

INSPECTION REPORT

COXLEASE SCHOOL

Lyndhurst

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 116586

Principal : Steve Cliften

Reporting inspector: Alastair Younger
23587

Dates of inspection: 8 - 11 October 2001

Inspection number: 196782

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Independent

School category: Special

Age range of pupils: 9-17

Gender of pupils: Boys

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Appropriate authority: The Directors

Date of previous inspection: 4 - 8 November 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an independent special school for boys aged 9-17. Pupils are admitted at any age within this range. All have previously displayed behavioural or emotional difficulties of such severity that they have been unable to thrive in other schools and nearly all have statements of special educational need. Few are identified as having additional learning difficulties but all have seriously underachieved prior to their referral because their education has been seriously interrupted. There are currently 39 pupils on roll, including 8 from ethnic minority groups. One pupil has English as an additional language. The school curriculum encompasses academic education and residential care; therapy is a permeating feature of the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is one of the best schools of its kind. An outstanding Principal, with strong support from the directors, has created a delightful school. Very good teaching results in pupils achieving well academically and the combined efforts of teachers and care staff result in pupils making very good progress in their personal development. The cost is substantial but the money is very well spent. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- High quality teaching balances the pursuit of academic achievement and personal development very well
- The quality of care is well ahead of that found in most schools of a similar nature
- Leadership is exceptional; management is good and improving quickly
- All pupils are respected as individuals; each receives what he needs to help him succeed
- In and out of the classroom, pupils have access to a good range of learning opportunities

What could be improved

- The school has only minor weaknesses.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in November 1996. It was considered a good school then. Weaknesses in leadership and management and curriculum development have been substantially remedied. There has been good improvement.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets. The organisation of the school falls into senior, middle and junior groups more clearly than into key stages. This is because the complexity of pupils needs and the time they have been in school is often more significant than their age. However, the junior school relates most closely to Key stage 2, the middle to Key stage 3 and the senior to Key Stage 4

Progress in:	Junior school	Middle school	Senior school	Key
Speaking and listening	B	A	A	very good A
Reading	C	B	B	good B
Writing	C	B	B	satisfactory C
Mathematics	C	B	B	unsatisfactory D
Personal, social and health education	A	A	A	poor E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A	

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

Pupils achieve well in the most important areas of the curriculum. Achievement is particularly high in speaking and listening because this is taught and practised in nearly all lessons, irrespective of the subject. It is also a key focus in many out of school situations. Achievement in English and mathematics is lower in the junior school than elsewhere because programmes of study are less well developed and the school has not sufficiently implemented the principles of national strategies. Achievement in personal social and health education is very good because it is the focus of so much work out of the classroom as well as in it. Pupils' individual targets relate mainly to personal development, particularly behaviour, because that is the main reason why the pupils are in the school. Achievement here is very good.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils who have rejected every other form of educational provision settle here and make good progress. This demonstrates a radical shift of attitude. They recognise that staff are trying to help them and enter into many tasks and activities wholeheartedly.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. From a position far worse than is found in mainstream schools, pupils make very good progress. Several pupils, usually the younger or more recently referred, still experience huge difficulties. This results in frequent incidents, a few of them serious. Nevertheless, individual problems in the classroom rarely escalate, so most pupils' learning is not unduly affected. The behaviour of pupils out of school and in the residential accommodation is often very good.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. An immense amount of work goes into helping pupils to understand the effect their actions have on others. They respond well to this with the result that, in the aftermath of 'losing it', they are often genuinely remorseful, recognising the hurt they may have caused. At the heart of the school's success are the very strong relationships between pupils and staff. Relationships between pupils are frequently more strained.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Almost all pupils are nearly always present in the school. What weakens attendance is the tendency of a handful of pupils to absent themselves from lessons to take 'time out' and of a few teachers to allow this without sufficient justification.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Junior school	Middle school	Senior school
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good	Very good

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

What makes teaching so good is the fine balance that teachers maintain between the pursuit of academic achievement and pupils' personal development. This high quality teaching is not always reflected in pupils' learning because the school day is short and many pupils are absent from parts of lessons, either because of withdrawal for therapy, or as a result of them taking 'time out' in moments of crisis. Teaching in English and mathematics is good overall. In discrete personal, social and health education lessons it is good overall. Numeracy and literacy are well taught as part of mathematics and English lessons but inconsistently in other lessons. Teaching is weaker in the junior school where teachers face the greatest difficulties in managing extreme behaviour and they are less sure about what should be being taught.

Teaching is effective because most lessons are very well planned and pupils very well managed. Teachers use their good subject knowledge well. Tasks and activities are well matched to individuals because teachers understand their needs particularly well. This is because teachers are perceptive in their questioning to establish whether pupils have understood what has been taught. The high level of good quality support in classrooms facilitates the inclusion of many pupils who would otherwise not be able to cope within the classroom environment. Weaker teaching is often the result of low expectations. Occasionally this manifests itself in undemanding tasks, more often it is seen in teachers allowing pupils to leave the classroom for 'time out' before it is strictly merited.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. All of the subjects of the national curriculum are taught. In nearly all subjects there is good planning to show how pupils will be able to use their existing knowledge to help them understand new work. The school day is short and this limits achievement in several subjects but residential care makes a strong contribution to the curriculum through its broad programme of well-planned activities. The junior school curriculum, whilst satisfactory overall, tends to follow a secondary school pattern rather than a primary one.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. This is central to the school's success. Throughout nearly all activities pupils are encouraged to pause and think. They are helped to understand that their lives will improve if they learn how to become more socially and morally acceptable. In addition, the provision for broadening their cultural horizons is well above average, with a strong emphasis on the contribution of other cultures to their own.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The huge importance of this aspect is very well recognised by the school. Child protection procedures are exceptionally thorough and there is high quality risk assessment of pupils as well as of accommodation and activities. Strong guidance is given through high quality policy and procedures to promote better behaviour. The monitoring of pupils academic and personal progress is of a high quality.

Parents are provided with very good quality information about their children's progress. The school goes out of its way to keep them well informed and to help them attend reviews. The huge distances between home and school limit the degree to which parents can be fully involved.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the principal and other key staff	Very good. The principal is outstanding. He knows what he wants for the school and he knows how to get it. Senior staff fulfil their duties with a high degree of success. Most subject managers are giving a strong lead to educational provision. There is a strong culture of co-operation between care and education staff.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Very good. Three of the four directors founded the school over 20 years ago. They have been the one constant over the years as the school's reputation and quality has grown. They not only own the school but they are very involved in its daily operation. They therefore have a particularly clear view of where its strengths and weaknesses lie. In recent years they have devoted time to ensuring that when they retire the school will continue to provide the high quality of education, therapy and care that is expected of it.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The curriculum is closely monitored and evaluated, with very close attention being paid to its effectiveness. A good improvement plan is giving clear guidance as to what needs improving and how improvement will be judged. Good use has been made of outside agencies to evaluate performance and good attention has been given to their advice. There is still room for improvement in the monitoring of teaching, which at present is effective but informal.
The strategic use of resources	Good. There is very good financial planning. There is an acute awareness that the most important resource is the staff. To this end, the school employs nearly 150 staff, about 20 of them teachers. These staff are well deployed to ensure that appropriate help is always on hand to support pupils.

