

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **HAILEY HALL SCHOOL**

Hertford

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 117673

Headteacher: Mr B Evans

Reporting inspector: Ms M Last  
17171

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> –15<sup>th</sup> June 2001

Inspection number: 193993

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 (EBD)
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Boys
School address:	Hailey Lane Hertford Hertfordshire
Postcode:	SG13 7PB
Telephone number:	01992 465208
Fax number:	01992 460851
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N Copping
Date of previous inspection:	April, 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17171	Mary Last	Registered inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language Modern foreign languages Music	What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9779	Ms S Smith	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
32055	Mr G Davies	Team inspector	Equal opportunities English Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
13066	Ms M Harrison	Team inspector	Science Art and design	
2982	Mr R Lomas	Team inspector	Mathematics	The school's results and pupils' achievements Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
3055	Mr C Tombs	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education	Residential provision Leadership and management

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Hailey Hall School is a residential and day school for up to 56 boys between 11 and 16 years of age, with emotional and behavioural difficulties situated on the borders of Hertford and set in attractive woodland grounds. There are currently 48 boys on roll, 19 of whom reside at the school from Monday to Friday. All pupils have statements of special educational needs and many have come to the school with unsuccessful attendance and negative experiences of previous education. These difficulties have affected the pupils' abilities to learn and to concentrate and as a result most are not achieving the standards of which they are able when they enter the school. Pupils travel to school either daily or weekly by taxi and none have English as an additional language; eight of the day pupils are entitled to free school meals. The school aims to enable the pupils to 'think for themselves with an acceptable set of personal qualities and values'.

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

Hailey Hall is an effective school where pupils enter with low levels of achievement because of their behavioural difficulties, but leave with increased self-esteem and creditable achievements at GCSE. The staff provide good standards of teaching, interesting lessons and are skilled in managing the pupils' behaviour so that they increase their ability to learn. The headteacher ensures that the school runs as an orderly community and all staff provide good adult role models. The pupils' behaviour is closely monitored so that they understand how they need to improve and then learn to take responsibility for their actions as they approach school leaving age. By the age of 16 higher attaining pupils successfully study for nationally recognised qualifications and all pupils do well in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education and care plans. The provision for residential pupils is very good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Provides high standards of teaching with activities which motivate the pupils and help them to achieve well and improve their work
- Manages the pupils' challenging behaviour firmly and fairly so that pupils improve their attitudes, concentration and motivation as they move through the school
- Makes particularly good provision for physical education, humanities and mathematics
- Provides very good residential provision with very good support and guidance from care staff
- The personal and charismatic leadership of the headteacher motivates both staff and pupils and ensures a clear direction for the work of the school
- Provides excellent management of the school's administration and financial procedures and maintains very high standards of cleanliness in the accommodation and grounds.

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

- The curriculum so that it meets statutory requirements and religious education and a modern foreign language are included
- The role of the governors in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the school and in planning its future direction
- The individual learning programmes for the oldest pupils in the school to include more opportunities for vocational education and work experience within the community
- Curricular opportunities for all pupils to reflect on their own experience and spirituality and to develop an awareness of other beliefs.

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

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

The school was last inspected in May 1997 and has improved the quality of teaching and learning since then. However, not all weaknesses reported in 1997 have been effectively addressed. Due to a continuing difficulty in appointing staff, the school curriculum remains unsatisfactory as it does

not include religious education or a modern foreign language. However, the provision for the remaining subjects of the curriculum are satisfactory overall and very good in mathematics, the humanities and physical education. The school has not been able to put effective and consistent procedures in place to monitor the standards of teaching through a regular programme of classroom observations and it has yet to stringently evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of its curriculum. Although pupils studying for examinations reinforce their work with homework, the school still does not set homework regularly for all pupils. The school now promotes a consistent and effective approach to behaviour management but this is not implemented consistently in a very small number of lessons. Individual education plans have been amended and now include at least one target that is shared between the individual education plans and the residential care plan which helps pupils to focus on and reinforce their skills in a different environment. Information and communications technology is now an integral part of the school's curriculum. The school still does not fully meet statutory requirements in terms of its risk assessment and its curriculum.

## STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

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

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

In relation to their abilities, pupils achieve well and make good progress. In speaking and listening they communicate increasingly well with each other, with adults and visitors. Many pupils enter the school with low levels of reading ability but improve their standards especially where they have benefited from individual support and teaching. Pupils learn to express their thoughts and ideas well in writing and use information and communication technology effectively to enhance the presentation of their work. In mathematics pupils make very good progress given their poor attainment on entry and many achieve at nationally expected levels. All pupils in the school benefit from firm management so that they achieve the targets set for them in relation to improving their behaviour and work.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory: pupils' attitudes to the school are generally positive, they like school and take part in all the activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory: pupils' behaviour varies across the school but generally improves over time. However, some pupils have difficulty in taking responsibility for their own behaviour and this affects their ability to concentrate and learn.

Personal development and relationships	Good: relationships between the staff and pupils are good and promote good support and learning but some pupils have difficulty in relating to others and maintaining friendships.
Attendance	Good: the levels of attendance are well above that of similar schools.

Although some, particularly younger, pupils sometimes have difficulties controlling their behaviour in lessons, they generally try hard to improve and respond well to teacher support and intervention. The polite way in which the oldest pupils in the school behave at college and talk to visitors demonstrates their ability to respond appropriately to others. Pupils enjoy good relationships with all staff but their friendships with other pupils are sometimes fragile.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The standards of teaching are good overall throughout the school and result in pupils making at least satisfactory, and often good, gains in learning overall in all subjects. In 58 per cent of lessons teaching is good or very good, outstanding in nine per cent and satisfactory in the remainder. In the very best lessons teaching is characterised mainly by the teachers' ability to manage the behaviour of the pupils very well and maintain the flow of learning so that pupils continue to work despite some interruptions by the minority. In English teaching is good, teachers know the subject well and plan a good range of activities that address the topic being studied but also make effective links to the pupils' own lives and experiences. Teaching in mathematics is very good because it enables pupils to gain new skills to understand and apply the processes they need to reach correct solutions. In science teaching is satisfactory and covers a range of practical and theoretical work with opportunities for pupils to handle materials such as rocks or plants. Teaching is good and teachers help the pupils develop their personal and social skills in tutor groups, within lessons through discussion, and at other informal times of the day such as over lunch or tea. The work by residential staff is a major strength in this regard. A very significant contribution is made by learning support assistants to the pupils' learning. They are skilled in guiding the pupils and are always careful to ensure that the pupils undertake the work themselves, rather than completing the work on their behalf, thus ensuring that pupils are making good steps towards becoming independent learners. Most teachers pay careful attention to promoting the use of technical language within their lessons and thereby help pupils develop their literacy skills, however, the emphasis on the teachers' use of numeracy, whilst very good in mathematics lessons, is less well developed within other subjects.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory: the school does not meet statutory requirements because it does not offer religious education or a modern foreign language. However, other subjects provide a good range of activities and tasks, which enable pupils to make progress. Opportunities for work-related study are however limited.



Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory: provision for social and cultural development is satisfactory and the school places a good emphasis on developing pupils' moral awareness. There are very good group activities in the evenings for pupils in residence. However, there is insufficient provision for pupils' spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good: staff show a clear commitment to ensuring that pupils are well supervised and supported in school and at other times of the day. Pupils work is assessed regularly and is generally satisfactory but there are some inconsistencies in practice.

The facilities and support for the pupils in residence is very good. However, the opportunities for spiritual development are limited with few activities where pupils reflect on their own and other peoples' spiritual experiences and beliefs. The school makes satisfactory arrangements to keep the parents informed of its work and parents are pleased with the way they can approach the school to help with difficulties. Where possible the school works in successful partnership with parents to support their children's education and development.

### **HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good: the headteacher provides clear educational direction, maintained in the face of continuing teacher vacancies.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Unsatisfactory: the governing body is not sufficiently aware of its responsibilities and is therefore unable to provide support to the school in its development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory: monitoring of actions taken by the school staff in support of its development plan are good but the monitoring of teaching and the curriculum has not been fully implemented because of teacher vacancies.
The strategic use of resources	Good: resources are well used to raise standards and motivate pupils.

The headteacher leads the school very effectively through his charismatic, energetic and well-informed management style. The contribution of the governing body to support the further development of the school is unsatisfactory because governors are insufficiently involved in the work of the school to identify its strengths and weaknesses. Planning for improvement is good; there are very efficient and effective administrative procedures, financial controls and procedures for applying the principles of best value so that all monies accruing to the school are spent for the benefit of the pupils. There are currently sufficient staff to teach the curriculum on offer but only because the headteacher and deputy headteacher have taken on substantial teaching commitments. Teachers make good use of resources including computers to help pupils learn. The accommodation for day and resident pupils is of very high quality.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The progress made by their children</li><li>• The high standards of teaching</li><li>• The ability to approach the school with difficulties</li><li>• The headteacher's leadership and management</li><li>• The way the school helps pupils to become mature and responsible</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The pupils' behaviour, particularly the swearing</li><li>• The information they receive about pupils' work between annual reviews</li><li>• The inconsistency in setting homework</li></ul>

Parents feel that their children are helped to develop in maturity and responsibility, that they are taught well and make good progress. Most feel able to approach the school with concerns and particularly confident that they will be dealt with effectively by the headteacher. The pupils' behaviour continues to cause concern but parents acknowledge that it improves as pupils get older. The inspectors agree with the parents that pupils do improve their attitudes and therefore their levels of work as they move through the school and the high quality of behaviour management helps them to do so. Parents and inspectors agree that residential facilities are of a high standard and that the school is very well managed by the headteacher. Inspection judgements support the views of the parents overall.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Overall standards of attainment are below national expectations for pupils of this age range. However, for some pupils attainment reaches the national expectation in mathematics, art and physical education by the age of 16. It remains below this in English and science. In mathematics examination results at this age are better than the average for similar schools nationally, as they are by the age of 14. The outcomes in mathematics, art and physical education by the age of 16, and in mathematics by the age of 14, are testimony to the effectiveness of the provision which the school makes in these subjects.
2. Considering the effect of their emotional and behaviour difficulties on their learning prior to entry to the school, pupils make good progress overall and achieve well. In relation to their abilities they make good progress towards the learning targets set for them, and pupils aged 14 to 16 make slightly better progress as they have learn to concentrate and work well. Pupils make very good progress overall in mathematics, humanities and physical education, and good progress in design and technology and sometimes in English.
3. In English, pupils make good progress throughout the school. In speaking and listening pupils communicate increasingly well with one another, with adults and with visitors. Many pupils enter the school with poor levels of reading ability, but improve their standards, especially when they have benefited from individual support and teaching. Pupils learn to express their thoughts and ideas well in writing, and use computers effectively to enhance the presentation of their work. Literacy skills are reinforced in many other areas of the curriculum but in particular in humanities.
4. In mathematics, pupils make especially good progress given their poor attainment on entry, and many achieve around nationally expected levels in the general certificate of secondary education. Pupils have accurate arithmetic skills. They have good knowledge and skills in problem solving and investigation and their progress in data handling is very good. Numeracy skills are effectively reinforced in other areas of the curriculum but particularly in science and design and technology.
5. In science, pupils make satisfactory progress. They show at least sound understanding of basic principles. Their investigative skills, planning and research are developing well. They understand the notion of a fair test.
6. For those pupils who board, the quality of care and support provided considerably enhances their attainment and progress. The pupils are able to reinforce their learning in the classroom within the wider community during organised activities away from the school.
7. All pupils benefit from the firm management provided so that they achieve the targets set for them in their individual education plans in relation to improving their behaviour.
8. Taking all aspects of the school into account, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. In subjects standards have improved satisfactorily in art, information technology and design and technology. There has been good improvement in science, physical education and music, and significant improvement in English, mathematics and humanities. All this represents improving trends in results overtime. The focus on the consistent application of a whole-school approach to behaviour management has made a significant contribution to raising standards of behaviour, which in turn has supported progress in learning.

