

INSPECTION REPORT

RIPPLEVALE SPECIAL SCHOOL

Deal

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 118995

Headteacher: Mrs R Howells

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Clemence
22629

Dates of inspection: 12 – 15 March 2001

Inspection number: 196137

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Residential Special School for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties
School category:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Boys
School address:	Chapel Lane Ripple Deal
Postcode:	CT14 8JG
Telephone number:	01304 373866
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Appropriate authority:	Directors of Ripplevale School
Name of chair of governors:	Not applicable
Date of previous inspection:	November 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22629	Jayne Clemence	Registered inspector	Art and design	Standards Teaching and learning Leadership and management Residential provision
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1358	Glyn Essex	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Design and technology	How well the school cares for its pupils
23300	Lily Evans	Team inspector	Science Geography History	
18206	Elizabeth Mildner	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Religious education Equal opportunities	The quality of curricular and other opportunities
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ripplevale is a residential special school for boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties between the ages of eleven and sixteen. There are 31 pupils currently attending the school, and 22 of those have residential placements. 28 pupils come from a White ethnic background and three from a Black-Caribbean heritage. No pupils have English as an additional language. All pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs, apart from one who is at the final stages of having a statement completed. Pupils are referred to the school from a wide range of local education authorities across England. Almost half of the pupils are looked after by the local authority and live apart from their families, including some with foster carers. Many pupils have had serious disruption to their lives, resulting in significant gaps in their education and knowledge. Their attainment on entry to the school is low due to these factors. The vast majority of pupils are eligible for free school meals. A high proportion of pupils are offered places and start at the school at the age of fourteen, a stage that many schools view as too late and are not prepared to consider. Many pupils have very seriously disadvantaged social circumstances. The school is situated in the village of Ripple, near Deal, in a large house with an additional classroom block nearby. There are large grounds, including a football and rugby field, playground, fields and garden. The school is independent and owned by three directors.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Ripplevale School is effective in enabling pupils to achieve well in relation to their special educational needs. The headteacher ensures there is clarity and purpose to the school's direction, with a strong emphasis on raising pupils' achievements. The quality of teaching continues to improve and is having a positive impact on standards and the pupils' achievements. The school provides satisfactory value for money and uses its budget prudently. There is good capacity for further improvement.

What the school does well

- Raising standards and enabling pupils to gain nationally recognised awards
- Improving the quality of teaching; resulting in a direct and positive effect on pupils' learning, achievements and rate of progress
- Good quality care and procedures for assessment; ensuring provision is well matched to the pupils' individual needs
- Enthusiastic and energetic learning support assistants; working effectively with teachers to support the pupils' learning
- The headteacher's leadership; bringing about significant improvements in the quality of education, teaching and pupils' achievements over time

What could be improved

- Standards in aspects of English; the quality of pupils' writing and missed opportunities to develop their literacy skills in other subjects hinders their progress
- Standards in information and communication technology; the limited opportunities to use computers, and lack of staff expertise in developing the pupils' skills restricts their learning
- The use of strategies for improving pupils' behaviour, personal and social skills, inconsistencies in practice lead to pupils not being sufficiently aware of the consequences of their behaviour, and too few opportunities for them to work as groups
- The poor quality accommodation for learning, and parts of the building in disrepair; does little to instil a sense of pride for the pupils. Health and safety issues, including ventilation for the science room
- Arrangements for governing the school; currently there is no governing body to hold the school and its finances accountable, or provide objective outside perspectives for the directors and senior management

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvements since the inspection in 1997, when it was judged to be failing, and requiring special measures. The many weaknesses identified at that time included a very high proportion of almost 30 per cent unsatisfactory teaching, poor procedures for assessment, poor access to the curriculum and lack of clear educational direction from the leadership. The school was subsequently monitored by Her Majesty's Inspectors over a one year period, and in November 1998, removed from special measures. Further issues were identified for the school to address, including guidance for teaching literacy and numeracy, and improving target setting. The quality of teaching has improved significantly, and procedures for assessment are now good. All pupils have good access to the curriculum and the headteacher has ensured clear educational direction in addressing the school's weaknesses effectively and systematically. The headteacher ensured that teachers were given guidance on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, but there has been a significant turnover in staff since then, and the task has to be repeated. The school has become increasingly efficient in its use of people and resources to impact on standards and the pupils' learning.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	By age 16	Key	
speaking and listening	C	Very good	A
Reading	C	Good	B
Writing	D	Satisfactory	C
Mathematics	B	Unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	C	Poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C		

Most pupils enter the school with significant gaps in their knowledge and skills due to missed education. The year 2000 National Curriculum test results show pupils achieve well during their time at the school. GCSE results for pupils in Year 11 were significantly better than results for special schools of a similar type nationally. The school has set appropriate targets for 2001 for the number of GCSE entries, and is expected to achieve them.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in their speaking and listening skills. They learn to express their views and opinions in an appropriate manner, for example when discussing activities outside of school in the residential setting. Many pupils develop the basic skills for reading successfully, and some have a growing appreciation of literature. Younger pupils understand the importance and relevance of print, and use illustrations accurately as clues for the text. Older pupils use their reading skills for a variety of purposes such as reading for information, timetables and instructions for games. Pupils make more limited progress in their writing skills. They struggle to record their work clearly, or at an appropriately swift pace. For many pupils, their own handwriting is difficult for them and others to read legibly. These factors all hinder the pupils' rate of progress in writing. Pupils use their knowledge of mathematics and number with increased confidence, and by the time they leave school, use these skills in a variety of circumstances. Standards in information and communication technology are not as high as they could be, due to the lack of opportunities available for pupils to use the computers, and limited expertise of staff to develop the pupils' computer skills. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their personal and social skills, as they begin to learn respect for themselves and others. Individual education plans are appropriate and the best examples are specific and measurable. Pupils are set suitably

challenging, yet realistic targets that are reviewed and revised regularly. The school is effective in helping pupils to achieve, sometimes for the first time, and national test results confirm this positive picture.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory attitudes, pupils are learning to develop a positive outlook towards school
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory; many pupils show improvements in their behaviour over time that enables them to gain from the educational opportunities
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory; pupils show increasing awareness of their part in approaching life more constructively. Relationships between pupils and with adults are sound
Attendance	Unsatisfactory by national comparison; a small number of pupils with long histories of school absenteeism affect these figures greatly

Pupils develop positive attitudes towards their work over time. They learn the importance of rules, and some begin to show a growing awareness of good citizenship. Many pupils find difficulty maintaining good behaviour throughout the day, but overall, there are improvements. Most pupils learn to develop some positive relationships with other pupils and staff, though many find difficulty understanding the impact they have on others. The attendance is unsatisfactory due to a small number of pupils with long term absenteeism, having a negative impact on the overall figures.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 11-16
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall throughout the school and is having a direct and positive impact on the pupils' learning and rate of progress. Ninety six per cent of the teaching was satisfactory or better, and forty six per cent was good. Nine per cent of the teaching was very good and one per cent was excellent. Four per cent of the teaching was either unsatisfactory or poor. Teaching is satisfactory in English, although there are missed opportunities to develop the pupils' literacy skills systematically across other subjects. Teaching is good in mathematics for pupils between the ages of eleven and fourteen and satisfactory for pupils aged fourteen to sixteen. Teachers develop the pupils' understanding and use of number effectively and set suitably ambitious targets for them to gain national awards as they move up the school. Teaching in science is satisfactory for pupils aged eleven to fourteen, and good for pupils aged fourteen to sixteen. A small minority of teaching was unsatisfactory where the lesson lacked challenge, and poor where strategies to manage the pupils' behaviour were ineffective. Teaching in personal and social education is sound as pupils learn increasingly effective strategies for expressing themselves, their ideas and the impact their choices has on others. Teachers are effective at helping pupils to express themselves and encourage them to develop their speaking and listening skills more positively. The teachers have suitably specific targets for pupils identified as part of their individual education plans. These are well reflected in the lessons, ensuring the pupils' individual needs are appropriately met. The pupils' learning is sound overall, as a result of the teaching, and often good learning takes place in the most effective teaching.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory; providing suitable breadth and balance. The wide range of activities outside lessons make a useful contribution to the quality of pupils' learning
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils develop a growing awareness of issues beyond their own immediate experience through this provision
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good; procedures for monitoring progress, and methods for assessing pupils' achievements are thorough and comprehensive, ensuring their learning is tracked systematically