The accommodation is good overall. The school improvement plan shows good consideration for improvements, including the much needed indoor facility for physical education. Resources are satisfactory overall. The money is there to improve them but not all subject co-ordinators are giving sufficient attention to spending it.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very supportive of the school and grateful for the way in which it is helping their children. There is no consistent area of criticism, though three parents felt that not enough work was sent home at weekends or in the holidays. The inspection team feels that parents' trust in the school is well placed and that, whilst work is rarely sent home, pupils do complete a satisfactory amount of homework in the residential units.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils achieve well overall in the most important subjects of the National Curriculum. This reflects good improvement since the previous inspection, especially when taking into account the increasing complexity of pupils' needs.
2. A programme of therapy helps all pupils to be included in as many classroom activities as possible. This results in all pupils making very good progress towards attaining the personal targets they are set. Progress is particularly strong in personal, social and health education, where the valuable work of residential care staff complements the work being done in classrooms. The school sets statutory targets for pupils leaving at the end of Year 11. These reflect realistic expectations and are well met. Targets for success in examinations are lower for next year than this, accurately reflecting the likely achievements of a very different group of pupils, but the same high expectations.
3. Academic achievement is higher in the middle and senior schools than in the junior school. This is because pupils in the junior school are often the most recent referrals, or those who are less emotionally, behaviourally and socially mature. Individual targets for these pupils reflect their most pressing needs, mainly personal and social. These are being very well met. Another reason why pupils in the junior school are achieving less well academically is because insufficient attention has been paid to the planning and implementation of the national literacy strategy.
4. The short school day limits achievement in several minor subjects and, more importantly, English in the junior school. Pupils lead very full lives and any increase in the school day would lead to a weakening of the 24 hour curriculum, including therapy. As both these areas are immensely relevant to pupils' progress, the short academic day is judged by the inspection team to be appropriate. Nevertheless, there is a small number of pupils who are in a position to benefit from a longer school day and who would achieve more with longer time in class.
5. Achievement is good overall in English (including literacy and drama), mathematics (including numeracy) and science. It is satisfactory in physical education, where accommodation is the limiting factor; geography, history and information and communication technology, where time is a limiting factor and music, which has only recently been reintroduced.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. High standards, noted at the last inspection have been maintained despite the admission of pupils with more complex difficulties to the school.
7. Pupils' attitudes are remarkably positive given that most have been excluded from at least one previous school and arrive at Coxlease with very poor attitudes and an unwillingness to work. Many pupils become keen to join in with activities including football and the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme. They talk enthusiastically about their achievements, including climbing the greasy pole during the Tudor Fayre. Pupils take pride in their bedrooms, personalising them with their own belongings and

posters. Concentration improves, such as when they make a careful drawing showing the construction of a round house during a history lesson. A few pupils find it difficult to get started in lessons but, with high quality input from support staff, most manage to achieve success. Most pupils get on with their own work and ignore difficulties other pupils may be having. Parents report their children are eager to attend school.

8. Behaviour is good. Pupils demonstrate honesty when evaluating, at the end of each lesson, how well they have worked and behaved. Most show courtesy to visitors and strangers and, as a result, are welcomed in the community outside the school. They use facilities at the local sailing club and are praised for their behaviour when attending college. Nevertheless, newer pupils in particular, often find it difficult to keep their temper in check and in their words 'sometimes totally lose it'. One pupil commented 'our behaviour is not always good but the staff still like us'. As a result, strong relationships with the staff are built and incidents decrease as self-control develops. There are occasional incidents of bullying and racist and sexist comments. Afterwards, pupils are invariably remorseful, recognising they have let themselves down. A positive side of pupils' racial tolerance was seen during the inspection when pupils celebrated African tribal music, joining in enthusiastically and showing great interest in the music and songs of another culture. The number of fixed term exclusions has risen slightly since the last inspection. There have been two permanent exclusions in the last year.
9. Personal development is good. Relationships, particularly with staff, are very good indeed. During the evenings, pupils often play games, such as snakes and ladders or knock-about football, with other pupils and staff. Invariably they try to keep to the rules. Other people's property is respected. During unit meetings, pupils are very prepared and sufficiently confident to make suggestions about purchases or repairs that are needed and they learn to discuss communal and personal needs sensibly. They are aware of the effect on others of what they do. Their respect for feelings is shown in the ready way they apologise for misbehaviour and how they receive apologies from others. In one instance, a pupil responded 'that's all right' to another pupil who deliberately came and found him in the evening to say 'sorry, I did not mean it' for a previous incident. Pupils respond well to increasing responsibility. For instance, they behave appropriately when they are not closely supervised, such as at a local youth club. Growing responsibility is also shown in the way pupils look after their own bedrooms and keep them tidy.
10. Attendance is satisfactory overall. Almost all pupils are nearly always present in the school. What weakens attendance is the tendency of a handful of pupils to absent themselves from lessons to take 'time out' and of a few teachers to allow this without sufficient justification.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. Teaching is very good, an improvement since the previous inspection. This high standard is the result of teachers balancing pupils' individual needs particularly well, enabling them to make good progress academically and very good progress in their personal development. The quality of teaching is not always reflected in pupils' learning because the school day is short and pupils are often absent from parts of lessons, either because of withdrawal for therapy, or as a result of them taking 'time out' in moments of crisis.

12. Teaching is effective because most lessons are very well planned. These plans take good account of individual needs and targets and reflect medium and longer term planning carefully to ensure that each lesson fits well into an overall scheme. This results in pupils being able to use what they have learned in previous lessons to help them make progress in subsequent ones. Teachers are quick to praise pupils who make this link, for instance when they remember a story line in English, and this further encourages them to learn. What facilitates this whole process is the very good ongoing assessment of pupils' progress within lessons.
13. Teachers use their good subject knowledge well. Tasks and activities are well matched to individuals because teachers understand their needs particularly well. This is because teachers are perceptive in their questioning to establish whether pupils have understood what has been taught. In a Year 8 French lesson this allowed the teacher to offer appropriate prompts to a pupil, helping to motivate and keep him involved in learning. As teachers become more confident in their skills, several are using computers and other forms of technology well, either to help pupils present their work as seen to good effect in English, or to record pupils' achievements by using digital cameras, as in design and technology.
14. Support assistants are playing an invaluable part in pupils' learning. In many instances they are the key to pupils managing their own behaviour, thus enabling them to stay in lessons. Support staff also bring many other strengths to their work such as when, in a middle school physical education lesson, they help pupils develop their football skills. Invariably, support and teaching staff work closely in every aspect of teaching, including planning of lessons and monitoring of pupils' progress.
15. By the very nature of their referral, most pupils have presented insurmountable behaviour management problems in previous schools. That pupil response is rarely a limiting factor in the effectiveness of teaching, bears testament to the enhanced skills of teachers and support staff. Much of this is the result of the relationships formed by staff and pupils. In times of crisis, pupils recognise that it is their behaviour that is being criticised, not themselves. In a French lesson, for instance, although a pupil was taken to task for his behaviour, he was also roundly praised for his achievement. Another way in which teachers prevent bad behaviour is through the presentation of work in such a way as to interest pupils, such as was seen to particularly good effect in music. Teachers in the junior school occasionally face extremely testing behaviour. This is nearly always well managed but on occasion results in a slowing of learning.
16. Teaching in English, mathematics and discrete personal, social and health education lessons is good overall. Numeracy and literacy are well taught as part of mathematics and English lessons and pupils with the greatest difficulty are given high quality individual learning support. There is still room for improvement in lessons other than mathematics and English, particularly in geography and history, where teachers miss opportunities to contribute in these areas by encouraging more reading or the development of a better vocabulary. Residential care staff contribute by helping pupils to read books which are taken back to the houses when homework is set.
17. Weaker teaching tends to be the result of low expectations. Occasionally this manifests itself in undemanding tasks, such as colouring worksheets, more often it is seen in teachers allowing pupils to leave the classroom for 'time out' before it is strictly merited.

