

INSPECTION REPORT

THE ORCHARD SCHOOL

Canterbury

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 119058

Headteacher: Mr. Brian Shelley

Reporting inspector: Alan Tattersall
20466

Dates of inspection: 20-23 May 2002

Inspection number: 193097

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Cambridge Road Canterbury Kent
Postcode:	CT1 3QQ
Telephone number:	01227 769220
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Everett
Date of previous inspection:	17 March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20466	Alan Tattersall	Registered inspector	Personal, Social and Health Education Modern Foreign Language (French)	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
11437	Anthony Anderson	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18461	Vanessa Wilkinson	Team inspector	English Religious Education, Special Educational Needs	How well does the school care for its pupils?
10781	Robert Thompson	Team inspector	Design and Technology Information and Communication Technology	How well is the school led and managed?
30071	John Pearson	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Equal Opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
1769	Michael Holohan	Team inspector	Science, Art and Design English as an Additional Language	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
1987	George Davies	Team inspector	Physical Education, Geography History	

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Orchard School is a maintained school for pupils between the ages of 5 and 16. However, currently there are no pupils of primary school age. The current roll is 85 boys and 33 girls between the ages of 11 and 16. All pupils have moderate learning difficulties; over half have associated behavioural difficulties and six have autism. Pupils come from a wide catchment area in the county. Fifty-five pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is high for this type of school. Pupils' attainment on entry is low because of their special educational needs. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. All pupils are from white, United Kingdom heritage apart from one pupil from an Indian and another from a white European background. The school has achieved the Investors in People Award, a local ECO award and a Silver Artsmark Award from the Arts Council.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. The effective leadership and management of the school has ensured that pupils achieve well and standards of teaching and learning are good. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Ensures that the quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Promotes excellent progress in music for all pupils and in art and design for pupils from Year 9, leading to excellent achievement in Expressive Arts.
- The leadership and management by the headteacher and the senior management team is good.
- Promotes pupils' attitudes, values, behaviour, relationships, social, moral, cultural and spiritual development well.
- Provides good information for parents.
- Provides very good work experience and community service placements for pupils.

What could be improved

- Pupils' achievement in science.
- The size and condition of a number of classrooms, withdrawal rooms to provide pupils with individual guidance and the facilities for indoor physical education.

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

Standards have improved well since the last inspection in March 1997. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is now good. Pupils achieve more in accreditation. Although achievement in science has improved and is now satisfactory, there is still room for improvement. There are better systems to improve pupils' behaviour and to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, pupils' behaviour is better. However, the quality and suitability of several classrooms and the hall, changing and shower facilities remain unsatisfactory in spite of the school's efforts to improve them.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors’ judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	by Year 11	Key	
speaking and listening	B	very good	A
reading	B	good	B
writing	B	satisfactory	C
mathematics	B	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	B	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B		

(There are no judgements regarding the achievement of pupils by Year 6 since there are no primary pupils on roll.)

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

Pupils’ achievement is good overall. There is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Those pupils who have additional learning needs achieve as well as other pupils through the effective support they receive. Pupils make good progress towards the whole school targets set for them in mathematics and English, and towards greater success in accreditation at the end of Year 11. Pupils’ progress towards targets in science is satisfactory. Achievement is good in all aspects of English. Last year, seven pupils achieved a merit and 12 a distinction in the Certificate of Educational Achievement (CoA). Pupils achieved similarly well in mathematics: seven pupils gained merits and 14 a distinction. Pupils make good progress in information and communication technology (computers), where 20 pupils gained a distinction in the CoA. Pupils’ progress in art and design is very good up to Year 9 and excellent from Year 9 onwards. This, together with all pupils’ excellent progress in music enables them to achieve exceptionally well in the GCSE for expressive arts. Twenty pupils gained certificates. Achievement in other accreditation is good, with 19 pupils gaining bronze awards in the Award Scheme Development Network (ASDAN). Pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the school in personal, social and health education, physical education, geography, history, religious education and French. Pupils achieve well in design and technology: they make very good progress in the workshop and good progress in food technology. Although seven pupils gained merits and 12 pupils gained a distinction in the CoA in science, achievement is currently satisfactory overall because pupils could achieve more in the subject if they had more challenging targets to aim for. Pupils make good progress towards the targets in their IEPs for literacy, numeracy and personal and social development.

PUPILS’ ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils value the time they spend in school. Pupils are very interested in learning and participate very well in physical and creative activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Although many pupils have difficulty behaving, they are responsive to staff measures to improve their behaviour. Consequently, behaviour is good in school and when pupils are out in the community.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils develop more confidence as they move through the school. They form good relationships with staff and each other. Pupils welcome the opportunity to undertake responsibility, such as, becoming representatives on the school council.

Attendance	Satisfactory. There is little unauthorised absence but the level of recorded, authorised absence is high. This is largely the result of factors beyond the school's control. Punctuality is good.
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TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall, often very good and is occasionally excellent. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when there was a large proportion of unsatisfactory teaching resulting in unsatisfactory progress. Teachers inspire pupils to make particularly strong creative efforts through their expert guidance. A strength of teaching is the high level of subject expertise that enables teachers to plan lessons effectively for pupils to learn. Teaching is good in English, mathematics, information and communication technology, physical education, religious education, geography, history, and personal, social and health education. It is good in design and technology, being very good in the workshop and good in food technology. Overall the quality of teaching and learning in art is very good and is excellent for pupils from Year 9 onwards. It is excellent in music and expressive arts. In science, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are weaknesses in the planning for science lessons to promote pupils' learning of all aspects equally, such as, experimental work. Teachers plan well to promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and the use of computers in their subjects throughout the day. Teachers and learning support staff work effectively together to ensure that they meet the range of special educational needs that pupils have. The provision of homework is good and makes an important contribution to the progress that pupils make.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. A suitable range of subjects is offered. It is very good for vocational education. The curriculum for expressive arts is excellent and is a strength of the school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no pupils on roll who require support for English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Teachers achieve this by placing a good emphasis upon planning to promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development. There are good arrangements to improve pupils' personal, social and moral development throughout the day and on residential visits.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils receive high levels of support in school and on visits into the community. There are effective systems for assessing, checking, recording and informing pupils of their personal and academic progress.

The provision for careers and the arrangements for work and community service placements are very good. Planning ensures that the needs of pupils who have associated additional needs are met well. The school has formed good contacts with the community and has established a few good partnerships with

local schools. Most pupils have benefited from attending a nearby school for occasional lessons. Relationships with parents are good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff is effective. Staff share the very strong commitment to improvement. The leadership and management of the school has ensured good improvements in standards since the last inspection.
How well the governing body fulfils its responsibilities?	Good. The governing body provides strong support to the school, sharing the desire to ensure high standards in all it does. Governors have a clear understanding of how the school is performing and where improvements are required.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. There are effective systems to check the quality of teaching and this has led to good improvements. The headteacher's annual reports provide a clear evaluation of how well developments are proceeding, and include relevant proposals for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Spending is planned carefully to make effective use of the limited funds available.

The number of teachers and support staff is sufficient for the school and their quality is good. Teachers are particularly well qualified to teach specialist subjects. The arrangements for the induction of staff and the provision for professional development are good. There are effective systems to enable the school to plan future developments. The school is aware that the accommodation is unsatisfactory for physical education, two mobile classrooms are in a poor state of repair and several classrooms, including the food technology and design and technology rooms, are too small. The library is unsatisfactory and there is inadequate lighting and ventilation in the computer room. The lack of small quiet rooms for pupils to use when they have difficulty behaving well has reduced the opportunity for the school to provide on-site alternatives to excluding pupils for bad behaviour. Learning resources are satisfactory but there is a shortage of storage space. There is a lack of clarity about the age range of pupils the school is required to admit.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • They feel welcome to approach the school with questions and problems. • Teaching is good. • The school is well led and managed. • The school has high expectations for pupils to achieve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils' behaviour.

The inspection team agrees with parents' and carers' positive comments. They agree that a large proportion of pupils have difficulty behaving well as a consequence of their special educational needs. However, the school employs effective methods to improve behaviour so that pupils behave well overall.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils achieve well. They make good progress in most subjects. Pupils' achievement in accreditation is good, being excellent in music, art and design and expressive arts. There is no difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Most pupils have precise targets to work towards in their individual education plans in literacy, numeracy and personal development and make good progress. Pupils' achievement and the progress they make show good improvement since the last inspection. At that time, achievement was satisfactory overall but unsatisfactory for a significant proportion of pupils in Years 7 to 9. Pupils up to Year 9 now achieve well.
2. Pupils' achievements have improved because the school has higher expectations and has improved the quality of teaching to provide more effective planning for what pupils will learn. Pupils up to Year 9 achieve well in most subjects they study. Pupils' good progress by that age is aided by the targets that enable them to make good progress in literacy and numeracy. There is a wider range of accredited courses in CoA and GCSE than before. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in accreditation in English, mathematics and using computers in information and communications technology (ICT). The school has just introduced accreditation for geography through CoA. A few pupils are studying for GCSE accreditation in English, mathematics and science for the first time. The school has begun to set targets for pupils to achieve in English, mathematics and science and for them to achieve accreditation. Although they are sufficiently challenging, the school is refining the whole-school target setting arrangements, particularly for science. However, it is clear that pupils are making good progress towards their targets in the priority areas of English and mathematics.
3. Pupils achieve well and make consistently good progress in English throughout the school. They make equally good progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing. This is because teachers ensure that pupils learn new vocabulary by planning for them to use new words in discussion and conversation and to read and write them. This was evident when pupils in Year 7 used scientific vocabulary in an English lesson when they wrote letters to a fast food outlet to advise them of the most effective wrapping paper to use. Other activities such as role-play and drama reinforce pupils' learning well. For instance, pupils in Year 10 researched the topic of unexplained events in history and legends and wrote a 'script' before explaining their findings to the class. Pupils make good progress in mathematics lessons. They make equally good progress in all aspects of the work such as solving problems and exploring regular shapes. It is evident that the good progress that pupils make in literacy, numeracy and using computers is in part due to teachers' good planning for this in most subjects. Pupils develop communication skills well in most lessons and frequently improve their reading and writing skills as they find out more about their subject and record their findings. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make exceptional progress in improving their literacy skills in expressive arts. They write impressive dialogues for their plays and perform exceptionally well. Pupils develop more understanding of numeracy by using their skills practically in lessons such as food technology. Pupils make good progress in ICT lessons. They receive good practise in

using their skills throughout the day because teachers frequently plan for pupils to use computers to help them with their work, for instance, to provide a written account of their work. Pupils up to Year 9 consolidate their progress well in computer skills and in literacy and numeracy skills because they have regular lessons to use dedicated computer programmes to improve in basic literacy and numeracy skills.