The school has a good partnership with parents. Many parents express a high degree of satisfaction about Ripplevale School, the quality of leadership, the teaching and progress made by their children. These views are supported by the inspection team. The school is not required to meet statutory requirements, but strives to provide a curriculum that reflects a secondary school timetable as much as possible. There are effective links between day and residential provision that ensure a smooth transition between the pupils' education and social life. This adds further continuity and stability for them.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership, and the senior management is effective. There is a clear understanding of the school's relative strengths and weaknesses, and suitable priorities designed to bring about further improvement
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The directors are in the process of establishing a governing body for the school in order to meet national requirements; there are weaknesses in the governance without an external body. The directors fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school monitors progress appropriately towards its targets and evaluates the impact of its actions overall
The strategic use of resources	Resources are allocated efficiently and used to make the most impact on pupils' learning and progress

There is a satisfactory number of well qualified teachers, support staff and care workers. Overall accommodation is satisfactory, but there are limitations. The classroom block has poor features, including worn and shabby facilities for food technology. Some areas of the grounds have disused materials lying around and the gym is not kept to a suitably high standard of cleanliness. Other parts of the building are in need of decoration and do little to add a sense of pride for pupils in their school or surroundings. The residential facilities in contrast are bright and well cared for, in a good state of repair. Learning resources are limited in English, music, physical education and food technology. The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff is effective, and the directors of the school make a useful and strategic contribution. There is no governing body to hold the senior staff accountable for the school's direction and finances and this is a weakness. The school applies the principles of seeking best value for money in its procedures and decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They are kept well informed about how their child is getting on• They would feel comfortable in approaching the school• They feel the school works closely with them• The school is helping their child become mature and responsible• There is an interesting range of activities outside lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some parents consider their children do not receive sufficient homework

The inspection team agreed with all the positive comments identified by the parents. There was a high degree of satisfaction expressed overall by parents. The amount of homework is considered carefully by teachers, although some parents may not be fully aware of what their children do in addition to lessons. The inspection team agrees with parents that there should be further clarity provided about the amount and frequency of homework.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The pupils' achievements since the last inspection have risen steadily. The school is effective in enabling pupils to achieve levels that are higher than those usually reached in similar schools for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Data from examination and test results show sustained improvements over time. In 2000, one hundred per cent of pupils by the age of sixteen gained one or more GCSE passes grades A-G, and forty per cent of them gained 5 GCSE passes grades A-G. This compares very favourably with the national picture of achievements in similar schools where forty six per cent of pupils on average gain one GCSE pass grade A-G, and eight per cent gain five GCSE passes grades A-G. This trend has improved considerably since the previous inspection when far fewer pupils gained national awards.
2. The school's results represent good achievement sustained over time, particularly as pupils start from a relatively low baseline of knowledge and skills, with many gaps in their learning. This also indicates a rise in trends and pupils' achievements over time. Since the previous inspection, pupils' achievements have risen steadily. Improvements since that time have been good.
3. By the age of fourteen, the majority of pupils are working at Levels 3 and 4 of the National Curriculum. These levels are much lower than expected for pupils of this age due to the many gaps in their knowledge and skills. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory in English, religious education and physical education. The pupils' achievements are good in mathematics, science, art and design, food technology, geography, music and physical education. Pupils make steady gains in reading and writing, though many still struggle to record a sufficient amount in appropriately legible handwriting. Pupils achieve well in mathematics and use increasingly effective strategies for developing numeracy skills. In science, pupils make suitable gains in their use of vocabulary to explain their enquiries and scientific investigations.
4. By the age of sixteen, the pupils' results are improving as more gain nationally recognised awards. The school sets ambitious targets for the pupils, many of whom arrive at a very late stage of their school life, and have much ground to cover in order to catch up. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory in English, religious education and physical education. Pupils' achievements are good in mathematics, science, art and design, geography and music. Pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory in information and communication technology throughout the school overall. This is due to the lack of consistent opportunities for them to use computers and develop their technological skills systematically. There are suitable plans to address this issue.
5. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their personal development as they move through the school. A significant proportion of the pupils start at Ripplevale with low self esteem, and a lack of confidence in themselves and their abilities. The school is effective in developing the pupils' self confidence, and helping them to realise what they can achieve, and how to go about improving themselves academically and socially. The pupils' achievements continue to improve and there are good examples where pupils have gained passes in a wide range of external examinations and certificates.
6. In English, the pupils' literacy skills are being developed effectively in English lessons, though these skills are less well developed in other subjects. Pupils' achievements are hindered by the quality of their written work and handwriting. Many pupils struggle to record their work at a suitable pace, and their handwriting is often difficult for themselves and others to read clearly. Pupils have genuine opportunities to express their views and opinions, and to influence decisions that directly impact upon the quality of their lives, for example in the residential setting. Some principles of the National Numeracy Strategy are being developed effectively, though teachers are at the earliest stages in their own understanding of its use and application. Pupils use their numeracy skills effectively in other subjects, for example in food technology weighing ingredients, counting rhythm and beat in music, and drawing graphs to represent data in scientific enquiry.

7. The school places suitable emphasis upon the pupils' achievements and learning. Teachers are ambitious, yet realistic in setting targets for the pupils. There is a sense of urgency conveyed to the pupils to use the time as productively as possible in order to gain qualifications, and widen their choices for the future.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Since the last OFSTED inspection pupils' attitudes have continued to be satisfactory, and this enhances their learning. Many pupils have very negative feelings about education when they enter the school, but most respond quickly to the calm, caring and constructive atmosphere it promotes. They enjoy school, and the welcome they receive at morning assemblies and in tutorials gives them a daily sense of purpose. Although there are inconsistencies between classes, pupils' attitudes to lessons are satisfactory overall and sometimes good, and most are willing to learn. They respond well to praise, take pride in what they do and undertake practical work, such as in art and food technology, with marked enthusiasm. When teaching is good and their interest aroused, they listen carefully, follow instructions and sustain concentration for long periods of time. Pupils help each other and work successfully together in activities such as wood modelling. Although some pupils remain suspicious and withdrawn with visitors, most are respectful, self assured and pleasantly inquisitive.
9. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory, as it was at the time of the last OFSTED inspection. On entry to the school, pupils are set clear and realistic targets to follow, and once they have settled into the new regime their behaviour noticeably improves. They understand the daily and weekly system whereby credits are awarded, and most make a positive effort to meet the school's expectations. The majority of pupils are well behaved for much of the time, and challenging or disruptive behaviour both during lessons and in and around the school is well handled by most staff. On the occasions when staff respond slowly to a developing situation, pupils' behaviour can deteriorate quickly. There are no signs of harassment or bullying and if pupils become frustrated their abuse and aggression is directed against the establishment, not usually their peer group. They respect property such as books, equipment and classroom displays. At lunch pupils wait patiently to be served, and thereafter engage in banter which makes it a civilised and social occasion. Exclusions in the last school year were above average.
10. The personal development of pupils has improved since the last OFSTED inspection and is now satisfactory. Pupils welcome responsibility and boarders in particular are beginning to play a more active part in the school's routines. Boys in the residence are expected to keep their rooms tidy and to undertake communal tasks such as washing up and cleaning. This they do with diligence. Some have garden plots in which they grow vegetables. These and other immediate tasks help to foster pupils' self-assurance, purpose and esteem, providing them with a positive sense of community and helping to prepare them for contemporary life. In classrooms opportunities are more limited. Although pupils are given tasks such as taking attendance forms to the school office, feeding fish and putting equipment and books away, their duties are not challenging. Educational visits and discussions on subjects such as drug abuse, racism and the environment further enhance pupils' personal development.
11. Relationships remain satisfactory overall, with some good and very good features, but also some aspects which are unsatisfactory. The attitude of staff to pupils is very good. Relationships between them are relaxed, sincere and trusting and this greatly increases pupils' confidence and self respect. Older and younger boys are separated throughout the school day and relationships within peer groups vary considerably. Many pupils have yet to develop a proper respect for any feelings, beliefs and opinions which differ from their own. In some lessons pupils neither listen to what others have to say nor value the views they express. Outside the classroom most pupils interact successfully and relationships are positive. Impromptu football games organised by staff in the playground generate good cooperation and teamwork. There are instances of harmonious and constructive friendships, however at times pupils show little concern about the impact their actions have on their peers, and relationships can then be uneasy.