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

18. The curriculum is good. There have been big improvements since the previous inspection. These are most evident in the middle and senior schools but less so in the newly formed junior school, where curriculum planning has only very recently embraced the principles of good primary practice. The curriculum makes a very supportive and positive contribution to pupils' progress and achievements as well as their personal development. All pupils share equal access to the curriculum, and special educational needs provision arrangements pay due regard to the Code of Practice.
19. The full range of national curriculum subjects and religious education are taught. Planning and organisation is good overall, with schemes of work clearly set out and linking well with lesson planning. This latter shows how pupils of differing ability can be fully included in lessons, each working towards clear targets set at a level appropriate to their ability. The curriculum is broad and well balanced across the whole range of academic and residential experiences the school offers. Incoming pupils have a 12-week period of assessment during which their therapeutic as well as social and educational needs are evaluated. The school puts this to good use in determining the balance each pupil needs between therapy and education, always keeping education at the fore.
20. Policies and plans for teaching literacy and numeracy are good overall, but the junior school's implementation of the national literacy strategy is underdeveloped. This is currently being addressed. Joint planning by overall and subject co-ordinators is well advanced, and there is an excellent series of forms to guide curriculum development, modules, and lesson planning. These are helping to achieve consistency across all subjects. The senior management team recognises the need to extend this work.
21. There are good curricular links between education and care. For example the life skills health files and workbooks, kept by middle and senior school pupils, reinforce personal, social and health education within the residential setting as well as supporting the practice of literacy and numeracy skills. Residential staff successfully promote speaking and listening skills in discussion times, and pupils learn to make decisions and keep to them when choosing from a good range of activities after school. A further strong link is the accessibility of classrooms for use after school.
22. Extra-curricular activities are strong. They reinforce many aspects of national curriculum subjects. There are frequent outings. A group of three pupils visited Winchester Cathedral during the inspection and, in an activity alongside mainstream school pupils, brought back 500 spring bulbs to be planted in the local community, in collaboration with the local council. Many strong links have been built up within the community, and with other schools, providing opportunities for social learning and interaction as well as raising the profile of the school and increasing the possibilities for attracting good staff.
23. There are good links with a local college. These allow older pupils to sample a wide range of practical and vocational subjects such as bricklaying and joinery. There is a flourishing work experience programme, which is fully incorporated within the Trident scheme, and every eligible pupil takes part on a twenty days basis. Planning for this is thorough. A broad range of ASDAN life experience and citizenship programmes start from age 14 and are very popular with the pupils.

24. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' spiritual development. At the end of every lesson pupils reflect on their achievement and behaviour. In residences, weekly unit meetings are successfully planned to promote "emotional literacy". Here, pupils are helped to reflect on their own and others' lives and to talk about them in a way which extends their understanding. Assemblies are not overtly religious, but still contain a measure of spirituality. In an assembly during inspection week, pupils resolved to set their sights higher. In lessons, pupils' imaginations are extended by a selection of worthwhile literature and poetry, a range of art, and a variety of styles in music. In religious education, pupils discuss faith, trust, and believing in things and standing up for what you believe. In these lessons, pupils openly talk of their feelings and begin to come to terms with their emotions like anger and jealousy as seen from the other person's point of view.
25. Opportunities for pupils' moral development are very good. A very clear aim of the school is to promote decency, fairness and respect for truth and justice. This moral code is promoted consistently in all lessons and in the residential units. There are frequent discussions about right and wrong behaviour. Pupils are left in no doubt over the morality of their actions and the effects that actions which are wrong may have on others. They are strongly urged to take responsibility for their own behaviour, and many begin to do so.
26. Opportunities for pupils' social development are very good. Skills of interaction and communication are well promoted in all lessons. The acceptance of group rules by pupils underpins all behavioural development. Good social behaviour is successfully promoted in classrooms and the residential setting, at meal times and during leisure hours. The importance of good behaviour is stressed when pupils attend local colleges for courses, or visit workplaces or clubs. A strong programme of training for life after school helps pupils to use public transport, sort and wash laundry, use a launderette, and to budget for buying food. Pupils effectively learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour and are prepared as well possible for a responsible life-style when they leave.
27. Cultural development is very well promoted. Study in English promotes local culture as pupils learn of the history, characters and customs of the New Forest and all have an opportunity to visit a local museum. Pupils were celebrating the achievement of black people during the week of the inspection. Books by Maya Angelou and Nelson Mandela were prominently displayed, and pupils were studying slavery. Good opportunities were provided for them to cook and try African food. A black drummer visited with authentic hand-made instruments to entertain the school. During the week of the inspection three pupils visited Winchester Cathedral for a workshop based on making gargoyles. They visited the crypt and appreciated the striking examples of modern art they saw there. Art is a strong area of the curriculum and music, French, history and geography also make significant contributions to pupils' cultural awareness.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

28. The school builds up a thorough understanding of each pupil's educational, developmental and emotional needs. The family atmosphere of the school is valued and nurtured by a staff whose primary concern is to provide a safe and secure environment that encourages a spirit of personal achievement and progress.
29. An exceptionally thorough child protection policy closely follows local authority guidelines. The inspection team agrees with a recent social services audit which states that procedures are a strength of the school. The Head of Therapy is the named person for child protection purposes and a therapy social worker the deputy. There is appropriate provision for other members of staff to assume this statutory responsibility should circumstances require it. There is regular induction training for new members of staff. Follow-on training takes place regularly to ensure that vigilance, sensitivity and rigour in respect of the school's duty of care towards its pupils remain central to its ethos of accountability. Additionally, CCTV monitoring of the corridors in the pupils' residential accommodation reinforces the confidence in the school's child protection measures.
30. The Health and Safety policy is well met in practice. Regular risk assessments are made and recorded and matters of concern dealt with promptly. Fire precautions are sound and well rehearsed. First-aid equipment is readily accessible throughout the premises and the school provides training to the nationally accepted basic standard. The school has a full-time registered nurse, a visiting doctor and a designated medical treatment room.
31. Attendance is compulsory and absences from the classroom are properly accounted for. Procedures for handing pupils over from residential to classroom, and vice versa, are thorough and teaching and care staff are kept well informed about pupil's conditions and location to ensure their presence and safety. Registration and monitoring procedures and attendance records are very good.
32. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. An effective reward and penalty system, using tokens that have a specific exchange rate, is well understood and valued by both staff and pupils. Other measures are in place to safely control behaviour that could be potentially harmful to a pupil or to members of staff. The noticeable improvement in behaviour and self-control of pupils as they progress through the school is testament to the effectiveness of the school's policies on behaviour and discipline.
33. There are good, formal procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. The school reviews pupils' education plans regularly and collects relevant evidence. There are thorough procedures to gather information for baseline assessments shortly after pupils enter the school. The information is used very well to set individual targets and inform future teaching plans. Pupils' reading, spelling and mathematical ages are set out as standardised scores and are used well to identify underachievement and to set targets. The school administers six-monthly tests in order to track pupils' progress in aspects of English and mathematics. These are recorded systematically in such a way as to track pupils' progress and support the identification of clear targets.