4. Pupils make good progress in geography, physical education, French and religious education. They achieve well in design and technology, making very good progress in lessons that take place in the workshop and good progress in food technology. Pupils up to Year 9 make good progress in history. They make extremely good progress in music in lessons up to Year 9 and in the music element of the expressive arts in Years 10 and 11. Progress is very good in art up to the end of Year 9 and excellent in the following years in combination with music in the expressive arts. The strength of this provision is the extremely high quality of teaching provided for art and music and expressive arts. The school has funded the purpose-built accommodation through its own efforts, demonstrating its commitment to ensuring that pupils continue to achieve exceptionally well in these subjects.
5. Pupils achieve well in personal development in PSHE and through the support they receive during many tutorial periods. They make good progress towards the targets set for them for personal development in their individual education plans. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve well in related studies that lead to the Award Scheme Development Accreditation Network (ASDAN). They make particularly good progress preparing for life after school by participating in community service and work experience placements.
6. Pupils' achievement in science is satisfactory throughout the school. Although pupils achieved similar results in the CoA accreditation with those in English and mathematics, current pupils, particularly the higher attaining pupils, could achieve more. There are for instance, lower whole school targets for pupils to gain in science.
7. There are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. Although all pupils in the school have moderate learning difficulties, many have behavioural difficulties associated with their learning difficulties. They make good progress towards the targets set for them. Staff are sensitive to their needs and there is good planning for instance, through targets to improve behaviour. Frequently, pupils receive support from learning support assistants in class and this contributes well to the good progress they make. A few pupils have the additional special educational need of autism. Staff know pupils well and plan and provide the support to enable pupils to play a full part in the school and achieve as well as other pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and values are good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when the behaviour of pupils in Years 7 to 9 was very challenging and marked by anger and frustration. The school has successfully addressed these issues. Despite the presence of a number of pupils who have difficulty behaving as a consequence of their learning difficulties, the atmosphere of the school is calm and settled and relationships between staff and pupils are good.
9. Pupils are highly motivated by the work and they find it stimulating and absorbing. They respond both positively and with enthusiasm. In a mathematics lesson for pupils in Year 8 for example, the good relationships with the teacher gave pupils the confidence to work productively and independently. Similarly, in a lesson where Year 9 pupils were working

with computers they were deeply engrossed in their tasks. This, combined with the friendly and supportive relationships with staff, resulted in pupils behaving very well.

10. Pupils' personal development is good. They respond well to the demands that are placed upon them by the school. They are willing to undertake small tasks to help in school and to support the community for instance, by fund raising for charity. The school was awarded a local environmental award through the pupils' efforts to improve the grounds and to help to recycle materials. Pupils are pleased to take the opportunity to develop further independence by travelling to school on their own. The oldest pupils relish the privilege of visiting the shops at lunchtimes. They understand that they need to maintain good behaviour to retain the privilege.
11. Pupils develop maturity and the ability to form their own opinions well in many lessons as they move through the school. This is often through the teachers' well-planned opportunities for discussion. For instance, in a religious education lesson for pupils in Year 11, pupils discussed the topic of euthanasia. They showed perception and sensitivity, paying due regard to the opinions of others. Pupils take increasing responsibility for themselves as they become older and show concern for each other's feelings. In a Year 11 art and design lesson, pupils displayed an impressive ability to assess and evaluate both their own work and that of other pupils. This demonstrated a mature attitude and respect for each other's achievements and feelings. Pupils feel free to express their opinions.
12. Pupils feel valued by the school and trust the staff. This helps to foster good responses to work and improve behaviour. However, pupils are still capable of unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons, for instance when they enter the class after an unresolved difference between pupils following break time. They usually respond well to the teachers' measures to improve their behaviour. However, occasionally pupils do not behave well enough to engage with the work as fully as they could. Consequently, in a few lessons they do not make as much progress as they could.
13. Pupils behave well overall in and around the school. This is evident in the absence of damage in the school and the respect that pupils have for the high quality of their work on display. Pupils have a high regard for the staff and what they are doing to help them. The improvement of the behaviour of the pupils allows them to undertake activities successfully in the wider community. They show respect for instance, when they use the facilities of a local tennis club. Diaries of their experiences of working for short periods in the community, such as at a home for senior citizens, show an understanding of others' needs, commitment and enthusiasm. However, pupils can have difficulty getting along with each other, particularly when they move around the school and during breaks and lunchtimes. Levels of supervision were high during the inspection week and this enabled pupils to move freely and confidently, behaving well and getting along with each other well, for instance, in the dining room. This means that pupils work in an atmosphere that is free from oppressive behaviour and where there is an absence of bullying. Although the level of exclusions from school remains relatively high, this is largely the result of a small number of pupils who have great difficulty behaving well and the school's lack of rooms to provide alternatives to exclusion. Records show that the level of exclusions shows a significant decline in recent years.
14. There is a sense of community in school that is evident in the assemblies. Pupils come together to celebrate their achievements and to consider issues of school life. The atmosphere is one of both interest and concern with a shared sense of purpose.

Participation in the school council reflects pupils' commitment to the school community. Members of the council successfully undertake the difficult task of representing others. They make a significant contribution to the quality of life of the school community through discussing issues such as, preferences for school meals and the improvements required to the quality of the toilet facilities.

15. Attendance is satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is low. Although the level of authorised absence is higher than expected, part of the reason for this is the statutory requirement to classify pupils' education off-site as authorised absence. Furthermore, one pupil who lives just under the limit for assisted transport is not attending until a solution is found. This has a negative effect on attendance figures through no fault of the school. Although pupils are occasionally late for school this is because of the late arrival of school transport and is beyond the school's control. The school ensures that lessons start on time and pupils move between lessons promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching is good overall. During the inspection it was often very good and occasionally excellent. The school has taken good measures to improve teaching since the previous inspection, when the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in a quarter of lessons. The checking of the quality of teaching by senior staff has led to systematic improvements, particularly to the way that teachers plan lessons more effectively. The school has ensured that staff have greater expertise and this is one of the most important features that contributes to the high quality of teaching.
17. The teaching of English is consistently good. Lesson planning is effective to ensure that pupils learn a wider vocabulary to communicate their ideas and develop skills in reading and writing through systematic planning. Teachers throughout the school are knowledgeable about the teaching of the important areas of literacy and nearly always plan well to promote pupils' skills in their lessons throughout the day. In most lessons, teachers establish important words at the start of the lesson and ensure that pupils have a greater understanding of them by the end. There is effective planning for pupils to write. For instance, pupils in Year 10 gain valuable opportunities to write at length for a specific purpose when they complete their community experience diaries. When they re-read them later as they improve the appearance of their files for ASDAN evaluation, they appreciate the value of keeping a written account.
18. Specialist teachers are particularly skilled at teaching mathematics and ICT. They teach the subjects well in timetabled lessons. They have high expectations for pupils to learn and ensure this by planning lessons so that pupils build upon the skills they have learnt previously. As with literacy, teachers throughout the school plan well to promote pupils' basic skills in numeracy and using computers throughout the day. In history for instance, pupils in Year 9 have enhanced their understanding of time through learning how to express the passage of time in their study of the events of the two World Wars. In design and technology there is frequent emphasis on the practical application of numeracy such as, measuring, weighing and estimating. Teachers plan well for pupils to use computers to help them with their work. This was important when pupils in Year 11 completed their books to celebrate their life in school. Since they had made drafts of their work in English, they could concentrate on word processing their text about their reminiscences of their life in school and develop their skills further in setting out text and designing their book covers. Although teaching is satisfactory in science, pupils would benefit from more

consistent planning for them to investigate and experiment in order for them to achieve more.

19. Teachers have very good expertise in their subject areas. This enables them to plan lessons well. The specialist art teacher is extremely good at imparting skills and an appreciation of art. Consequently, pupils have developed the confidence to be ambitious in lessons. Because of effective demonstration, pupils in Year 9 quickly learnt how to create a wax rubbing and apply paint in the style of a famous artist. A strength of the teaching was the encouragement and praise given to pupils to try for themselves, motivated very well by confirmation that they were proceeding well and praise for the final effort. The teacher's excellent subject knowledge and expertise in music has engendered a respect for the subject and the teacher. In a lesson for pupils in Year 9, this led to pupils concentrating very hard to understand their tasks, aided by the clear revision of previous work. Pupils responded to the extremely high expectations, making excellent progress in recognising jazz sequences.
20. A very good lesson in religious education for pupils in Year 11 demonstrated the teacher's high expectations for pupils to achieve. Planning was meticulous to revise what pupils knew, using questions matched to each pupil's attainment to ensure that all participated. Through exemplification and constant checking of pupils' understanding, they could explain the difference between a hospice and a hospital. Relationships were sufficiently strong for pupils to discuss the difficult subject of death, consider the differences between animals and humans and the way that humans deal with death in different religions.
21. Teachers know pupils very well and relationships with pupils are good. This contributes to a positive working atmosphere in lessons which ensures that pupils work diligently. This was evident in a physical education lesson utilising the climbing wall of another school for pupils in Year 9. The high level of co-operation between the teacher, learning support assistant and the climbing instructor was an excellent example for pupils to follow. Consequently, pupils were confident to participate individually and to help each other. The high level of trust between pupils and staff ensured that pupils followed instructions well and acted responsibly.
22. Teachers plan well for pupils' different needs in class, either by providing different work for pupils according to their attainment or by directing support. This ensures that pupils who have additional special educational needs, including those who are autistic, make the same progress as other pupils in class.
23. Teachers usually make lessons interesting and this motivates pupils well to concentrate on their work. This was an important factor in the success of a geography lesson for pupils in Year 7 to understand more about changes to the Earth. The teacher's vivid description of volcanoes and the excellent visual display provided excitement that seized pupils' interest. They were enthralled by the effects of volcanic action. The teacher heightened pupils' interest further by enabling pupils to handle a good range of rock samples obtained from a local resource centre. This introduction of well-chosen resources is a feature of several successful lessons and increases pupils' participation with a consequent improvement in behaviour. Pupils in Year 9 made good progress in English, choosing the type of magazine to make. Through referring to a good range of comic and magazine sources, pupils were able to understand the features of the publications that appeal to different people and begin to provide ideas for their own.

