactory. Annual reports tell parents and carers what their children have been studying and teachers' comments are focused on pupils' behaviour and attitudes. These do not, however, always give parents, carers and pupils enough information to improve what they do in order to be able to move forward with certainty. However, these reports represent an improvement since the last inspection when they were integrated as part of the annual review.
54. Twenty-seven per cent of parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaires hold the view that their children do not get sufficient homework. The homework policy states that 'homework is encouraged for all pupils', but in reality it is rarely set unless pupils ask for it. The inspection team feels that the regular setting of homework, particularly for older pupils, would be a positive step towards better involvement of parents or carers in their children's learning.
55. Although some staff make regular contact with parents or carers via the telephone or letters there are very limited opportunities provided for parents to have an impact on the work of the school. The governors' report is used to inform parents about term dates and contains an invitation to an annual open evening to meet teachers and look at pupils' work. It fully complies with the current requirements in its composition, but the style in which it is presented is uninviting to a parent readership. Newsletters are not routinely sent to parents or carers and the school does not hold information evenings about work experience or opportunities for further

education. Consequently, the knowledge that parents have about the general work of the school is ineffective in encouraging them to have greater involvement in the education of their children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The leadership and management of the school is satisfactory overall, but the quality of this is not uniform between the senior management team and governors of the school. The headteacher leads the school with considerable skill and dedication. He has assembled a team of staff committed to the needs of pupils and who work very hard on their behalf. Staff say that they are very satisfied with the support and direction provided by the headteacher and his senior management team. The senior management team has been successful in encouraging a good morale and team spirit among staff and this has resulted in a school that is good at addressing the behavioural and emotional needs of its pupils and ensuring that the broader range of their needs and opportunities are satisfied. The considerable experience of the headteacher ensures that the school functions in an orderly and directed way and the outcome is a school of purposeful activity, serving the identified needs of its pupils. There is a shared commitment to continued improvement, although the role played by the governing body in this regard is not securely in place. They have few formal procedures by which they can monitor the work of the school and do not satisfactorily identify, through their strategic planning, the expectations they have of school management.
57. School management has had difficulty in filling the posts relating to music and a modern foreign language. It has responded to the former deficiency by using the services of the local authority peripatetic music service. French is taught by a teacher already within the school. Standards in both of these subjects are adversely effected. In music only a limited number of pupils in Years 7 to 9 have access to this curriculum. Although French is taught throughout the school the standard of this provision is low because the teacher lacks the appropriate expertise.
58. Discussions with many of the governing body show that they are wholly committed to the school and give substantial time to its cause. They appreciate the work done by staff and this is also mirrored in the opinions provided by parents. However, the governing body is not sufficiently involved in strategic planning that relates to the development of the school and do not effectively monitor the outcomes of its work and spending decisions. Consequently, although the governors have a view that 'the school is doing well' and 'staff work very hard' they do not have enough evidence for these claims.
59. Management information systems are weighted towards monitoring the social and emotional development of pupils. These are good and result in good quality information that is used to plan future progress for all pupils. The information gathered that enables monitoring of academic development is less secure. In some subjects, such as art and information and communication technology, there exist good systems by which teachers identify and monitor progress in pupils. These effective practices are not repeated in other subjects. Performance management systems are in place and used to monitor the quality of teaching. Some of the criteria against which teaching is judged are insufficiently rigorous and lack a focus on how well pupils learn.
60. Whilst the governing body has ensured that the school continues to fulfil its statutory responsibilities, it has devolved too much of the strategy for its continued development to the headteacher and local authority. Accordingly, while the trust in the headteacher is well placed, the governors are insufficiently involved in monitoring the outcomes of planning and ensuring that there is a consequent rise in standards. For example, it is clear that a lack of training opportunities for staff has a negative impact on provision in some subjects.
61. Since the last inspection the governing body has introduced a sub-committee that oversees financial matters. Despite a recommendation within the last report that these sub-committees should also cover other key areas, these committees have not been formed. This is because the governing body is 25 per cent under strength and unable to cope with the required workload. This is a similar situation to that at the time of the last inspection. The strategic development of the school, the setting of its targets and monitoring of its work are being adversely effected

because the heavy workload this implies falls to this small group. In part this also accounts for the levels of responsibility that fall to the headteacher. Because of this, practices, such as monitoring of academic progress by pupils, do not receive the necessary degree of development.

62. The school has sufficient teachers and classroom assistants to meet the needs of the pupils. However, a number of staff have insufficient expertise in the subjects they are required to teach and this impacts adversely on the quality of some lessons and, consequently, on pupils' learning. The current practice of requiring all teachers to teach English and mathematics to their own tutor groups, even though some teachers do not have skills in these areas, has a negative impact on standards in these subjects. Some teachers teach subjects on a basis of 'need for pupils' rather than from a basis of knowledge and expertise. Although the school has regular in-service training days, there are insufficient additional opportunities for staff to update and develop their subject management skills. Training for classroom assistants is satisfactory overall, with several qualified first-aiders. All have participated fully in the government funded computer skills courses, and are actively involved in aspects of whole-school training days.
63. Training in the teaching of literacy across the school is satisfactory, but similar work in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy is required for this to become effective in all subjects. Induction procedures for new or temporary staff are satisfactory.
64. Performance management procedures are satisfactory, although the monitoring of teaching is in the early stages of development and the criteria against which this is judged are not sufficiently rigorous. For example, too many lessons seen by the senior management team were judged as needing little improvement – this is not the view of the inspection team. The school is adequately served by a range of visiting specialists, but there are no on-site services from speech therapists. Consequently, individual pupils who need these services are provided for by means of out of school appointments. It is reported that some pupils fail to keep these appointments and this has a negative impact on their learning and social development.
65. Accommodation is satisfactory overall and generally supports the needs of pupils. The food technology room is inappropriately equipped with incorrectly sized worktops and toilet facilities are not appropriately sized for secondary pupils. The small dining hall doubles as a gymnasium, and is also a thoroughfare to other parts of the school. This is unsatisfactory because its dimensions inhibit the teaching of the PE curriculum and lessons are constantly distracted by the passage of people to other parts of the school. There is a designated and adequately equipped science laboratory and a pleasant and reasonably well-stocked library. The latter was not seen in consistent use during the inspection and the book stock contains few multicultural works. The ICT suite is well equipped with sufficient work stations for individual pupils. The work done by pupils within ICT lessons is enhanced by the quality of this provision.
66. Overall, the school has a bright and pleasant atmosphere, with corridor walls used to attractively display posters, information, photographs and pupils' work. This reflects the caring ethos of the school. Externally, the attractive wooded environment offers sufficient casual play areas, but there is insufficient space for sporting activities such as football or cricket. As a result of the restricted internal facilities, the PE curriculum cannot be taught to an appropriate secondary level. The overall standard of cleanliness and maintenance is very good and is a credit to the premises manager and his staff.
67. Resources are satisfactory and adequate for the demands of the curriculum. Subjects benefit from an annual care and maintenance budget, but standards in some subjects could be further raised if budgeting practice was refined and better targeted according to school priorities. Computer software in subject areas is beginning to develop and the ratio of computers to pupils is good.
68. Financial planning is unsatisfactory. The school has no formal procedures for testing out the cost-effectiveness of the developments it undertakes. This is unsatisfactory. The school development plan written on an annual basis is not fully costed and does not contain specific

success criteria. All subject leaders do not provide costed action plans and it is evident that the skill of planning for subject development is not fully understood by all staff. One subject plan described its main priority as 'bigger and better'. Although any subject can request additional funding most of this is provided historically rather than on a basis of need or priority. Over the last four years the school has accumulated a large budget surplus. At the beginning of this financial year this surplus amounted to just over 17 per cent of the school's total budget. A substantial part of this is a reserve to finance planned capital developments (for the development of PE facilities). The inspection could find only statements of intent rather than firm plans for the spending of this reserve. Nevertheless, a portion of this funding was an unplanned accumulation of funds arising from unbudgeted amounts available through the LEA and funding for additional pupils. However, no firm plans or date for its use are in place. The situation is unsatisfactory because it denies pupils facilities and opportunities that could be available.