34. The quality of formal assessment procedures varies between subjects. Formal assessments are made in several subjects to gauge pupils' progress and understanding at the end of a unit of work. There are good procedures in food technology, for example, but in information and communication technology they are weak. Information from tests is used well to monitor areas where the school is doing well and where improvements are needed. Assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are good. Progress is monitored, regular reviews take place and information on assessments is used well to inform future targets.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS (INCLUDING CARERS)?

35. The school works well in partnership with parents and carers. Comments made in a pre-inspection parents' meeting, together with responses to a questionnaire, indicate a high level of satisfaction with the school and its standards of education, care and personal development provided for their children.
36. Individual contact between staff and parents is very good. Key workers, the therapy department, and the school nurse maintain regular telephone contact concerning matters requiring an immediate response and to preserve the special relationships that exists between parents and themselves. There is also regular written contact that provides information on the education and social security reviews and guidance, together with an offer of assistance in travelling to the school to encourage their attendance.
37. The impact of parents' involvement with the school is largely positive. The nature and location of the school limits any regular active contribution by them in support of their children's learning and development. However, the reassurance that the staff draw from the secure knowledge of parents' appreciation of their efforts to care for and educate their children in a warm and homely environment compensates for this lack of active input by them.
38. Information for parents is very good. The school prospectus is clear and informative, giving useful administrative and curriculum information. It is carefully written with the reader in mind. Prior to admission a member of the Therapy Department will visit the home of the prospective pupil. This visit provides an opportunity to assess the suitability of the school to meet the potential needs of the pupil and make an informed judgement as to his likely social and personal development needs. Subsequently the quality of information concerning academic progress, behaviour, development and health concerns is also very good. This information is effectively used to inform and guide the multi-disciplinary review meetings on the progress of the pupil as well as parents and carers.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

39. The principal offers leadership of the highest quality. In the fourteen months he has been in post he has firmly established the importance of a strong educational base for the school, supported by the programme of therapy and residential care. He has managed change very well, ensuring that every member of staff feels valued and has a valuable role to play in helping pupils to achieve to the best of their ability. He has produced a good improvement plan for the school, taking into very good account the findings of a thorough, independent monitoring of the school a year ago. His involvement in national initiatives and professional organisations gives him very clear insights into the development of provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and ensures that each child referred to the school can be included in all its activities.
40. Senior staff, including the heads of education, care and therapy, fulfil their duties with a high degree of success. Most subject managers are giving a strong lead to educational provision. Very well led by the curriculum co-ordinator, they are compiling good improvement plans for their subjects and developing schemes of work that realistically reflect how educational success can be achieved. A newly appointed teacher-in-charge for the junior school will be leading the necessary curriculum development in this area. He took up post just one week before the inspection and during the inspection improvements were already being made. The senior management team recognises the need to extend this work.
41. There is a particularly strong culture of co-operation between care and education staff. Through a network of management teams the workings of the school are carefully monitored. All staff are expected to contribute in regular meetings and in a particularly good initiative, firm guidelines have been issued to help improve the minuting of these meetings to provide the principal with a tool by which he can monitor the achievements of the school. The best practice is seen in residential, therapy and key worker meetings, where the focus is nearly always on individual pupils. Minutes suggest that education meetings are weaker because they lack this clear focus and because responsibility for action is not sufficiently identified in the minutes. Senior staff gain a clear view of strengths and weaknesses of teaching but the informality of the system does not sufficiently provide hard evidence for the personal development of teachers.
42. Three of the four directors founded the school over 20 years ago. They have been the one constant over the years as the school's reputation and quality has grown. They not only own the school but they are very involved in its daily operation. Between them they bring a wealth of experience and strong practice to the school and have a particularly clear view of where its strengths and weaknesses lie. In recent years they have devoted time to ensuring that when they retire, in the near future, the school will continue to provide the high quality of education, therapy and care that is expected of it. The care of their consideration is evident in the appointment of the bursar as a fourth director and an executive which includes the principal. A particularly good example of their forward thinking is the rigour with which they are pursuing children's home status as a means to extend the provision offered to pupils whose needs extend beyond the classroom.

43. Priorities identified in the school improvement plan are well supported through very good financial planning. The directors have a clear overview of expenditures through regular monthly reviews including predictions, out-turns and variance in spending. The effects of spending are monitored internally by the executive group and the focus group and externally by an independent consultant, local education authorities, social services and health authorities. The school is very aware of the need to provide the highest possible quality of provision. The high level of staffing accounts for 78 per cent of the budget. This is necessary in view of the severity of needs of the pupils. The domestic budget is very efficiently planned and monitored by the household manager. This includes forecasting and contingency planning together with clear priorities for spending. This results in a high quality of residential provision, including food which is matched to pupils needs and preferences. The school has good procedures for ensuring the principles of best value. This results in on-going referrals from local authorities.
44. The number, experience and qualifications of staff well match the needs of the pupils throughout the 24 hour curriculum. Staff are well deployed to ensure that appropriate help is always available to support pupils. Shortfalls in staffing have been identified and remedied. All departmental heads have appropriate professional qualifications. There is an induction process in place for all staff. The quality of the programme is higher for care staff than for education staff at present. This anomaly is currently being addressed.
45. The accommodation is good overall. Classrooms are clearly places of learning whilst residential accommodation is made as homely as possible. There are well considered plans to improve the schoolrooms with the proposed construction of a new block to replace existing temporary buildings. The lack of suitable facilities for the teaching of physical education is a major weakness as it is the limiting factor to the progress pupils make. This weakness is recognised by the school and plans to build a new indoor area are being considered. These improvements face the substantial hurdle of gaining planning permission in a National Park. This is beyond the powers of the school but would have a substantial impact on improving the existing accommodation.
46. Learning resources are satisfactory overall. They are good in English, science, design and technology, art and personal and social education. They are unsatisfactory in physical education and in history and geography where there is a lack of artefacts. Funds are available to all heads of departments and subject co-ordinators either through their annual budget or through bidding for extra resources. It is clear that not all staff understand or use this process effectively.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. The very high quality of leadership and management in the school has ensured that all weaknesses identified were already being addressed to a good degree prior to the inspection. It is important that these initiatives are continued but it does not merit their being made into key issues requiring a statutory action plan.
48. To help the school improve, however, the following minor weaknesses are listed, each accompanied by reference to the paragraph in which they are mentioned.
- insufficient attention to the planning and implementation of the national literacy strategy in the junior school (3, 20).
 - short school day limits achievement (4)
 - tendency of a handful of pupils to absent themselves from lessons(10)
 - weaker teaching tends to be the result of low expectations (17)
 - education meetings lack clear focus upon individual pupils and responsibility for action is not sufficiently identified in minutes (41)
 - weakness in the administration of history and geography (61)
 - physical education accommodation and resources (106, 45,46)
 - use of ICT for research and investigation (89)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	60
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	15	33	10	0	0	0
Percentage	3	25	55	17	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	39
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

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

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	0

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

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	7
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	31
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	2	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	7	2
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y5 – Y12

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	2.2
Average class size	4

Education support staff: Y5 – Y12

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	624

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	3590314
Total expenditure	3551699
Expenditure per pupil	93466
Balance brought forward from previous year	86101
Balance carried forward to next year	124716

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

35

Number of questionnaires returned

9

As less than ten questionnaires were returned a breakdown of responses is not included here but it is clear that parents are very supportive of the school and grateful for the way in which it is helping their children. There is no consistent area of criticism, though three parents felt that not enough work was sent home at weekends or in the holidays. The inspection team feels that parents' trust in the school is well placed and that, whilst work is rarely sent home, pupils do complete a satisfactory amount of homework in the residential units.