24. Learning support assistants (LSAs) play an important part in promoting pupils' learning. Several lead parts of lessons. This was particularly successful in a lesson to teach cricket skills to pupils in Years 8 and 9. The LSA led the warm up and took responsibility for a group under the direction of the teacher. This provided well-directed support to younger pupils and the active participation served as a role model for pupils to work similarly well together. Teachers ensure that support staff know what they have to do in lessons. This means that they can carry out their tasks to support pupils with some independence and allow the teacher to concentrate attention upon the other pupils. This active participation was successful for instance, in mathematics lessons for pupils in Year 7 where it enabled the class to work in several groups, with staff allocated to promote pupils' individual skills. Similarly, in an English lesson for pupils in Year 10, the LSA helped lower attaining pupils to read the text of 'Macclesfield Fair'. Consequently they could fully participate with the other pupils and learnt skills such as finding pages quickly in order to keep up with the others.
25. The school ensures that it matches staffing resources and teaching expertise to pupils according to their needs. This ensures that activities are pitched at an appropriate level for each pupil. This helps those pupils who experience learning or behavioural difficulties to overcome them to the extent that they make as much progress from their own starting point. The challenge for teachers has increased since the last inspection, with an increasingly large number of pupils who enter the school with associated behaviour difficulties. The school has worked well to improve staff expertise and this is evident in their good skills to manage pupils' behaviour, and to support the autistic pupils with their learning needs. On several occasions during the inspection week, pupils entered lessons exhibiting bad behaviour. Teachers almost always handle such incidents very well to ensure that pupils maintain the good progress expected of them. For instance, in a mathematics lesson for pupils in Year 7, planning was very effective and ensured pupils' engagement from the start of the lesson. Pupils settled down quickly to interesting and enjoyable activities. The pace of the lesson was quick and pupils achieved well, praised on each occasion by staff. The teacher and LSA consistently reminded pupils of correct behaviour. Consequently pupils behaved and achieved well. Teachers also plan well to meet the needs of the small number of pupils who are autistic and to ensure that girls make the same progress as boys.
26. In a few lessons during the week in different subjects pupils only made satisfactory progress because the teacher did not engage pupils' attention from the start. For example, pupils in a Year 9 English lesson had not listened well to the introduction and lacked motivation because they could not see the connection between the lesson to design a front cover for a teenage magazine and previous lessons. The lack of clarity meant that the teacher spent too much time providing explanations during the lesson. The teacher needed to remind pupils about vocabulary since pupils did not learn this at the start.
27. A small number of parents and carers who responded to the pre-inspection parents' survey were not content with the amount of work that pupils are required to do at home. However, the few parents and carers who attended the pre-inspection meeting were pleased that pupils had a programme of study for homework and that their children received homework regularly. The provision of homework is good and contributes well to the progress pupils make in school.

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

28. The school provides a good range of lessons and activities for pupils that are relevant to their needs. Since the last inspection there has been a good improvement in the quality and range of learning opportunities. There is now a good curriculum, with excellent provision for expressive arts and very good provision for vocational education. This improvement is the result of the deliberate policy to offer pupils a similar range of subjects to those they might have received had they attended a mainstream school. As part of this same policy, the school has made sure that all pupils receive recognition for their achievements by entering them for a good range of nationally recognised qualifications.
29. There is good provision for promoting the pupils' personal and social and health education. This includes sex and drugs awareness education. Plans are at an advanced stage to make sure that all subjects promote the skills of good citizenship.
30. The way that the school plans for what pupils will learn is successful, as is evident from the pupils' good level of achievement of nationally recognised awards. There has been good progress to enable pupils to gain Certificates in Educational Achievement (CoA) since the last inspection. Their achievements and confidence have increased, so that the gap between their achievements and that of pupils in mainstream schools has narrowed. The highest attaining pupils, therefore, are capable of extending their learning in their best subjects by studying for higher accreditation through GCSE courses.
31. The school has a good record of building worthwhile partnerships with both mainstream and special schools in its vicinity. In some instances, good arrangements are made to make use of the facilities of a local secondary school. For example, a group of pupils uses the better design and technology workshops. As well as arranging for its pupils to use some resources in other schools, it is beginning to establish an effective role in helping local mainstream schools, for instance, to meet the learning needs of their own pupils who have special educational needs. This role is becoming particularly important as these schools continue to include more pupils with special educational needs rather than send them to special schools. However, this process is not yet sufficiently established for the Orchard school to enter into a full partnership to enable more Orchard school pupils to attend on part-time placements. For instance, for more pupils to pursue their personal subject interests and strengths.
32. Activities for pupils are planned well, so that their learning builds up systematically across the years that they move through the school. It makes sure that pupils cover the requirements of the nationally recognised accreditation for which they are entered. Although this detailed planning is good in the majority of subjects, there are weaknesses in science. It is only satisfactory and, therefore, requires further attention for instance to enable teachers to plan more to promote experimental science.
33. A key issue raised at the last inspection was the lack of co-ordination between the primary and secondary departments of the school. This is not an issue at present because there are no primary-age pupils on roll. The school's official designation is for pupils from Years 1 to 11. As such, it does not now have an appropriate curriculum should any pupils be admitted in Years 1 to 6.
34. Pupils receive satisfactory equal opportunities to learn. Although girls achieve well and follow a similar programme in physical education as boys, there is occasional insufficient consideration of the division of pupils into groups for games and sport. This means that

occasionally boys and girls receive lessons in single-sex groups. However, they do not miss out on activities over the year.

35. The school has successful approaches to the teaching of both literacy and numeracy. Pupils in Years 7 to 9, gain good benefits from lessons based upon the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, which have been adapted sensibly by teachers to suit the learning needs of the pupils. Older pupils continue to learn literacy and numeracy skills through their courses for national accreditation. The school has good procedures for promoting pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in all other lessons. This has an important effect in reinforcing learning and providing concrete examples for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills.
36. It is difficult to provide activities for pupils outside of normal school hours because of the distances that pupils travel from home. However, there is a satisfactory number of additional activities to enrich their learning. A large range of educational visits makes effective use of the local community. For example, to places of worship, local shops and businesses and the university. Full advantage of the school's nearness to the coast is taken by providing day trips to France. Every year there is a residential activity and a good range of sporting events with other schools, including cross country running, athletics, swimming, badminton, tag rugby and tennis. Pupils also take part in orienteering, archery and, during a residential activity week, tackle rock climbing, sailing, gorge walking and cycling. Every week there is also an after-school club for the expressive arts, although this is limited to those pupils who can make suitable travel arrangements to get home.
37. Pupils receive the opportunity to express themselves creatively with a high degree of success, giving a boost to their self-esteem that compensates for many of the difficulties they experience with other forms of learning. Pupils also develop skills and interests that continue into their adult lives.
38. Pupils from Year 9 onward benefit from a very good careers and vocational education programme, which is also a strength of the school. An external adviser, who also meets parents, provides careers advice for pupils. Pupils in Year 11 receive an introduction to the world of work through a very well organised work-experience programme that provides them with work near to where they live. This complements the programme for pupils in Year 10 to prepare them for work experience by engaging in a community-service programme. It enables pupils to contribute to the local community by helping in establishments for senior citizens and pre-school children. The very good programme of vocational education includes part-time attendance at local colleges for pupils in Year 11. They join in courses that help them to prepare for their later full time attendance. Pupils greatly appreciate the efforts made by the school to help them prepare for leaving school. The programme is successful preparation for pupils since nearly all pupils proceed to further education courses.
39. The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection because there has been significant improvement in the provision for the pupils' spiritual development. A carefully considered whole school policy secures the provision to promote pupils' spiritual development. This provides effective guidance for subject teachers through the very carefully planned programme of assemblies. In history, pupils reflect on how people feel at times of conflict as they study the civilians and soldiers in times of war. Geography lessons provide illustrations of the wonder of the natural world,

for instance, when looking at the power of volcanoes and the height of trees in tropical rain forests. Their work in art when using Van Gogh's painting of flowers as a stimulus provided them with good opportunity to appreciate how the spirit of the artist is given expression. The school's equally well founded religious education programme makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual development and in particular helps them to have an understanding of and show respect for those who have different beliefs and hold different views.

40. Assemblies ensure that pupils celebrate the main Christian religious festivals as well as providing them with an opportunity to appreciate the richness and diversity of festivals associated with other major faiths. During the week of the inspection, pupils had opportunities to consider and explore the implications of "Learning new skills". They reflected on this during assemblies and during class tutorial sessions. Younger pupils responded particularly well to focus on a candle while reflecting on this theme and older pupils showed through discussion, that they were developing an understanding of and respect for people learning at different rates. In addition, older pupils had opportunities to explore more complex ideas, such as the spirit of darkness and the gateway to light, when they prepared for their presentation for the Millennium Arts Festival in Canterbury Cathedral. In mathematics, pupils have many opportunities to reflect on the concept of truth.
41. The school promotes pupils' moral development well. The "10 Rules to Remember" which are displayed throughout the school serve as clear reminders of what is acceptable. In particular, they stress the need to listen to and show respect for others and 'not to do unkind things to others.' Teachers provide pupils with an opportunity to consider the effect of their inappropriate actions on themselves and others when periodic lapses in behaviour take place. They plan opportunities well to influence pupils' moral development positively. This happened in a history lesson for pupils in Year 9 when they studied letters sent home from the trenches in the First World War, that included 'white lies'.
42. The good provision for pupils' social development evident during the last inspection has been sustained. The personal, social and health education programme, the expectations that teachers have of pupils and the role models that they provide promote pupils' social development effectively. Lessons regularly provide pupils with opportunities to learn how to work individually and in small groups. For example, pupils' ability to carry out tasks independently in an observational skills art lesson contributed well to the high quality of work produced. Pupils working in pairs in a history lesson ensured that a competent user of graphics helped a peer to produce a 'header sheet' for her unit of work. In a rounders game for Year 10 and 11, pupils demonstrated clearly that they have developed a very good understanding of the value of team work. The many opportunities that pupils have to use community facilities such as the climbing wall in a high school, a local tennis club and the pool in the public swimming baths enhance their social development. Similarly, when pupils undertake community placements, this helps them to adjust to a range of social demands and to relate to adults in an appropriate manner.
43. The provision for pupils' cultural development remains at the good level identified during the last inspection. Pupils make music with a wide range of instruments. They compose with instruments associated with other cultures. Pupils sing an African hymn in assembly. They link movement and dance together effectively for instance, as for the Millennium presentation in Canterbury Cathedral. Pupils' cultural experiences are extended further and enriched by listening to and working with very high quality visiting

musicians. Teachers provide an excellent range of famous paintings from around the world to stimulate pupils' own work. Pupils develop a good awareness of other cultures through studies in geography and in other lessons such as French.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The school takes good care of its pupils. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. The supervision of pupils during the day is good and staff attend to their needs well. First aid and accident procedures and those for the administration of medicine are good. There is a suitable number of staff trained in first aid and there is a well-qualified and experienced member of staff responsible for co-ordinating first aid and the management of medication across the school. The procedures for child protection are satisfactory. Records are confidential and the school has a designated person for child protection who is very experienced. There is good dialogue with the local area child protection committee when there are concerns. However, child protection procedures have been changed recently, and there is a need for staff training in this area to be updated.
45. Pupils are encouraged to make contact and seek advice and support from any member of staff when they feel they need it. They have open access to senior staff throughout the school day and at break times. These staff are visible and accessible around the school. It is clear that pupils are comfortable to approach them. Health and safety procedures are carried out well. The school carries out suitable risk assessments to ensure safe practice across the curriculum although the assessments for science need to be more rigorous and better linked to what is happening in lessons.
46. The school has good procedures to monitor and guide pupils' personal development. Pupils' individual education plans contain personal development targets and these enable the school to help them improve their behaviour and their attitudes to learning. They ensure that pupils receive suitable opportunities to develop their social skills. Pupils attend group tutorials twice a day. This time is used well to reinforce the moral and social theme of the weekly assembly and to review pupils' attitudes and behaviour through for instance, the merit system. The personal, social and health education programme is effective in providing formal learning opportunities, which prepare pupils well for adult life. The arrangements for careers education and guidance provide a good means of determining how well pupils feel prepared for the future.
47. Pupils' pastoral care is managed and monitored effectively. There is good communication between the teachers and learning support assistants involved with each pupil. Formal meetings, such as the weekly pastoral staff meeting and morning briefings enable everyone to share their concerns about pupils. This facilitates the sharing of information to enable those working with pupils to have very good knowledge and understanding of their needs. The school has also established a pastoral management group, which ensures that the support provided by all those involved with the education and care of pupils is well co-ordinated and checked. The governing body checks effectively the pastoral support provided for pupils by the school and external agencies. This includes monitoring the provision made for pupils with additional special educational needs, and child protection procedures. There are good arrangements for a counsellor to be available in school for two days per week to provide valuable support for pupils. There have been good improvements in the area of pastoral support since the last inspection.