69. Other grants and awards are spent appropriately; for example, the current NOF grant is being used to train teachers in the use of ICT and this should impact well on ICT use within subjects. Financial administration is satisfactory and the most recent audit report provided by the local authority did not highlight any significant weaknesses. The minor recommendations it contained have been addressed. The school's administration officer provides good support to both the headteacher and governing body. Regular statements of expenditure are made available to the governors and teachers. Systems for ensuring 'value' are in place for major purchases, but these do not extend fully to the concept of 'best value'. This weakness is derived from the insecure school development planning, which does not identify any success criteria. Governors have still to develop their practice of considering the impact of major spending decisions on the gains for pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68. In order to improve the school and raise standards the governors, senior managers and staff should:

- a. Raise achievement of pupils in mathematics, French and music by:
 - i. ensuring that there are clear and identifiable expectations of what is to be taught and to what level this should be;
 - ii. improving the teaching and co-ordination of mathematics.

(Refer to paragraphs: 6-7, 9, 17, 20, 25, 48, 78, 57, 83, 87, 125 and 128.)

- b. Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - i. restructuring the present timetable arrangements, particularly for English and mathematics;
 - ii. more accurately measuring pupils' achievement through consistent assessment and using this information to individually plan pupils' learning;
 - iii. responding to parents' concerns by providing more opportunities for homework, especially for older pupils.

(Refer to paragraphs: 18, 25, 28-29, 33, 47, 49, 59 and 126.)

- c. Raise the effectiveness of school management by:
 - i. reconsidering the present requirement of teachers to teach a wide range of subjects;
 - ii. deploying teachers according to their areas of greatest expertise;
 - iii. continuing to monitor the standard of teaching through more rigorous application of demanding criteria;
 - iv. ensuring that the governing body has a strategic plan for raising standards and monitors the success of this process through clear success criteria and challenging the school to produce evidence of the outcomes to its work.

(Refer to paragraphs: 56-58, 60-62, 64 and 68.)

In addition the school management should also consider the following minor issues in its action plan:

- continue to address the issue of pupil attendance – especially for those pupils in the final two years of education* (paragraph 15).
- ensure that ICT is used more consistently to support learning (paragraphs: 26, 74, 93, 113, 118, 124, 131 and 135).

* The school already recognises this through its development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	9	37	42	9	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons. The total does not add up exactly to 100% because of rounding. 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	46
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	20

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	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	7.5	School data	12.4

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year. In the Autumn and Spring terms of this year almost 60 per cent of pupils had attendance rates in excess of 90 per cent. Figures overall continue to be depressed because of persistent non-attendance by individual pupils – in 2001 there were three such pupils in Key Stage 4 and two pupils in Key Stage 3. This situation is commonly experienced by EBD schools nationally

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

Fewer than ten pupils were assessed through the system of National Tests and these results are not reported.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

In 2001 just over one half of the pupils in Year 11 sat for accreditation in a range of GCSE subjects. These included; English, science (single award), mathematics and art and design.

- Eighty per cent of pupils attained a pass within the range of F-G in English.
- Forty per cent of pupils attained a pass within the range E-G in science
- Forty per cent of pupils attained a pass graded at G in mathematics.
- Eighty per cent of pupils attained a pass within the range D-F in art & design

Fewer than ten pupils also gained passes in the Certificate of Achievement in geography and craft, design and technology.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	46
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	25	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7–Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.1:1
Average class size	7

Education support staff: Y7– Y11

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	210

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	606,033
Total expenditure	564,491
Expenditure per pupil	10,080
Balance brought forward from previous year	59,698
Balance carried forward to next year (2002)	101,240*

*This balance has now reduced to £79,137

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	45
Number of questionnaires returned	11

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	55	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	36	45	18	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	9	55	9	27	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	9	27	27	27	9
The teaching is good.	45	55	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	64	36	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	27	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	36	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	45	55	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	45	36	18	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	27	55	18	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	36	9	0	27

It should be noted that one response equates to +/- 9%

Other issues raised by parents

Although relatively few parents chose to respond to the pre-inspection questionnaire and only one parent attended the meeting held by the Registered Inspector, it is significant that the majority of those parents, who have made their views known, support the work done by the school. The inspection team support these views, particularly as they relate to the provision of homework.

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

ENGLISH

69. Pupils' achievement in English is overall satisfactory at both Key Stages 3 and 4. A number of pupils have been successful in the AQA achievement test in literacy at Levels 1, 2 and 3. These tests are taken by pupils from Year 7 onwards. In 2001 four older pupils at the end of Year 11 were successful in the WJEC GCSE (Foundation Level) in English. Pupils take the national assessments at the end of Year 9 and results are satisfactory. This maintains the standards of the previous inspection.
70. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily in all elements of the English Programmes of Study, which includes communication through speaking and listening, reading and writing. The youngest pupils in Year 7 talk with enthusiasm about the story of Icarus and their previous role play of that story. This encouraged them in their reading and they are developing that also in writing their own accounts. They use simple punctuation and are able to use evocative vocabulary in, for instance, an account of going fishing and the peace and quiet their hobby brings. By Year 8 pupils are developing their listening skills and watch a video in history of how slavery was started, listening carefully and asking relevant questions. For the majority achievement in reading is satisfactory. They are able to read text and gain accurate information from it and the higher attaining readers are beginning to read for pleasure. In their writing pupils produce simple sentences that are grammatically correct. They know the basic rules of grammar and consider and check their spelling. In lessons that focus on media studies pupils show that they can write their own opinions and ideas, but overall writing is weaker because there is insufficient development of individual and extended writing skills both within this Year 8 as well as subsequent year groups.
71. In Year 9 teachers are working from the new Literacy Strategy so that the breadth of expectations is wider and pupils work has more variety of content and purpose. Pupils respond well to this and in a discussion about the Titanic disaster they explain in accurate detail how and why the events occurred. They also express their emotions as they read the story. In a group reading session all pupils were confident to read part of the text and could then analyse it to discriminate between fact and opinion. Pupils are beginning to enjoy reading, especially magazines. Many pupils need adult support in their writing but, with that support, are able to write about the characters in Macbeth. As part of their media studies they also consider up to date television characters. They are beginning to develop skills of re-drafting their written work but this is insufficiently developed. In this regard the use of word processing is generally under-developed.
72. In Years 10 and 11 there is a wider range of pupil attainment. High attaining pupils who this year are mainly in Year 10, express their ideas in a mature way and consider and adapt their views through discussion. They are aware of different styles of communication. In their media studies lesson, for instance, they could discriminate between the different approaches to topical stories in broadsheet and tabloid newspapers and their reading was skilful and specific enough to pick out examples from that day's papers. They could explain their conclusions with relevant examples. As with Year 9 pupils, they need adult support to develop any extended writing due to the lack of a secure foundation of literacy and sentence development skills in their prior learning. Pupils in Year 11 are generally working at a lower attainment level and need sensitive adult support to help them to express their ideas. When on a visit to the local TV station, a group of Year 11 pupils were diffident to ask questions, but had plenty to say to school staff when they returned to the school. They can read and use textbooks with support. Their previous written work shows a range of tasks many related to life skills, such as writing letters of application, which they will need when they leave school. In class pupils are encouraged and enjoy exploring their feelings in poetry.
73. The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and more frequently good, very good or in one case, excellent. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Overall pupils'