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

ENGLISH

49. Pupils make good progress overall. They make very good progress in speaking and listening and good progress in writing and in reading. Progress is better in the middle and senior schools than it is in the junior school, where pupils make good progress in speaking and listening and satisfactory progress in reading and writing. Since the last inspection, there has been a good level of improvement.
50. In the junior school, pupils listen carefully in lessons. They listen with particular interest when a big book such as "Watch Out For The Giant Killers" is read to them. They ask and answer sensible questions and this helps them to learn. Pupils read words and phrases confidently from the blackboard, such as "in the beginning", and "in the end." They understand the concept of "sequence", and re-sequence a story about snakes and ladders using rudimentary but effective skills of annotation. Pupils copy the account in the proper sequence and see that it then engages the attention and makes more sense. A high attaining pupil correctly adds capital letters and punctuation. All have written a letter to their favourite footballer.
51. In the middle school, pupils develop very good listening skills. They listen carefully when a simple book such as "I'll take you to Mrs Cole" is read to them. They show good ability to listen to others and, in the discussion of this simple tale, use spoken language effectively to extend, clarify and follow up ideas in their discussion with the teacher and each other. Pupils show awareness of stylistic features in text such as assonance, and show real appreciation of books. Pupils investigate character. When studying the above book they could say what sort of person Mrs Cole was, and whether they would like to stay at her house. All have tackled a Shakespeare play with at least some measure of success. Pupils have read, or had read to them, in whole or part, worthwhile autobiographies such as "Boy" by Roald Dahl, and "Cider with Rosie" by Laurie Lee.
52. In the middle school, pupils write simple accounts such as a review of their career to date. They write limericks and 'shape' poems. Pupils have written their own fables as part of their study of Aesop. Others have prepared fact files on animals. Imaginative accounts have included adventure tales with titles such as "Help" and "The terrible tunnel ". A few of the highest attainers write to good length, with accurate spelling, reliable punctuation and proper paragraphing. In the majority of work, however, pupils use phonetic spelling with random use of capital letters. When pupils plan and redraft their work, standards improve. Good use is made of information communication technology to present work in striking and original ways.
53. In the senior school, pupils' listening skills are very good. Some are able to work collaboratively, and jointly consult a thesaurus to find synonyms for bullying and victimisation. They are able to feed back to the class what they have learned. In their investigation of slavery in preparation for making a response to the poem "I am a Negro" by Langston Hughes, pupils make spidergrams from a variety of written sources noting the powerlessness of slaves and their high death rates. A lower achiever came fully to understand the concept of "victim" in this lesson. Pupils read, or have read to them, classic novels such as "David Copperfield", poems such as "The poison tree" by William Blake and the short story "Lamb to the Slaughter" by Roald Dahl. Pupils' writing ranges from the substantially correct to work which

contains major errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. All improve when it is carefully redrafted. Pupils take pride in their written work, and present it well, often using a word processor. Pupils have written literary criticism, produced personal accounts of interests such as fishing and written argumentative essays for and against such subjects such as fox hunting and vivisection.

54. By the time they leave school, lower ability pupils continue to have difficulty with the simplest words and phrases. Those of average ability are content to look at pictures with captions. Pupils with higher than average ability read tabloid newspapers and magazines which reflect their leisure interests. All can sign their names and write their addresses. Those of high ability confidently fill in forms and follow simple written instructions.
55. Teaching and learning are consistently good. The best planning is simple and well focused. It identifies clear learning objectives, which are shared with pupils, so they know clearly what they should learn and whether they have achieved it by the end of each lesson. Weaker lesson planning only includes behavioural targets and opportunities to motivate pupils academically are missed. Pupil management is very good. Teachers and learning support assistants co-operate effectively to do everything in their power to involve pupils with difficult behaviour in the lessons and enable them to cope. This allows these pupils to learn a little, and all the rest to learn well. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject so that they are always able to push pupils to learn a little more in every lesson. This increases their enjoyment when they begin to notice how character is shown in a story, for example, or they see how effectively an illustration complements a text. High standards such as correct use of punctuation and presentation are well promoted and some pupils make a good level of improvement in this area. Because some books and activities are well chosen, pupils sometimes enjoy them so much that strategies to manage their behaviour become superfluous.
56. Pupils learn well because the teacher and support assistants give a highly effective and well-planned level of individual attention to all pupils, to which they respond positively. Teachers have a very pleasant manner and relationships with pupils are very good. The patient and reassuring style of their questioning in the classroom allows pupils to make good oral contributions to lessons, which helps confidence and learning. Praise is used whenever possible so that pupils are encouraged to learn. In the best lessons imaginative material and well-planned strategies extend learning and fully involve the whole class. In a middle school lesson in which pupils were asked for adjectives to describe unseen objects, for example, pupils had to communicate, take turns, concentrate and respond appropriately to instructions. In this lesson, they learned with enthusiasm.
57. The curriculum is good in the middle and senior schools, but weaker in the junior school, where discrete lessons in English amount to two hours a week, less than half that taught in many similar schools. Although the teaching and learning in these lessons is good, there is too little time for pupils to make good progress in reading and writing. The good middle and senior school curriculum addresses all attainment targets and is rich in worthwhile literature. There is good, well planned use of information and communication technology. The senior school curriculum is nationally accredited and pupils have every opportunity to gain a grade at GCSE or a certificate of achievement in the subject.
58. The standard of teaching and learning continues to be improved by an efficient and helpful programme of monitoring and evaluation of teachers' performance. A well

taught literacy support course, securely based on high standards of assessment, helps pupils' reading and writing skills. The curriculum for all pupils is well supported by a programme of visits to the theatre. Theatre troupes visit the school to organise acting workshops. Reading is effectively supported by "Readathons" and writing by "Spellathons".

MATHEMATICS

59. Achievement is good overall. It is satisfactory in the junior classes and good in the middle and senior classes. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The information gained from good, regular assessment procedures supports the view that pupils make good, if rather erratic, progress in relation to their identified learning needs.
60. Pupils entering the junior school have previously made slow gains in early mathematical understanding and skills. Test data frequently indicates low levels of competence. Pupils recognise the symbols for arithmetic calculations but do not interpret them consistently. They know several number facts for additions and multiplication to around thirty and are more confident with doubling methods. While there is a good supportive atmosphere and relationship that encourages the pupils, insufficient attention is given to providing relevant, practical activity to help pupils build confident mental number patterns and methods. With help pupils enter sums on a calculator correctly, often relying on prompts from the teacher to press the calculator keys in the correct order. They read numbers in the hundreds and, in a good choice of task, recognise which answers have been entered incorrectly on a worksheet. Previous work indicates that there is a suitable balance across mathematics, although with a strong emphasis on number.
61. In the middle school pupils build on previous work and apply their skills in a good variety of tasks. For example, pupils were methodical in setting out a table of results for the areas of gardens less the amount of lawn. They applied multiplication skills correctly and set out the work neatly. The very good relationships and support help pupils to become settled and interested in the tasks, so that they make good progress during lessons. A clear explanation of how decimals work enabled pupils to understand that $\times 100$ moved the digits up two places. The pupils' understanding has developed so that they can name the values of the new positions correctly. The excellent handling of pupils' behaviour in another class helped to maintain very good behaviour and a hard-working atmosphere. Pupils made good progress in their understanding of area and perimeter, applying their number skills well. There is a suitable balance across mathematics, and most written work is neatly presented. The amount of work pupils produce during a lesson is satisfactory. Overall, the sensitive handling of the pupils encourages them to take an interest and concentrate so they achieve above what would be expected.
62. In the senior school pupils are making good progress in relation to their identified targets. For example, pupils understand how to record and say numbers to millions. They have gained an early understanding of the differing forms of average. They apply their number skills correctly, for example, in finding the mean number of goals scored by football teams. Pupils understand how to plot the values of length and width of ivy leaves on a scatter graph. They interpret the pattern correctly and understand the likely shape of leaves in other positions, for instance being short but wide. The work of a very few pupils shows better progress than the average for the group, showing good skills in calculating values for pie charts and rotations of