9. The focus within the school development plan on developing strategies to measure pupils' abilities on entry is having a positive impact on target setting. It supports teachers' planning both to meet individual needs and to obtain objective evidence of progress towards attainment of the targets. An increased emphasis on raising attainment through aiming for success in public examinations at the age of 16, together with improved teaching, has led to higher standards generally. The school's targets are appropriately challenging for the ability range and numbers of current pupils.

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

10. Pupils' attitudes to the school are satisfactory overall. When they first enrol many have negative views of education and this affects their willingness to settle down and learn, particularly pupils aged 11 to 12. Over time, however, they usually respond well to the supportive environment and firm but fair management and many enjoy their lessons. They show increasing enthusiasm for their work, particularly, when learning has been planned to be challenging and stimulating. As a result of this they become well motivated, listen attentively, focus on tasks set and want to succeed, this is particularly evident in mathematics. In science, during the inspection, pupils were excited by a Van der Graaf generator; resulting in them being anxious to participate and explore. Where lessons do not engage their interest they are easily distracted and staff must work hard to regain their attention; this slows learning. The ability of pupils to learn on their own grows as they move through the years, although there are too few planned opportunities overall for them to work independently. A good example can be seen in mathematics where pupils are encouraged to become increasingly self critical of their work. Pupils aged 14 to 15, demonstrate that when they are truly interested they behave well. Older pupils attending vocational courses at the local college are particularly well motivated and showed high levels of enthusiasm and commitment.
11. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall, but is very noticeably better during their last two years at school. Although improved since the time of the last inspection, behaviour was unsatisfactory in seventeen per cent of lessons seen. Almost all of this is displayed by the youngest pupils, who have yet to come to terms with the staff's high expectations for behaviour. These pupils demonstrate poor concentration and sometimes disrupt lessons which slows learning for all. This confirms the views of parents who say that their children's behaviour usually improves after they settle in to the school. Where pupils' interest is engaged and lessons are stimulating many pupils behave very well indeed; ensuring that time available for teaching and learning is used to best possible effect. In lessons where the agreed behaviour management strategies are used consistently and effectively pupils usually respond well. Pupils know and understand the school rules. Because they feel the rules are fair they are usually willing to abide by them. When not in lessons most pupils behave well, and, although there is occasional friction between individuals, they usually respond well to the behaviour management strategies developed by the school. During the last school year there were 55 fixed-term and one permanent exclusions. Although this is high, time out of school is kept to a minimum and reasons for exclusion are sound and understood by the pupils. It is used effectively as part of a process to help to develop pupils' sense of responsibility for their actions. Behaviour at mealtimes is usually very positive. Pupils socialise well, are polite, relate well to staff on duty and routinely clear away after themselves. Those in boarding accommodation behave well in response to good management by care staff. Pupils respect the school environment, leaving little litter and no graffiti.
12. Relationships and pupils' personal development are good overall. Relationships between pupils and adults are usually very positive leading to high levels of respect and co-operation that support learning well. Most pupils get on well together, and, although there are some squabbles and tensions these are invariably managed well and only occasionally

escalate into more serious problems. Staff know pupils very well and are alert to the potential for bullying, which occasionally occurs. Inspection evidence confirms the views of parents who feel that bullying is usually dealt with well, however, pupils do not always develop a sense of responsibility for those younger than themselves as they move through the school, despite a module in the newly introduced personal, health and social education (PHSE) programme which is intended to develop an anti-bullying culture. Where given the opportunity to work in pairs the pupils' ability to co-operate and engage in discussion develop well. For example in mathematics when pupils listen and make suggestions that build on the views of other people; pupils aged 14 to 15 were observed willingly to share and co-operate with each other, showing a clear understanding of the needs of others. In other subjects these skills are less well developed as opportunities are not always so well planned. There were no racial incidents during the week of inspection; however, some boys make occasional remarks that indicate a lack of awareness of other cultures within the wider community. A good level of awareness for their responsibilities to the school community is shown by the way that all pupils routinely expect to be responsible for clearing up, tidying away and taking care of school equipment, including games used by pupils in boarding accommodation. They respond positively to opportunities for community involvement, for example in their support for the elderly.

13. The level of attendance is good. For the last school year it was 87.4 per cent, which is above the average for similar schools. Unauthorised absence is broadly in line with expectations at 8.3 per cent. Many pupils arrive at the school with very poor records and most, after an initial settling-in period, improve their levels of attendance significantly. This has a very positive impact on how well they learn. Reasons for absence include education off site, pupils with a history of school phobia that, whilst improving, still affect their attendance; family and social problems and holidays taken during the school term. The school day usually begins punctually and little time is subsequently lost during lesson changeovers. This maximises time available for teaching and supports learning well.

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

14. The standards of teaching are good overall throughout the school and result in pupils making satisfactory and often good gains in learning in all subjects by the time they are 16. In 58 per cent of lessons teaching is good or very good and in nine per cent it is outstanding. Teaching is satisfactory in the remainder. Inspectors were unable to observe lessons with the oldest pupils in the school as they had just completed their exams and left the school on the first day of the inspection. All other classes were observed. There is no significant difference in the quality of teaching between the different age groups, abilities or backgrounds of the pupils. These high standards of teaching represent a clear improvement since the last inspection when in over one out of every ten lessons teaching was unsatisfactory.
15. Outstanding teaching was observed in five lessons, three in physical education and two in mathematics. Very good lessons were also observed in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, history, geography, physical education and personal, social and health education. The very high standards promoted in these lessons are characterised mainly by the teachers' ability to manage the behaviour of the pupils consistently well and maintain the flow of learning so that pupils continue to work despite some interruptions by the minority. The very good relationships that these teachers enjoy with the pupils enables them to persuade the pupils that it is better to work than to misbehave. In a mathematics lesson, with 13-year-old pupils the teacher and pupils had very good relationships and showed mutual respect for each other. The teacher demonstrated excellent recognition of the pupils' individual needs, such as impatience, growing anxiety and the difficulty with group dynamics. She kept all the pupils working by targeting her expectations and response to their individual difficulties, so that the most independent pupil worked on his

own at the computer and required only basic supervision whilst the least confident pupil received regular feedback and praise from the teacher and support assistant. During incidents of individual behaviour the teacher remained unemotional and uninvolved dealing with the situation calmly. The language of mathematics was also well reinforced and because the teacher modelled the language well the pupils very quickly learnt to use words such as 'symmetry', 'rotation' and 'reflection'.

16. Teaching in English is good in all lessons. Teachers know the subject well and plan a good range of activities which address the topic being studied but also make effective links to the pupils' own lives and experiences. For example, a class of 12-year-old pupils were studying methods of describing different environments and made links to material they had previously read such as the kidnapped Brian Keenan's description of his cell. The teacher then took the pupils to a common room in another part of the school where the décor and facilities were vastly different both from those described in the above text and the pupils' normal classroom. This stimulus helped the pupils to generate ideas about what they saw and the teacher and classroom assistant made very good use of open questions to help the pupils reflect and form their answers. Lower attaining pupils offered simple nouns of objects in the room such as 'play station' or 'tape recorder', whilst higher attaining pupils began to develop their thoughts about the view out of the window or the feeling in the room describing the 'dark atmosphere', the 'comfortable seating' and the 'beautiful views out of the window'. Upon returning to the classroom the pupils were then able to add to their descriptions by thinking about the positioning of objects leading to the end task, which was to write a description of their own bedrooms.
17. Teaching in mathematics is very good because it enables pupils to gain new skills to understand the processes they need to employ in order to reach correct solutions. The teachers make good use of the board to provide examples of how to work and, for higher attaining pupils, alternative ways of reaching the same solution. As a result of these explanations and demonstrations pupils aged 14 and 15 deepen their understanding of symmetry and demonstrate this through their ability to explain in detail how they reached the solution. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and are therefore able to motivate those who show positive attitudes to work and want to succeed. The youngest pupils in the school are still sometimes volatile but, nevertheless, biddable. They are less settled in their behaviour, as they have not yet learnt to take responsibility for their own actions.
18. In science teaching is satisfactory; the youngest pupils in the school benefit from handling and appreciating the differences in texture of different rocks and this 'hands-on' activity helps them to classify the rocks accurately into marble, granite and slate. Pupils one year older responded well to the teacher as he gave a detailed explanation of an experiment concerning Dutch weed. The teacher gave clear and full instructions on how the pupils were to collate the evidence from their experiment into a chart so that they could make comparisons. The teacher dealt sensibly and firmly, but sympathetically with a pupil who was upset after behaving badly but insisted that he sat quietly under the supervision of the support assistant. This firm management of behaviour kept the other pupils working and eventually all succeeded in recording their experimental work.
19. Teaching is very good overall in mathematics, physical education and the humanities (history and geography). In all subjects offered by the school, teachers have a good knowledge of the subject content and plan activities, which are generally well matched, to the pupils' abilities. The majority of teachers adhere rigorously to the school's published policy on managing the pupils' behaviour by regularly and fairly applying the system of points – known as 'ABLE' – which recognises the pupils' efforts and achievements. In a minority of subjects teachers do not comply with this system and some pupils take advantage of this inconsistency by knowing that their unacceptable behaviour will not attract a consequence. In almost all lessons, however, behaviour management is very

good. It is at its very best when teachers calmly and relentlessly focus upon their teaching and only respond to challenging behaviour where it interferes with other pupils' learning; the most skilled practitioners build an acknowledgement of the behaviour into their communication with the pupils but make it quite clear that the lesson will continue and that the pupils will come to concentrate. This skilled approach causes minimum disruption and interruption to the class and frequently results in all pupils concentrating and co-operating – even the original miscreant.