48. The arrangements for assessing and recording pupils' achievements are good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection. They are very good in mathematics and good in all other subjects of the curriculum. However, there is room for improvement in science. The assessment co-ordinator has been effective in supporting the development of systems that appropriately reflect the needs of each subject. The current procedures have been implemented for a year and subject co-ordinators have already identified suitable improvements that will make them more effective. The assessment co-ordinator is aware that teachers need to use targets from individual education plans more consistently to inform the learning and experiences they plan for pupils. The school has useful information about pupils' achievement and the progress they make towards achieving individual targets. However, this information is not being analysed accurately enough to help the school set whole school targets for improving standards. The school has identified this as an area for development.
49. There are good systems to monitor and improve pupils' attendance. Staff have good knowledge of the backgrounds and likely reasons for absence of all pupils and check records of attendance well to identify those pupils who are absent too often. The school has worked hard and used a wide range of good strategies to promote attendance and there are effective links with the education welfare service for those pupils who are causing concern. The good relationships between the school secretary and escorts on the school transport also help to check on and promote attendance. The school places a good emphasis on older pupils learning to use public transport independently. Careers education places a strong emphasis on the importance of punctuality and regular attendance at a place of work.
50. There are clear procedures to manage pupils' behaviour through merit awards and monitoring behaviour, and they are implemented well. Systems are supported by good communication between staff so that they know about pupils' current difficulties and the involvement with external agencies such as the educational psychologist, when referrals are judged appropriate. Pupils clearly understand how the system works. This helps them to learn how to manage their own behaviour better because they know what the consequences will be. The school involves parents when appropriate and this ensures that they receive information about any emerging concerns. This enables them to become involved in helping to address any problems.
51. The systems and procedures to keep a check on pupils' behaviour are good. Staff gather information from these systems effectively to identify trends and successful strategies. However, the school needs to keep a record of any physical management of pupils who have challenging behaviour to confirm that the correct procedures are being followed. Procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour and to eliminate bullying have improved since the last inspection. This has included procedures to eliminate bullying and racism. Although bullying does occur occasionally, pupils say that they feel safe in school and know who to go and talk to if they need help or support. Parents are also confident that the school handles bullying effectively. The systems are well known and when pupils report concerns to staff they respond quickly and sensitively to address the issue. The upper and lower school have different breaks and lunchtimes and this helps to reduce the number of occasions where friction could occur.
52. The school ensures that it addresses pupils' additional problems through the annual review processes and within pupils' individual education plans. Annual review documents, annual reports and individual education plans identify well overall the progress pupils have made since any previous review or report. Annual reviews set and

refer to specific targets and provide an appropriate picture of progress in the previous year. This includes effective collaboration with the speech and language therapy service in identifying pupils who require extra support. Pupils' individual education plans are checked well. They identify short-term targets to promote learning in the areas of literacy, numeracy and personal and social development. The plans also contain suitable targets to help pupils improve their attitudes and behaviour if required. The appointment of a special needs co-ordinator is an improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has established an effective working relationship with the external agencies who provide additional support for pupils.

53. Overall, the school sets targets for pupils to learn well. The school uses National Curriculum level criteria and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's 'P' level criteria to measure achievement. However, for higher attaining pupils, the National Curriculum level descriptors are not sensitive enough to measure the small step achievements that some pupils make. The school is ensuring that pupils are involved in developing an awareness of their own learning by sharing targets with them, by explaining the learning outcomes for lessons and by involving them in the annual review process.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. The school has good relationships with parents and carers. They consider that the school is good and that their children benefit from being there. However, the parents' meeting with the inspectors was not well attended and the percentage return to the parental questionnaire was low. The few parents who attended the meeting provided mostly positive comments about the work of the school. The majority of parents or carers who completed the questionnaire are supportive of the school and of its aims and objectives. However, a significant minority of parents felt that pupils' behaviour was not good.
55. Parents receive good information from the school. Academic reports provide a comprehensive level of information to parents in terms of the details of what their children have been studying over the past year and of the progress they have made. There are also useful comments about possible areas for development. Reports include good information about pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development. The school also sends out weekly newsletters to keep parents informed and these provide a helpful level of detail to assist the many parents who live some distance from the school.
56. Parents have satisfactory involvement in the life of the school. Many live a long distance from the school. This is a significant reason why few parents are regular visitors to the school and little parental support is in evidence during the day-to-day life of the school. However, there are many examples of very positive parental support for their children when they are involved in school performances either at school or at an external venue such as the local theatre. For example, pupils are preparing a very good musical and dance presentation with an environmental theme as part of a GCSE course. They will present this soon to other pupils at the school, parents will be invited to a staged presentation and teachers expect that many parents will attend.
57. The school endeavours to involve parents and carers more in its work. Homework supplements pupils' work at the school. This provides an opportunity for parents to help them with their learning. The school aims to improve parents' involvement and to improve on the current satisfactory level of parental support to pupils both at school and at home. Parents are always welcome to discuss any particular areas of concern in relation to the

progress of their children and to visit the school whenever they wish. Parents value this highly. The school has appointed a teacher recently, to be responsible for parent liaison in its endeavour to improve links with parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The leadership and management by the headteacher and the senior management team is good. Together with governors, they have worked effectively to improve the quality and range of the provision, supported well by teachers and support staff.
59. The headteacher leads effectively. This has ensured that nearly all the key issues from the previous report have been addressed. He sets a very good example to others and is very visible around the school, providing valued support to staff and pupils. All members of the senior management team make a good contribution to the leadership and management of the school. The most recent member of the senior management team has recently completed a national course for headteachers and senior leadership and is keen to apply his new skills.
60. The headteacher has been successful in maintaining staff morale at a high level. This has been difficult, as the school has had a range of staffing difficulties in recent years. Good staff appointments have been made and a stable staff developed. In 2001, the LEA implemented a review of special education provision in the county and the outcome will influence the future of the school. The headteacher and senior management team have evaluated challenges that face the school and future developments well. This includes a clear view of the changing school population and the need to work closely with other schools to maximise opportunities for pupils to attend each other's schools. This is particularly important since the school does not currently admit pupils into the primary department.
61. The school meets its stated aims well and provides a good, safe environment for pupils where they feel secure and can make progress. The aims and policies are well reflected in the work of the school. . The good relationships between adults and pupils reinforce the high expectations for pupils' personal development and educational attainment. The school's planning system is based on individual pupil targets that help pupils make progress. Whole school targets have recently been introduced for pupils with the intention of raising standards. These are complemented well by individual targets set for pupils in their academic work and personal or behavioural targets. Good use is made of these targets in pupils' annual reviews, where targets set the previous year are measured against progress made. The school is good at collecting data about its performance, and is now at the stage where it is ready to evaluate the data to use it more effectively.
62. The senior management team led staff well through 'Threshold' procedures last year. This has complemented other measures to make good improvements to the quality of teaching and learning across the school. 'Performance management' is well established. The headteacher has taken on the role of team leader for all teaching staff. All teachers have agreed performance targets, been formally observed teaching, had formal comments and are now in their second cycle. These work well in identifying directions for improvements since there is a link with staff training. LSAs receive appraisal by senior management annually and have an interim review every six months. This is good practice and works well. Several LSAs have developed specific skills and are attached to particular areas. For instance, they provide support for pupils to use computers. They

also provide support in physical education and science lessons and supervise medication. There are good systems for the induction of staff. The most recent members of the teaching and support staff valued their induction and the support they received. There has been good training to implement the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies for pupils up to Year 9. The strategies are being implemented well and pupils are making good progress.

63. The governing body meets its statutory responsibilities well. Governors are committed to the success of the school and are wholehearted in their support for the work of the headteacher. They are frequent visitors to the school and have good knowledge of the day-to-day procedures. Governors provide effective support to formulate the school's plans for development and ensure that the priorities are the best ones for the school to pursue. A recent innovation of the governing body is to appoint a 'duty governor'. In this way, all governors visit the school on weekly rotation. This works well to strengthen relationships between governors, staff and pupils and it underlines the governors' commitment to get to know each pupil and to support the work of the school.
64. In spite of very good efforts by the school, the key issue of unsatisfactory accommodation identified in the last report remains. The raising of funds and creation of a building for expressive arts was a significant achievement. The school's own painting programme is a heroic effort but is not succeeding in stemming the deterioration of the fabric of the main building. The deputy headteacher (one word) has made great efforts to obtain grants for school improvement but without success. The hall is too small for secondary physical education. It provides a corridor to gain access to other classrooms and changing rooms are unsatisfactory. However, the school makes good use of outside facilities to supplement the lessons in physical education, such as using a local tennis club. There are insufficient 'time out' rooms, where pupils with behavioural difficulties can go for instance, to calm down. This makes it difficult to retain pupils on the premises. Consequently, this contributes to the number of exclusions being higher than it should be. The rooms for design and technology and food technology are too small for the size of groups. The computer suite is too small for the number of pupils using it. The lighting is poor and the lack of ventilation affects pupils' ability to concentrate on their work. The library is too small although the school is planning to move the books to a room that is already used for computers. Two mobile classrooms are too small, lack storage and toilets, and are in a poor state of repair. This was evident in an art lesson when pupils had little room to work, they had no means of washing their brushes and there was a lack of space to store their ongoing work.
65. The provision of learning resources is satisfactory overall. Resources for design and technology, mathematics, information and communication technology, religious education and personal, social and health education are good. Teachers, such as in mathematics, make their own resources, which ensures that they are suitable and matched well to the needs of individual pupils. Resources for music are very good and contribute very well to pupils' success in the subject. The library is under-resourced. There is a lack of storage space in the school for resources.
66. Financial planning is good. The headteacher, school finance officer and governors have firm control over planning the budget. They ensure that funds are directed to the areas of need. This has been a very important part of the school's work because of the limited funding available. Many pupils have additional behavioural difficulties and this places great demands upon staff and resources. For instance, senior staff and others are constantly engaged in supporting pupils who have great difficulty behaving. The school

development plan sets out well what is to be achieved and contains costs. The school looks for ways to attract other support and funding for its pupils. For instance, one of the most recent successful projects was the provision of a suite of computers to promote pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy. This was provided through partnership with a local secondary school.