shapes. By the time they leave, good teaching and relevant tasks have ensured that pupils have made good gains in skill and understanding. Progress in the skills of numeracy is good. Pupils are helped to apply their numeracy skills within several subjects, for example design and technology, where pupils make careful measurements and calculations, and draw designs in 3-dimensions.

63. Teaching is good overall. It is satisfactory in the junior school and good in the middle and senior schools. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers and support staff are very sensitive to the pupils' needs. All members of staff apply high levels of skill in managing pupils' behaviour and in motivating them. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are generally good as a result of this positive approach. With help, pupils are soon interested in the tasks and are prepared to work for long periods to try and complete the work. The very good assessment system that is agreed at the ends of lessons helps pupils to reflect on their behaviour and work. It is having a positive effect on both progress and attitude. However, marking pupils' work is not carried out consistently. Lesson planning is clear, and carefully adapted to the needs of each pupil. The choice of tasks is generally good, and relevant to their lives so that pupils are motivated to work. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, particularly within the senior classes, which helps teachers to give clear explanations. Teachers have good skills of questioning which they use to good effect in helping pupils to think about and explain their work. Within the junior classes, and to a lesser extent within the middle and senior classes, teachers make insufficient use of practical resources to meet the stages of learning of the pupils. This was noted for example during number work on multiplication and decimals. The range of resources is satisfactory and has been extended recently.
64. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and direction for the subject. He has prepared a suitable subject improvement plan and is making steady progress in addressing issues. For example, there is an increasing focus on the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' skill development. He holds regular meetings with those teaching mathematics to help cohesion and consistency across the department. He uses a good balance of teaching materials and ensures that planning provides appropriate coverage and skills progression. There are good monitoring procedures in place to track pupils' progress and the quality of teaching.

SCIENCE

65. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in gaining knowledge and understanding of scientific principles and vocabulary. This is evident in junior, middle and senior schools. There has been good progress since the last inspection.
66. In the junior school most pupils know that all living things have their own life cycle. They understand that forces operate in pairs, for example gravity and muscular reaction. They conduct simple experiments, such as separating rock salt and sand, in which they learn how to handle apparatus and develop techniques including filtration and evaporation.

67. In the middle school most pupils recognise and correctly label parts of plant cells and accurately record data from investigations, for example the effects of magnets on each other. They understand and describe the actions of friction on moving objects. The highest attaining pupils name fats, proteins and carbohydrates as the main food groups and conduct investigations on these to test for starch and glucose. Pupils use apparatus appropriately and record findings with increasing accuracy as, for example, the temperature recorded when food burns. From these results they deduce that foods with higher energy content produce higher temperatures.
68. In the senior school most pupils know that respiration is the way that oxygen is used to release energy in living things. They understand the functions of blood vessels such as veins and arteries. Diagrams of tissues such as skin are accurately drawn and labelled. Higher attaining pupils know and understand factors affecting variation in living species, for example inheritance and environment and the effects of genetic crosses. They know of the “human genome project” and its impact on research. When undertaking investigations they form and test hypotheses unaided, for example diffusion of dyes in water.
69. Teaching is good overall. It is occasionally very good in the middle and senior schools. At its best, lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives shared with the pupils. This gives them an indication of what they should have learned by the end of the lesson. Teachers have a good knowledge of their subject and of pupils’ individual needs. This helps teachers to prepare appropriate activities. The effective use of a wide range of behaviour management skills enables all staff to forestall many events before they escalate. All staff have a good rapport with pupils which improves their self-esteem. Teachers’ enthusiasm is conveyed to pupils so that they enjoy the lessons and participate throughout. Learning is made fun and, as a result, pupils make good progress. Learning support assistants make very good contributions to learning through skilful and unobtrusive levels of support. They are particularly skilful in intervening discreetly before escalation of incidents and this helps pupils to remain engaged in the lessons.
70. The subject is well managed. Schemes of work are in place which closely follow the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. Monitoring of the subject is ensured through team-teaching and regular meetings with other staff. Assessment and recording is in place and is used effectively to inform both short and medium term planning. Good use is made of information and communication technology in producing diagrams, tabulating results and for word processing.

ART AND DESIGN

71. Pupils’ achievement is good overall. It is satisfactory in the junior school and very good in the middle and senior school. This has resulted in all pupils taking GCSE in art, and achieving at least within range of the national average in the subject. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.
72. In the junior school all pupils show that they have grasped the basics of using a variety of implements and materials. They produce collaborative work, an example of which is a large mural of an underwater scene which includes images of wrecks, litter, and surface features in addition to a wide and imaginative variety of fish and other creatures. In the middle school, pupils work on figure observation and drawing, using a variety of approaches including the use of articulated figures. They also complete a series of studies based on patterns in shape, colour and form. By the time they reach

the senior school pupils have gained in confidence in their drawing skills in particular, and also appreciation of colour and texture. They have used the work of famous landscape artists such as Lowry, Cezanne and Van Gogh for this work, and there is a useful collection of reference books in the art room which they use for their own research and inspiration. Skills development and technique are well advanced at this stage but pupils show only a moderate degree of flair and imagination.

73. The quality of the teaching is very good overall. Planning is a strength. Teachers' management of pupils is generally strong but pupils' behaviour in the junior school is often limiting learning as teachers experience difficulty in managing the most extreme behaviour. Teachers are using a good range of methods to make lessons interesting and to ensure that all pupils are able to be included in all activities with realistic expectation of success.
74. The art curriculum is broad, well planned, and incorporates the richness and resources in art found in different places, both physical and cultural. In a very good development there is increasing cross-curricular development of art with music and drama. Assessment of progress is good in the short term but not enough use is made of digital cameras to record pupils' work for records. Resources in art are good and varied but the new information technology resources are not fully operational and staff need further training. The art co-ordinator ensures that art has a high profile within the curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

75. Pupils achieve well. This indicates good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in food technology, which was then noted as weak.
76. In the junior school, pupils recognise the properties of thermo-plastic. Pupils think around the design and manufacture of a mould from which the final product would be impressed. They watch a plastic beaker being heated in an oven until it returns to a flat disc before discussing how a raised section might be made. Following on from this they produce several designs and begin to understand the properties of the material. Pupils have also designed and made products such as a digital clock. When preparing a sandwich and a drink pupils made good choices of fillings to suit their interests, and taste. Pupils use and extend their preparation skills, such as spreading margarine or chocolate, or slicing banana.
77. In the middle school pupils make good progress. They are introduced to the application of pneumatics in making moving models. Pupils discuss the merits of their designs and use existing skills well to produce high quality products. Previous work, recorded through good use of a digital camera, indicates a good range of completed practical tasks. In food technology, pupils make good progress as they prepare simple snacks, such as beefburgers. They make good decisions as to ingredients and flavourings then use their skills well to cut up an onion, add herbs, mix these with the mince and shape it into a round using flour to prevent sticking. They understand how to test when the burger is cooked thoroughly. The task was completed by the opportunity to eat the burgers, with an invited friend if the pupils wished.