learning in lessons follows this trend, but in some lessons this learning is less successful due to insecure literacy skills. When teaching is excellent or very good the teacher has high expectations, often well above pupils' own views of their potential, and learning is developed carefully from lesson to lesson. Younger pupils reading the story of Icarus, for instance, were encouraged by role play to really experience and imagine how it must have felt for Icarus to fly. Their ideas and emotions were then developed through exploring vocabulary to describe that feeling, so that pupils had the means to express their ideas in writing later in the week. In a lesson with older pupils reading about the Titanic disaster they were challenged to find hard evidence from the text in order to get their facts correct. In media studies with Year 8 pupils, a deceptively simple task of watching TV advertisements for cereals developed into critical thinking and identification of the trigger words used by the advertisement to make the product attractive to certain age groups. Overall teachers know their pupils well and work is correspondingly matched to each pupil's ability with stimulating ideas and resources. Support assistants are well deployed to support those who need help with reading or spelling so that those who lack confidence can complete tasks.

74. The attitudes of pupils to their English lessons are invariably good. They try hard to do their best and usually show perseverance to complete work. They much prefer and are more confident in discussions, but most will share in group reading and, with support, their individual writing. Their behaviour is good. Neatness of presentation is very variable and there is still insufficient use of ICT to make a fair copy of their work.
75. The school has begun to implement the National Literacy Strategy for Key Stage 3 and its development has been started by the subject leaders with the Year 9 classes. This has entailed a more detailed planning system for the scheme of work so that the full breadth of the strategy can be accommodated. There is joint planning so that ideas can be shared and consistency maintained. The benefits of this, although only recently started, are already obvious as pupils make progress in all aspects of their English. This is not so obvious in other classes where exercises in, for instance, punctuation and grammar, are not sufficiently consolidated when writing text and the continuous development of literacy skills is not embedded in the subject planning for pupils as they progress through the school. The school intends to extend the strategy in a consistent and determined way so that all pupils will have the necessary literacy foundation to become competent readers and writers. There is a scheme of work for each year group, which now needs to be adapted to incorporate the expectations of the strategy to ensure that each teacher is aware of what content needs to be taught and the level pupils should be expected to achieve.
76. Assessment is at present unsatisfactory. Pupils are tested for reading and spelling annually and there is a recent action plan that will establish the means by which pupils' work will be assessed against national criteria. This will give teachers an accurate view of pupils' progress so that they can identify areas of weakness in need of extra work. Reports to parents do not contain sufficient information about what pupils have individually learned during the year in order to give them a view of their child's progress.
77. The two subject leaders have worked hard and successfully to develop the subject and are wholly committed to further development. There is now a whole-school agreement for literature for each year group and resources have been developed to encourage a range of literary experiences for pupils including novels, poetry and plays. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. There is, however, insufficient emphasis on drama. There is a pleasant library, well maintained by the support assistants and used by most classes. Pupils also like choosing books from the Schools' Library Bus. Occasional theatre trips have also been arranged.

MATHEMATICS

78. Overall, pupils' achievement in mathematics is unsatisfactory. This is due to a number of factors related to curriculum planning, teacher's expectations, unsatisfactory subject knowledge and unsatisfactory assessment practice. Inspection evidence shows that standards in mathematics

are generally below national expectation on entry to the school. Results in the National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments over the past four years indicate that pupils in the school generally achieve Level 3 by the end of Year 9. Standards have declined since the previous inspection. However, this is partly explained by the change in nature of the pupil intake.

79. There are several reasons why pupils are underachieving. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory and, because of this, pupils do not build systematically on previous knowledge and skills. Examination of pupils' completed work shows that they are often given the same or similar tasks, in subsequent years. This results in a lack of challenge, particularly for higher attainers. The lack of effective procedures for monitoring and evaluating standards has meant that low standards are too readily accepted as normal. Assessment data is not yet used to identify areas of weakness and set targets for future improvement. School targets for numeracy are in place, but are insufficiently challenging and there are no detailed plans to show how success will be assured or identified.
80. The National Numeracy Strategy has only recently been introduced. It was decided to commence this in Year 9 only. This has made a small, although significant, contribution to the teaching seen during the inspection, especially in some teachers' planning. The inclusion of an opening mental arithmetic session to some lessons, which pupils appeared to enjoy, has also been of benefit.
81. Younger pupils successfully used numbers up to 100, identified odd and even numbers and calculated the area of a regular shape. They were less sure when the shape became irregular. Some had difficulty in remembering the name of a rectangle. Some used simple coordinates to locate items on a grid. Year 9 pupils used 2, 3, 4 and 5 times tables and multiplied 16×4 . Higher attaining pupils chose what long multiplication method to use and then calculated 64×18 accurately, checking their own answers by using a calculator. A scrutiny of previous work indicates that they accurately calculate time using the 24-hour clock, convert fractions into decimals, understand place value up to thousands and carry out computations using long multiplication and division. There is a wide range of attainment in Key Stage 4. Higher attaining pupils mentally recall prime numbers between 30 and 40, know values up to one million, convert $.3$ into $\frac{3}{10}$, add and subtract three-figure numbers, demonstrate secure knowledge of their times tables and use and interrogate graphs to present data. Lower attaining pupils still have difficulties with times tables and when required to do a series of addition sums arrive at answers that are not always accurate. They multiply a decimal number by ten or 100 and do computations involving brackets.
82. Most pupils have satisfactory attitudes to their work and this impacts satisfactorily on their learning. In lessons where behaviour management by teachers is secure, relationships are good and learning is developed from a base of trust. This was seen in a good lesson in Year 10 where the concept of place value was being taught. Pupils concentrated well and volunteered answers without too much encouragement.
83. Overall the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory and this impacts negatively on pupils' achievements. This is worse than the situation described in the previous inspection report. The judgement derives from scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning. This confirms that a balanced and sequenced curriculum is not in place. Of the nine lessons observed during the inspection, three were good, four were satisfactory and two were unsatisfactory. The unsatisfactory teaching was evident in both key stages. Good teaching was characterised by good behaviour management techniques, so that time was not wasted in settling pupils or responding to unsatisfactory behaviour. Lessons are unchallenging and, where these have not been planned with thought about how pupils learn, the outcomes are incidental. Assessment is not sufficiently well developed to identify these types of weaknesses.
84. Teachers use praise appropriately to reward correct or sensible answers and good relationships enable purposeful dialogue and help to be given. The use of the expertise of LSAs was a significant factor in the better lessons. This was seen in a good lesson for Year 9 pupils when they were asked to carry out a series of long multiplication problems. The tasks were