12. Although attendance in the last school year was unsatisfactory compared with mainstream schools, it is in line with the national average for this type of school. Unauthorised absence in the same period is above average, the figure being depressed by the protracted absence of two pupils. Absence rates are published in the prospectus. Class registration is conducted quietly and effectively and the details are passed to the school office to be entered in the upper or lower school attendance registers. These registers are very well maintained. The pupils' punctuality varies, but lessons at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions are sometimes late starting, as a few are not arriving on time. This, together with unsatisfactory attendance has a negative impact on pupils' learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall throughout the school. It is having a direct and positive effect upon the pupils' achievements, learning and their rate of progress. At the time of the inspection, there were many recently appointed teachers who had been in the school for under two terms. The teachers are knowledgeable in their areas of expertise and learning to adapt effectively to the challenges of the pupils' special educational needs.
14. Ninety six per cent of the teaching was satisfactory or better and forty six per cent was good. Nine per cent of teaching was very good and one per cent was excellent. Four per cent of the teaching was balanced between unsatisfactory or poor. There have been significant improvements since the previous inspection when almost one third of the teaching was unsatisfactory. The proportion of satisfactory, good and very good teaching has also improved since that time.
15. Teaching is satisfactory overall for pupils between the ages of eleven and fourteen years. In mathematics, art and design, music and religious education the teaching is good, and in food technology and geography, teaching is very good. In all other subjects, the teaching is satisfactory.
16. Teaching is satisfactory overall for pupils between the ages of fourteen and sixteen. It is good in science, art and design, religious education, geography and music. Teaching is very good in food technology. A small minority of teaching was unsatisfactory where pupils were insufficiently challenged, leading to limited achievements and learning taking place during the lesson. A very small proportion of teaching was poor where strategies to manage the pupils' behaviour were insecure and ineffective and no learning took place during the lesson as a result.
17. In the very best teaching, for example in an English poetry lesson, the lively pace and detailed planning ensured work was well matched to the pupils' needs and capacity. The teacher's rigorous and effective use of questions enabled pupils to give an excellent response during a brainstorming activity, where ideas were recorded efficiently on a flip chart. Pupils gained new skills and knowledge as they discussed aspects of poetry and how they might develop their own preferred styles. The teacher had excellent strategies for managing the pupils' behaviour, with very high standards set both academically and socially. In examples of very good teaching such as music, pupils were given appropriate responsibility to organise equipment and materials for the lesson. All adults provided very good role models, as the pupils were encouraged to appreciate a wide variety of musical styles and sing as a group. The high quality teaching led to some thought provoking and spiritual moments as pupils discussed lyrics and their impact on their own lives and circumstances.
18. Very good teaching was seen in food technology, and characterised by highly challenging tasks, with pupils given a variety of ingredients to make a product without a recipe. The activity led to a high degree of motivation and independence as pupils learned new skills in organisation and use of different types of food. They developed their ideas effectively, using the ingredients and equipment sensibly and maturely. The teacher's use of questions provided further challenge to the task as pupils were reminded of their original intentions, for example "to make something spicy". The very good quality teaching led to a busy and productive session with very good learning, effort and concentration. Pupils gained an obvious sense of pride and satisfaction as a result of the teaching, and their own contribution and responses became increasingly positive as the lesson progressed.

19. The good teaching was characterised by thorough knowledge of the subjects and effective strategies to refine the pupils' own techniques, for example in art. In mathematics, this secure knowledge is having a good impact on the pupils' learning and rate of progress as they prepare for national examinations.
20. In otherwise satisfactory teaching, there are missed opportunities to use the school's strategies for managing the pupils' behaviour, and help them realise further the impact of their behaviour on rewards and sanctions. The beginning of lessons is sometimes fragmented, with pupils not always arriving on time for the introductions. Occasionally, the ending to lessons is rushed, and opportunities missed to reflect on the learning or pupils' behaviour and attitudes. The merit system, whereby points are earned during the lesson is not used to the best advantage and pupils do not realise sufficiently what they did well or how they are expected to improve further in their work or behaviour. Many teachers are relatively new to the school and the team are enthusiastic to improve further and learn from the expertise of others.

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

21. The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection in establishing a curriculum which is broad and balanced and meets the needs of individual pupils. Although not a statutory requirement for this school, pupils are able to study the full range of National Curriculum subjects, apart from a modern foreign language, as well as religious education. There are now revised policies and schemes of work for each subject based upon the programmes of study for National Curriculum 2000.
22. Pupils may arrive at the school during any academic year and many will have had a disrupted education prior to their entry, hence the curriculum for pupils is planned to address any gaps in their basic skills. Pupils in both key stages have a timetable which includes literacy as well as English each day, and a daily mathematics lesson.
23. Pupils between the ages of eleven and fourteen also study all other subjects of the National Curriculum, with a focus on food technology from the design and technology programme of study and as classes are small all pupils in this key stage gather together for PE lessons. Pupils between the ages of fourteen and sixteen follow a similar timetable, but they have the opportunity to attend a local college of further education, following a course in resistant materials to comply with the other element of the design and technology requirements. Twice a week the pupils in this key stage follow an options course which includes information and communication technology (ICT), physical education (PE), food technology and a course of life skills and the world of work. In these latter two courses pupils have the opportunity to work towards accreditation either via the Associated Examination Board (AEB), Basic Skills certificate, or the Youth Award scheme at bronze level.
24. Older pupils are prepared for GCSE examinations (Foundation or Intermediate level) in English, mathematics, science, art, domestic science, history and design and technology. They also take the Certificate of Achievement in food technology and literacy as well as the AEB basic skills examination in health and safety, world of work and life skills. Results in these examinations are consistently successful so that pupils not only have a good breadth of curricular opportunities, but are also well prepared for the next stage of their education.
25. For those pupils who are resident, the evening curriculum is overall satisfactory with an interesting range of activities both on weekday evenings and at the week ends. The activities give experience of social, sporting as well as leisure pursuits and enable pupils to develop individual interests such as fishing or cadets. Staff plan activities to take account of pupil's needs to develop group skills as well as to extend independence skills. Regular planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) complement the work being done in the main school and give the residential staff an opportunity to help pupils consider a wide range of health and social issues.

26. The school is developing satisfactory strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy and note has been taken in the schemes of work in both English and mathematics of the curriculum for the national numeracy and literacy strategies. However, there is insufficient expertise amongst teachers in the methods of these strategies which would help pupils to address the weaknesses they have in these areas. The reinforcement of basic literacy skills is not consolidated sufficiently in other subject of the curriculum and those pupils who have particular and serious deficits in literacy and numeracy are not making the progress that they might because these deficits are not being addressed in a systematic way. The school is in the process of re-organising the delivery of ICT but at present there is insufficient integration of ICT into all subjects of the curriculum.
27. The organisation of the curriculum to ensure equal opportunities and access to the curriculum is satisfactory. The school attempts to ensure that pupils have the same opportunities that they would have in a mainstream school and Ripplevale is largely successful in achieving this aim. Class sizes are small, enabling pupils to have a good deal of individual attention. Sometimes the small numbers in teaching groups inhibit opportunities for discussion or for pupils to learn the skills of collaboration and group work. Many of the pupils who come to the school initially show little motivation for learning. The school is flexible in its use of pupil grouping to encourage pupils to settle and begin to enjoy learning. At present a very small group is well supported by a regular learning assistant who works under the direction of subject coordinators to follow the same curriculum as their peers. They are able to join them for a number of activities each week including PE, art, science, ICT and geography.
28. The provision for extra curricular activities is satisfactory. The school has both day and boarding pupils which makes after school activities difficult to arrange but the school is starting to organise transport so that all pupils can join in the afternoon clubs such as PE, ICT and art. Football matches have been organised against other local schools and pupils have been able to experience camps in the past. Outings are a regular part of the behaviour merit award system.
29. The provision of PSHE in the school is overall satisfactory. There is a new scheme of work now established on the timetable with lessons in both key stages. These have been recently started and the quality of those lessons observed was good. The initial intention of delivering the PSHE during the daily tutorial times was found to be unsuccessful as this time is mainly taken up with the behaviour merit award system and general communications and the move to timetabled lessons appears to be more successful. There is, however, work still to be done to integrate the ethos of PSHE in developing good personal relationships throughout all the activities of the school. Sex education and drugs awareness are taught as part of the PSHE programme using the expertise of the school nurse and a residential social worker.
30. Careers education is well established and is of good quality. Pupils have careers session in both Year 10 and 11, with Year 10 pupils having an opportunity for work experience for two weeks at the end of that year. Since all pupils between the ages of fourteen and sixteen have the opportunity to attend further education for their CDT course they all gain an insight into that kind of college. The school is very well supported by the careers service who have helped to develop a useful careers library for the school. A designated careers officer is also present at pupil's review meetings and helps pupils through discussion and personal interviews come to a decision about their careers. There is good liaison established between the school and the pupil's home area college.
31. The school makes good use of the community to enrich pupils' learning. Many groups, especially those pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9, visit places of local interest as part of their lesson in history, geography, science and English. Year 10 pupils take part in community service in the locality and local firms support the school in providing placements for work experience. A variety of leisure centres are used for both evening activities and for work towards the Youth Award
32. The school's links with partner institutions are good. In the recent past there has been successful part time inclusion of pupils into a local secondary school under the "Building Bridges" scheme and this encouraged one boy to pursue a sixth form course when he left the school. This year one pupil is integrated into the same school on a part time basis. Links with the local further education college allow elements of design and technology to be offered, as the school's design and

technology facilities are currently being updated. Support assistants and residential workers are at present on a course at the Canterbury Christchurch College and some teachers have started to establish links and professional dialogue with teachers at local mainstream schools. The school is realistic about the opportunities for including pupils into mainstream settings, as they often have very little time left in their education to achieve. Nevertheless, they make every effort to link pupils wherever practical and reasonable.