78. By the time they leave the senior school, pupils have gained a good range of skills with resistant materials through tasks that encourage direct practical experience. The teacher's good emphasis on tasks that capture their interest gives pupils the motivation to become involved and work hard. In a lesson on enameling, for example, pupils were able to explain how they had made an early piece and to evaluate it. They recognised what might have caused a patchy surface and how to improve a second example. They prepared suitable designs, building up their ideas into a workable layout. Pupils demonstrate a good range of skills, such as shaking the glass powder carefully through a sieve or using a mask to add a second colour.
79. In food technology, during the week of the inspection, pupils took part in an excellent session on 'black history' foods. They prepared a delightful variety of fruits to a traditional recipe for a starter and main course. Several pupils showed good knowledge of different fruits.
80. The teaching and learning of both aspects of design and technology is good. There are several very good aspects. The relationship between teachers and pupils is a particular strength, as is the contribution of the support assistants. The choice of imaginative tasks, within a well-structured curriculum, captures pupils' interest very well and motivates them to persevere and produce good work. This has a direct impact on pupil's learning and progress, which is better than would normally be expected. Teachers use good methods that focus on first-hand experiences for the pupils and have high levels of questioning skills to help the pupils think and reason. Behaviour management of pupils is very good. Teachers are adept at emphasising the importance of the social aspects of food technology. Pupils and adults often sit together discussing foods they like and their experiences.
81. The co-ordinator for food technology has very good assessment procedures to check pupils' progress. Procedures for assessing progress in resistant materials are good. Workshops are well set out to create a good working environment, especially the attractively refurbished food technology room. A good subject development plan identifies suitable priorities and the school has made appropriate progress in tackling these. Teachers plan to the National Curriculum scheme of work and adapt it well to the needs of pupils. The curriculum is very good. Tasks are chosen to lift the pupils' imaginations as well as provide very good opportunities for basic skill development. Teachers are quick to pick up health and safety matters and carry out a very clear risk assessment of pupils before they are allowed into the workshops.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

82. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. This is much the same as at the last inspection. Pupils in the senior school make better progress than those in the middle and junior schools. Pupils in the junior and middle schools have only one lesson per week each for history and geography. This is the main obstruction to better progress as it is insufficient to teach a wider curriculum. In the senior school, pupils have twice as many lessons and their work in geography is successfully linked to accredited courses.
83. In the junior school, pupils learn well in their lessons because the quality of the teaching is good. They gain knowledge of the area where the school is situated and begin to build a picture of early British history. A good range of teaching methods ensure pupils' interest is caught and sustained throughout the lessons. For example, from a very relevant video, they gather evidence of life in England before the Roman

period. This is reinforced through completing a clear diagram in their books. Teachers use questions skilfully to check on and extend pupils' knowledge so they have a clear understanding, for instance of the construction of a roundhouse and the way of life of the Celts.

84. Progress in the middle school is slowed because many pupils do not complete all of their work and the teacher does not sufficiently ensure they do so. However, their knowledge and understanding is improved because of the practical activities and well-chosen topics, which make them want to find out more. For example, they learn about the area where the school is situated through sorting and categorising materials, including fungi collected from the surrounding forest. Pupils have a very graphic understanding of the effects of the Black Death. Teachers and support staff work well together supporting pupils and ensuring more able pupils have opportunities to begin to interpret information and evaluate effect, for example, of climate on populations.
85. In the senior school, pupils make satisfactory progress towards the Certificate of Achievement (CoA) or General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations in geography. Although the problem of incomplete work remains, their knowledge, for example, of the effects of microclimates and their awareness of the difficulties that developing countries face increases. Similarly in history, pupils become more skilled in recalling characteristics of periods in the past and in noting changes that take place. This is helped by the additional teaching time and by the improvements in behaviour of most older pupils. The oldest pupils use well-developed geographical skills effectively to explore information on settlements in Kenya. They establish the effect of the physical environment on how the various groups of inhabitants live.
86. The main factors in the overall good teaching are the enthusiasm and good levels of subject knowledge, which capture and sustain the interest of pupils. A calm approach, sense of humour and willingness to listen to members of the class are effective in helping pupils manage their behaviour. Pupils' knowledge is additionally enhanced through whole school events including the Tudor Fayre and through field trips to such places as Porchester Castle.
87. Management of the subjects is satisfactory overall but the quality and level of resources is unsatisfactory. The strength is in the determination to make the subjects interesting and fun and the main weakness is in the administration. The co-ordinator has been in post for almost a year and acknowledges the need for a better subject improvement plan and better schemes of work to prevent the occasional repetition of topics for a few pupils. Photocopied worksheets are overused and at times are not suitably adapted for this school's location. The use of information and communication technology is limited and opportunities are missed, for example, to explore data in both subjects.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

88. Achievement is satisfactory overall. Pupils generally make good progress in lessons in developing skills, knowledge and understanding. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. There is no marked difference in the performance of different groups of boys when considered in relation to ethnicity or their specific educational needs. Learning support was always present in the lessons observed and pupils benefited greatly from the presence of such staff who were competent in

reinforcing skills demonstrated by the teacher, for example, in preparing 'Power-point' presentations in the middle school.

89. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of attainment but in general, standards on entry are low. In the junior and middle schools they become adept at handling and communicating information but are less secure in their abilities to model information or use spreadsheets and databases effectively. This in part, reflects the limited curriculum time available for information and communication technology not simply as a discreet subject but across the curriculum. This is the main limiting factor preventing progress from reflecting the quality of teaching. In the senior school, pupils make satisfactory progress within a narrowly focused curriculum. Desk-top publishing becomes more sophisticated but the use of information and communication technology for research and investigation remains underdeveloped.
90. In other subjects, pupils have used the application of 'Corel Draw' in technology, largely for illustrative purposes. In English and food technology it is used for aiding the presentation of written work through word processing. Commercial software has been effectively used to develop skills and understanding in art. Weaknesses include the lack of opportunity for spreadsheet work in mathematics and the use of data logging in science.
91. Teaching is good. This is partly due to the fact that the information and communication technology team are well organised and prepared with good quality handouts and support materials to make activities tangible to pupils. There is good challenge in the projects set, for example, in producing story readers for nursery age and young children. The best lessons are characterised by a rigorous approach to learning which offers little hiding place for those who do not want to work. They also embrace a variety of approaches to teaching, sensitively deployed to accommodate the differing needs of pupils, for example those with attention deficit disorders. The curriculum is relevant with emphasis on using current business software and projects which stimulate pupils, but lacks breadth because of the limited time available, especially in the senior school where it reduces access to external accreditation.
92. Management is good. There is a clear vision for developing the subject and information and communication technology across the curriculum. There are clear and well-grounded strategies for assessment, though due to recent staffing changes ,these are not uniformly in place. Schemes of work have been reviewed and closely mirror national best practice guidance. There is a realistic action plan for further developing the subject although specific success criteria could be further considered, for example in measuring skill levels expected of pupils in 2002. There has been good consideration of a number of applied information and communication technology accreditations, for example the European Computer Driving Licence. There is insufficient monitoring of the contribution other subjects are making to pupils progress. This is particularly important if the school is to compensate effectively for the short time available for teaching the subject.
93. The School has invested in modern computers and appropriate software, often well focused on the world of work. INTERNET capability has very recently been acquired but is not yet available to pupils using the information and communication technology suite. Access to computers has been enhanced and there is greater pupil use during lunch times and before the formal school day. This assists in raising pupil confidence, for example, in deepening knowledge of desk-top publishing. Where additional training is needed it is provided promptly.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