20. Where teaching is no more than satisfactory the teachers do not provide sufficient practical tasks to ensure that the pupils feel involved in the task. For example in a food technology lesson, 11-year-old pupils spent a considerable time observing the teacher cut samples of cheese, which they could have done themselves. Similarly in an art lesson with 15-year-old pupils, the teacher was not fully aware of the level pupils were achieving in respect of GCSE grades and, subsequently, did not plan tasks which effectively challenged them to do their very best. The youngest pupils are sometimes unsettled and, as a result, despite the teachers' best efforts to keep them working, the pupils become disruptive. For example in an information and communication technology lesson, pupils had an argument over a mobile phone and some went off to the toilet without permission interrupting the flow of the lesson. The teacher needed all his skills to get the pupils back on task, which he did eventually.
21. Teachers use a good range of methods and resources to capture the pupils' imaginations. These include, for example, authentic materials and equipment such as switches, wires and soldering irons in design and technology to written guidance ensuring that pupils could follow the wiring instructions given. Similarly teachers expect pupils to demonstrate their understanding in music by using the keyboards to consolidate their work through practice before playing their chosen pieces independently and competently. In subjects where extended writing is required teachers are skilled in priming the pupils' imagination by brainstorming ideas on the board or reminding them of text they have read which will provide sources of reference. Whilst teachers made every effort to plan such interesting and motivating activities during inspection week they made little use of the local area and community resources to support their work.
22. The teachers are continually developing their skills and methods for promoting the pupils' knowledge, use and understanding of literacy across other subjects of the curriculum. However, some teachers are more adventurous, rigorous or imaginative than others. Most teachers systematically promote the pupils' use of key vocabulary in their lessons. For example, in music the teacher challenged pupils by using such vocabulary as 'stave', 'tonality', 'key', and 'mode'. In science the teacher displayed the key vocabulary on the board and this emphasis on language encouraged one pupil to say that another way of referring to voltage is 'potential difference'. In an information and communication technology lesson the teacher had simplified the manufacturer's own guidelines to ensure that his 15-year-old pupils would be able to understand the instructions for using some new software. These relevant emphases on the use of literacy help pupils to realise the importance of reading and writing in their lives. In less effective literacy work teachers miss opportunities to reinforce and ensure pupils' understanding of language, as in a food technology lesson where the teacher talked about many different cheeses and elicited interesting adjectives as they tasted. However, these words were not displayed on the board or the construction of them explored as the pupils identified them.
23. Teachers make good use of the school's 'ABLE' system to monitor pupils' behaviour during lessons and most teachers also assess the pupils' work regularly and comprehensively, stringently noting all details of the pupils' learning, however small their achievements. In a few subjects, however, teachers pay more attention to the pupils' 'ABLE' targets than to their learning and only record success against one single subject target. In these cases

both spontaneous and planned achievement are not consistently identified and a significant proportion of the pupils' progress goes unrecorded.

24. The teachers' planning and organisation of lessons is generally good. Teachers include details of the pupils' individual needs in their planning and, in the very best teaching, they adapt their approach to meet these needs. Most teachers also have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour although these are not always justified due to the pupils' challenging behaviour. However, teachers manage the pupils' learning well and ensure that good use is made of lesson time; the acknowledgement of the pupils' arrival, ready to start work, attracts incentive points and this acts as a good motivator for the pupils. Support assistants also provide well focused, understanding, yet firm support thus encouraging pupils to carry on working so they may complete their tasks. The work of the support staff is a major factor in the strength of teaching and learning. The specialist tuition given by one support assistant to enable individual pupils to improve their reading has proved particularly beneficial in raising pupils' reading ages and boosting their self-confidence. High standards are achieved through the support assistant's meticulous planning and attention to the needs of the pupils. For example in one lesson she checked that one pupil with hearing difficulty was able to hear and understand and another lower attaining pupil who needed constant encouragement and support remained focused and on task. This emphasis on the teaching of reading is already having an impact on the classroom as pupils increase their skills and realise that improved reading helps them to do well in all lessons.
25. Teachers do not routinely set homework for all pupils and in this regard the school has not addressed this weakness as identified in the previous inspection. Older pupils preparing for GCSE do receive homework, but parents believe that overall teachers do not provide sufficient homework to enable pupils to develop skilled and independent study.
26. Teachers are rigorous in ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to achieve well and as a result there is no significant difference in the standards of learning between pupils of different age groups, backgrounds or abilities. Teachers are flexible in their expectations so that the range of pupils' needs are addressed and they develop an interest in their work. As a result, over time, pupils show at least satisfactory levels of achievement and through good teaching the majority gain creditable GCSE passes at the age of 16.

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

27. The curriculum is unsatisfactory because it fails to meet statutory requirements to teach religious education and a modern foreign language. This is a decline in the curriculum offered since the previous inspection report, when all subjects of the National Curriculum were taught. These weaknesses also have an adverse effect on the overall breadth and balance of the curriculum.
28. The remaining curriculum provides a good range and balance of activities in line with the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. There are good schemes of work in place, although that for information and communication technology (ICT) has yet to be formalised, and appropriate accreditation in English, mathematics, science, art, geography and music. The school has improved the allocation of time to subjects as recommended by the last inspection report.
29. Overall, the school does not have sufficient cohesive procedures in place to identify the strengths and weakness of the curriculum, the actual content of what is taught and how effective it is in promoting pupils' learning. The guidelines to help teachers plan what they teach and when, are not sufficiently detailed to enable them to build systematically on the



pupils' previous learning and understanding as they move from year to year. In this respect the role of the subject co-ordinator in most subjects is not clearly defined.

30. The school has taken satisfactory account of national strategies for numeracy and literacy and has successfully introduced strategies to improve literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. There are many good examples of key words and number skills being reinforced in other subjects such as music, ICT and geography.
31. All pupils have equal access to the formal curriculum. Residential pupils have additional access to the care curriculum that makes a major contribution to their personal and social development. Day pupils can negotiate with their parents and care staff to stay at school in the evening or overnight to take part in certain activities.
32. The school has satisfactory procedures for meeting requirements regarding the annual reviews of the pupils' statements of educational needs and the Code of Practice. It follows due procedures to modify pupils' statements of special educational need where appropriate. Pupils' individual education plans include targets which are closely related to the needs identified on their statements and staff broadly address these in lessons and assess pupils' progress towards them regularly between annual reviews. Parents are not routinely informed when new learning targets are set during the year and the school is currently changing its procedures to remedy this situation.
33. The quality and extent of provision for pupils with additional special needs is satisfactory. Support staff provide good support in lessons for pupils with learning difficulties and work is sometime individualised. Pupils with severe emotional and behaviour problems are carefully supported by teachers and care staff who monitor the behavioural targets in their individual education plans. The school makes good use of the expertise of the visiting educational psychologist to support its work with pupils with additional special needs.
34. An updated PSHE programme covers aspects of citizenship, sex education and attention to drug misuse. This gives pupils opportunities to understand themselves, fosters good co-operation, raises self-esteem and develops independence. However the overall planning is underdeveloped because it does not consistently and clearly identify meaningful activities that purposefully engage all pupils and ensure their progress in specific skills or understanding.
35. Extra-curricular activities make a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' education. The minority of pupils who are residential have organised activities in the evenings, which make a good contribution to their education. However, day pupils, because of travel arrangements, have access to lunch time activities, which are mainly of a sporting nature and homework is only a feature for those pupils following GCSE courses which is a missed opportunity to further extend and consolidate learning. Other extra-curricular opportunities include a wide choice of activities on a Friday afternoon, which, while including sport also embrace art and craft, table games and gentle relaxation. The school organises regular sporting activities with other similar schools and an annual outdoor pursuit course. The course is for a week's duration for pupils aged 15 and this makes a good contribution to the pupils' social and moral development as they work in teams solving problems.
36. The provision for careers education and the school's 'Leavers Programme' is satisfactory and raises the pupils' awareness of jobs, careers and choices. The school has close contact with the Careers Service and all pupils are given advice and guidance on their future careers. Nearly all the pupils have a job or the offer of a place on a college course by the time they leave the school. However, in the past year, because of staffing difficulties and the problems in finding workplace providers the school has only one pupil working towards a work experience placement. In addition, the school has only just established links with the local college of further education for 15-year-old pupils to follow a vehicle

maintenance course. Consequently, the school is not currently providing effectively for work-related education with only limited opportunities for pupils to enhance their experience and their opportunities to join the world of work through work experience placements or part time study in colleges.

37. The quality of links with the community and with other schools is satisfactory in terms of group activities but underdeveloped for individual pupils to follow their interests in preparation for life after school. The school has regular contact with a senior citizens home nearby and the residents and pupils value the contribution made by the school, for example by organising a Christmas party and Easter lunch. There are good sporting links with similar special schools and occasional links with mainstream schools for academic or social opportunities. For example an annual drama project with a theatre company culminates in public performance and pupils participate in the Rotary Club's activities at Broxbourne. By necessity such activity is often highly supervised and does not give the pupils about to leave school a greater degree of freedom. Increased individual opportunities for integration could also make a significant impact on the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and help older pupils see that they can relate very well to people outside the school and their known environment in preparation for the next stages of their lives.
38. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall but planning to cover these aspects within curricular subjects is not consistent. Provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Music, art and music offer limited opportunities for pupils to reflect on questions of value and meaning. However, the absence of a taught religious education programme limits pupils' insight into a wide variety of faiths, and opportunities to consider how our beliefs affect the way we live.
39. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. Although not all assemblies are an act of collective worship, they have moral themes, and these are explored and reinforced in many lessons. Staff take every opportunity to use ways that pupils will understand to remind them of appropriate actions and their consequences. Pupils clearly know the difference between right and wrong and have a sense of fairness. Older pupils make moral decisions through the application of reason. When pupils do forget and sometimes treat others unkindly, they are often very remorseful afterwards and will often apologise with prompting from their teacher. There are good opportunities to discuss moral issues in English and humanities. Formal personal and social education lessons allow pupils to discuss moral aspects related to personal relationships with sensitivity. Teachers are aware of the need to address issues of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination.
40. Provision for pupils' social development is satisfactory. The school places appropriate emphasis on the pupils' social development and this is very closely linked to the good relationships within the school community. All adults provide positive role models in the kind and considerate way they relate to pupils and to each other. Pupils generally respond well to the positive atmosphere that allows them to develop in confidence and self worth. Many become happy and assured young people by the time they leave. Meal times are pleasant and social occasions. Pupils show concern if other pupils are unwell or unhappy. They share in the achievements of others, for example in school assemblies when prizes are distributed. Older pupils work together well when highly motivated, as was observed in the college link course and on the canoe outing. The School Council actively involves all pupils in making decisions about such issues as the use of the woods, although this is conditional on their sensible and responsible behaviour and pupils are not always aware of the outcomes of their suggestions.
41. The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Opportunities are created and developed to increase the pupils' awareness of their culture and other people's cultures in lessons. In this respect art makes a significant contribution with the study of

various cultures, for example Egyptian art and Maori culture. Other subjects and activities also make very effective contributions, for instance in history the study of the slave trade displayed the various ways different cultures have emerged. There is also a reasonable selection of books in the library representing other cultures.