33. The provision for pupils' spiritual moral social and cultural development is satisfactory in all aspects and teachers' weekly planning identifies suitable opportunities.
34. Pupils have useful experiences which go beyond the day to day routines, across the curriculum. During the inspection, there were such moments in music lessons and assemblies, when pupils had the pleasure of singing, listening to music, or praying with respect. In art lessons pupils work creatively, and calmly showing a quiet pride in their work, whilst sketching or working in the medium of clay.
35. Moral development is promoted through tutorial time, assemblies, religious education, and the personal, social and health education and other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils are taught right from wrong, and there is a well-structured system for setting and recording pupils' behaviour targets so that pupils know very well the difference between acceptable behaviour and unacceptable behaviour. However there are inconsistencies in putting theory into practice. Pupils are taught to respect other individuals, but often they swear at members of staff without reprimand. There is good sense of tolerance between staff and pupils, but in many situations there is a lack of tolerance by pupils of staff.
36. Social development is satisfactory. There are worthwhile opportunities for inclusion of individuals into local colleges and schools, for sport fixtures, and for community service. Pupils cleared an overgrown pathway so that people could make use of it. Pupils across the school contribute articles of interest to the school magazine which has recently been started. There are clubs after school for art, computing, and music. In the boarding house, pupils are encouraged in independence skills, by taking responsibility, and having a voice in the running of the residential community. In the evenings, they visit the local swimming pool, go fishing, individuals have music lessons, go ice-skating and visit the beach. Older pupils can earn the privilege of visiting Deal independently. In school, as class groups are very small indeed, and the staffing ratio high, opportunities for pupils to work together as a group rather than individually, are very limited. The result is that social interaction, which is successful in the dining room of the residence, is very limited within school.
37. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. It is enriched by historical visits to museums at Dover and Ramsgate, and to Canterbury Cathedral. For literacy studies, pupils have recently been on a theatre visit to see a production of Macbeth. There are field visits to places like Samphire Hoe, a wildlife museum at Birchington, and the local churchyard and village. There are environmental surveys, such as at the local shopping centre in Deal. Through religious education, pupils learn about the features of the main world religions, and on appropriate occasions there are cultural days when the whole school has a focus on for example China, learning something of the culture, custom and enjoying Chinese food. In assembly, key dates on the calendar are marked, such as Commonwealth Day. Currently, there are no residential visits, but there is a day out to France and a range of trips such as on the Thames and the River Stour.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school displays a high level of awareness of pupils' welfare, health and safety in its policies and procedures. There are very good arrangements for child protection. Staff know all the pupils very well and are alert to the needs of those who are particularly vulnerable. A close and effective watch is kept on the potential for bullying and other forms of harassment. The good quality care has a positive impact on the pupils' achievements as they are better equipped to make the most of their learning in a safe and secure environment. The child protection policy is detailed and comprehensive, and all staff are familiar with its requirements. Pupils have access to a telephone in the residential building and to the telephone numbers of outside support agencies. Procedures such as those governing fire alarms and drills, the administration of medicines and incidents involving violence are consistently implemented and thorough records are kept. Individual members of staff are given clear responsibilities for different aspects of health and safety and as a result there is effective reporting of potential hazards. There is a lack of adequate ventilation in the science room.
39. Relationships between staff and pupils, both in the school and in the residential wing, are good. Care staff, the school nurse, classroom support assistants and catering staff all make very positive contributions to the general welfare of the pupils. In the evenings, there are well-established routines for leisure activities, meals and bedtimes which pupils in the main respect and follow consistently. There are effective arrangements for the monitoring of pupils' attendance. These have been improved since the previous inspection when some weaknesses were identified in the use of registers and the school's use of target-setting in this area of its work has brought noticeable improvements to its promotion of good attendance.
40. There have been significant improvements in the school's arrangements for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress. In the 1997 inspection, these were described as poor. They are now good. The pupils' academic performance is effectively monitored through a system in which learning objectives in each subject are regularly assessed. These objectives are specific and measurable and provide a detailed, ongoing record of pupils' progress. In addition, there is useful reference made to National Curriculum levels, both in assessment of attainment and in target-setting. The quality of pupils' individual education plans, both academic and care, have also improved considerably since the inspection in 1997. The school has responded successfully to the need identified there for plans to be more realistic, measurable and achievable. The use of assessment information to inform planning both for individual pupils and for subjects is effective. It is also used well to set whole-school targets, for example, in the area of reading, and some very good "tracking" of each pupil's progress over time has been developed. Individual planning still, however, lacks sufficient detail in the guidance it gives to teachers on the preferred strategies or resources to be used to address individual needs. For those pupils who have significant literacy difficulties, for example, there is a lack of diagnostic testing to enable this to be done.
41. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are effectively monitored through standard checklists and through the "credit slip" system. Staff use this information well, for example, to pick out any patterns or trends in pupils' behaviour. The colour-coded system of privileges, which is also based on this information, provides effective motivation for the boys to be aware of their behaviour and of the consequences which it may have. There are good links evident in the way information on each pupil is passed between school and care staff at the beginning and end of the school day.
42. The statutory annual review procedure is carried out satisfactorily. The content of the reviews is sometimes bland with phrases such as "to continue with the same programme" and "(pupil's) targets remain the same". This appeared in several of the reports sampled, but in general they provide a useful summary of pupils' all-round progress in the twelve months since the previous review. Clear reference is made to the Statement of Special Educational Needs, and the match of provision made to meet these, both in the pupils' academic programmes and in the residential requirement, is good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Parents' views of the school are very good. The great majority of those who answered the questionnaire and contributed to the parents' meeting are very supportive of the quality and effectiveness of the school's provision for their children. Parents/carers say the school is well led and managed, teaching is good and their children work hard and make good progress. Parents/carers consider that the school works closely with them, they find it easy to approach staff with questions and problems, and the school keeps them well informed of their children's progress. They confirm their children enjoy attending the school, they are becoming more responsible and mature, and their behaviour is good. Parents/carers are content too with the provision of activities outside lessons. Inspection evidence upheld most but not all these views.
44. Some parents/carers are unhappy about the school's approach to homework and the apparent inconsistencies between tutors in setting homework. Evidence gained during the inspection found that most tutors only set homework for pupils who clearly benefit from it. This is not fully understood by some parents or pupils.
45. The school's links with parents have improved since the last OFSTED inspection and are now good. The school encourages parents/carers to be involved wherever possible in the life of the school. Formal evening meetings are not held, but parents/carers are invited to an annual open day and they are always welcome to visit the school to talk to staff and see their children's work. To ensure regular contact is maintained with all parents/carers, some of whom live many miles from the school, tutors telephone them at least once a week to update them on their children's performances. These calls are greatly appreciated by parents/carers. When parents/carers are not present to discuss their children's education plans or annual reviews they are contacted and asked to comment on progress and strategies. The induction programme for new pupils is well managed and parents/carers are given a proper understanding of the school's practices and activities.
46. The quality of written information sent to parents/carers is satisfactory. The layout of the prospectus is comprehensive and provides useful information. Regular newsletters keep parents/carers up-to-date with school activities and events. Termly assessments of pupils' personal and social performances which contribute to education and care plans are readily available for parents/carers to see. Annual reports give a good commentary on pupils' efforts and progress by subjects across the year. Although they include appropriate targets for pupils' academic improvement, some learning objectives are not clearly explained. The school's complaint procedure is satisfactory and contained in the prospectus.
47. The impact of parents' involvement with the school is satisfactory. The school values the part parents/carers play in education and welcomes their help in consolidating and developing their children's learning. However, there are few in-school opportunities, apart from planning and review meetings, for parents/carers to contribute significantly. At home some parents/carers support their children's homework either during the week for day boys or at weekends at home for boarders, but others do not. Many rely heavily on the school to educate their children and are reluctant to become involved in the learning process either in school or at home. Although the home-school agreement is clear, well written and appropriate, not all parents meet their undertakings such as ensuring good attendance. Pupils would benefit, both in academic performance and personal development, by greater parent/carer involvement.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The headteacher provides good leadership and clear direction for the school. This has ensured that the many weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection have been eradicated and addressed systematically and eradicated. The senior management team, including the deputy headteacher, is effective, and supports the leadership appropriately. The school's aims and values, with a strong emphasis on helping pupils achieve, are suitably reflected in its work.
49. There are systematic procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching that have been established securely over time. This has brought about significant improvements in the quality of teaching, as