challenging; the teacher displayed sound knowledge and was able to deal well with a range of questions. In this she was well supported by the LSA. The teacher had produced worksheets, which enabled all pupils to understand the required learning objectives. This resulted in a lesson in which all pupils were successful at their own level. However, in a lesson for Year 10, the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory and pupils showed negative attitudes to their work by becoming bored and disinterested. In such cases learning is unsatisfactory. The mental arithmetic section of this lesson was conducted at such a slow pace and with no obvious theme that the pupils became mentally lethargic and their learning suffered as a result. Questions were too easy for some and too hard for others and, because the teacher did not inject any pace to these, many pupils took little part and became bored. This was then followed by a long, direct teaching session in which the teacher tried to teach pupils to understand the concept of multiplying a decimal number by tens or hundreds. This led to higher attaining pupils switching off because they were already able to do the task; while lower attaining pupils became progressively unable to understand the concepts involved and failed to improve their learning. In another unsatisfactory lesson, Year 7 pupils were given unchallenging exercises involving coordinates, which failed to motivate them. The lesson failed to achieve its aim because all pupils were required to work on the same task with no opportunity for higher attaining pupils to extend their learning. They were not given any opportunity to explain their understanding of the tasks.

85. The current curriculum meets statutory requirements. However, there is an over emphasis on the use of number. The study of other areas of the subject, such as, shape, space and measures and handling data are underdeveloped. The current scheme of work and provision for planned progression are unsatisfactory. They do not refer to the detail of the National Curriculum or ensure full coverage over time. There are very few opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills and knowledge in extended investigations. The skills and knowledge connected with mathematics are not systematically used within other subjects. The planning in Year 9 where consideration is being given to the Key Stage 3 numeracy strategy is better and provides a clearer structure to teachers' planning and ensures progression for pupils. This would provide a satisfactory model for future development.
86. Most teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of their pupils very well, but this does not always translate into high expectations for each. Teachers do not set mathematics targets for pupils or make any predictions of the level they expect pupils to reach. Pupils, consequently, have little clear understanding of what they are expected to learn either in the long term or in some individual lessons. Older pupils have the opportunity to sit for accreditation in the mathematics Certificate of Achievement and there are plans to introduce the more demanding GCSE. The information available in the school is not used to inform planning. For example, pupils' individual education plans do not contain any mathematics targets. Whilst this need not necessarily be the most appropriate way of recording these, the school has not addressed where best to identify and record these. There are insufficient systems for involving pupils in their own learning; for example, through weekly and individual targets. Assessment opportunities are not identified and evaluations are mostly incomplete or appear to be completed before the term's work has been taught.
87. Subject leadership is unsatisfactory. Co-ordination of the subject is currently very confused with a subject leader and two Key Stage 3 co-ordinators simultaneously developing the subject. There is confusion because each does not seem to be aware of what the other is doing. There are two sets of targets for developing the subject. There is amended planning in Year 9, which during the week of the inspection was unknown to the subject leader. Currently there is no monitoring of teaching by the subject leader, although much of this is carried out by the senior management team. It remains an issue that the subject leader is unaware of the standards within other parts of the school. There is an undated curriculum statement, but no policy for mathematics. Standards suffer because the subject leader does not plan in sufficient detail to effectively ensure that learning happens in an incremental way. The outcomes of planning are not firmly enough linked to current resources and assessment opportunities. However, he is very aware that across the school, knowledge and confidence for teaching mathematics is not sufficiently developed. The use of information and communication technology in mathematics is

very underdeveloped and rarely appears on planning or in lessons. Pupils are thus denied the opportunity to extend their learning through this means.

SCIENCE

88. When pupils are admitted to the school they have significant gaps in their knowledge and understanding of science. They have unsatisfactory approaches to scientific enquiry, but during their time in the school they show satisfactory achievement in the subject. By the time younger pupils reach the end of Year 9 their performance in national tests shows the majority attain above Level 3. When compared to figures for EBD schools nationally the performance of Polygon pupils is slightly above that of similar schools. The last inspection report noted that younger pupils were provided with a course that would provide a good foundation for future examination work. While the number of pupils gaining success in the single award for GCSE is modest (five in 2001) the outcomes, in terms of examination passes, represent an improvement since the last inspection. In general, however, pupils' achievement over time is satisfactory. Since the last inspection standards have generally been maintained.
89. In the lessons seen during the inspection, Year 7 pupils showed a good understanding of the requirements necessary for life to flourish and illustrated this knowledge by reference to the adaptation of plant life. As part of their investigations they collected small insects and micro-organisms in order to examine these using a microscope. Using a digital microscope they appreciated the finer detail of each insect or organism and used a printed photograph of their find in order to illustrate and record their work. In Year 8 pupils were adept at constructing simple electrical circuits and adding a contact switch to this in order to send simple Morse Code messages to each other. Year 9 pupils know that the freezing of water occurs at 0° centigrade and that it will boil at 100° centigrade. In their investigation about heat transference, higher attaining pupils meticulously recorded the outcomes of their experiment. Pupils of lower attainment needed help in this aspect and this was provided by the LSA and teacher. When required to test the relative strength of fibres, Years 10 and 11 pupils showed that they understood that wool consisted of many fibres and that other similar items, such as string, depended on the number of strands they contain for their strength. Only higher attaining pupils could reasonably estimate the breaking point of the various fibres they tested.
90. The quality of teaching is satisfactory although, because of better planning and lesson organisation, those lessons for Years 7 to 9 were more effective for pupils' learning. Most lessons are characterised by their practical nature and this results in pupils giving their full attention. For example, in the Year 7 lesson relating to habitats, pupils were fascinated at the level of detail they could see by using the digital microscope. This stimulated much debate among the pupils and the teacher encouraged this as part of their language development. Effective uses of practical experiments result in pupils becoming engrossed in what they are doing and where this happens good learning takes place. However, in lessons where the management of pupils is weak, teachers do not insist that pupils record the results of experiments and opportunities to integrate practical and intellectual aspects of learning are lost. Lessons, such as that given to Year 10, ran out of time because pupils took too much time in the practical element of testing fibre strength. Poor timing was a regular feature of some lessons and if they are to become more effective for pupils' learning this aspect should be controlled with more rigour.
91. A good feature of all lessons is the way in which teachers begin with a summary of what has gone before with use of question and answers to check pupils' understanding. This encourages pupils to put new learning against the background of what they already know and serves to give the teachers an idea of what pupils have learned. This form of assessment is, however, too informal and unrecorded. Some of this practice tends to be dominated by a few higher attaining pupils and procedures to determine how well pupils are learning are insecure and subjective. The end-of-lesson summaries are not as well developed as the introductions. As a result of the poor lesson timing, some of these tend to be truncated, rushed or even ignored.