67. The finance committee of the governing body provides good oversight of finances and meets on a regular basis to check and review the budget. The accounts produced by the school finance officer and the headteacher are presented in a way which is easily understood and much appreciated by the governing body to enable them to keep a watchful eye on spending. There is good day-to-day management of the finances of the school. The school secretary and the finance officer run the office efficiently. There is close liaison between the finance officer and the LEA finance department to maintain a check on expenditure. The school uses new technology for administration satisfactorily.
68. Specific grants made to the school are used well to improve training and raise standards such as in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Money is appropriately earmarked for staff training through the New Opportunities Fund. Staff who are pursuing this training, such as ICT skills, are complimentary about the standard and are keen to participate, incorporating their new skills into their planning and report writing.
69. The school is committed to gaining the best value in the way that it uses funds and succeeds well. It closely examines and compares financial data of special schools in Kent as one of the ways of comparing its income and standards with similar schools. In view of the good quality of teaching and learning, pupils' good achievement, the good leadership of the school and the relatively low cost per pupil when taking into account the large number of pupils who have additional behavioural difficulties, the school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. In order to raise standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- I. Improve pupils' achievement in science. (Paragraphs 6, 18, 32, 86-90.)
- II. Continue to work in partnership with the local education authority to improve the quality of the accommodation. (Paragraphs 13, 64, 65, 78, 101, 117, 132.)

The following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Improve the way that information from assessment is used to plan for what pupils will learn next. (Paragraph 48, 78.)
- Continue to seek ways with other schools to increase inclusion opportunities for pupils. (Paragraph 31, 38, 99.)
- Improve systems for recording incidents of the physical management of behaviour. (Paragraph 51.)
- Clarify with the local education authority and the Department for Education and Skills the age group of pupils the school intends to take. (Paragraph 33, 60.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	82
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	62

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	16	45	16	1		
Percentage	5	19.5	55	19.5	1		

Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	118
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.	55

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	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	11.5

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	1.9

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

It is not appropriate to set out the achievement of pupils in external accreditation in table form or to compare the results with those of different groups of pupils in previous years. In 2001, 20 pupils gained a GCSE in expressive arts. In the Certificate of Educational Achievement (CoA): 7 pupils gained a merit and 12 a distinction in English, 7 pupils gained a merit and 8 a distinction in mathematics, 7 gained a merit and 12 a distinction in science and 20 pupils gained a distinction in information technology. 19 pupils achieved a bronze award in ASDAN.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	1
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	117
Any other minority ethnic group	

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	27	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y 7– Y 11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.45
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.2:1
Average class size	12

Education support staff: Y 7 – Y 11

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	324

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	696903
Total expenditure	693806
Expenditure per pupil	5880
Balance brought forward from previous year	29245
Balance carried forward to next year	32342

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
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Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	118
Number of questionnaires returned	29

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	41	45	7	7	0
My child is making good progress in school.	28	52	3	10	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	31	24	7	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	52	10	14	7
The teaching is good.	45	28	0	3	24
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	42	10	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	31	3	7	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	24	3	7	3
The school works closely with parents.	55	28	7	7	3
The school is well led and managed.	59	21	3	10	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	31	7	10	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	35	10	3	21

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

ENGLISH

71. Pupils throughout the school achieve well and make good progress. In the past year, the majority of pupils in Year 11 achieved at least a merit in the CoA, with 12 achieving distinctions. The quality of teaching and learning is good. This represents a good improvement in standards since the previous inspection. The school's emphasis upon ensuring that teachers have good skills to teach the subject, have made an important contribution to promoting higher standards. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy to lessons for pupils up to Year 9 has been successful and has improved teachers' planning with a consequent improvement in pupils' progress.
72. Teachers take good account of pupils' abilities and prepare work to meet their needs. They provide good levels of support which ensures that lower attaining pupils and those with additional special needs achieve well. There is no difference in the attainment of girls and boys. Pupils of all ages and abilities achieve well in speaking and listening, reading and writing because planning is good and teachers have high expectations for pupils to achieve. Pupils who have autism receive good support to achieve well and make good progress. The good relationships between pupils and teachers, particularly for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is an important reason why pupils work so well in lessons and make good progress. Although teachers manage pupils' behaviour well overall, occasionally they are less successful. For instance in an otherwise satisfactory lesson for pupils in Year 8, the teacher did not gain pupils' attention at the start of the lesson and time was lost explaining later.
73. Pupils make good progress in communication. For instance, pupils in Year 7 concentrated upon the teacher's interesting explanation to formulate their own instructions to describe well how to get out of a maze. Effective support from the learning support assistant (LSA) ensured that the instructions were reinforced well and this enabled lower attaining pupils to work equally hard and achieve well. By the end of Year 9 pupils communicate well and are able to work together to determine common views. For instance, pupils in Year 9 discussed ideas for a magazine in pairs to agree the 'target audience', how they will set their magazine out and choose cover illustrations. Pupils were successful because the teacher provided them with good opportunities to discuss many related topics in previous lessons. Pupils in Year 10 listened well to the story of 'The Legend of Alderley' because they knew they were going to be asked questions by the teacher. One-word answers are not accepted and through good questioning and prompting, they could explain in more detail.
74. Teachers have good expectations and plan well for pupils to improve their reading. Through regular planned periods of reading and reading at other times of the day, pupils make good progress in developing skills and in forming an interest in a good range of literature. Pupils up to Year 9 make good progress in reading because they receive regular turns to read to the teacher or LSA or during shared reading in class. Teachers are realistic about pupils' abilities and ensure that pupils make good progress by preparing plenty of supporting materials such as videos, pictures and modified texts. This ensures that pupils of all abilities are successful. Pupils in Year 11 have made good progress in studying texts such as, 'Of Mice and Men' and 'Romeo and Juliet' because teachers have provided good opportunities for them to discuss their ideas. All pupils

- perform well because teachers expect each pupil to read according to their ability, and ensure that lower attaining pupils receive sufficient support. Pupils are confident to attempt the reading tasks because others in the class are supportive and patient if someone stumbles. Pupils are confident to use the reading strategies they have learnt to help them with unfamiliar words. Pupils have good planned times to practise reading and for staff to hear them using the school's reading scheme. This ensures that they make good progress in developing reading skills.
75. Where teaching is enthusiastic, such as in a Year 7 lesson about writing instructions and a Year 10 lesson about legends and mysteries, pupils approach learning eagerly, clearly recognising their success when they contribute effectively. Year 11 pupils enjoy their work about planning a holiday. They are confident to share their notes with each other when they decide what they will need to pack in their suitcase and what they will write on their postcard home. Teaching in expressive arts is particularly enthusiastic and pupils have very good opportunities to take part in drama work. Their examination pieces demonstrate their ability to write short sketches that include dialogue and to develop character and plot through confident performances. Pupils' good achievements in writing throughout the school are in part due to teachers providing interesting work for them to do and the positive attitude pupils develop through their success that motivates them well to make more progress. Teachers provide very good support and encouragement during lessons which enables pupils to sustain their efforts. Praise boosts pupils' self-esteem effectively and helps them identify their achievements. Sensitive suggestions enable pupils to improve their work because they are able to consider alternatives and develop their ideas further. However, few pupils develop cursive script and the co-ordinator for English recognises that this is an area for development.
76. Teachers ensure that pupils make good use of their literacy skills in other lessons as well as English. They expect pupils to read from worksheets, the whiteboard, their own work and textbooks. This contributes effectively to their progress and to the confidence with which they approach unfamiliar texts. In religious education for instance, pupils in Year 10 are given good opportunities to read text aloud during a lesson about the roots of Sikhism and the teachings of Guru Nanak. The teacher provides text of different difficulty so that pupils of all abilities can contribute. There is a good emphasis on writing within other subjects, where teachers promote pupils' writing well through a good range of topics. The English co-ordinator has high expectations for pupils to make progress and is planning improvements to pupils' targets for learning literacy to enable teachers to improve on their planning to promote pupils' literacy skills in other lessons throughout the day.
77. Pupils up to Year 9 have regular lessons to use the 'Success-Maker' computer programme during lessons and this is helping pupils to make good progress in developing basic skills in literacy. There are satisfactory examples of pupils using computers to produce a finished example of their written work. For instance, pupils in Year 10 type out their mystery stories and pupils in Year 11 re-draft their written assignments for accreditation. However, there is scope for pupils to use computers more regularly to help them with their work.
78. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and this has led to good improvements since the previous inspection. There are three teachers responsible for teaching English and they have good information to help them plan learning. Plans are already in place to write better targets to help pupils improve and enable teachers to measure progress more accurately. Although resources are satisfactory overall, there is a shortage of some books that accompany courses. The library, in terms of accommodation and book

stocks, remains unsatisfactory and does not provide a location where pupils can learn to select from a sufficiently wide range of books to help them with their work.