lessons have been observed regularly, judgements given, and areas for further improvement identified. The school is not required to be part of the current national initiatives related to teachers' performance and appraisal, but chooses to follow the principles in any event.

50. The school development plan identifies appropriate priorities, with an emphasis on raising pupils' achievements and ensuring the quality of education continues to improve. There is a strong and collective commitment by staff to improve further. New staff have a structured programme of support, and induction plans are carefully considered and formulated for their individual needs. These arrangements ensure that new staff are well supported, and helped to become familiar with the pupils' special educational needs as quickly as possible.
51. All activities are supported through careful financial planning, although the budget overall may vary considerably depending on the number of pupils attending in any one year. The school use specific grants efficiently for additional needs, and applies the principles to ensure best value for money in its decision making.
52. The use of new technology to support the school's work is currently unsatisfactory and underdeveloped. New equipment is soon to be installed to rectify this weakness.
53. There is an appropriate number of well qualified staff at the school. Many teachers are secondary school subject specialists who have expertise to help pupils follow GCSE and other national awards. A high proportion of learning support assistants are following courses to gain diplomas in areas closely related to the school's work. This is having a very positive impact on their understanding of the pupils' needs and an increased effectiveness in their contribution to the pupils' learning. Some teachers are not experienced in teaching literacy in their own subjects and their knowledge is limited. As a result, there is too little emphasis on developing literacy across the curriculum. A few teachers have limited experience in the area of teaching pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and their strategies for managing pupils' challenging behaviour are not yet entirely secure.
54. The accommodation is variable in quality. It is satisfactory overall, but some parts are poor. The classroom block presents challenges in its design and location. Classrooms are entered mostly from external doors with immediate access to the playground area. When dealing with challenging behaviour, the staff have additional difficulties in their attempts to manage the pupils, as there are no areas beyond the classrooms, other than the playground where any immediate conflict can be resolved. Although some classrooms have been decorated, there are others, such as the food technology room that are poorly furnished and shabby in appearance. The room for additional literacy is small and cramped, with gaps between walls and the roof, and has exposed wires. Staff have made every effort to cover these deficiencies with the pupils' work. The music room, though usefully separated from other classrooms, is small and narrow, with little scope for making into a proper classroom environment. Other areas of the school have old, disused equipment and unwanted materials lying around. This adds to the unkempt appearance of parts of the school. The separate gym facility has scope for improvement. It is currently in a dirty state, and the changing area not kept to a high enough standard for its purpose.
55. The residential areas are, in contrast, maintained to a good standard, and bedrooms have been decorated individually with careful thought given to colours, design and the pupils' preferences. The communal lounge is warm and homely, and the dining room has been designed and decorated to a good standard. Other features, including tablecloths, flowers and pictures add to the overall quality of the environment.
56. The directors of the school are also the owners, and have separate responsibilities and functions within the overall management structure. They carry out their responsibilities efficiently. There are weaknesses in the overall governance of the school, as there is no governing body to add an outside perspective, or to hold the directors accountable for their strategic decisions and use of finances. The directors are currently seeking to address this weakness, and comply with national requirements by appointing a governing body as a matter of urgency.

57. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection when many criticisms were directed towards the leadership and management of the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The directors, headteacher and staff should continue to improve the school further by:

(1) *Further raising standards in English by:

- improving the quality of pupils' written work
- developing pupils' literacy skills across all subjects, providing further training in the teaching and promotion of literacy
- developing effective strategies to meet the literacy needs of pupils with additional special needs

As referred to in paragraphs 6,26,53,59,61,62

(2) *Raising standards in information and communication technology by:

- providing more opportunities for pupils to use computers in all subjects
- increasing staff confidence and expertise in teaching computer skills

As referred to in paragraphs 4,26,52,61,69,76,84,91,94-97,100

(3) *Further improving pupils' behaviour, personal and social skills by:

- ensuring a consistent approach to managing behaviour
- implementing suitably high standards and expectations for pupils' behaviour
- identifying more opportunities where pupils can develop their personal and social skills individually and in a group

As referred to in paragraphs 8,11,16,20,29,35,53

(4) *Improving attendance by:

- ensuring more pupils attend school regularly, and arrive at lessons punctually

As referred to in paragraph 12

(5) *Improving classroom accommodation, and carry out renovations and repairs around the school in order to establish a more suitable environment for the pupils' learning

As referred to in paragraph 54

(6) *Improving the strategic leadership of the school by:

- forming a governing body who will establish systematic and formalised procedures for monitoring the school's progress and evaluating the impact of its actions

As referred to in paragraph 56

(7) Address the health and safety issues by:

- equipping the science room with adequate ventilation
- securing the fire equipment to the walls in all areas of the school
- ensuring areas, including the gym are clean and fit for use

As referred to in paragraphs 38,58,108

The school may also wish to address the following aspects for further development:

- Ensure all teachers are familiar with strategies for teaching numeracy skills effectively
- Clarify with parents the amount and frequency of homework
- Improve learning resources in English, music, physical education and food technology

As referred to in paragraphs 26,44,61,101,108

(*indicates the school is addressing or partly addressing this issue in its school improvement plan)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

	Year			Total
	2000			15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Below Level 3	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7
Number of pupils at each NC level	English	3	0	2	0	0	0
	Mathematics	2	2	1	0	0	0
	Science	1	3	1	0	0	0

Teachers' Assessments		Below Level 3	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7
Number of pupils at each NC level	English	3	0	2	0	0	0
	Mathematics	2	2	1	0	0	0
	Science	1	3	1	0	0	0

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

	Year			Total
Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	2000			11

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Total	0	4	9
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	0	40%	100%
	National	0	9	46

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

Other external examination results 2000

Certificate of Educational Achievement				
Subject	No of students entered	Pass	Merit	Distinction
English	9		50%	50%

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

67

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1%	9%	46%	40%	1%	3%	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	31
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	31

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	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3%

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	13%

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	3
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	28
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y7– Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	3
Average class size	4

Education support staff: Y7– Y11

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	385

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	1
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	11	4
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	99/00
	£
Total income	1,071,680
Total expenditure	1,050,119
Expenditure per pupil	35,000
Balance brought forward from previous year	21,561
Balance carried forward to next year	10,050

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	38
Number of questionnaires returned	11

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	36	45	9	9	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	55	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	18	64	9	0	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	45	27	9	0
The teaching is good.	36	64	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	91	0	0	0	9
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	91	9	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	82	9	0	0	9
The school works closely with parents.	91	9	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	45	36	0	0	18
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	18	0	0	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	82	0	18	0	0

The boxes may not add up to 100 per cent, as some parents did not complete all questions

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The parents' views of the school are a good representation. The additional comments made on the reverse of the questionnaire forms are reflected in the responses above.