92. The most significant and effective strength of all the teaching is the group and behaviour management techniques used by the teachers. Much of the learning undertaken by pupils results from the teachers' experience and, to a lesser degree, their expertise. They anticipate where trouble might occur and in practical lessons carefully consider social grouping of pupils. This combination results in positive outcomes for pupils' learning.
93. Where ICT is used in lessons, such as through use of the digital microscope, the quality of pupils' learning is considerably enhanced and results in higher levels of concentration. Its use, however, does not appear consistently in planning and this denies pupils significant learning opportunities. For example, when examining the strength of fibres, Year 10 pupils could have entered their data into simple data-handling programs or spreadsheets. This would significantly have speeded up the lesson outcomes and ensured that objective evidence of progress became available.
94. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. As most of the lessons are practical in nature pupils concentrate well and put a lot of energy into their learning. Older pupils are better at working together and their levels of co-operation add to the quality of learning, because they discuss the results obtained and brainstorm different theories. The younger pupils, in Year 7 for example, work best as individuals, although the skilled behaviour management by the teacher encourages them to consider the opinions of others in their discussions. The attitudes and behaviour of Year 8 pupils differ significantly from other groups. These pupils are less well behaved, but because they are well managed, they work satisfactorily.
95. The planning and co-ordination of the subject are not sufficiently well developed. Currently this is done jointly by two teachers who take responsibility for each of the key stages. The statutory requirements of the curriculum are provided, but the emphasis on these is determined by the expertise of the teachers. Neither of the teachers has subject expertise and, because of this, final accreditation opportunities and outcomes for pupils are not at the standard they could be. Because pupils have lost many opportunities within their previous education, they are still studying elements of the curriculum that they would normally have already completed. This presents a problem for teachers who wish to enter pupils for GCSE accreditation. In part this could be addressed by increasing the low time available to the subject, particularly for Years 9 to 11. Record keeping that provides objective evidence of progress is significantly under-developed. Although many pupils appear to be making progress this cannot be securely evidenced by any of the records that currently exist.
96. Pupils' learning benefits by being able to work in a purpose designed science room. The quality of this accommodation is good and pupils respond by adopting positive attitudes when they enter the room to work. Safety issues are fully considered by both staff and pupils.

ART AND DESIGN

97. Observation of lessons, teachers' planning and talking with pupils indicate that pupils reach the expected standards for their age at the end of both key stages. This judgement shows that standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 7 study ancient Egyptian writing and design and then apply their knowledge in making such items as bowls in clay or three-dimensional models of Scarab beetles. They make a variety of masks depicting; for example, the supernatural. By Year 10 they use their skills in a variety of personal topics designed to culminate in external accreditation. Pupils were seen working with fabric and plaster of Paris, undertaking still life drawing and making large scale three-dimensional models using exciting, bright colours.
98. Pupils' achievement is good. The teacher's records, pupil portfolios and self-assessment sheets as well as the work on display around the school, indicate the teachers' enthusiasm and good relationships with the pupils. These combine to produce good learning opportunities and outcomes. All pupils have the opportunity to take GCSE and the subject leader has a target of raising achievement and accreditation in GCSE.

99. Pupils say they enjoy art and observation of lessons supports this. Their attitude towards the subject is positive and they try very hard to carry out the instructions given by the teacher. Their attitude and behaviour during the lessons seen was never less than very good.
100. Teaching of art is very good and this is an improvement from the last inspection. The teacher organised lessons methodically and enabled pupils to improve their skills systematically. She provided useful demonstrations that helped pupils to learn new skills and understand what was required. She gave clear instructions, expected pupils to respond promptly and was vigilant about matters of safety. Because of this pupils were clear about what they had to learn. The best teaching used appropriate vocabulary to ensure that pupils extended their knowledge. This was observed in a Year 7 lesson when pupils improved their performance after the teacher had instructed them how to improve ideas they were using to design a three-dimensional Scarab beetle. Because the teacher used the pupils' own ideas the learning they undertook was more effective. The very best teaching used good examples of pupils' performance and self-assessment to stimulate further improvement. There was consistent emphasis on improving the quality of pupils' presentation especially when working with pupils who had to produce finished pieces for external marking. The level of support from and subject knowledge of the LSA is very high and significantly adds to the quality of learning for all pupils.
101. The subject leader, who teaches the subject to all pupils, is knowledgeable and enthusiastic about her subject. This is conveyed to pupils and staff who openly recognise the contribution art has in enhancing curricular provision and cross-curricular skills. The personal prayers written on fabric and produced for religious education displayed around the school are fine examples of this cross-curricular link. Planning for the subject displays a good understanding of necessary and progressive skill development and is linked to National Curriculum requirements in Key Stage 3 and the examination syllabus for older pupils. Assessment in art is good and involves pupils in a self-assessment recording system. This suits the needs and ages of pupils. This information combined with a very good understanding of individual pupil's needs enables skills to be targeted for development, although this is not yet formally recorded.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

102. Observation of lessons, scrutiny of finished work through photographic evidence, teachers' planning and talking with children indicate that pupils reach the expected standards for their age at the end of both key stages and achieve satisfactorily. Pupils in Year 7 effectively use a software program, with help, to design a clock face. They then use this successfully in the production of a clock, which is made by bending and working with plastics. They use joints to produce a variety of well-crafted boxes and bookcases. In food technology lessons they accurately combine ingredients to make a roux sauce and use this in a main course dish. Year 11 pupils are producing accurate scale drawings as part of their work for external accreditation. They use specialist drawing equipment to produce simple, but clear, scale drawings of a house. In their food technology lessons they follow instructions and produce dough, which they make into a tasty pizza. They self-select the toppings, chop and prepare ingredients and successfully produce the finished pizza, some still with much adult help.
103. Pupil's attitudes towards design and food technology are good and occasionally very good. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when some of the pupils' responses to the subject were found to be unsatisfactory. They are well behaved and follow the safety instructions given by the teacher. Their attitude towards the subject is positive and they try very hard to carry out the instructions given to them. This impacts well on their learning.
104. Teaching of design and food technology is satisfactory. This is another improvement since the last inspection when teaching ranged from good to unsatisfactory. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed this time. Teachers' preparations for lessons are good, and learning objectives are shared with the pupils so that they understand what they need to learn. The teachers use their good knowledge of the subject to explain concepts clearly and to pose challenging questions, so that pupils are actively engaged in learning and develop their understanding. For example, in a good lesson concerned with plastic clock production very clear instructions and good

relationships between teacher and pupils led to a high rate of success. All pupils successfully completed the objective, which was to carefully drill holes in and bend a sheet of plastic. Pupils were used as 'experts' by the teacher, which resulted in the raising of their self-esteem and helped them to clarify what had to be done. The better teaching is well-paced, pupils are expected to work hard, and there is a good balance of explanation and practical activity. Lessons are characterised by high expectations. In another lesson of food technology, pupils had to listen carefully then work under time constraints to complete the pizza. All achieved the task because of the good working relationships and informative demonstrations by the teacher, which were very ably supported by the LSA. This combination ensured that individual pupils received all the help necessary and learned well.