MATHEMATICS

79. All pupils achieve well and make good progress in mathematics. This is evident in their good results in courses leading to national awards. There has been a very good improvement in mathematics since the last inspection. Pupils, particularly older pupils, make better progress, which coincides with a similar improvement in teaching. In contrast to the time of the last inspection, there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. Pupils now have increased opportunities to take courses leading to recognised qualifications because of improved curriculum planning. The very good improvement is also a consequence of providing specialist teaching for pupils as they progress beyond Year 7 and establishing the National Numeracy Strategy for younger pupils.
80. Pupils achieve so well because of the high quality of teaching and the good range of learning opportunities they receive. Activities are planned in very fine detail to form good courses of study that enable pupils to improve progressively during their time at school. Learning is often fun. For instance, pupils in Year 7 were excited to match 3-D shapes with pictures because they realised that they were making good progress in remembering the common solids. They have developed a good vocabulary to describe their shapes in terms of edges and corners through the teacher's consistent promotion of the correct words at the beginning of the lesson and constant checking. By the end of Year 9, pupils have settled into a busy routine in lessons. They enter the room usually knowing what they will be doing because they are building steadily on learning from previous lessons. For instance in one lesson for pupils in Year 9, the higher attaining pupils proceeded to solve problems involving hundreds, tens and units while lower attaining pupils worked with smaller numbers. A feature of many lessons is the way that pupils take turns to use a computer programme to improve their basic skills of numeracy. Pupils are aware of how well they are performing since they receive constant information on the screen. There is friendly competition to see who can get the highest score.
81. An important feature in the pupils' success in mathematics is the very good way in which teachers ensure that they plan for pupils to learn by matching tasks to their different levels of ability. This means that each pupil receives appropriate work and thereby progresses at his or her own pace. Pupils have their own learning tasks set out as 'targets' to achieve in the front of their work folders. Their accomplishment of these is tested regularly, so that both the teacher and pupil have a good understanding of the learning that has taken place and what needs to be done. Pupils develop the confidence to tackle difficult tasks by the high expectations of their teachers. They apply themselves to their tasks diligently, with interest and concentration. They take pride in their success and are careful in the way that they present and keep their work.
82. This very good planning increases the opportunities for pupils who have learning difficulties to gain success. Consequently, there is no significant difference in the progress made by high attaining or low attaining pupils. The approach of pupils working on their own assignments is usually successful and enables pupils to follow their own individual programmes independently in lessons, particularly those older pupils who are following courses leading to national awards. Pupils in Year 11 are making good progress designing rooms for their accredited assignments. In one lesson the teacher explained the task of how to estimate the amount of paint required for a room so well that

pupils proceeded to work independently. A small number of higher attaining pupils are studying for GCSE. They are making good progress learning algebra and are able to solve simple equations containing one unknown quantity. They find the subject difficult but this enables them to enjoy their success when they solve problems with help.

83. In a few lessons there is too much emphasis on individual assignments and pupils miss the benefits and the enjoyment of sharing ideas and learning from each other. However, this is not the case in all lessons for pupils up to Year 9, when pupils benefit from the frequent whole-group activities that are part of the National Numeracy Strategy. The behaviour of pupils in mathematics lessons is good, with any lapses by more challenging pupils being quickly resolved by application of the school's agreed behaviour management procedures.
84. Teachers use computers effectively to support pupils' learning. Pupils use them to help them complete their individual assignments. Pupils also make good use of computers to find information for their projects. For example, older pupils find prices of furniture for their assignment about decorating and furnishing their own room by searching the Internet.
85. Strong leadership has raised standards in mathematics very well throughout the school. The subject is well resourced. The specialist mathematics room for older pupils, however, is not satisfactory accommodation for the number and ages of pupils who use it.

SCIENCE

86. Pupils' attainment and progress in science are satisfactory. The teaching of science is satisfactory. This is a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection when the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory in only half of lessons. The last report drew attention to the significant proportion of pupils who exhibited bad behaviour, which was inhibiting pupils' progress. Significant improvements to the way that staff improve pupils' behaviour has largely ensured that pupils behave well. Nineteen pupils received accreditation in the CoA last year and the school has recently introduced GCSEs for higher attaining pupils. However, currently, pupils' attainments remain satisfactory. This is because pupils, particularly the higher attaining pupils, lack sufficient knowledge in areas such as handling data, use of computers and independent experimental work.
87. By Year 9, pupils have developed an understanding of basic experimental skills as well as the capacity to draw observations from teacher demonstrations. In Year 7 for example, pupils are able to use everyday materials such as kitchen towels and polystyrene to measure their absorption and insulation properties to maintain temperature. Pupils are also beginning to understand how information such as temperatures, can be recorded in tables. Occasionally pupils make good progress in lessons. For instance, pupils in Year 8 made good progress understanding how human bones and joints work together. This was because the teacher had planned resources very well before the lesson so that pupils could learn how bones articulate by using pre-prepared models. However, by Year 9, experimental skills remain at an elementary level. Although satisfactory overall, there are missed opportunities for pupils to draw conclusions for themselves. This weakness was apparent in a lesson for pupils in Year 9 relating to the use of steam or solar power to generate electricity. The lesson depended too much upon on the teacher's demonstration and the subsequent analysis of data, with pupils copying rather than working independently.

88. By Year 11, pupils have established knowledge of a diverse range of scientific information. They know about the natural decay of materials in the ground, the capacity of the human lungs and the properties of magnets. However, there are weaknesses. There are occasional missed opportunities to allow pupils to work independently. Written work in a few instances is dependent on undemanding tasks such as copying questions from a textbook.
89. Although teachers' planning for lessons is satisfactory overall, a few do not begin with clear objectives and pupils are not made aware of the work to be covered. This affects the pace of this minority of lessons and hinders pupils' concentration. Pupils' development of scientific vocabulary is less effective because the teacher does not consistently identify the important phrases in lesson planning and provide the means by which this vocabulary can be recorded by pupils. Occasionally planning does not take full account of pupils' needs identified in their individual education plans or the means by which the work can be matched to their abilities. However, the learning support assistants play a significant role in ensuring the participation of lower attaining pupils by helping them, for instance, with reading.
90. The management of science is satisfactory overall. The long term planning sets out well the work to be covered. Satisfactory planning is in place to enable non-specialists to lead lessons for the youngest pupils and promote suitable skills. However, several issues require addressing to improve standards further. The assessment of pupils' work lacks rigour and does not give pupils appropriate guidance for improvement. There is a lack of clarity as to how the targets for pupils to achieve more in examinations are arrived at and how they should influence teaching. Resources for learning are good, with better quality computers provided since the last inspection. However, computers are currently under-used by pupils.

ART AND DESIGN

91. Pupils' achievement in art and design is excellent by the time they leave school. The quality of teaching and learning is very good for pupils up to Year 9. It is excellent for pupils in Years 10 and 11 where they achieve exceptional success in the expressive arts GCSE. In 2001, twenty pupils achieved passes in the GCSE examination. The 1997 report judged that progress was very good and quality teaching combined with successful management has maintained these strengths and built on them further.
92. Through teachers' careful fostering of interest and commitment for pupils to take care with their work in Year 7, pupils develop the foundations very well for later work. Pupils in Year 7 for example, make good progress developing skills of colour usage and shape by following exciting topics such as the creation of fantasy landscapes based on science fiction and other photographs. The results demonstrate pupils' recognition of the importance of colour and shape in the creation of an imaginative and intriguing picture. Pupils develop appreciation through an early introduction to the work of famous artists such as Turner and O'Keefe. This enables pupils to consider issues such as whether pictures should look like their subjects or if they should create them to express their own individuality. In Year 8, pupils continue to build on their early foundations. Pupils develop both their making skills and their imagination in a wide range of forms such as creating representations of Aztec artefacts. Pupils develop a wide range of techniques and make excellent progress in Year 9 under the expert guidance of the specialist art and design teacher. For instance, they compose impressive compositions, rubbing over the shape

of a winged figure with wax crayon and colour washing in response to observing the work of a famous artist.

93. Pupils make excellent progress from Year 10 onwards and by Year 11 pupils have developed mature skills. They develop an awareness of how to use light and shade to create dramatic flourishes in sketching as well as an understanding of perspective and shape. A knowledge and empathy with famous artists such as Van Gough and Salvador Dali informs their own work as well as giving them knowledge of a wider culture. The work of older pupils is of a highly stimulating and sophisticated nature.
94. In an excellent lesson for pupils in Year 10 pupils sketched a copy of Van Gough's "Sunflowers". The previous development of skills and knowledge combined with very good relationships with the teacher provides pupils with the confidence to undertake work of both a challenging and emotional nature. The teacher's insistence on excellent standards and a mature approach to learning has a very positive effect on pupils' developing skills. The pupils' commitment to work of this standard is evident in their ability to concentrate for more than two hours. Pupils' evaluation of their work is a significant strength. Pupils have insight and understanding, exemplified by one pupil who said "the pencil sketch of the tools is clear and precise but I prefer the freedom and power of the pen drawing of the flowers." Such standards are a consequence of the quality of the teaching throughout the school.
95. The very good management of art has also had a significantly positive effect on pupils' learning. This has ensured that the provision of art is a success not only in furthering pupils' knowledge and skills but also in creating a supportive atmosphere in which they can explore their own creative needs. The careful use of homework for sketching not only gives the pupils the opportunity to practise their skills but also provides them with the freedom to explore new methods and ideas. Similarly, the use of computers to edit and devise pictures opens a new range of artistic work for the pupils. The careful and sympathetic assessing of work, in which pupils play a full part, is useful in both tracking pupils' progress and developing their own artistic appreciation. Very good use is made of the art room to create a stimulating and exciting atmosphere by touches such as displaying the logos of bags from art galleries around the world.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

96. Pupils' achievement in design and technology (DT) is good. Pupils achieve very well and make good progress in the lessons they receive in the workshop, and well in food technology lessons. The provision has improved since the last inspection when pupils' achievement was satisfactory. The co-ordinator has worked effectively to raise standards across the school. Planning follows the latest requirements for the subject. Consequently, the quality of teaching and learning has improved and is good in food technology and very good in the workshop. The planning for what pupils will learn is set out well to ensure that pupils receive good provision.
97. By the end of Year 8, pupils design and build a scale model of the school. Their planning is good. They measure accurately and convert their measurements to scale to make a model. They attach their preliminary drawings on to MDF (medium density fibreboard) and cut out accurately. By the end of Year 9, pupils carry out a 'casting' project of moulding models, using low melting point casting metal. This is an ambitious project that pupils enjoy. Pupils receive very good support and supervision to build simple moulds

and pour in molten metal. They are delighted when they take out their casting, clean, and drill it to put onto a key ring or bracelet.

98. Lessons are prepared and planned well. Relationships in class are very good and pupils are well behaved and work diligently. Staff manage pupils who have challenging behaviour particularly well. Health and safety procedures are continually emphasised throughout lessons. Consequently, pupils understand the need for safety in the workshop, and fully comply showing a mature attitude to their work. At the end of lessons or topics, pupils carry out a self-assessment of their work. This is interesting as they are asked to detail how they accomplished their work, and which areas they liked and why. They rise to the challenge to give good explanations and this enhances their literacy skills.
99. Pupils up to Year 10 receive lessons in food technology in the specialist room. Through a well-planned series of lessons, pupils make good progress in the food technology room. They learn how to plan, cost and cook simple meals, such as spaghetti Bolognese and apple crumble. They build up vocabulary, gradually moving from using simplified instructions to follow recipes in cookery books. Pupils learn well how to create menus and consider the nutritional balance of meals. The promotion of reading and writing in lessons and working with measures enhances their literacy and numeracy skills well. Pupils complete good accounts of their work and weigh, measure and gauge time accurately. One Year 7 class attends a local secondary technical school for a weekly lesson. Pupils benefit from using the host school's food technology room and being taught by the main school staff. Pupils make good progress in lessons and the arrangements provide a very good opportunity for them to develop social skills. This builds up pupils' self-esteem and confidence, serving as very good preparation for further opportunities for inclusion.
100. By the end of Year 11, pupils design and make wooden 'cameos'. They plan and design their work in meticulous detail. Pupils use the digital camera and this provides them with a 'profile' photograph that they use for the cameo. The planning for pupils to use computers to support their learning has improved well since the last inspection when pupils did not use computers sufficiently. Pupils measure and set out their work well and then produce their final shapes in fibreboard. The teacher is skilled in supporting them to create a very good finish by applying paint. Pupils gain in self-esteem with the completion of their impressive cameos. Pupils enjoy their work, take pride in their efforts and look forward to their lessons.
101. The subject is well led and managed. The workshop for DT and the food technology room are too small for the size of groups that they take. There is insufficient provision for the storage of ongoing work.