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

42. Procedures for assessment, support and monitoring pupils' progress are satisfactory overall and have some good and occasionally very good features. The school has made a satisfactory improvement in its assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress since the last inspection. Information from assessments is used to plan the work for the pupils on a class basis. However, there is no co-ordinated whole-school policy on assessment and the information from assessment is not yet consistently used to plan pupils' future learning.
43. Individual education plans derive their original information from pupils' statements of educational needs. In many subjects learning targets developed from the individual education plans are not used effectively to plan future Programmes of Study. For example, in English, mathematics, physical education, science, geography, history and music, precise, pertinent targets are set for individual pupils and these are reviewed half-termly. In the other subjects the procedures are not as effective because they frequently lack precision in what the pupils are expected to achieve.
44. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are sound. The school uses a merit system and this is generally applied consistently throughout the school. The success of this policy has contributed enormously to the orderly conduct as well as the safe happy atmosphere of the school. All the pupils' individual education plans contain effective behaviour programmes that are reviewed half-termly: these help the pupils manage their behaviour because they understand the aspects they need to improve.
45. The school makes satisfactory arrangements to secure the health, safety and welfare of pupils. Members of staff know pupils very well indeed. They are aware of their duty of care and relationships between them and the pupils are positive. There is a suitable person with designated responsibility for child protection. The policy and procedures meet local guidelines and are followed by the designated person where there is any cause for concern about a pupil in the care of the school. All staff present at the school received child protection training about two years ago and they are alert to the need for vigilance. The school is aware that it now needs to formalise arrangements for their continued regular updating and briefing. There are suitable arrangements to deal with first aid emergencies and prescribed medicines. Liaison between home and school about pupils on medication is very effective. There is a medical officer who is responsible for this, ensuring that medicines are taken on time and recorded.
46. The school regards the health and safety of pupils as a high priority. The statutory requirements for annual testing of equipment and appliances are fully met. Pupils are made alert to procedures in the event of fire; exits are free from obstruction and clearly marked. The supervision of pupils who board at the school is good, a waking member of staff is on duty throughout the night. The school has procedures that require teachers to make pupils aware, where appropriate, about issues affecting their personal safety during lessons. The local authority inspects the premises regularly to identify maintenance issues and the school expects members of staff to be alert to the need to report any safety hazard seen. Despite the good arrangements for risk assessment, these need to be updated on a regular basis, and formal practices introduced to complete the risk assessment process. For example, by carrying out risk assessments for school trips, visits and use of the

premises. The health and safety policy is broadly suitable but does not include the need for risk assessment.

47. The personal and educational support and guidance given to pupils is good. Expectations for behaviour are very clear and consistently applied by most staff, who set a very good example. Pupils feel they are treated fairly and with respect. This ensures they are usually prepared to co-operate resulting in a positive learning environment. Staff have had recent training about bullying, behaviour management, crisis intervention and counselling and there are clear strategies for them to use in the classroom. Where time is taken to use these consistently they are very effective in helping pupils to manage their behaviour. Some teachers are very skilled and able to use their knowledge of the individual effectively to support the development of self-control. There are suitable procedures to deal with bullying and it is included as a topic in the personal, health and social education programme (PHSE). Where any aspect of a pupil's life at school causes concern the school seeks to involve both pupil and parents or carers in seeking a way forward. All aspects of pupils' lives at school are recorded with care. There are effective attendance procedures that ensure parents, carers and support agencies are suitably informed immediately after registration where there is an unexplained absence. Boarding provision is used effectively to help stabilise the attendance of some pupils who come to the school with poor attendance records, the school has noted that this benefit often continues when they subsequently become day pupils. Registers provide an accurate record of those present. The school has an appropriate level of support from the education welfare officer and makes suitable use of time available from other support agencies.
48. The school has recently updated the PHSE programme to meet the latest guidance, including aspects of citizenship. The programme plans for pupils to explore a broad range of issues that support personal effectiveness and life skills including the social aspects of sex education and drugs awareness. The headteacher is aware of the need to monitor this programme during its introduction to ensure a consistent and coherent approach. There is a suitable programme for careers education. Arrangements to support this with relevant work experience or other individual links with the community for boys to work, have broken down during the current year. As a result, the oldest pupils in the school are not currently provided with sufficient individualised opportunities to build on their personal interests and skills. They do not currently spend enough time extending their vocational interests through work experience, work-shadowing, or attendance at other educational placements, in order to prepare them for life after school or for their next stage of their education. The school is aware of the need to make alternative arrangements. Recent staff training has included citizenship and the work-related curriculum. Opportunities for pupils' personal development through supervised trips and visits ensures they make good progress over time with their social skills and personal confidence. Their ability, however, to cope independently with travel is not always sufficiently well developed by the time they leave school to ensure they are able to travel to training or work independently. Pupils in boarding accommodation are given good opportunities for personal development through extra-curricular activities such as first aid training, links with a local kennels where they are able to sponsor a dog, visits to the elderly and organising a social evening for them in school. There is a school council, with opportunities for all tutor groups to put their views. Opportunities for pupils to take roles of responsibility in this are underdeveloped and there is insufficient feedback about the suggestions they make. The personal development of pupils is monitored well through individual care records and plans, personal targets, behaviour reviews, sessions with key workers, counselling and staff meetings.
49. The school has a system of rewards that promotes good behaviour in all aspects of school life including evening and residential activities. Marking is usually effective, it is often backed up by clear, constructive comments that help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work and to give praise where it has been earned. Classroom support is effectively planned to meet pupils' needs and teachers know pupils well ensuring

their ability to provide suitable support and guidance in lessons. In mathematics very high standards of explanations help pupils to understand their work. There are clear objectives set at the beginning of lessons and these provide good opportunities to help pupils understand what they are trying to achieve and when they have been successful. In those lessons where pupils are encouraged to identify their own strengths and weaknesses this helps them to develop as effective independent learners.

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

50. Parents are pleased with what the school provides and achieves. All those who expressed an opinion praised the leadership and management of the school, in particular that of the headteacher. Most parents say they are easily able to approach staff to discuss problems and concerns. They feel that the teaching is of a high standard and their children make good progress and develop in maturity and responsibility. Parents acknowledge the good work of the school in managing children's behaviour; they are aware that some of this is very challenging and also that not all children like coming to school, particularly during the first few months until they settle in. Inspection evidence confirms that staff usually manage behaviour very well and that good support is given to pupils to help them settle into school. Some parents would like more information about how their children are getting on and more opportunities to work with the school to support their progress. Whilst the quality of annual progress reports are good and parents are suitably involved in the subsequent review, there are no further planned opportunities during the year for them to take an active part in their children's learning or be brought up to date with progress towards those targets and the new targets set. This limits their opportunity to work with the school to support their children. Some parents are not happy with the school policy of not setting homework routinely and inspectors agree that, if carefully managed, this should benefit their personal development and enable parents to have a greater involvement in their children's learning.
51. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is satisfactory overall. There are good arrangements to familiarise them with the school before their children's entry. In addition to the opportunity to visit the school and meet with staff there is a very effective booklet for prospective parents that gives a clear outline of the way the school works, its aims and what is expected of both pupils and parents. Parents find staff approachable and say they get back to them promptly about queries and concerns. Complaints are dealt with well. The governors' annual report to parents gives generally good information about what the school provides and achieves; however, governors have overlooked the need to include in this a summary of the progress they have made in working towards targets set in their action plan following the last inspection. Parents are not always aware of who the parent governors are and how to contact them if they wish to raise an issue. The prospectus provides good information about routines and expectations and ensures parents have an effective overview of school life. Relationships between the school and parents are usually positive; they are particularly good with the headteacher.
52. Parents are encouraged to be fully involved with the annual review process and receive a copy of the annual report prepared prior to this. Reporting is of good quality and evaluates effectively what pupils know, understand and can do. The targets that are included are often too general to be of real help to parents and carers in understanding how they can help their child to improve. There are, however, opportunities within the review process to discuss this and copies of subsequent individual education plans are sent home. The results of end of year testing by the age of 14 are sent to parents with information about their children's progress towards targets set. However, little other information is sent to parents between annual reviews which helps them to understand and track their children's progress term by term. Parents are not routinely informed when new learning targets are set during the year but the school is currently changing its procedures to remedy this

situation. There are also few planned opportunities for them to be involved in learning through the setting of homework, which is not routinely provided.

53. The impact of parents' involvement with the work of the school and their contribution to pupils' learning at school and at home is limited mainly because of domestic or personal difficulties and remains satisfactory as it was at the last inspection. The distances that many parents have to travel limits opportunities for them to visit regularly and there is no parent teacher association. Nevertheless, parents place great value upon the school's provision and appreciate the care the school takes to ensure they are informed and involved when their children are experiencing problems or when successes are celebrated.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

54. Overall leadership and management are good. The aim of the school is clearly stated in the mission statement 'Maximising everyone's potential', and evident in practice in all aspects of school life. It gives a clear signal of the school's intention to provide equality of opportunity for all, although this has yet to be extended sufficiently in regard to inclusion in the wider community. The headteacher gives charismatic and energetic leadership in pursuit of these aims, ensuring a clear direction for the school. He leads by example, in managing the pupils, in valuing pupils and staff, and contributing to high standards through his teaching commitment.
55. The contribution of the governing body to support the further development of the school is unsatisfactory because, in spite of regular receipt of reports on the progress of the school development plan, it is still insufficiently actively involved in the work of the school. It is not in a position to identify the school's strengths and weaknesses, to fulfil its statutory responsibilities, or to participate in an effective partnership with the headteacher and support him as a 'critical friend'. There is currently no teacher on the governing body which limits governors' opportunities to seek and hear the views of the staff at its meetings. The minutes of the governing body meetings indicate that governors have in recent times been encouraged to become more involved.
56. The school development plan builds on a full range of policy documents and provides a good strategic process for improvement, appropriately based on tackling the key issues from the last inspection and a clear identification of priorities and costs. The plan is reviewed annually and changes made to reflect progress. The plan forms an effective component of the school's monitoring and evaluation of its own performance towards attaining identified targets. Overall progress towards attainment of the targets has been good. Continuing staff vacancies have meant that the senior management's contribution to teaching has left insufficient time for formal monitoring of teaching as part of the potentially effective Performance Management policy agreed with staff. The vacancies have meant that, in spite of the fact that the financial resources made available to the school are used effectively in pursuit of the school's aims and the targets contained in the development plan, the school feels there has been little opportunity for senior management to monitor the effectiveness of spending outcomes. However, specific grants are used for their intended purposes.
57. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The governing body recognises that the reason that it has not been better than this is largely due to the continuing staff vacancies. Some of the key issues from the last inspection have yet to be fully implemented. For example, procedures for monitoring and evaluating teaching and the curriculum are not yet fully in operation, and the curriculum, despite some major strengths, remains unsatisfactory.