105. The subject leaders are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subjects and their expertise impacts well on pupils' learning. Both have sensible plans for developing the subject. Planning for the hard technology aspect is brief and not well linked to the National Curriculum requirements and criteria. There is currently no formal recording of individual pupils' skills and no appropriate assessment practice that is used to make subsequent teaching more effective. Older pupils have the opportunity to take the Certificate of Achievement and in 2001 three pupils gained awards.
106. Two teachers teach food technology across the school to all pupils. There is a good subject policy and the action plan gives clear proposals about how the subject will be developed, including the addition of an external accreditation. Planning contains clear aims and each term's work is linked to social learning and skill development. The units are further broken down into weekly tasks with some identification of assessment and differentiation. This helps the teachers to be very aware of individual needs and difficulties. It is currently a very practical subject with few requirements for pupils to formally record information. The use of information and communication technology in both subjects is underdeveloped.

GEOGRAPHY

107. Achievement in geography in Key Stages 3 and 4 is satisfactory. The school has maintained the standards in geography noted in the previous inspection.
108. The younger pupils in Year 7 have been studying their local area, which is an urban environment. They have done traffic surveys and through questionnaires asked supermarket customers their favoured mode of transport. Currently they are learning about symbols used on maps and are able to locate towns on a United Kingdom road map by using grid references. Year 8 pupils have a wider knowledge of the world and can locate major oceans and the continents on a world map. They have studied volcanoes and earthquakes and now are beginning to consider the environment of the Amazon rainforest. By Year 9 pupils consider some of the world's economic and environmental problems. They have studied the rich and poor countries in the world and are now looking at why recycling is so important in our industrial society.
109. In Year 11 pupils study more physical geography. They have learned about the erosion forces of rivers, wind and the sea. A visit to 'Old Harry' cliffs was used to give them an effective understanding of how the power of waves can produce major coastal features. Some pupils in this year were able to use that understanding to explain other coastal features they had seen.
110. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There are examples of good teaching at both key stages and the pupils' learning follows the same pattern. Teachers began lessons with an 'opener' such as locating countries on an overhead projector map of the world so that pupils could focus on the area being studied. Tasks were made enjoyable through the format of a quiz so that, for instance, pupils in Year 10 having been given a pack of photographs had to guess the erosive forces that had produced each particular landscape. The pace of lessons was crisp; teachers' enthusiasm encouraged all pupils to take part and high expectations, especially for older pupils, meant that pupils learned to think for themselves and use the knowledge they already had.

111. Pupils' attitudes to lessons are always satisfactory and often good. They are interested and motivated to work hard and behaviour is good. Some younger pupils find it hard to take turns in discussions, but older pupils show maturity and share ideas well. Pupils have confidence to ask for the help of teachers and support assistants.
112. There is a scheme of work in place for both key stages although that for Key Stage 4 is more detailed and challenging. There is, as yet, no link made in the schemes to National Curriculum Level expectations for each module to ensure that teacher's planning is challenging and will maximise pupil's progress as they move through the school. Assessment is currently unsatisfactory since there is no consistent practice of measuring pupils' attainment against nationally accepted criteria.
113. The subject leader has worked hard to maintain standards against rising expectations. Resources are now adequate with atlases, globes and textbooks appropriate for the scheme of work and pupils' needs. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Although there is some use of the Internet there is room for further development of ICT in geography. The school makes good use of places of geographical interest in the locality, although the use and benefit of this field work is not fully embedded in the curricular planning.

HISTORY

114. History is taught at Key Stage 3 only and achievement in the subject at that key stage is satisfactory. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Some pupils, particularly older pupils in Year 9 are making good progress in their lessons, but pupils' prior knowledge in the subject is weak and much of the progress has been recent.
115. The youngest pupils in Year 7 learn about England in medieval times. They know about the Norman Conquest and its effect on the lives of people in Britain. They are now learning about the role of the church in English society at that time and can use sources such as texts and pictures to gain a view of how the church influenced people's lives. Year 8 pupils, having learned about the industrial and agricultural revolutions in mid-eighteenth century in England, are now considering events in America and the West Indies and the development of the slave trade to provide workers for the cotton and sugar plantations. Pupils show real empathy for the plight of the captive slaves and can maturely consider the moral issues of slavery. By the end of Year 9 pupils have done considerable work on the twentieth-century history of Europe with an in depth study of the First World War and its aftermath. They have considered how and why dictatorships arose in Europe and in particular Hitler's rise to power. In watching a film about anti-Semitism they showed that they could use this previous learning to begin to understand the developments in Europe prior to and during the Second World War.
116. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils' learning in lessons follows the same trend. Lessons were challenging and supported by the good subject knowledge of the teacher. His knowledge and experience of resources, texts and videos that would interest and motivate meant that pupils learned with enthusiasm and gained accurate knowledge of the era being studied. Materials and tasks were well prepared so that pupils worked efficiently and effectively. In discussions the teacher teased the pupils with open questions and challenged them to justify their point of view. This enabled pupils to use previous knowledge and understanding and the teacher then developed this to point out the relevance to the historical period under discussion.
117. Pupils' attitudes to their lessons are good. They are keen and interested and keep their notebooks as a resource of their learning. They are confident to discuss their views and older pupils are able to consider the views of others sensitively.
118. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection with a rise in the rate of pupil achievement and the quality of teaching. The subject leader has worked hard to establish a scheme of work that covers National Curriculum expectations and resources have been developed to an adequate level. The subject leader is aware of the need to integrate learning expectations into the scheme so that pupils' progress can be accurately measured in

each module of work. The use of ICT in the subject is underdeveloped and pupils are denied the opportunity to use the Web in order to research their topics. Assessment and reporting to parents is unsatisfactory. Although the subject leader keeps personal records of work done there is no rigorous system to measure pupil attainment. Reports to parents lack details of what history skills and concepts each pupil has developed during the year. The school uses visits to the many places of historical importance in the area so that all pupils are gaining an interest and understanding of history in their lives.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119. By the end of Years 9 and 11 pupils show satisfactory achievement. Some pupils within all year groups show good understanding and these make particularly good progress. Many pupils work at Level 3 attainment, but this still represents improvement because of their previous poor attendance at other schools and interrupted learning. Since the last inspection, satisfactory improvement in the subject has taken place.
120. In lessons seen during the inspection, pupils in Year 7 were challenged to produce an art work in the style of Kandinsky. While some of these pupils did not appreciate the essential elements of this style they all successfully produced passable imitations and showed that they could control and manage the elements of their own work. Much of this work was at Level 1 attainment, but some individuals within the group worked at Level 4 as they used the more intricate and sophisticated parts of the art software program. In Year 9 pupils were challenged to design a street scene using 'Spex' software. To do this they had to select and position items, such as buildings, kerbstones and street furniture, in order to make a composite plan. All completed this with varying degrees of success and higher attaining pupils then displayed their effort to the rest of the group through means of the interactive whiteboard. Year 10 pupils showed more advanced skills in their construction of a simple 'Powerpoint' presentation. Lower attaining pupils in this group achieved simple presentations while those of higher attainment extended their work to include animation, three-dimensional effects and sound. Despite being new to the software program the majority of pupils showed a good command of its possibilities and all learned quickly the principles involved.
121. Teaching is generally satisfactory, although good lessons were also seen. Lessons are generally well organised and there is a clearly established procedure used by pupils when they enter the room. Pupils 'log on' using their own passwords and only did this when given permission by the teacher. The sessions were well constructed, although introductions were sometimes too rapid or even skimped. This did not enable the pupils to remember what they had learned previously or put the new learning into a clear context. Although not a specialist, the teacher has good expertise and this enabled him to challenge the pupils' knowledge at an appropriate level. He made very good use of the resources available to him. For example, using 'Classlink' software, he was able to demonstrate the display of each pupil's individual monitor on the interactive whiteboard. Pupils learned more effectively from this as they could see the possibilities achieved by others. In lessons, such as that for Year 10, involving 'Powerpoint' he also used the whiteboard to successfully demonstrate a presentation he had previously compiled.
122. The knowledge and skill of the teacher is supported and enhanced by the LSAs. They provide very good support to individual pupils and, as they are also technically knowledgeable, they complement well the effort of the teacher. A good feature of the teaching is the way in which pupils are encouraged to extend their knowledge and skill through a series of exercises that grow in complexity.
123. Pupils' attitudes are generally good and they enjoy learning. When engaged in practical work, as opposed to listening to the instructions, they concentrate wholly on their task. Despite some agitation, symptomatic of their special need, they absorb the instructions satisfactorily and put these into practice. Where individual pupils are disaffected, as seen during a lesson in Year 9, there was an insufficiently clear expectation by the teacher of what each pupil should achieve. In this example a pupil proved wholly unco-operative and wished only to use the games on the