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

ENGLISH

58. The pupils' achievements in English are satisfactory throughout the school. Over the last two to three years, a significant number of pupils have achieved results in statutory assessments at the age of fourteen, and in GCSE examinations, which were good in the light of their previous attainment. Compared to results for mathematics and science, however, there were fewer higher grades recorded. The unsatisfactory progress made by the higher-attaining pupils in some aspects of their writing is an important factor in this discrepancy.
59. The majority of younger pupils come into the school with very low levels of basic literacy. Teaching focuses effectively on these skills throughout Years 7, 8 and 9, and as a result most pupils have made steady progress in their reading and writing by the age of fourteen. In the case of the small number of pupils who have serious and long-term difficulties, however, there is very little progress evident in their reading skills, in both key stages, and this is reflected by their scores in the standardised reading tests administered by the school to all pupils. Teaching lacks sufficient emphasis on individual needs in these cases and does not have available the detailed information, for example, from diagnostic tests, with which to plan effective, individual programmes of work for these pupils. In general, however, the teaching of literacy benefits from good planning and effective use of assessment information.
60. The school's literacy consultant has made a positive contribution to improvements in this area of its work. Teaching is satisfactory overall for pupils, with examples of good, very good and excellent teaching. The excellent teaching was observed in one lesson for Year 7 and 8 pupils. A very lively pace was maintained, extremely effective teaching of more complex letter combinations was achieved and the pupils' speaking and listening skills were fully exploited in a very challenging "brainstorming" session. Other strengths of teaching include the positive effort to provide a good variety of tasks for pupils. This is reflected in their folders which contain examples of writing for different purposes, such as letters, argument, note-taking and some attempts at story-telling, to complement the basic language exercises taken from the course book used.
61. Most pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in their reading as they move up the school. There are some fluent readers and they are beginning to talk and write with growing confidence and understanding about events and characters in the books which they read in class. In conversation, however, very few pupils reveal any real interest in reading for pleasure and the absence of a school library is no doubt a contributory factor to this situation. In writing, expectations of what pupils can produce, both in quantity and quality, are too low. Although there is satisfactory development of their basic skills such as handwriting and spelling, pupils are generally reluctant to write at any length, both in English and in other subjects of the curriculum, and teaching fails to promote the skills of developing and organising longer pieces of writing. It also fails to make effective use of information and communication technology to motivate pupils to exploit these skills and to develop their ability to draft, edit and publish completed pieces of work. The contribution which other subjects could make to the development of pupils' literacy is also generally underdeveloped, although some examples of good practice in this area were noted in science and food technology. When the teaching of English is good in this key stage, it makes use of materials which interest the pupils and uses questions and discussion well to promote their speaking and listening skills. When it is unsatisfactory, it fails to control pupils' behaviour adequately and any continuity in pupils' learning disappears.
62. The arrangements for the co-ordination of English are currently unsatisfactory. The responsibility is divided between the two key stages, and between English and literacy. As a result, the effectiveness of whole-school practice in key areas such as the teaching of writing skills and the development of age-appropriate resources for language work is reduced. The school recognises this problem and has plans to change the arrangements for the co-ordination of the subject in the near future. The school has made steady progress in overcoming the weaknesses in English which were

identified in the 1997 inspection and has good plans in place in the school development plan for the further development of the subject, which improved co-ordination could only benefit.

MATHEMATICS

63. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are good throughout the school. Pupils may enter the school in any year including at the beginning of Year 10, and the majority of pupils have experienced a disrupted education prior to entry into the school hence have gaps in their mathematical skills and understanding. Despite this, results in the standard assessment tests at the end of Year 9 are in line with those from pupils in similar schools, and results in GCSE at the end of Year 11 are good with all pupils who entered the examination gaining a pass grade.
64. The younger pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 have covered work encompassing all the attainment targets of the National Curriculum. They show they know the 5 times table and some know their number bonds to 10 and are hence able to add and subtract numbers quickly and accurately. They use correct mathematical vocabulary such as horizontal and vertical axis for a graph in work using co-ordinates as a preliminary to starting a game of battleships. They are beginning to use simple fractions and some can convert fractions to decimals.
65. Older pupils, between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, are following the syllabus for the GCSE foundation level. Many of the pupils who enter the school in Year 10 are unsure of basic number bonds or their tables and the majority need a good deal of support to have the confidence to develop their mathematical understanding. A group of pupils, for instance, were drawing squares to ascertain squared numbers and found the concept of square roots difficult. Others, however, quickly grasped the basis of the concept and could progress to using a calculator accurately to find the square and the square root of large numbers. By Year 11, pupils are concentrating on questions from examination papers and show the ability to decide on a strategy to solve each problem. They are able to draw and measure angles accurately, read temperature levels from a thermometer, draw a scatter graph and work out probability problems.
66. Pupils are encouraged to use their numeracy in other subjects of the curriculum, for instance by weighing in food technology, measuring in woodwork and interpreting population statistics in geography.
67. The quality of teaching is overall satisfactory with some examples of good teaching and the quality of pupils' learning mirrors the teaching quality. Overall teachers have the expertise to teach at this level. Lesson planning is clear and when learning objectives are specific and made clear to pupils their learning of new knowledge or skills, for example using the calculator is secure. Teachers are skilled in encouraging pupils to stay on task although as yet few pupils can be left to work independently for long. In good lessons where there is a lively pace and good levels of challenge pupils often surpass their expectations. This occurred in a lesson on probability where a pack of playing cards was used as an example and pupils could quickly assess the chance of picking a card of a particular suit and hence understood the concept of probability. In most teaching groups there is a wide range of attainment amongst the pupils but there is a yet insufficient individual pupil planning to meet the needs of all pupils. In some classes, support staff are well used to assist pupils with their mathematics so that the teacher can give some concentrated time to others in the group. This is not always the case though, and neither the lower nor higher attaining pupils get the direct teaching they need to maximise their progress.
68. Pupils' attitudes to their lessons are overall satisfactory. Some pupils are anxious of failure and hence appear unmotivated whilst others enjoy their mathematics and are willing to share their knowledge with others. Only a few pupils can work independently but the majority complete tasks and use adult support well.
69. The co-ordinator has worked effectively to establish a new scheme of work for pupils between the ages of eleven and fourteen, which because many pupils are working at lower levels, incorporates elements of the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers in that key stage value the support given by the co-ordinator but there is a real need for all teachers in the mathematics department to gain

knowledge and skills of the numeracy strategy methods to enhance their teaching and give pupils a secure foundation in basic numeracy. ICT is in the process of being developed in the school but is not yet incorporated sufficiently into the teachers' planning or the pupils' experience in mathematics. Resources are adequate although teachers have few visual aids as prompts for mathematics requiring verbal answers, and for pupils who are insecure in tables or mathematical terminology.

70. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. The new scheme of work encompasses the National Curriculum 2000 and gives pupils a progressive experience as they move through the school. Assessment and recording of pupils' attainment is much improved and well used by all staff to monitor each pupil's progress. Teachers' planning for both medium term and lessons has improved and work is well under way in meeting the need to improve the provision for teaching numeracy effectively. Results in examinations have been sustained.

SCIENCE

71. The pupils' achievement in science is good throughout the school, and pupils are encouraged to think independently and explore ideas. By the age of sixteen, pupils' achievements are above the national average for similar schools. By the time they leave, pupils gain awards for General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) double science.
72. Standards in science have been maintained since the last inspection. There is good improvement in the lesson planning, in which learning objectives are clearly identified and pupils' progress towards them is assessed and recorded at the end of each lesson. A cumulative record of each pupil's achievement is recorded against each topic, from which progress towards targets are assessed. The quality of teaching and learning is very similar to the last inspection, and is good overall. The level of challenge within lesson planning has improved, and pupils are encouraged and usually keen to carry out practical investigations. Since the last inspection, long, medium and short term planning has been revised to meet Curriculum 2000 requirements. The scheme of work, based on a commercial programme, has sufficient timetable time, has good balance but is curtailed by the lack of an extractor in the room. Even when using Milton Solution, there is a clear need to disperse the fumes.
73. By the age of fourteen, pupils know that electrical energy is transformed into light and heat. They work out for themselves how energy is transferred, understand about potential energy, and through discussion realise that a lighter transfers kinetic energy to heat, light and sound. Following an assisted launch of a 'rocket' made from a balloon, they establish an understanding that initial thrust must be greater than the rocket's weight, because of the gravitational pull. When they are learning about the solar system and features of the planets, they join in well to help to devise a mnemonic from which they remember the names, and order from the sun, of the planets.
74. By the age of sixteen, pupils are preparing for their science GCSE. Work in file shows that every one takes a pride in the presentation of their work and notes and diagrams are set out clearly. They know that living things contain enzymes. They experiment with making cheese and yoghurt in different conditions using rennin and bio yoghurt, discovering first hand that enzymes speed up chemical reactions. They measure the refraction of light when it travels through glass, and a pupil is encouraged to explore further his discovery about gravitation, and that light forms a beam when it is lined up with the corner of the glass block.
75. Teaching is satisfactory for pupils between the ages of eleven and fourteen and good for pupils aged fourteen and sixteen. A feature of good teaching is subject expertise, which ensures that pupils have a broad range of experiences in lessons, and expectations are good. Teachers plan frequent opportunities for experimental science, and pupils, who take the initiative to explore further, are encouraged to pursue their line of thought and find rules. Teachers' plans have clear learning objectives, and learning is tested at the end of lessons. Pupils are aware of their gains in knowledge, and the teacher adjusts following lessons accordingly. The organisation of lessons is good and key learning is well summarised and focussed into pupils' written work. For those pupils who have additional learning difficulties in reading and writing, there is insufficient emphasis on

learning key ideas and words. Learning support assistants give good support to pupils. They encourage pupils' participation and ensure practical equipment is used sensibly. In less successful lessons, where pupils present challenging behaviour throughout, teachers have insufficient strategies to keep their attention and consequently progress is curtailed. Praise and good behaviour reminders are underused and too often pupils are disrespectful. The quality of teaching is having a good impact on the rate of pupils' learning as their scientific vocabulary is being extended and there are some good opportunities for scientific enquiry