58. The school's management of its administration and financial procedures, including financial control, is excellent. Budget monitoring is described by the local authority audit report as very good. The audit recommendations have all been carried out. The school is aware of the principles of best value and applies them whenever possible. For example, it compares its performance and costs with that of similar schools and it takes full advantage of the local authority tendering system in order to obtain best value for money. The school now uses information technology effectively in support of its day-to-day and financial administration, and in support of the delivery of the curriculum. The match of staff, both day and residential, to the curriculum is good. Support and care staff now work very effectively with teachers. The school makes good use of support services such as those provided by the educational psychologist. The very high standards of cleanliness in the accommodation and grounds, and the pride taken in their maintenance are readily apparent. Resources and accommodation are now very good and have had a strong impact on standards.
59. Unit costs for day and residential pupils are not separated and therefore unit costs appear initially on the high side. However, pupils enter the school with low prior attainment, poor behaviour and negative attitudes to learning; they leave having received a good education with credible accreditation, improved behaviour and a more positive view of themselves. As a consequence, the school is judged to offer satisfactory value for money.

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

60. In order to help the school to improve further the headteacher, staff and governing body now need to:
- (a) improve the curriculum so that religious education and modern languages comply with legal requirements;  
(*Para ref: 27*)
  - (b) improve the governors' overall knowledge of the school by:
    - ensuring they are fully informed about standards of teaching, learning and the curriculum and what is legally required in schools;
    - appointing a teacher governor;
    - increasing the involvement in the school of all governors; and
    - continue to use all available evidence to evaluate the school.(*Para ref: 55, 57*)
  - (c) provide more opportunities for the oldest pupils to take part in work-related aspects of the curriculum in preparation for life after school; and  
(*Para ref: 36*)
  - (d) increase curricular opportunities for all pupils to acquire knowledge and insights into values and beliefs and enable them to reflect on their experiences in a way which develops their spiritual awareness and self-knowledge.  
(*Para ref: 38*)
61. In addition to the Key Issues above, these other issues should be considered by the headteacher and governing body:
- (a) ensure that teaching and the curriculum are regularly and rigorously monitored;  
(*Para refs: 29, 57*)

- (b) introduce formal and regular arrangements for completing risk assessments on school trips, visits and use of premises and include the need for risk assessment in the health and safety policy (*Para refs: 46, 67*)
- (c) formalise arrangements whereby all staff receive regular updating and briefing on child protection matters; (*Para refs: 40, 67*)
- (d) develop a close working relationship with parents and partner institutions so that they make a major contribution to the learning of all pupils; (*Para refs: 51-53*)

## RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

62. Residential provision is very good and has a positive impact on the achievement and progress of all nineteen pupils who board from Monday to Friday. This maintains the high standards noted in the previous inspection. This is because the relationship between the school and residential elements ensures that the distinct cultures support pupils' development throughout the 24-hour curriculum. For example, in the residential provision there are clear policies and practices relating to behaviour and discipline, which are consistent to those that apply in school. As a result, pupils know what is expected of them and feel secure within these boundaries. Over time they develop a more constant and positive attitude about themselves and towards other people.
63. Aspects of the residential provision make a good contribution to the quality of learning of all pupils. There are opportunities to continue their studies in suitable conditions. For example, to use the computer in the library to improve the presentation of a letter. They have access to books, music and other resources for homework or for the pursuits of personal interests. They meet each evening to discuss and choose an activity to follow. This is a well-established routine so pupils settle quickly into it. They are well motivated and conduct themselves in a mature and sensible manner. They speak and listen with confidence, knowing that their contribution will be valued. They pay close attention to what others say, asking questions to clarify issues, and take account of others' ideas and views. In this way, pupils' speaking and listening skills and confidence are enhanced.
64. Pupils make very good progress in working towards the behaviour targets in their individual education plans, because staff refer regularly to them and because of the very positive reward and privilege system in place. This is valued by pupils and motivates them to do well. In contrast to school, pupils' behaviour is much more stable and consistent. Behaviour at meal times is excellent. With such a small number of boarders care staff know the pupils really well. They take great care to ensure that pupils' personal development is promoted and monitored and that they are settled and at ease before school, ready to make the most of all learning opportunities. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good. Residential staff provide very good role models in the patient, kind and considerate way they relate to pupils and to each other.
65. Pupils make good progress also in developing personal and social skills in the planned care programme. These are regularly assessed and recorded. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to extend their personal interests and skills in a balanced way without undue interference or restriction. Good use is made of local leisure facilities, such as swimming, ten-pin bowling and quasar to develop pupils' recreational skills and gain social and cultural experience, knowledge and understanding. Staff provide the necessary support and encouragement to make these activities worthwhile and as a result pupils' experience success and this raises self-esteem.
66. The residential provision is well led by a qualified and experienced head of care. He is well supported in his work by the deputy and sufficient care staff to ensure adequate supervision and pupils' safety at all times. For example, there is a waking night attendant,



supported by a member of staff on sleeping-in duty and a member of the senior management on call, in an emergency. There is effective overlap between school and residential setting and information and communication systems, including documentation and record keeping, are efficient. Care staff work two mornings a week in school supporting one-to-one reading and this further reinforces a continuity and consistency of approach to pupil management.

67. Appropriate policies and guidelines are in place for such aspects as equal opportunities, action against bullying, child protection and abuse procedures and restraint. While there has been recent training on physical restraint, the head of care is aware that refresher and induction training in the key area of child abuse is overdue. While pupils are told about the complaints procedures these should be clearly posted in each of the residential units. Regular fire practice drills are carried out by day and night in each half-term and duly recorded. Pupils have access to the school's cordless phone to make outgoing calls in private. There are good systems in place for communicating with Social Services Department and other relevant outside agencies. Links with parents/carers are maintained and encouraged.
68. The residential accommodation is pleasant, comfortable and brightly displayed. Pupils have personalised their living areas with posters and photographs, which reflect a sense of ownership. The accommodation is clean, well lit and ventilated and has all the amenities and comfort you would expect of a home. In the living area for example, there is adequate space and resources for pupils to pursue their own interests. The accommodation would seem to be free from safety hazards although no recent risk assessment on the premises, grounds, trips and activities, has been undertaken. Bedroom recesses are good but lack privacy, as do the showers. Only two of the four residential units are currently used. The hostel for independent living shows no evidence of recent use. This is a missed opportunity to prepare senior pupils for the reality of independent living after school. Overall, residential provision is effective and is a very positive feature of the school.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

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

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9	28	33	30	0	0	0

*The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	48

#### 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	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	8.3

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	13	0	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	0	8	1
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	0	8	1
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	0	61	8
	National	0	0	0
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	0	0	0
	National	0	0	0

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	0	8	1
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	0	8	1
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	0	61	8
	National	0	0	0
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	0	0	0
	National	0	0	0

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

There were too few pupils to report National Curriculum test results. However of the four pupils in Year 11 in July 2000:

2 pupils achieved 5 GCSEs Grades A-G and  
1 pupil achieved 3 GCSEs Grades A-G

Younger pupils in Year 10 achieved 1 GCSE Grades C-G  
and 1 pupil achieved 2 GCSEs grades B - E

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	47
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	47	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7– Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4.7
Average class size	8

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	137.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	799,752
Total expenditure	772,368
Expenditure per pupil	17,963
Balance brought forward from previous year	119,353
Balance carried forward to next year	146,737

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	49
Number of questionnaires returned	17

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	29	47	18	6	0
My child is making good progress in school.	12	76	6	6	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	6	59	18	6	12
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	0	29	6	29	35
The teaching is good.	35	53	0	0	12
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	47	12	12	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	24	12	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	41	41	12	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	24	53	18	6	0
The school is well led and managed.	47	53	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	53	0	12	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	29	6	0	29

## Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Because many parents live a considerable distance from the school they are unable to join in with school activities as much as they would like. They also feel unsure about what is on offer for the pupils in the evenings. Several parents have responded negatively to the box asking for their opinions about homework, helping their children to become more responsible and the amount of information they receive from the school. Inspectors support their view that while annual reviews are well organised and sensitive to the needs of the pupil, between these events parents do not receive enough information to enable them to underpin what their children are learning in the classroom. Parents are pleased overall with what the school offers and quote several incidents of improved behaviour since pupils were enrolled.

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

### **ENGLISH**

69. Standards of attainment in English are below national expectations for pupils of this age. However, pupils achieve well and make good progress in English throughout the school. These good gains in learning are a direct result of good teaching. Other teachers also take full advantage of opportunities in the whole school curriculum to reinforce pupils' command of language, for example in history and geography, where key words are displayed in the classroom. When measured against their low prior knowledge and understanding, pupils make good gains in learning.
70. Pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. They are encouraged to use everyday language effectively and are introduced to specialist language specific to different subjects as appropriate. They are given the opportunities to acquire the confidence to develop their oral skills ranging from informal discussions with peers to more formal presentations to larger audiences. They listen carefully to both adults and to one another.
71. Achievement in reading across both stages is very good. Pupils of all abilities make good progress because their reading is heard frequently and detailed records are kept of progress. Class reading is encouraged and in all classes, those pupils who are not reading listen to other pupils reading. There is evidence of good individual support by teachers and learning support assistants. The school's aim is to raise the reading standard of every pupil by 14 to a minimum of nine years. All pupils aged 11 to 12 are given a baseline assessment during their first half term at school. Those pupils who are experiencing levels of difficulty receive one to one support by a trained learning support assistant. This project has been very successful, with many pupils making large strides forward in their reading skills. The classroom assistant responsible for the project is skilled, experienced, well trained and highly committed to her work and makes a significant contribution to the success of the project.
72. In their first year pupils are learning a range of strategies in reading unfamiliar words and establishing their meaning. Pupils aged 13 read well with expression and show good levels of fluency, developing their skills of comprehension. Pupils aged 14 read with good expression to convey meaning and observe punctuation. Older pupils are able to read widely and comment on a range of texts. Higher attaining pupils in this age group can give a good account of events in their workbooks. Pupils read for pleasure both fiction and non-fiction books and by the age of 16, the majority of the pupils have gained in confidence and have the necessary skills to tackle a wide range of literature.
73. Pupils aged from 11 to 14 make good progress in writing in a variety of styles and forms. Younger pupils write on a range of topics and gain skills necessary for writing reports of visits as well as simple letters. Pupils aged 13 make progress in imaginative writing, increasing their understanding of grammar. They are involved in a group project at present creating a brochure about the school. Pupils aged 14 gain in their knowledge of poetry and creative writing, and some of their work in English is linked to historical topics. These pupils are in the process of producing a school magazine. This enables them to learn about the structure of a magazine. Pupils make good improvements in handwriting and in spelling. Their work is well presented and legible, and pupils use computers effectively to improve presentation.
74. Higher attaining pupils aged 15 use an extensive range of vocabulary and punctuation. Lower attaining pupils are making very good progress towards individual literacy targets.

For instance learning to spell the days of the week and the months of the year. All pupils are developing skills of setting work out appropriately, using a good range of grammar and vocabulary and developing their own ideas. Work is well presented and all pupils are well motivated to improve through the effective way their individual education plan targets are included in their classroom work. By the age of 16, pupils' writing includes accounts of their own experiences and they are learning to select and present information, for instance, writing a critical report about a poem or a piece of literature. A scrutiny of pupils' work in their last year at school, show that the majority have developed a good command of the language with evidence that they are able to use the dictionary confidently.