computer rather than take effective part in learning. Although the teacher resolved this issue well, the practice of allowing all pupils five minutes of 'free time' at the end of a lesson appears to entrench the expectation by pupils that they use the computers for games. It also puts unnecessary pressure on the teacher to complete the plenary or summing up.

124. Assessment practice in the subject is currently satisfactory and the records being compiled by the subject leader will provide a good basis for establishing individual pupil's progress. The records are detailed and derived from end of unit tests that pupils sit. As yet they have been in place for an insufficient length of time to provide accurate trends relating to pupils' progress. The leadership of the subject is good. The subject leader has organised the provision so that it is much better than at the time of the last inspection. The full range of the subject curriculum is assured and the subject development plans are both realistic and aim at higher standards. As part of his service to the school, the subject leader also provides weekly tuition to other members of staff as part of the NOF training in ICT. This is a most valuable exercise that could further be extended by encouraging teachers to use ICT within their own teaching. Presently, use of ICT is not prominent in the teaching and learning of other subjects.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

125. The school's provision for modern foreign languages is unsatisfactory. French is taught to pupils in all year groups. At both key stages, standards are well below national expectations. They make poor progress in their knowledge and understanding of the language. Although some pupils show a willingness when they enter the classroom, by greeting the teacher appropriately, they are unable to respond to simple everyday instructions and conversations. By the age of 14, a small number of pupils attempt to read their answers in French, such as when identifying the time on a clock face. Written work is limited to colouring exercises, completing tick boxes and copying one or two words taken from a prompt sheet. When telling the time, few can count up to 12 unaided. By the age of 16, they complete exactly the same work as their younger peers, and from lesson observations it is apparent that they do not know the date, the days or the months of the year. There is evidence in the pupils' folders that they have covered a range of modules on topics such as food and drink, their bodies, homes and everyday objects, but there is no evidence during lessons to suggest that they have retained any previously learned vocabulary or have any knowledge of the French culture. Their achievement is poor.
126. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. The teacher has an insecure knowledge of how the language should be taught and uses little French during lessons. Planning is too brief and there are too few resources to support learning. The teacher's expectations are low and there are few techniques used to challenge pupils' learning, such as opportunities for role play or exchanges of conversation. Lessons are driven by photocopied worksheets, which are limited in their content, level of challenge and purpose; they consist of either a colouring exercise, the insertion of a word or copying a short phrase. Neither the Internet nor computers are used to support or enhance learning. Despite this, relationships are mostly good and some pupils showed enthusiasm in responding to questions about telling the time. The teacher frequently checked that they could tell the time in English. This reinforced numeracy skills, but the teacher then gave too much help by telling the pupils the answers. Having provided answers he then followed this with unmerited praise. Classroom assistants work hard to support individual pupils, but their efforts were impeded by the lack of challenge in the content of lessons. The standard of marking is unsatisfactory, with some incorrect work marked as correct and given an inappropriately good grade. Procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress are informal, and there are no accreditation opportunities for 16-year-olds.
127. The subject leader has received very limited support and training in order to develop the subject. He is teaching the subject almost by default and this is an issue for the school management to address. Departmental documentation is minimal and short-term schemes of work are the same for all year groups, regardless of age and attainment. The limited resources are currently being developed to include a range of games, but there is no computer software and the department does not have consistent access to the Internet. There are few videos or original artefacts to enhance pupils' knowledge of the French way of life. The accommodation for modern languages

is satisfactory. Wall displays highlight aspects of the vocabulary. Improvement in modern languages, since the previous inspection, is unsatisfactory.

MUSIC

128. At the time of the last inspection the provision for pupils to learn music was unsatisfactory because a teacher with little expertise was required to teach the subject. In addition the subject was poorly planned and lessons were described as 'characterised by poor management of the classroom and poor relationships between staff and pupils. Tasks set for pupils are inappropriate.' Despite the school's best efforts, the teaching of music remains limited. Recruitment advertising has not resulted in the appointment of a specialist teacher and standards for the majority of pupils remain low. Nevertheless, the school does offer music to Key Stage 3 pupils, but only a small number receive regular weekly tuition in brass instruments. This tuition is provided by the local authority peripatetic music service. These few pupils make good progress, building on their earlier learning with pride and enthusiasm. For example, they accurately select notes at the teacher's request. They read music of traditional airs, such as 'The Grand Old Duke of York' or 'Jingle Bells' and play these competently. They listen well and follow instructions carefully. Pupils work hard and are justifiably proud of their achievements, particularly of their participation in a community carol concert at a local church.
129. The quality of teaching is good. The peripatetic teacher has a secure knowledge of the subject and has developed positive relationships with the pupils. He encouraged them to be self-critical of their performances. Consequently, they identified areas where they needed to improve, such as holding a note for longer or less time. This promoted their personal development and encouraged self-esteem. Because they are able to accept criticism pupils learn effectively and this leads to an ability to perform in public at local musical events.
130. Although the provision for music continues to be limited, the quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection, but these are small beginnings. Because of the staffing situation, departmental documentation is restricted to the planned sessions and this is provided by the peripatetic teacher. The school has no designated music room; however, a large room is allocated on a regular basis to the teaching of music and this is satisfactory. Wherever possible, the school links to the local community for seasonal musical celebrations, however, there is no other extra-curricular musical activity and this is due to the absence of a subject leader. ICT is little used within the subject – mainly because the expertise of the teacher does not allow for this. This expertise is used more effectively in teaching pupils to play wind instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

131. Pupils' achievements in physical education (PE) are satisfactory in both key stages. Pupils make satisfactory progress within the broad range of the curriculum and some individuals attain standards that are in line with mainstream schools. Standards throughout the school could be higher, but these are artificially depressed by the unsatisfactory facilities available. These standards have remained constant since the last inspection.
132. By the end of Year 9 pupils develop satisfactory skill in physical co-ordination. They throw and catch a cricket ball with accuracy, sprint with some vigour and determination and show a good understanding of the rules of major games, such as soccer, basketball and cricket. Year 10 pupils show good skill in basketball and have developed good notions of tactics, such as zone defence and man-to-man marking. These pupils also take a full part in a fitness regime based around a training circuit.
133. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although there were instances of good teaching. Where teaching is better it starts from a basis of higher expectation by the teacher. The expertise of teachers is good and they show good technical knowledge of the subject, which enables them to quickly sum up and appraise the outcomes of pupils' efforts. In a lesson that introduced the athletics sprint, the teacher showed good knowledge and his skill of communication enabled

him to clearly explain to pupils the correct starting position and why it is necessary to be well balanced. The effectiveness of this teaching was demonstrated by requiring the pupils to sprint over five metres from the standard starting position. Their first efforts were timed. After good teaching and constructive criticism pupils' efforts were re-timed. Without exception all improved their original effort. This was a positive example of the teaching and learning that takes place.