76. There are satisfactory strategies for teaching literacy in science, in reading and recording work, and learning new vocabulary, except for pupils with reading and writing difficulties. Opportunities for numeracy are satisfactory. Pupils record and interpret tables and graphs and have many opportunities to measure and weigh. The use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped, although there are programmes to support some topics. The video recorder is used suitably to help pupils to reinforce learning and the overhead projector is used well.

ART AND DESIGN

77. Pupils achieve well in art and design during their time at school. They achieve higher than is normally expected for their degree of special educational needs by the ages of fourteen and sixteen. Art has a high profile in the school and the pupils' work is celebrated with care and creativity.
78. Teaching is good for pupils up to the age of fourteen and sixteen. The teaching demonstrates good knowledge of the subject and as a result, pupils develop increasingly refined techniques in their work. This is having a very positive impact on their achievements and learning, as they acquire new artistic skills that help them towards gaining nationally recognised awards. The pupils' artistic skills are being developed systematically, using a wide range of materials. All pupils are developing good quality sketch books that are used regularly, in close observation work, line drawing, colour mixing and in collecting pictures. As a result there are sound examples where pupils show a growing appreciation of culture and artistic qualities.
79. There are high expectations set for the pupils and the art room is well organised to encourage independence and responsibility wherever possible. Pupils, for example with challenging behaviour, who find difficulty cooperating and working together, have produced an impressive wall size collage in an aboriginal style, with outlines of large animals and birds. They are justifiably proud of the overall effect and the task continues to challenge their social skills, sometimes to the limit, as they have to share, negotiate what to do next and respect the contribution of others, as it will have a direct effect on the collective end product. Occasionally teaching is unsatisfactory where the system for awarding merits is not used effectively to ensure pupils' understand fully the consequences of their actions.
80. There have been good improvements since the previous inspection and the subject is developing from strength to strength.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

81. There are currently very limited opportunities for pupils to work with resistant materials. Facilities for work with wood or metal in the school are inadequate. The school has plans to provide suitable workshop accommodation and to appoint a specialist teacher but at the moment provision is made at a local college of further education for a number of the Key Stage 4 pupils on a termly basis only. This arrangement provides a very good experience for the boys, however, with high quality resources and specialist teaching in a friendly atmosphere to which they respond very well.
82. Food technology is taught to all pupils at the school. The pupils' achievement in this subject is good throughout the school. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the challenge presented by some very good teaching that promotes their independence and initiative very effectively. Year 10 pupils, for example, were observed in a lesson in which they were asked to come up with their own ideas for a new dish. After a lively discussion in which the possibilities of various ingredients were

considered, the pupils set to work with enthusiasm. They thought ahead about the order of their work, chose appropriate tools and worked safely.

83. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school in food technology. Teaching has high expectations of behaviour and these together with very good relationships enable a very productive but also relaxed atmosphere to be maintained. Pupils work steadily to complete their tasks and take great pride in the finished product. Their folders in this subject show that they study a broad range of foods and associated topics such as healthy eating and, although the amount of writing they produce is limited, their literacy skills also show development, for example, in the way they are able to write up their projects. Very good planning, the very effective use of questions to challenge pupils and to monitor their understanding and very secure knowledge of the subject are particularly noticeable strengths of the teaching of food technology.
84. Plans to enter pupils in the GCSE examinations for the first time in the summer of 2002 are thoroughly justified by the standards of work and very good attitudes displayed by pupils. The accommodation and resources available for the subject, however, do not match up to these high standards. Only electric cookers are provided. These are old and in one case not fully functional. The only microwave oven is also less than efficient and there is a lack of other equipment such as food processors. The funding available for the purchase of ingredients is inadequate and this restricts the range of materials and processes which the pupils can work with. There are very limited opportunities to use information and communication technology as part of the pupils' learning.
85. Despite these deficiencies, food technology has achieved a very good rate of improvement since the 1997 inspection when it was described as poor in several respects. It is now a very successful and well-established subject which is much enjoyed by pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

86. Pupils enjoy geography and behave well in class. From a low starting point, pupils by the age of fourteen, make very good progress, showing interest in and enthusiasm for the subject. As geography is a new subject, lessons only extend to Year 10 at present, and pupils make good gains in learning.
87. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection, in the quality of teaching and learning, behaviour, curriculum and lesson planning, assessment, extension of the option for older pupils, and resources. A geography specialist, who gives strong leadership, capably leads the subject. Long term plans based on a commercial scheme of work are being suitably adapted to the needs of the pupils. The breadth and balance of the scheme of work is carefully planned and matched to the National Curriculum. Pupils are assessed against the levels, which have been broken down into smaller steps in order to show smaller steps in progress. Learning objectives for lessons are very clear, and progress towards the targets, is measured at the end of each lesson. Assessment records are kept of pupils' progress in each unit of work. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own learning.
88. By the age of fourteen, pupils know about features of the weather and are learning to interpret satellite photographs of current weather downloaded from the Internet. They know the names of different types of clouds, according to appearance and height. They discuss why people choose to live in the close vicinity to a volcano, use their observation skills to identify economic reasons for doing so. On learning that pumice stone is volcanic rock, they use their knowledge of science to suggest why bubbles rise from it when immersed in water.
89. Fifteen year olds, interpret map keys and colours in their study of population distribution, and understand population density expressed in numerical terms. They interpret the colour coded world map to describe population density and understand key terms such as sparse, spread and dense. They know that a country with sparse population would have only ten people per two hundred football pitches, finding examples across the world of dense and sparse populations.

90. Teaching is satisfactory for pupils up to the age of fourteen and good for pupils up to the age of sixteen. Features of strong teaching are the good relationships and respect between teacher and pupils so that pupils want to work and enjoy the subject. When pupils enter the lesson in a poor frame of mind, the teacher uses effective strategies to draw pupils into questioning and discussion, the level of which, reflects subject expertise and extends beyond the planned learning for the lesson. Meticulous and appropriate planning of learning with good attention to literacy skills, ensures pupils have a good range of activities and opportunities for reinforcing key ideas, skills and understanding. Pupils practise reading, writing and spelling key vocabulary and ideas and the teacher checks and records learning at the lesson end.
91. The scheme of work now extends as an option for accreditation for sixteen-year-olds. From next session pupils may gain the Certificate of Achievement, and those units may also contribute to part of a GCSE if students wish to take this further examination. A growing number of field trips and visits out are part of the geography programme. Pupils have visited the local church yard to look at the effects of weathering on stone, and to Samphire Hoe to look at coastal erosion. The framework for the work scheme shows a good balance of units and medium term planning ensures progression in acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. Daily plans are suitably detailed and final activities provide an assessment of gains in learning. The use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped although CD-ROM resources are used from time to time.