75. By the age of 14 most pupils have reached Level 3 of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and two pupils attained Level 4. From this level, pupils work towards GCSE where in the past they have obtained encouraging results. Many of the classes study the work of Shakespeare. Pupils aged 14 study 'Twelfth Night', and as part of their GCSE programme of study older pupils study 'Romeo and Juliet'.
76. The quality of teaching was good in most lessons and very good in one lesson. The best lessons are well planned with clear objectives and expectations that are shared with the pupils. In these lessons, teachers have a high expectation to which pupils respond well. Key vocabulary is identified and explained to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and the white board is used appropriately to promote spelling lists. Opportunities are given to pupils to read aloud and good relationships are established with pupils. Praise and encouragement are used well to reinforce learning and motivate pupils to stay on task. Set tasks are interesting and present English as an exciting subject. Work is regularly marked with clear guidelines and pupils are given advice on how to improve. A contributory factor in the good achievement in English throughout the school is pupils' positive attitudes to improving their literacy skills. A learning support assistant is responsible for the organisation of the library, which is a pleasant area conducive to reading for pleasure or information. There is a good selection of books as well as a computer, which pupils use to develop skills in word processing and other aspects of information and communication technology. These good resources encourage pupils to learn. The curriculum is also enhanced by the pupils' participation in an annual drama festival with a youth theatre group.
77. The leadership, management and co-ordination of English are good. Planning is clear and the two teachers are appropriately qualified, experienced and enthusiastic. They work well as a team. As a result the school has maintained the good progress identified in the previous report.

## **MATHEMATICS**

78. The standards of attainment overall, and of pupils under the age of 14, are below national expectations. By the age of 16, however, the attainment of most pupils matches, or in a few cases exceeds, the average national expectation in the general certificate of secondary education (GCSE). It is higher than the average of similar schools nationally. This is a very commendable outcome considering the poor levels of mathematical attainment of most pupils on entry. It is due to teaching that is very good overall and a good curriculum, which steadily builds up pupils' skills, understanding and confidence.
79. Progress in mathematics overall is very good. It is good when pupils reach the age of 14, and very good when they reach the age of 16. They draw logical conclusions and consider possible outcomes, for example, 'It'll be off the chart, then' was one pupil's explanation for selecting which display he would use for his data. Pupils increasingly take responsibility for their own learning, and become analytical thinkers because teachers have high expectations that they will do so. Pupils are confident in the learning situation, knowing their contributions and efforts will be valued. This has a direct impact in reducing their

primary special educational need as pupils are increasingly able to calmly accept that they are less than perfect. Their very positive attitude to mathematics overall and good behaviour contributes to their good learning and achievement.

80. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, which enables them to understand the anxiety about mathematics that many pupils suffer. On entry to the school, most pupils have poor attitudes to the subject because of their unsatisfactory earlier experience of it. Teachers help pupils to quickly learn the basic numeracy skills, including oral 'tables', which are necessary for progress on to effective higher-order mathematical problem solving. This thorough grounding enables calculating to become virtually automatic, so that pupils' intellectual energy becomes focused on solving the problem. They learn to set out their work neatly, which enables them to organise their thinking. By the age of 14 they have become keen learners, because they have discovered they can understand mathematical concepts, and find mathematics a rewarding learning experience. This is because teachers have carefully planned challenging work that builds successfully on prior learning and targets for achievement. Pupils have a good understanding about transformations in geometry, can use formulae to calculate volume, fractions and decimals. They carry out investigations and surveys, for example, on the popularity of the various makes of 'trainers' and can estimate realistically. They use a computer programme to consolidate and revise their learning. By the age of 16 pupils have become reasonably confident in algebra, can calculate using negative numbers, plot complex data, and solve quadratic equations. Their improved literacy enables them to answer written mathematical problems confidently. Through the use of mathematical ideas and processes such as the presentation of data in bar charts in other subjects such as science, humanities and technology, pupils become aware of the practical usefulness of the subject in everyday life.
81. The improvement in attainment and behaviour of pupils is largely due to the very good provision made in the subject. Teaching is based firmly on the National Curriculum programmes of study, the key concepts of the National Numeracy Strategy, and on a very good cycle of medium and short-term planning and assessment. The management of pupils by teachers and learning support assistants, who work very well together, is very good. It stems from their intimate understanding of individual pupil's special educational and learning needs, which enables them proactively to plan management strategies and individualised learning programmes for them all. The very good relationships that the staff actively promote with the pupils are based on mutual respect and contribute to a conducive ethos for learning. Very high expectations of work and behaviour are consistently and unemotionally made clear so no time is wasted in refocusing attention. Teachers use imaginative strategies for teaching mathematical concepts and making them relevant to pupils' experience. For example, 'Think of a Toblerone', when helping one pupil understand about symmetry. The very good use of open-ended questioning develops pupils' responsibility for regularly thinking about their learning, for example, 'How did you get that answer?' And there is a consistency of response, so that pupils know where they stand, in very good use of immediate praise, and other less public ways to indicate approval for individual pupils' learning or appropriate behaviour such as a smile, a gentle touch or a 'thumbs up'.
82. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Standards are higher and teaching is now almost all good or very good, and in a few cases excellent. The very good scheme of work covers all attainment targets and is more effective in supporting learning. Ongoing assessment informs teaching and lesson planning. Information and communication technology is effectively used and resources are now good, and are well targeted to support pupils' learning. The school has set appropriately challenging targets for attainment in mathematics in line with current provision. The mathematics co-ordinator, a specialist, has very good understanding of the value of mathematics to the pupils. She gives very good leadership for maintaining high standards and for moving the subject forward.



## SCIENCE

83. Overall standards of attainment are below those expected nationally for pupils of this age range. However, considering the differences in, and the complexity of, learning needs in the school, pupils' achievements are satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress and attain creditable results in the GCSE examination. There has been considerable improvement in pupils' progress since the last inspection, when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. Overall, improvement in science since the last inspection is good.
84. By the age of 14, pupils are finishing the first year of their GCSE course. In learning about resistance in electrical circuits, the higher attaining pupils have good recall and remember that another way of referring to voltage is to say 'potential difference'. Lower attaining pupils are increasing their knowledge and understanding about resistance, voltage and current at a good pace. All pupils make satisfactory gains in learning about the resistance of different materials. They know that copper has a low resistance and plastic has a high resistance. Several pupils attempt to disrupt lessons and this has a negative effect on their progress, until the teacher encourages them to return to their task. Examination of pupils' work indicates that they have studied all the appropriate areas of science and have made satisfactory progress in acquiring new knowledge. For example, they understand how the skeleton works and know that the skull protects the brain and the ribs protect the heart and lungs. Pupils have studied chemical reactions and they have been involved in scientific enquiry, carrying out many experiments, including those on how different metals react with water to make a gas. The youngest pupils in the school, who have been studying volcanoes in geography, have successfully extended their understanding of geology, and illustrated this progress when classifying different samples of rocks, including shale, slate and granite.
85. By the age of 16, examination of pupils' work shows that they clearly understand the process used to purify crude oil. They know well that three methods of getting electrical energy from some other form are chemical, movement and nuclear and that solar energy can be converted into electrical energy. They have studied heredity and have some understanding of mutation and evolution. They know about genetic diseases such as haemophilia. Pupils have studied, and can discuss knowledgeably, different environmental issues, including the human population expansion and pollution. Lower attaining pupils and occasionally higher attaining pupils, whose verbal skills are much better than their skills in writing, have difficulty with written tasks. Consequently they write less and occasionally do not complete their work. Pupils aged 15 years, in the one lesson observed, made very good gains in learning about electricity. This was because of very good teaching, which included the use of resources that motivated them.
86. Across the school pupils make consistently good gains in their knowledge and understanding of science. They are able to make predictions, engage in scientific enquiry through carrying out experiments and can record and present the results of these experiments in a variety of ways, including charts, bar graphs, line graphs and the use of information and communication technology. They can form, discuss and record their conclusions in the light of these results. A small number of pupils throughout the school have a good understanding of scientific concepts. They are able to communicate this understanding when speaking but are unable to write down and record their work to the same standard as their oral work.
87. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. One good and one very good lesson were observed. Learning and progress are both satisfactory overall and are directly related to teaching. Where teaching is very good, it is based on very good subject knowledge. This was demonstrated in an electronics lesson for 15-year-old pupils. Very interesting resources were used such as the Van der Graaf generator. Pupils were excited and motivated by the experiments with this apparatus. The teacher clearly explained the principles involved, so that very good learning and understanding took place. Very good

links with numeracy were made, for example, the teacher explained to the pupils that the current in a car battery is 120 million times greater than the current that they have just experienced in the experiment. Because very good teaching motivated and excited the pupils, it had a positive effect on their learning and behaviour, which was also very good and they were keen to participate in the experiments. The teachers' classroom management was very good and this meant that little time was needed to discuss pupils' behaviour and encourage them to return to their tasks.

88. Where teaching is satisfactory, work is challenging, there is satisfactory ongoing assessment and scientific language is used appropriately, for example, metamorphic, in a lesson with the youngest pupils. However, the teacher's classroom management is less effective when dealing with the challenging behaviour of this age group. The pace of the lesson inevitably slows down as time is used to make sure that pupils keep returning to their tasks. This has an adverse effect on pupils' progress, attitudes and behaviour, all of which vary from satisfactory to unsatisfactory. Attitudes and behaviour in science are satisfactory overall. Pupils take time to settle down to their tasks and several try intermittently to disrupt the lesson. The teacher and support staff work well as a team in maintaining pupils on task.
89. The school's science curriculum is satisfactory overall. The GCSE course is now taught more thoroughly and in greater depth. Resources have improved and include some which are particularly captivating, such as an astronomical telescope and a visually stimulating interactive physics software package. Links have been made with a mainstream comprehensive school and scientific equipment can be obtained on a loan basis. The information and communication technology (ICT) content of the science curriculum has improved. The content of the curriculum for pupils aged 11 to 14 years has improved. However, as in the last inspection, pupils still start the GCSE course aged 14 and take the exam aged 15. This means that higher levels of some aspects of the curriculum are not always covered because there is insufficient time.
90. Leadership and management of science are sound. The head of department is a science specialist and is skilled in transmitting the excitement and wonder of the subject to the pupils. Science makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural areas of education, for example, when the teacher gave an exciting demonstration of electricity. In the two years that the head of department has been in post, he has completely rewritten the science policy and curriculum to bring them more in line with mainstream education. It is acknowledged that this new curriculum has not been formerly evaluated and there is not a focused action plan for future development. Assessment is unsatisfactory, as it is limited to reviewing and updating the targets, which are set each half term. There is no ongoing, formal recording of pupils' standards in the different areas of science, although tests are carried out and informally assessed.
91. The accommodation is adequate but the preparation room is too small and some storerooms are not accessible through the laboratory. This makes preparation difficult and less efficient. There is due regard to health and safety. Science makes a good contribution to literacy, for example, through built-in opportunities for discussion, listening, relevant question-and-answer sessions and the display of scientific language around the room. A good contribution is also made to numeracy, including built-in opportunities for different measurements, surveys, the construction of graphs and accurate counting. There is no technician to assist the science department.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

92. Overall standards of attainment in art are below those expected nationally for pupils aged 11 to 16. However, considering the differences in and the complexity of learning needs in the school, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress. The

pupils who take an art option at this age make good progress and in the year 2000 all pupils taking the GCSE examination obtained B and C grades.