134. Pupils enjoy PE. This results from the skilled group and behaviour management techniques shown by the teachers. Potential flashpoints are anticipated and most lessons proceed in a constructive and calm way. Although not a regular feature of lessons, a significant number of pupils applauded and encouraged the efforts of others. Where flashpoints occur the majority of pupils remain unperturbed and show through their response that they would rather get on with their lesson. In so doing they demonstrate clearly the trust and confidence they have in the teachers as well as their own personal development.
135. The subject needs considerable development in recording the outcomes of pupils' efforts because present assessment practice is unsatisfactory. There are no substantive records that enable progress to be securely identified over time and no use is made of ICT as a means by which this could be recorded. Much of the perceived progress is notional and unrecorded. The pupils benefit from a good range of the curriculum that includes adventurous activities, such as sailing. These are provided to challenge the pupils in developing their characters and effort in teamwork skills, but they do not lead to recognised awards.
136. Planned development of the subject is insecure because it focuses mainly on the provision of additional facilities. This matter is beyond the control of the subject leader. There remains much work to be done to ensure consistent development of the curriculum and provision of higher standards for pupils. Break and lunch-time activities contribute informally to the PE curriculum. These consist mainly of ball games, such as cricket or football, in which adults and pupils participate. The presence of adults in such games contributes well to the social development of pupils because the adults provide good role models in their responses to the outcomes of the games. The school also competes with other schools in football and athletics competitions and has a series of proven successes in these events.
137. The accommodation to support pupils' learning is poor. Indoor facilities are too small and do not enable games to take place safely that would include more than three pupils per team. Externally there are no facilities other than a hard surface playground. Lessons that teach athletics, for example, have to take place by running around the building – along with the distraction this causes to other lessons. Although the intention is to improve the facilities there are presently no firm plans or a date by which the improvement would be started.
138. PE plays a significant part in the life of the school and contributes well to the social and behavioural development of the pupils. There are good relationships between staff and pupils and because staff have expertise in the subject the standard of provision in the informal activities is high. This would account, in spite of the poor facilities, for the competitive successes of the pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

139. The provision for religious education is satisfactory. Although the standard of pupils' attainment at both key stages is below average, they make satisfactory and sometimes good achievement in their knowledge and understanding of religious concepts.
140. By the age of 14, the pupils make very good, and sometimes excellent progress. They develop an awareness of multi-faiths by examining the customs and artefacts of Judaism, Buddhism and Sikhism. For example, in Year 8, they create a Buddhist shrine and enact religious customs such as making offerings and burning incense, which gives positive reinforcement to their learning. In Year 9, during a lesson on Christianity, the pupils reflected, with superb sensitivity on the religious experiences of others, with comments such as, 'That was lucky because God can probably only look after one person at a time'. One pupil spontaneously described the

feeling of prayer as, 'God floating into your soul'. By the end of Key Stage 3, they have a firm foundation on which to move forwards towards accreditation in Year 11.

141. In Years 10 and 11, the pupils follow a course leading to Certificate of Achievement accreditation. They make satisfactory progress overall. They engage well in debates on moral issues such as human rights, friendship and the nature of trust and faithfulness. They further develop their knowledge of multi-faiths in well-considered discussions, such as those about the differences between traditional Christian and Muslim marriages. However, their written work is less well developed, and they are reluctant to record their thoughts in free writing. Lesson worksheets are based on elements of the examination syllabus requirements, but on occasions, there is insufficient time to allow for the completion of these.
142. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is better at Key Stage 3, where very good lesson planning and preparation ensures that the needs of all pupils are well met. Lesson aims were clearly explained and the theme reinforced through discussion, written and practical exercises. These reinforced and enhanced pupils' understanding. For example, Year 7 pupils were encouraged to share their feelings by making their own prayer flags. The content of these was evocative and touching, showing considerable sensitivity. The teachers' effective strategies and good behaviour management techniques motivated and promoted very good spiritual and moral development, by allowing opportunities for reflection and consideration of others. Literacy skills were a positive feature of these well-structured sessions, and the majority of pupils had no hesitation in reading aloud or applying themselves to written tasks. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 4 is satisfactory. Lessons are planned to meet the coursework requirements of the examination syllabus. However, this planning is still in the early stages of development, and although some good discussions were initiated by the staff and pupils, some lessons lacked challenge and there was insufficient encouragement for pupils to complete written work.
143. In all classes, relationships between staff and pupils were good and there was an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Teachers made good use of humour to encourage and motivate the pupils, and most responded with respect and consideration for each other. All staff used effective strategies and good behaviour management techniques, which encouraged the pupils to concentrate and work hard. Classroom assistants provided good levels of support to lower attaining pupils by encouraging reading and writing. The subject strongly promotes the pupils' spiritual and moral development, with good opportunities for reflection and thinking of others.
144. Departmental documentation is satisfactory and schemes of work are matched to the Locally Agreed Syllabus at Key Stage 3 and the examination syllabus at Key Stage 4. However, the monitoring and assessment of the pupils' progress is too informal, and this is an issue for the subject leader to address. The accommodation is satisfactory and resources are good, with the use of computers beginning to support the subject. Displays of pupils' work, particularly at Key Stage 3, are very good and give value to their achievements.
145. The department has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. All pupils now receive one lesson a week, and opportunities for national accreditation have been introduced for 16-year-olds. The subject now meets statutory requirements.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EDUCATION

146. An appropriate emphasis is placed on pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) within the daily life of the school and in lessons. It is embedded well in the whole-school curriculum. PSHE has a satisfactory impact on the standards pupils reach and endorses well the aims of the school. There are appropriate guidelines for work on sex, drugs awareness and health education as well as valuing self and others, safety and the physical and emotional changes during adolescence. The school has plans to assimilate citizenship into PSHE provision by the end of the summer term and is currently working to achieve this

147. The quality of teaching of the PSHE programme is variable and dependent upon the skill and confidence of individual teachers. Of the seven lessons seen during the inspection only one was unsatisfactory. Although this lesson started well, pupils failed to learn what was intended because of poor timing and pace. The remainder were satisfactory or good in equal measure. The curriculum is sufficiently flexible to enable issues raised by the pupils to be included and this serves to engage pupils more effectively, because they see their personal concerns being considered. The positive outcomes of provision for personal and social development are apparent throughout the life of the school. Pupils are courteous to visitors and meal times are pleasant social occasions. The positive relationships with staff, along with the personal, social and health education programme make a valuable contribution in helping pupils to become mature and sociable members of the school community. Parents particularly express great satisfaction at the changes in the behaviour and attitude of their children.