GEOGRAPHY

102. Pupils' achievements are good and they make good progress over time. These standards are high because of well-planned lessons that incorporate a good variety of methods to promote learning and make good use of a range of interesting resources. The quality of teaching is good. There has been a satisfactory improvement in the progress that pupils make and in teaching since the last inspection.
103. Pupils between Years 7 and 9 make good progress. In Year 7, pupils are developing a good understanding of the value of maps and are learning how to use the symbols on a

map to extract information. Teachers plan well to ensure that tasks match pupils' ability with the result that higher attaining pupils receive sufficient challenge to progress to using four figure references with more confidence and accuracy. Imaginative teaching in a lesson about volcanoes, including the use of relevant wall displays motivated pupils well. They developed a very good understanding of their composition and used correct terminology such as cone, ash and lava when they recorded what they had learnt. The worksheets provided by the teacher were carefully matched to the pupils' different learning needs and this made a significant contribution to helping pupils to make progress.

104. Pupils in Year 8 continue to make progress as they use their map skills to identify Europe and pick out their chosen country for study. Pupils learn how people utilise land in different countries. In a lesson about the tropical rain forests, the teacher's and learning support assistant's careful questioning and prompting increased pupils' knowledge of how indigenous people use forests. Teachers make increasing demands of the pupils to make comparisons between their own lives and locality with the lives and localities of other people. This develops pupils' investigative skills well.
105. During Year 9, teachers continue to plan well to build on the pupils' previous learning in a systematic way. Teachers revise previous work on climates before introducing "planet earth". Consequently, pupils show a growing understanding of the 'greenhouse effect'. Pupils increase their knowledge of the water cycle by studying river erosion and the use of rivers for power, irrigation and industry. Pupils identify potential sources of river pollution such as, industry, farms and settlements. Teachers employ the pupils' increasing confidence in mathematics to compare countries by abstracting data about them from the world atlas. Pupils compared populations and population density to consider the relative development of different countries.
106. In Years 10 and 11, pupils build up a portfolio of work as part of their C o A course. A study of natural hazards provides them with the opportunity to re-visit previous work on volcanoes in more detail, including the study of the Mount Pinatubo catastrophe. Their earlier work on rivers provides a foundation for developing a better understanding of major floods such as those that take place in Bangladesh. In a successful lesson about land-use in Brazil, the teacher ensured that the learning support assistant shared the lesson's objectives. Together, they provided very well targeted support to pupils for instance, for lower attaining pupils. Teachers made good use of the Internet to support this unit to provide coloured maps. This provided good motivation for pupils.
107. The co-ordinator for geography provides good leadership for the subject and has a clear idea about how the subject should continue to develop and improve. Planning for what pupils will learn is better than at the time of the previous inspection. There is now a balanced amount of time for the study of economic activities and development. Ongoing assessment in class is consistently good and enhanced by the recent addition of a skills profile sheet for each pupil.

HISTORY

108. Pupils achieve well in history and make good progress over time. The quality of teaching is good. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection in the pupils' attitudes to and the teaching of the subject. Good planning and effective support from LSAs ensures that all pupils, including those who have additional special educational

needs, make equally good progress. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not receive lessons in history.

109. Pupils in Year 7 make good progress understanding how to investigate a historical topic. They are aware of the need to locate a period in time and to gather information, both factual and interpreted. The teacher's questioning guides pupils consistently well, so that they answer why something happened and what the effect was. Pupils enjoyed applying the investigative skills that they have developed in a lesson about medieval villages. The teacher provided a very good aerial photograph of Warram Percy to aid pupils' understanding. Pupils used their knowledge of structures in their own locality to decide what would have been present in a medieval village.
110. Pupils in Year 8 make good progress in a lesson to understand chronology. They were motivated well to use information sheets. These highlight important names and dates to enable pupils to transfer them to a time line. Higher attaining pupils achieved well, recording their work using computers. Pupils progress well to look for events and their causes under political, economic, social and religious headings. For instance, they considered the heading of 'social' in the lesson about the Plague. As a consequence of this well organised lesson, pupils know about the causes of the Plague, understand why people left London and empathised with the horror of the scene
111. Pupils in Year 9 are more able at make comparisons because the teacher refers well to previous work so that pupils become better at identifying changes over time. They study life in Britain between 1750 and 1900. Pupils know about the industrial developments in Coalbrookdale and the effect this had on the lives of children in coal mines and factories. The teacher's consistent use of appropriate drawings and photographs is successful in stimulating pupils' thinking. Pupils responded with enthusiasm and understanding to well-planned lessons about life in the trenches during the First World War. The teacher's careful questioning and prompting ensured that all pupils understood life and death in the trenches. In a very good follow-up lesson to write "letters home to mother", higher attaining pupils' written work was very good.
112. History is led and managed well by the co-ordinator who has drawn up a good plan for how the subject should continue to develop. The guidelines provided by the co-ordinator for the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. This ensures that teachers plan well to ensure that pupils develop well in these areas when they study history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

113. Pupils' achievement and progress are good. The school has succeeded well to improve the provision for information and communication technology (ICT). At the time of the last inspection, pupils' progress was largely satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is now good. Pupils achieve well in accreditation, with twenty pupils gaining distinctions in the Certificate of Educational Achievement last year.
114. Pupils respond well to the high expectations to begin working productively as soon as they enter the room. They behave well, respond well and show good attitudes to their work. By the end of Year 9, pupils are highly motivated by computers. They are competent using a 'mouse' and keyboard. Pupils are very respectful of the expensive equipment they use. When they complete their work, they save their data, sign off and

switch down the computer correctly. They grow in confidence and skills using computers. The teacher explains new terms carefully, displaying important words during the lesson. Lessons promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills well for instance, presenting their work graphically.

115. By the end of Year 11, pupils receive external recognition for their achievements. They input text, add paragraphs, present text in different ways, and use graphics to make their work more attractive. One of the effective strategies used in lessons, is the way in which the teacher encourages pupils to work together. This improves pupils' personal skills of sharing and considering other pupils' needs as well as their own, when they act as members of a team.
116. Teachers throughout the school plan well for pupils to use computers to support their learning in most subjects. Teachers obtain good reference materials from the Internet to support lessons for instance, to provide information about different countries to support geography lessons. Pupils are confident to use the Internet effectively to research topics in other subjects. Part of a classroom is used to house the computers that run the 'Success Maker' literacy and numeracy programmes. This equipment has been developed in partnership with a local technical school. Pupils up to Year 9 receive frequent opportunities to use the computers to improve their basic skills of literacy and numeracy, where the computers provide a record of pupils' progress. Pupils in Years 10 and 11, follow the ASDAN scheme, in which they complete the data-handling module. Older pupils demonstrate their confidence in using computers when setting out their personal statements for their Youth Award Scheme work at the end of Year 11.
117. A new co-ordinator has been appointed and leadership and management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has good plans for improvement. This has already led to significant improvement in standards of teaching and learning. Resources throughout the school are now good. All classrooms have at least one computer. The school has a small computer suite. However, lighting is inadequate and ventilation insufficient.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

FRENCH

118. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 have lessons in French and achieve well. The quality of teaching and learning is good. This represents good progress since the last inspection when most pupils made unsatisfactory progress.
119. Pupils make good progress because of good planning, which encourages them to learn and use a growing vocabulary. Pupils occasionally come to lessons exhibiting inappropriate behaviour and this may affect how much they learn in the lessons. However, procedures to encourage pupils to improve their behaviour are usually successful. This was evident in a lesson for pupils in Year 7 where they were encouraged to improve their co-operation with the reward of playing a favourite board game to learn the numbers thrown on dice. Pupils greet each other in French. They can name fruit and are improving their pronunciation through good planning to provide them with plenty of practice. Pupils are building on this learning well by expressing their likes and dislikes of fruit.

120. Pupils in Year 8 continue to make good progress. They have a growing understanding of vocabulary to name and talk about objects in the classroom. For instance, they select a book on command, give, and receive, using please and thank you. Although there is a good range of work planned for pupils to follow in lessons, there are occasional missed opportunities to provide additional opportunities for higher attaining pupils to learn more. This was evident when higher attaining pupils were interested in learning more about the similarities between French and English words and gender but did not have sufficient opportunity.
121. By the end of Year 9, pupils have learnt basic vocabulary. With help, they can reply to questions about where they live and how they feel. They continue to learn to count in French. The teacher increases pupils' interest in lessons well by using video for them to listen to people speaking French, for instance in Guadeloupe. They are aware that French is the language of a number of countries. Pupils relate the incidence of language to historical reasons and this makes a good contribution to promoting their understanding of other cultures. They are looking forward to their day trip to France and this is providing good motivation for them to learn more vocabulary.
122. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and this has led to good improvements since the last inspection in the planning for what pupils will learn. The school recognises the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to use computers to help them with their work.

MUSIC

123. Achievement and progress are excellent. The school has maintained the excellent quality of teaching and learning evident at the last inspection. The excellent subject knowledge and extremely high expectations of the teacher ensures that pupils share the enthusiasm for the subject. The high quality of the teaching of skills, in conjunction with copious, sensitive encouragement, praise and positive criticism, enables them to give of their best.
124. There is comprehensive planning for music lessons that enables pupils to gain a full appreciation and understanding of music. Pupils learn the practical skills of making music with a variety of instruments. The programme for older pupils includes music as an essential component of an examination course in the expressive arts. A few pupils make further progress when they receive individual instrument tuition from external tutors who visit the school.
125. Pupils enjoy their music lessons and apply themselves to learning skills with the utmost seriousness, pride and enjoyment. Lesson planning is impressively elaborate to ensure that all pupils are fully included and they receive tasks to match their individual abilities. There is a good sense of team spirit in which high attaining pupils routinely assist lower attaining pupils to succeed, for example, by helping them keep time to a beat.
126. The teacher provides expert guidance to ensure that pupils persist with their practice. For example, during the inspection pupils in Year 9 were learning about musical devices found in jazz sequences. They practised counting and clapping the beats of the 12 bar blues rigorously many times before moving on to use xylophones to practice a chord change.