93. By the age of 14, pupils successfully design a mask or emblem in a similar style to ancient Egyptian art and produce a piece of sculpture using a plaster technique. Examination of pupils' work shows that they have effectively used a number of art techniques and a variety of materials. These include the use of a digital camera to distort and change images by inputting them into a computer. Pupils have successfully increased their understanding of the colour circle and have used paint, pencil, pastel, charcoal and crayon, made printing blocks and have carried out a variety of printing techniques, including making monoprints. They have deepened their knowledge of art movements and different artists' work, for example, Surrealism and the work of Salvador Dali. They have increased their own skills by creating repeated patterns and designs using natural forms such as the vine plant for inspiration when designing fans. Higher attaining pupils work at a quicker pace and finish most of their work to a satisfactory standard. Lower attaining pupils have a lot of unfinished work in their folders and do not always apply themselves well to the tasks set. They have difficulty persevering with their tasks.
94. Examination of work shows that by the age of 16, pupils have worked particularly well in textiles, when silk painting, making batiks and when printing using a variety of textured and coloured materials. Good examples included a silk painting of the inside of a prison and printed faces on a variety of materials, including a very emotive deep red, thin, silky material, which allowed the printing ink to go through and produce a negative type image on the back. Observational drawings, for example of skulls, indicate that pupils' skills in depicting tone are improving. Other good work has been carried out using a number of materials including paint, pencil and clay, for example, small sculptures representing brains. Older pupils work on their own individual pieces and themes. Higher attainers work hard to improve tonal work using pencil. They experiment with some success using clay to model a representation of the human form after studying Michelangelo's work.
95. Pupils throughout the school do not use sketchbooks, although they do work on separate pieces of paper sometimes. This does not encourage the continuous recording and exploration of ideas and materials. Pupils make good use of the Internet to gather information and are improving their skills in independent learning.
96. The quality of teaching in art is satisfactory. Classroom management is satisfactory and the teacher uses the school systems effectively to have pupils taken out of the classroom if they become uncooperative, as happened in one lesson with the older pupils. This helps the other pupils to remain on task and improve their skills and learning. Occasionally, pupils are quite noisy and this has an adverse effect on their learning and progress, both of which are satisfactory overall and are directly related to teaching. The teacher is a specialist who has good subject knowledge. Lesson planning is brief but adequate. The teacher visits each pupil in the class to give individual help and advice. Tasks are suitably challenging. This has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and behaviour, which are generally satisfactory. However, occasionally pupils' attitudes and behaviour are unsatisfactory as in a lesson with pupils aged 13, when one pupil tried to start a fight. Lessons take place at a satisfactory pace. The teacher uses appropriate materials to motivate pupils, including books about different artists and different cultures. The teacher and support staff work effectively together as a team.
97. The department ensures that pupils with additional special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils. This is because lessons are planned to meet the needs of all pupils effectively and the teacher visits each pupil to give individual assistance.
98. The co-ordinator has only been in post for a relatively short time, approximately one year. Since the last inspection programmes of work have been rewritten and areas within the art

curriculum, such as silk painting in textiles, have improved. The head of department is not fully aware of the responsibilities of this post. This is acknowledged and is recognised as an important area for professional development. Work in the department has not been reviewed or evaluated and there is no focused action plan to help improve standards. The formal monitoring of teaching has not taken place. Assessment is satisfactory. There are no extra-curricular activities but art makes a good contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils study many aspects of different cultures, including, Mexican, Maori and ancient Egyptian. Information and communication technology supports the art curriculum but the school acknowledges that it is not fully developed. Art makes a satisfactory contribution to literacy. This is mainly through speaking and listening, some writing and discussion, when learning about the Maori culture. However, language used in art is not displayed in a prominent, visual way to aid pupils' learning. Art makes a satisfactory contribution to numeracy, as when using perspective, distortion and spatial awareness. Opportunities are missed within the art department to create a visually stimulating, working environment that attract the pupils' interest and attention. There is a lack of interesting artefacts and objects on display. The kiln has not been used for some time because it needs to be repaired and this has an adverse affect on the provision for three-dimensional work. Since the last inspection there has been satisfactory improvements.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

99. Overall, standards of attainment are below national expectations for pupils of this age range in design and technology. However, all pupils make satisfactory and often good progress and achieve well. This is because they are taught well by specialists, enjoy the practical aspects of the subject and take pride in their achievements. This maintains the standards noted in the previous inspection.
100. Pupils up to the age of 14 make satisfactory and often good progress. In a food technology lesson, pupils learnt how to make different soups from a variety of ingredients, for example tomato, cheese and vegetables. They consolidated their manipulative skills of chopping, grating, mixing and slicing. They asked questions, for example, 'Miss, how many will I need?' to increase their knowledge and understanding. In a few lessons teaching is no more than satisfactory when activities include an overemphasis on watching the teacher undertake tasks the pupil could easily do for themselves or tasks concerning copying information which could be provided in a different form.
101. Pupils aged 13 make good progress working on an electronics unit. Most have a reasonable knowledge of electronics. They know for example, that a diode allows a current to only flow in one direction and how to use a transistor as a switch. They have a satisfactory understanding of how electronic components work, how transistors are controlled and how to apply electronic systems to everyday products, like a doorbell or alarm clock. They show good control, patience and an awareness of safety when using a soldering iron because the teacher reminds them regularly to wear their goggles. The teacher gives good demonstrations so pupils are clear about what to do. He circulates the workshop, prompting, encouraging and suggesting, so pupils' performance improves. He manages behaviour well, by largely ignoring minor disruptions, until the pupil is ready to take part. He uses good technical language like 'printed circuit boards', 'crocodile clips', 'calibrate' and 'caustic solution' and in this way reinforces literacy across the curriculum. He provides good worksheet designs to pupils to help pupils in their construction. Pupils are highly motivated. More able pupils talk freely about their work and show a good level of understanding. Behaviour is generally good and this contributes to pupils' good learning. However, the teacher does not assess behaviour at the end of a lesson in the detail and manner recommended by the school policy and this inconsistency detracts from the effectiveness of the system.

102. Pupils up to the age of 16 are working in a range of resistant materials on individually negotiated projects such as a bird box, a lamp holder and a steel hammer. They have designed their projects well and are on the way to completing them. The pupils work safely and independently on the wood and metal lathes. The teacher monitors their progress and his timely interventions with challenging questions or problem solving suggestions encourages better techniques and more accurate work. The third pupil is in a hurry to finish. He works too energetically and heavily with a hammer and saw. The teacher quietly advises him, for example, 'Let the saw do the work', but he is not responsive and the resulting product needs to be tidied up. The school grounds are enhanced by good quality work by pupils in design and technology. For example, a table, chair and wishing well in memory of former pupils and a wooden bridge over the stream.
103. The subject is led by two, experienced teachers who are both experienced practitioners. Whilst they have good subject expertise and a relaxed manner in managing pupils they do not promote the subjects in their specialist rooms through good displays of work or creating an exciting environment for work. Satisfactory schemes of work in place referenced to the National Curriculum Programme of Study are supported by local education authority assessment procedures for the subject. In addition, anecdotal notes are kept on pupils' progress on different activities. Areas for development should include the use of information and communication technology to give pupils experience of computer-aided design and manufacture with the introduction of appropriate accreditation for all pupils so that their skills are formally recognised.

## **HUMANITIES (geography and history)**

104. Standards of attainment in humanities are below national expectations for pupils of this age group. Nevertheless, progress in humanities is at least good and at times very good for all pupils in relation to their previous achievements. Pupils' work shows evidence that good progress is sustained overtime and that they work successfully towards accreditation in GCSE geography (Short Course). The GCSE results obtained for the past two years have been encouraging with pupils obtaining D grades. This is an improvement on previous years. This is as a result of teaching that is consistently very good overall and a curriculum that challenges the pupils with topics that are relevant and interesting. All this represents a significant improvement on the previous inspection.
105. The school has appropriate schemes of work in place based on the National Curriculum Programmes of Study, that seek to develop pupils' interest and knowledge in the environment, past events, human affairs and in the world around them. Pupils up to the age of 14 make good progress in understanding the issues that arise from peoples' interaction with the environment. For example, how people respond to a volcanic eruption. Their awareness, knowledge and understanding is helped because the teacher asks open-ended questions that make them consider how volcanic eruptions change the features of places and in turn, affect the lives and activities of people living there. The effective use of good resources including information and communication technology (ICT) motivates them to attend and reinforces learning. Pupils develop a sense of chronology when studying units of work on the Second World War and the slave trade. They can place the events, people and changes in and since that time within a chronological framework. They empathise with children evacuated at short notice in the war because the teacher 'tells a good story', that captures their interest and imagination. The teacher encourages them to think about controversial moral issues like war, poverty and slavery and in this way contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Lessons are well planned and prepared beforehand so that learning proceeds at pace and is uninterrupted.
106. Pupils up to the age of 16 make very good progress as they work towards accreditation at GCSE. The teacher has good subject knowledge and presents work that helps pupils understand modern social, environmental, economic and political issues. Pupils are well

motivated by the investigative nature of the work especially that which develops geographical enquiry. For example, pupils are establishing a case for a by-pass and have to identify the advantages and reconcile the disadvantages. Pupils are engrossed in the task and concentration and behaviour are excellent. The teacher skilfully manages the debate, valuing all contributions. The effect on the environment is discussed. For example the need to build a quarry and the danger to wild life. During this lesson the pupils display emerging geographical skills such as analysing and evaluating evidence, drawing conclusions and communicating their findings.