HISTORY

92. From two lessons seen during the inspection, evidence of pupils' work and wall display, there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards and achievement in history. The provision is satisfactory based on the school documents available currently.
93. Since the last inspection, accreditation for history has been discontinued at Key Stage 4, and has recently resumed throughout Key Stage 3. A new co-ordinator is not yet in post, and teachers of history are drafting from a programme of units, based on a Curriculum 2000 commercial package.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

94. The previous inspection in 1997 found that, while standards in ICT were generally satisfactory, there was little evidence of its use across the curriculum. There has been unsatisfactory progress in addressing the latter issue. This is in part due to staff changes and to delays in the commissioning of new computer equipment. This was operating in the school for only a few weeks before this inspection and the old equipment has not yet been transferred, as planned, to classrooms. Although there is some limited use of ICT in some subjects, such as geography and English, it is insufficient to reinforce pupils' skills in the use of the computer and to enhance their learning in these subjects.
95. In separate ICT lessons, pupils are showing satisfactory progress in skills such as word processing and handling information. They are opening files, editing text and saving their work. They are also producing simple spreadsheets and experimenting with scanners and art software. There is, however, no evidence of the more advanced skills which would be expected to be seen in the work of the higher-attaining Key Stage 4 pupils such as carrying out more complex tasks with databases or exploring the potential of the Internet and e-mail. These capabilities now exist in the school's system but are not yet being used. Very good planning has been produced for the Key Stage 3 course but Key Stage 4 pupils are currently working at very similar levels so that progression and continuity in the subject are not apparent.
96. Despite these shortcomings in the overall picture, however, there are several positive developments in the subject. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They show high levels of interest in the use of the new equipment and teaching is very effective in promoting their independence in its use. One Year 9 pupil, for example, was observed being taught to use a scanner. A very productive dialogue took place between the pupil and the teacher, who allowed the pupil to find his own way through the various stages of the process and used questions and prompts very skilfully to maintain the pupil's

co-operation. The pupil persevered, despite several mistakes, and by the end of the session had completed and saved his work. Other lessons observed for pupils between the ages of fourteen and sixteen showed similar, problem-solving activities being pursued by pupils, with the support of staff, in the use of multi-media resources, for example.

97. Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall when taught by teachers with suitable expertise, many staff lack the expertise and knowledge to teach the skills effectively and systematically to pupils as they move through the school. The development of an appropriate programme for pupils between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, and of competence among all staff in the use of ICT across the curriculum are issues which have not yet been satisfactorily addressed by the school. There has been a period in which development of the subject appears to have been put on hold pending the arrival of the new equipment. Both, however, feature in the subject's development plan.

MUSIC

98. Pupils are achieving well in music as they learn new musical skills and develop a growing appreciation of musical styles beyond their immediate taste and experience.
99. By the age of fourteen, most pupils are able to sing tunefully and make impressive progress in learning new songs and words with little embarrassment. They learn to play a range of percussion instruments with expression, and practice rhythm patterns accurately. By the age of sixteen, they develop further their composing skills using electronic keyboards, creating their own rhythms and melodies.
100. The quality of music teaching is good throughout the school. There are examples of very good teaching in this subject. The teacher responsible for developing the subject is a skilled musician, and pupils develop a genuine enjoyment of the subject. It is a favourite on the timetable as pupils look forward to their lessons and anticipate what they will do next to develop their musical skills. This is an impressive level of enthusiasm from pupils who are not in the habit of displaying such positive expressions of emotion and appreciation. The teacher is very skilled at reaching a balance between providing opportunities for pupils to pursue their own musical preferences and extending their awareness and knowledge of historical composers. Support assistants help provide good role models in music lessons as they join in the singing, help with the compositions and add further positive comments to encourage pupils to persevere and complete their work. There are very few opportunities to use information and communication technology as part of the learning currently.
101. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection when music featured very little and the pupils' responses were poor. Music resources are limited and there are insufficient musical instruments to further develop the pupils' musical skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

102. The level of achievement for pupils throughout the school in physical education (PE) is satisfactory. From lessons observed and from teacher's records pupils are making satisfactory progress over time. Pupils up to the age of fourteen, whilst playing basketball, show a clear understanding of the rules of the game and they follow these rules so that a lively game is established. Their control of the ball is developing well and the more skilled are able to control a low dribble and pass the ball accurately. In practice the majority are able to score a goal. Past records show pupils have been successful in learning football skills as well as the techniques and game play of snooker/ pool which is a popular sport in the residential house.
103. Older pupils between the ages of fourteen and sixteen have opted for PE. They show a good deal of perseverance in practising new techniques and moves in basketball and hence are able to develop strategies and use them in a game situation. These pupils have formed the core of the school football team which has successfully played against other schools showing the ability to complete a full match. No national accreditation is taken at present but the co-ordinator feels some pupils may have the potential in 2002.

104. Pupils' learning and progress is satisfactory overall. Younger pupils find it hard to play as a team group over a long period of time but most pupils show perseverance and older pupils can use practice and experimentation to develop skills and improve their game.
105. The quality of teaching is good overall and there are some very good elements to it. Lessons are all well planned with thorough and realistic objectives and when they include opportunities for small group teaching as well as whole group match play the pupils make good progress in the lesson. The teacher has a secure knowledge of the sports being taught so that useful and specific skills can be demonstrated accurately and pupils then know the correct way to practice the move or technique. Teaching was particularly good when the support assistants were effectively deployed to work with small groups which enabled the teacher to concentrate on checking pupils' work and coaching individuals and pairs. In that way a focused practice task led to a significant improvement in the later game play.
106. Pupils' attitudes to their lessons are satisfactory overall. Due to inconsistent delivery of the subject over past years a number of pupils show considerable reluctance to do PE and for younger pupils this is the only lesson during the week where they all come together in a collaborative activity. Despite this the teacher's persistence and enthusiasm is establishing enjoyable sessions and even the younger pupils are learning to play for a good length of time. Older pupils have opted to do PE and they show good levels of perseverance, humour and sportsmanship and some really useful collaborative work was observed.
107. The co-ordinator has worked effectively to establish a relevant scheme of work for both key stages. The range of PE activities is still limited to invasion games such as football, rugby and basketball as well as floor gymnastics but the co-ordinator is actively researching local facilities to widen pupils' experience. The assessment system used follows the whole school procedure and is well used and gives a clear picture of each pupil's progress.
108. Resources for PE, considering their quality, range and quantity, are unsatisfactory. The previous report noted deficiencies in the sports hall and grounds maintenance and these still apply. There are no regular cleaning arrangements for the sports hall and the floor is dirty and would not be safe for gymnastics in this condition. The hall is used for both PE and evening activities but there is no established code of practice to ensure that it and the equipment are left clean and tidy. This wastes time at the beginning of sessions. Storage arrangements mean that gymnastic equipment is not easily accessible.
109. At the time of the previous inspection the subject was judged to be good. Since that time there have been considerable changes in teaching staff and pupils have lost enthusiasm for the subject so that the standards of the previous inspection have not been maintained. The recently appointed co-ordinator, new to the school, is working very hard to develop the subject and has already enthused a core of older pupils to participate regularly both in lessons, matches and informal football at break times.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

110. The pupils' achievement in religious education throughout the school is satisfactory. Younger pupils up to the age of fourteen, have an accurate basis of factual knowledge of the main events in the life of Jesus including the celebration of the resurrection at Easter. They are also aware that people have different beliefs and are able to consider that with maturity. A Year 9 group considering what people believe about life after death were able to devise a questionnaire for a homework task which successfully gave them a range of views and beliefs from family and friends. In a lesson on the attitude of different churches to gender issues older pupils up to the age of sixteen are developing the understanding of different points of view and the validity of the justification for that point of view through looking at the role of women in Christian churches and the teaching of St Paul. This was a difficult task for these pupils but they responded well and were able to tease out the realistic opinion from the prejudice.

111. The quality of teaching is overall good and on occasions very good and the level of pupils' learning is good. The teacher has secure subject knowledge and hence is able to develop a pupil's contribution in the lessons and this motivates pupils to think of their own ideas and make a real effort in lessons. The teacher has high expectations and uses a very useful range of methods, for instance, planning arguments for and against an issue in preparation for a debate which not only widened the pupils' knowledge but helped them concentrate and think for themselves. Pupils are given confidence to speak openly by a sensitive and enabling manner as well as by being given the key vocabulary to express their views.
112. The attitude of pupils to their lessons is satisfactory. The groups are small which sometimes inhibits possibilities for discussion or debate but pupils are able to be open, honest and sensitive because their opinions are listened to by others. Work including homework is completed diligently and usually pupils behave well.
113. The co-ordinator has established a revised scheme of work which is relevant to the needs of these pupils. The range of issues covered, particularly for pupils up to the age of sixteen, is a major contribution to the school's provision for social, moral, spiritual and cultural issues. Assessment is through the whole school system and is thorough. Resources are just adequate for teachers to plan work but there are insufficient books for pupils to do their own research. The school has made good use of visits to the local church.
114. There has been a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching has improved and the scheme of work is providing challenging work for pupils of all ages.