127. Visiting musicians and musical events enrich pupils' learning. These have an excellent multicultural flavour. For example, pupils in Years 8 and 9 were involved in workshops held at the school by a leading group who perform African and Caribbean music. Pupils also have excellent opportunities to demonstrate their talents in performances, holding musical concerts. These are very popular with parents. Pupils have also taken part in performances held in the local theatre, Canterbury Cathedral and have performed at other local schools.
128. The expressive arts for pupils in Years 10 and 11 has two major areas of study: the performing arts and the visual arts. The school has a long tradition of excellence in the performing arts, which is born out by the excellent examination results achieved by pupils over the years in the expressive arts. Pupils compose their own music in groups for their examination presentations and, in their enthusiasm to get these absolutely right, they learn to be self-critical as well as offering positive comments about the work of others. When pupils work in small groups to complete projects, they use music, mime, drama and movement to express their creative interpretation of a specified theme. Pupils take project planning very seriously, with the contributions of all members of the group being valued.
129. Pupils enjoy the sessions and work extremely hard in them. Their self-esteem grows almost visibly as their performances begin to take shape. They perform their projects for an external examination. The current examination theme is "freedom". Pupils practise for their performances until they become well "polished". The results demonstrate excellent achievements in music and expressive language learning. During the inspection, for example, by the end of a 3-hour session, the dialogue used in pupils' presentations, entitled "Homeless" and "Romance" develops from short, sometimes disjointed phrases, to fluent sentences that build up into a gripping story line. A similar improvement in fluency occurs in their music sequences.
130. Music on its own and as part of the expressive arts curriculum, remains a strength of the school. It is very well resourced. For example, there is a wide choice of instruments and information and electronic equipment. This includes video cameras and monitors for reviewing work. There is very good accommodation, which was purpose-built with funds raised by the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

131. Pupils' achievements and progress in physical education are good. The quality of teaching and learning is better than at the time of the last inspection.
132. The hall is satisfactory for gymnastics and dance but is not suitable for activities such as indoor games. However, the co-ordinator has been very successful in arranging to use community facilities to make up for the hall's deficits. These include using the local public swimming pool and an excellent climbing wall at a high school. Pupils receive coaching at a private tennis club and at a sailing club. They benefit from using the local university's sports hall and athletics facilities. The activities are supplemented by the use of the school's own very good field, suitable for football, cricket, hockey, small ball games and athletics, and two marked hard areas.
133. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 make good progress. They enjoy their lessons, work with effort and show pleasure in their achievements and the progress that they make. The praise that

teachers and support staff provide contributes significantly to their feeling of success. Pupils play cricket, football netball and hockey well. They are developing good athletics skills in throwing, jumping and running. Despite an understandable wish to “get on with the game” or take part in running or athletic training, most pupils understand the need to warm up for skill practice. They demonstrated this well in one session as they paid close attention to the teacher’s clear instructions and showed genuine respect for a peer who was singled out for praise for the quality of her performance. Because of good, whole group teaching, pupils were well prepared to take part in more intensive small group work to develop their discus throwing skills. They responded particularly well to health and safety instructions provided by both the teacher and learning support assistant and the majority gripped the discus correctly. They have yet to achieve the necessary directional skills. Pupils respond well when learning support staff lead parts of lessons, for instance, in improving performance in small group work to develop sprint starts. Pupils paid particular attention to the explanation of their slower times being due to their running into the wind.

134. Pupils in Year 9 worked well to improve their performances during the shot put practice session. When a pupil recorded distances thrown by other pupils, the class followed the teacher’s example of trusting the accuracy of the recording with a consequent very positive effect upon the recorder’s self-esteem. Safe practice permeates physical education lessons This was demonstrated during the lesson when pupils recalled the safety rules that related to their previous work with the javelin. When pupils took part in climbing at a high school, they adhered to rules well and made very good efforts to climb. They listened carefully to the instructor and tried their best. They all tried and wanted to repeat it to improve their performance. This off-site resource for physical education is a very valuable addition to the school’s programme of physical education. The use of such resources contributes well to pupils’ physical development and to their personal, social and emotional development. Pupils’ behaviour while taking part in activities off-site is excellent.
135. During swimming lessons, pupils throughout the school make good progress at their own pace. Teachers make sure that learners and developing swimmers are carefully building up their confidence and stamina. They develop a variety of strokes while the most able swimmers focus upon correct breathing and improving their stroke and competitive swimming skills. Pupils work with effort while swimming. They concentrate well when working independently and will offer help to their peers such as when two pupils showed a friend how to swim more effectively underwater. Their positive responses to the rules and conventions that apply during lessons make a valuable contribution to their social and moral development.
136. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 continue to make good progress. During a rounders game, they demonstrated that they have developed the ability to be members of a team. They have a good understanding of positional play. They back each other up well and most can return the ball with accuracy. The praise, encouragement and ongoing instructions ensured that all pupils participated fully and achieved success in striking and catching the ball. The tennis lesson at a local club also provided pupils with very good opportunity to participate and develop personal skills. They responded to instructions well and are developing skills such as, using the correct grip and gaining good ball control using the racket head. Pupils showed knowledge and understanding of the court, know where to stand in the correct position, and can name the different lines.

137. Physical education is well led and managed. Teachers assess pupils well and provide certificates to recognise achievement. Whenever possible formally recognised awards are presented, such as in gymnastics and swimming. Overall, the accommodation is unsatisfactory. The hall is too small and there is a need to provide suitable changing rooms.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

138. Pupils make good progress and achieve well because teaching is consistently good and often very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There are no opportunities for accreditation although the co-ordinator Pupils are studying the GCSE short course materials although they are not undertaking accreditation because of timetable difficulties.
139. Pupils study a wide range of interesting and challenging topics. Pupils in Year 7 know about the Hindu marriage ceremony and those in Year 9 about Anglican Church furniture. Pupils in Year 10 know about the roots of Sikhism and the teachings of Guru Nanak and in Year 11 pupils were very well challenged to give their views on the moral issues around euthanasia. The youngest pupils, in Year 7, learn well by listening to the teachers' explanation and watching video clips about a Hindu wedding. Through discussions and very good use of questions, pupils are able to recall past learning about the Christian marriage ceremony and they identify similarities and differences between the two.
140. Teaching is well balanced between the study of religions and opportunities, through discussion, for pupils to make progress in personal and moral development. A small number of pupils have also had the opportunity to study philosophy and the teacher has effectively retained some of the topics within the religious education syllabus. This, along with the continued use of teaching methods associated with the philosophy modules, has made a significant contribution to the way pupils learn to think about the questions they are posed.
141. The teacher's ongoing assessment of pupils' responses to learning through questions, discussion and written work are used effectively to plan the next steps and check how well pupils are progressing. The teacher ensures that pupils' learning is enhanced by meeting people from different faiths in the local community, visiting different places of worship, and by providing good opportunities to share stories about the traditions, ceremonies and artefacts of different religions.
142. There is good development of pupils' listening, speaking, and reading skills during lessons. The specific vocabulary of different religions is promoted very well. Each lesson begins with a review and consolidation of important words associated with the current faith topic. This makes an important contribution to learning because lower attaining pupils receive good support to recall previous work. The work that pupils follow reflects the local education authority's approved syllabus but has been significantly and successfully developed to meet pupils' needs.
143. Pupils have good opportunities to use computers to support their learning in lessons. For example, when Year 11 pupils research euthanasia. The quality, quantity and range of resources have also improved. Resources such as religious artefacts and classroom displays are used to very good effect to enhance learning.

PERSONAL SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

144. Pupils achieve well. The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is very good in the lessons that prepare for leaving school. The subject has been developed well since the last inspection.
145. Pupils make good progress throughout the school in lessons that are interesting and relevant. In Year 7, pupils are composing letters to the Prime Minister to enlist his support in banning smoking. Through the teacher's good questioning, they understand the arguments well and are able to write letters and redraft them using computers. They receive effective support from the teacher and support assistant to spell words and set out their work. This ensures that pupils of all abilities make equal progress and know the importance of their relationship to the government. They are pleased and surprised that they will receive a reply. Consequently, they understand that they have a voice, and this makes a good contribution to their understanding of citizenship.
146. Pupils follow a good series of lessons as they move through the school. In Year 8 for example, they understand the importance of recycling. Pupils find the work interesting and usually have positive attitudes to learning. At the beginning of one lesson, the teacher anticipated that two pupils would not co-operate fully and worked with them well to ensure full participation. Pupils understood the need to sort waste into types of material. Most identified the correct categories such as, cans being metal. They were impressed with the value of recycling materials and the benefit to the environment. Pupils built on this knowledge well by designing posters to bring recycling to public attention. The comparison of methods of dealing with waste in other countries such as Germany, provided a good opportunity for pupils to understand the importance of studying other cultures.
147. By the end of Year 9, pupils have made a good start in developing ideas about their future careers. The teacher provides good reference materials for them to find out the main features of occupations that they might choose. They worked diligently in a lesson to write a leaflet entitled for example, 'So you want to be a hairdresser', to inform other pupils about a job. This enabled them to explain the main functions of the occupation and provided a valuable opportunity to improve writing and spelling skills. Lessons throughout the school provide good experiences for pupils to learn more about health. Pupils' files show that they have received worthwhile lessons and made good progress in sex education and drugs awareness.
148. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 receive very good provision for work-experience to prepare them for the future. In Year 10 they undertake valuable community-service placements. Pupils write impressive diaries of their experiences that give a clear indication of their progress in gaining confidence in working in the community and the need to adapt to new environments. For example, one pupil who completed service working in a 'centre' for senior citizens had learnt that the clients valued the opportunity to talk with him. He understood that the staff worked as a team and he had to fulfil his share of the tasks.
149. Pupils in Year 11 continue to make good progress in health education lessons. They achieved well in a lesson to understand what action they would take if they had a health problem. Pupils considered what the National Health Service offers and the alternative therapies that are available. Through discussion, they understood the need to take

responsibility for themselves and to express their needs clearly. Pupils have learnt about the safe use of drugs and how to seek medical assistance. A strength of the provision is the support provided in several lessons by health professionals such as the school nurse. Pupils have made good progress understanding the roles of different health service personnel in helping them with physical and medical needs.

150. In Years 10 and 11 in ASDAN, pupils develop good independence deciding how to improve and set out their work for their final moderation. Pupils use computers well to design covers for their completed work, demonstrating growing maturity in working independently. They complete personal statements for their record of achievements in the subjects they study in school and their experiences in the community. They relish recording their work to tell others of their experiences and clearly value the time that they have spent in school.
151. The new subject co-ordinator has maintained the good leadership and management of the subject evident at the time of the last inspection. There are good plans to make further improvements. Pupils receive praise for their achievements and there is good accreditation through ASDAN for a suitable proportion of their work in the subject. However, pupils do not receive an annual report in the subject to celebrate all their success.