107. Positive features of teaching in humanities include the routine introduction of specialist vocabulary with key words written on the blackboard, supplemented by printed charts and the very good use of ICT and other resources to enhance the subject. There is evidence too, of deliberate planned curricular links to science and mathematics so that pupils' learning is consolidated and they learn how to transfer their skills from one subject to another. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic specialist who has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and resources are much improved since the previous inspection.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

108. Pupils are very well motivated by the use of computers and they make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in relation to their prior learning. They are becoming increasingly computer literate and pupils aged 14 to 16 are beginning to appreciate the enormous contribution that information and communication technology (ICT) makes to communication, entertainment and the world of work. This represents good progress since the previous inspection when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory, and improving the quality and range of pupils' access to ICT was a key issue for action. This improvement is due in part to the enthusiasm and subject expertise of the temporary ICT co-ordinator and the school's considerable investment in computer hardware and software and an ICT technician.
109. Pupils up to the age of 14, gain good basic skills by following an interactive course that helps them to learn at their own speed and absorb a good range of ICT skills and knowledge. It includes taught units of work ranging from an introduction to the language of ICT and practice of perfect keyboard skills, to word processing, spreadsheets, databases and graphics. The teacher makes good use of ongoing assessment tests throughout the course. Pupils also consolidate their ICT skills through the regular use of other interactive programs in English and mathematics.
110. Pupils aged 11 to 14 make good progress in acquiring knowledge, skills and understanding in learning to type quickly and with increasing accuracy as a result of an appropriately challenging activity. The lessons are well planned and organised so that learning is continuous. The teacher has good management skills and makes timely interventions to maintain their concentration. He has a good command of the subject and deals confidently with queries. He makes critical but supportive comments so pupils' performance improves. Pupils' behaviour is erratic. They are easily frustrated by their own mistakes and slow down the pace of learning for everyone with distracting behaviour. However, the very good resources maximise their learning opportunities. For example in music, this same year group use music composition software with increasing confidence to create a readable score from their performance on keyboards. This heightens their interest and motivation in music.
111. Pupils up to the age of 16, build on their skills acquired through ICT and produce electronic presentations with confidence. The teacher gives clear demonstrations so pupils are guided in their work. He asks them to think of the program 'as an electronic overhead projector' and asks challenging questions to make pupils think and confirm understanding,

discussing with more able pupils how their work can be improved. He deals patiently with pupils' off task behaviour, refocusing their attention time after time. Some pupils' progress is less than it should be because they have an agenda of their own such as to surf the 'net' for things that interest them. 'Why do I need this program for mechanics?' one disaffected pupil exclaims. The long-term absence and illness of the ICT technician means that some computers are not regularly maintained and one pupil cannot access his saved work, causing minor disruption.

112. All teachers use ICT as a regular feature of their work and it is particularly effective in English, mathematics, science, humanities, art and music. In science for example, the use of a physics package enables pupils to simulate experiments in electricity, electronics, light and mechanics. All this work promotes high standards of learning and represents a significant improvement on the previous inspection. The subject is well managed by a technician with considerable expertise and taught by a teacher who has other subject responsibilities. This results in him having limited time for evaluating new software or helping overcome technical difficulties. There is a subject policy in place, but a need to formalise all ICT work into a recognised scheme of work. Since the last inspection too, there has been a major investment in computer hardware and software. The dedicated computer suite is well equipped with eight workstations and ten other machines located in classrooms. Good use is made of the digital camera to record pupils' achievements and to provide additional evidence for GCSE coursework. The senior management is aware of the need for further training, to improve the confidence and expertise of all staff, and to further consolidate the use of ICT across the 24-hour curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to be accredited in ICT are recognised as an important and immediate target.

## **MUSIC**

113. The school has made significant improvements in the provision for and quality of music teaching in the school. Although the pupils' attainment in music is mainly below nationally expected levels across the school, it is now appropriate in terms of their ability. In some cases, however, the amount of progress made by pupils is limited by the challenging behaviour of a significant minority. This is particularly so for the youngest pupils in the school many of whom have yet to understand that when their behaviour is unacceptable they are not able to enjoy their lessons and extend their knowledge and skills concerning music. The behaviour of a more motivated group of similar aged pupils is better and they become involved with the musical tasks set eagerly and with interest. For example, they make good gains in beating a rhythm and working co-operatively in a group with one pupil acting sensibly as conductor. This activity provides a very good measure of how well the pupils can achieve when they are focused, interested in their work and in control of their own behaviour.
114. Teaching and learning are now at least satisfactory and often good which represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. In a small number of lessons, the behaviour of a minority of pupils limits their attention span, and therefore their learning opportunities. A specialist teacher is now in post and through a comprehensive knowledge and experience of the subject is able to motivate the pupils with a very good range of activities that enable them to extend and improve their skills on the keyboard, by interpreting rhythm patterns and playing untuned percussion instruments. The teacher's planning effectively extends the pupils' musical skills systematically and with small steps. Pupils aged 12 were fascinated by the demonstration of a computer-based composition program. Their attention was excellent as they listened to instructions given by the teacher who has a very good working knowledge of the program. Following this input two pupils showed their willingness and ability to co-operate in sharing the computer and laying down musical tracks that they then reviewed and edited. Although at the very early stages of music technology, these pupils show good potential, as do the remaining members of the

class when they work independently on the keyboards to practise and improve the accuracy of melodies they have learnt to play.

115. By the age of 13, pupils are developing their skills in reading simplified notation and translating it into notes on the keyboard. Higher attaining pupils' work independently and repeatedly on their melodies and, as a result of skilled support from the teacher and expert encouragement from the classroom assistant, lower attaining pupils also improve their skills. By the end of the lesson each pupil is able to play their chosen piece, however brief, with accuracy.
116. The music teacher is highly skilled in adapting his work to respond to the unpredictable behaviour of the pupils and he therefore succeeds in maintaining their interest for the majority of lessons. Teaching is good in over half of lessons and satisfactory in the remainder and is characterised by the teacher's positive approach and secure knowledge of the subject. For example he makes good links to literacy by his rigour in promoting the pupils' understanding and use of the technical vocabulary of music. He introduces, explains and encourages the pupils to use such terms as 'tempo', 'inversion', 'Dorian mode' and 'tonality'. The pupils take pride in using these terms and this in turn boosts their self-confidence and self esteem. In over half of lessons pupils make good gains in learning because of activities, which are well matched to their skills and interests. However, in two lessons the pupils' learning and behaviour is unsatisfactory as the most challenging pupils set out to prove that they will not join in, work or concentrate. This unacceptable behaviour results in noisy lessons where the concentration of all the pupils is limited because of these distractions. However, the teacher is relentless in his determination that lessons will continue and, with the very effective help of a classroom assistant, he perseveres and maintains the pace of the lesson, insisting that pupils will pay attention and participate. In all lessons this approach succeeds in regaining the pupils' attention so that the greater majority always play and work well if only for a part of the lesson.
117. The music curriculum is good and provides effective coverage of the National Curriculum. The teacher keeps detailed records and assesses pupils' skills regularly. He is therefore able to respond to individual pupils' needs selectively in lessons and to identify those pupils who need extra support or would benefit from greater challenge.
118. Music is offered as an option for pupils in the last two years of school and pupils are able to study for GCSE examination. One pupil has completed the current course and two pupils are similarly on target to take the examination next year.
119. Music plays an important part in the life of the school at Christmas and other seasonal celebrations. The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to study the music of other cultures, contrasting composers such as Tchaikovsky, Bernstein, Paganini and Elgar and varying musical styles such as reggae, twelve-bar blues, early music, and rock. However, the school has yet to make effective links with music activities within the community by visiting concerts or hearing instrumentalists play. Neither has it yet succeeded in providing individual instrumental tuition for higher attaining pupils through the local authority service despite several attempts to so; this lack of challenge for such pupils limits their opportunities to benefit from tuition which is available to other pupils in the authority.
120. The music teacher has good ideas for the future development of the subject that is well placed to make a further, exciting impact on school life in the future.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

121. Standards of attainment in physical education for the majority of pupils in this age group are in line with national expectations. Pupils make very good progress as a result of



teaching that is consistently very good, because of very good facilities and resources and because activities are appropriately challenging. This maintains the very high standards noted in the previous report.

122. Pupils up to the age of 14, make very good progress in consolidating their general level of fitness. Pupils make very good progress because of the teacher's expertise and enthusiasm for the subject. He provides expert demonstration and knowledgeable instruction for pupils to emulate. He plans lessons thoroughly so pupils are continuously challenged from the warm up activities to the recovery period. Together with the learning support assistant, he sets high standards in terms of dressing appropriately, good sporting behaviour and managing equipment, so that pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject. They work hard to improve their stamina and performance. Only a few younger pupils make less than very good progress because of some erratic behaviour. Older pupils in this age group make very good progress in canoe practice and swimming skills. They learn to capsize a canoe and rescue themselves by staying in the canoe and swimming with the upper arm to the side. They can successfully complete an 'Eskimo' roll with a pupil attached to the front and back. More able pupils can stay upside down while four other pupils run in 'crocodile style' along the bottom of the upturned boat. Pupils are extremely well motivated and this contributes to the success of the lesson. They are proud of their achievements and enjoy the physical challenge. They are competent swimmers and divers and have good water fitness skills. Such very good progress is due to the excellent coaching skills of the teacher and the trust pupils place in him as they learn new skills and face fresh challenges. Appropriate use is made of very good resources and facilities, which enhance learning opportunities. Good concern is shown on all health and safety matters.
123. Pupils up to the age of 16, continue to build on this very good foundation. They consolidate their fitness levels in relation to the demands of football during informal activities at lunchtime. They improve their shooting, dribbling, passing and heading skills because the activities are carefully matched to their needs and are appropriately demanding. In canoeing, they effectively consolidate their skills, knowledge and understanding by going on a day's journey, paddling up a local river. Confident and eager participants, when visiting Hertfordshire Young Mariners' Base, without being told to the pupils prepare their canoes and don life jackets. Their behaviour is excellent. The pupils are, as individuals and as a group mature, sensible and responsible. As a 'team' they go into the water from the bank with a straight entry and paddle fluently across the lake. They climb out from deep water, drain their canoes and carry them up the bank and onto the river. Over time pupils have built up a range of canoeing skills that are accredited through the British Canoe Union Kayak one and two star awards. All this is a culmination of careful planning, assessment and teaching over their time in the school. For some pupils, canoeing techniques and the enjoyment and satisfaction of health-promoting physical activity are firmly embedded, such that canoeing could become a lifetime pastime.
124. The subject is well led by a specialist who has good skills, knowledge and patience and promotes the very good progress that pupils make. The contribution made by the support assistant is also a major factor in motivating the pupils and in providing a good, youthful, male role model. There is a very good scheme of work in place, which covers in balance all the activities of the National Curriculum and ensures pupils build on prior learning. All pupils have equality of access to the physical education curriculum. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assessment and accreditation are good and are mainly through progress and achievement in national association awards. Facilities are very good and include a swimming pool, repaired since the previous inspection, a gymnasium, a walled five-a-side football/basketball court, an improved playing field for football, cricket and athletics and a cricket net. Resources also are very good for a wide range of activities including outdoor adventurous activities. These very good resources and facilities contribute to the very good progress that pupils make.

Pupils also benefit from opportunities to play competitively against similar schools in the local education authority in such sports as football, cross-country running, swimming, cricket and football. Talented pupils have been introduced to a local athletics club. There is also the Outdoor Pursuits Camp in Wales and good use is made of community facilities to enhance still further the curriculum. An area for development is to improve pupils' opportunities for wider external accreditation, including GCSE as they currently have no such opportunity.