94. Pupils achieve well. Since the last inspection, there has been a satisfactory level of improvement. The standard of teaching has improved and pupils' response continues to be very positive. There are now more and adequate resources to support teaching and learning in the subject.
95. Pupils ask and answer simple questions confidently. For instance, they can pose the question, "As-tu un animal?" and respond using the simple construction, "J'ai." They have an appropriate range of vocabulary which enables them to say what sort of pet they have. High attainers show considerable confidence in recognising the words. All copy, and most remember, the vocabulary. Pupils willingly engage in simple conversation with the teacher, although lower ability pupils require some input in English to help them along. For example, in a lesson for pupils in Year 8, the teacher began, "Mon chat s'appelle Twinkle. What's yours called?" To which the pupil was able to reply, "Mon chat s'appelle Bob." Pupils speak their names, ask the names of others, and say where they live, using correct French. High attaining pupils use French to ask how many brothers or sisters another boy has. Most can name a range of European countries, using good French. In the senior school, there is evidence that pupils recognise a selection of interests and hobbies, and say what they are. They express simple opinions about leisure interests and can say why they like them.
96. Teaching and learning are consistently good. The teacher speaks good French and as pupils make progress, lessons are increasingly conducted in the target language. Planning is good, so that lessons address all attainment targets in the subject. Flash cards, picture cards and other aids to learning are effectively used. Class management is good. In a lesson for year 7 and 9 pupils, a truculent and disruptive boy was specially targeted and enabled to achieve. When he asked if he could match the last card to the last picture he took considerable pleasure in getting it right. On occasion, the teacher asks the pupils to behave themselves in French, which they fully understand and respond to positively. Lessons go at a brisk pace, and the teacher gives frequent opportunities for pupils to take an active part, whether by making oral contributions, by responding to flash cards, or coming to the blackboard to match words to pictures. Pupils, whatever their problems, rapidly become involved in proceedings. Good assessment opportunities are planned into every lesson and these are shared with pupils.
97. Management is good. The curriculum is good and fully reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum. The amount of time given to the subject is, however, limiting progress. As a result, too little learning takes place for the subject to be nationally accredited. There are opportunities for pupils to learn about French culture by tasting the food. Authentic artefacts are few, although money has been provided for them. A day trip to France is envisaged.

MUSIC

98. The report of the previous inspection stated that music had been introduced effectively from the beginning of the new term. A similar position has occurred prior to this inspection since a new coordinator was appointed from January 2001, from which time music has received very good leadership. It is clear that for some time between the two inspections pupils' access to an appropriate music curriculum was unsatisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection is, therefore, just satisfactory. The new co-ordinator has been energetic in taking on the role so that the curriculum is good and resources are broadly satisfactory.
99. Pupils' progress is satisfactory overall but there are many signs to suggest that it is rapidly improving. In lessons observed, for instance, pupils were seen to be making good progress.
100. Junior pupils watch videos, for instance on the making of a 1990's pop star. They recognise songs and rhythms within it and follow their beat and tempo. Pupils are aware of pitch and timbre. They listen very attentively and show that they can listen to music appreciatively and attentively. In the middle school, pupils have studied music from Chile and Peru. They recognise the sound of pan-pipes and contrast this well with the sounds of other instruments heard in previous lessons. This shows good gains in listening and recall of previous work. The good choice of music demonstrates the teacher's concern to provide a wide, multi-cultural range of learning experiences for the pupils. Pupils play a selection of percussion instruments responding to signals to make sounds louder or softer and to control how they produce the sounds.
101. Teaching is good. A high level of subject knowledge is evident in all planning. This results in the presentation of very good activities that are relevant and of interest to the pupils. As a result, pupils are highly motivated and learn and behave well.
102. The co-ordinator for music has a good understanding of the role and has made considerable improvements in a short time. The scheme of work covers the full range of recommended musical experiences. The co-ordinator is buying resources to match the tasks and this is continuing. He has a good view of how the subject should develop and is setting up appropriate procedures for such matters as assessment.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

103. Achievement is satisfactory overall. In games, swimming, athletics and outdoor activities it is good but in other areas of the national curriculum the constraint of poor accommodation slows overall achievement. Issues relating to accommodation and resources have not been fully resolved since the previous inspection but otherwise there has been satisfactory improvement.
104. Pupils have a good understanding of health-related exercise. In the middle and senior schools pupils, recognise the importance of warming up before vigorous exercise and do so without having to be asked. A good focus on key words as part of the department's literacy policy has helped many pupils to name major muscle groups. As pupils move through the school they are given increasing opportunities to work with each other. By the time they leave they are more controlled in their relationships with each other and can combine competitiveness with good

sportsmanship. Low pupil numbers limit the development of game strategies and associated skills in football but pupils do develop a good understanding of defence and attack and the importance of passing the ball accurately. Pupils learn the rules of squash and improve their performance in athletics field events, such as the discus and javelin. All pupils swim and develop better style and speed with practice.

105. The quality of pupils' learning is good in response to good teaching. Pupils are generally well behaved in response to teachers' firm, fair and friendly approach. Lessons are carefully planned and based upon audits of pupil ability in the activities to be undertaken. There is good collaborative working between teaching and support staff. Pupils benefit greatly from the presence of support staff who, for instance, were particularly effective in reinforcing skills of ball control during a football skills session in the middle school. There is good pace and variety of activity, for example, in a squash coaching session undertaken with senior pupils. Relationships with pupils are very good and pupils respond well to instructions relating to rules and etiquette within particular sports, for example squash. Health and safety issues are well considered and pupils are encouraged to take individual responsibility for their own safety and that of others.
106. A newly appointed co-ordinator has quickly made up lost ground in the development of the subject. There is no indoor accommodation and many activities occur at leisure centres situated a considerable distance away. Although this gives pupils access to good accommodation and resources it results in the loss of significant periods of teaching time. Staff work hard to provide curricular enhancement, for example, in accessing squash facilities, but links with other schools for sporting events are underdeveloped. Although it is very relevant and pupils make particularly good progress in outdoor and adventure activities, the time dedicated to them erodes that available for other disciplines within the subject, rendering the breadth and balance of the curriculum unsatisfactory. There are limited opportunities for pupils to develop gymnastics or dance skills.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

107. All pupils make good, consistent progress. They develop their knowledge and understanding of a wide range of religions including Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.
108. In the junior school pupils develop their understanding of helping others, for example through the parable of the Good Samaritan. They know the stories of Noah and the Crucifixion of Christ. In the middle school pupils increase their understanding of the concept of trust, for example, through grading their trust and respect for a range of professions. They know the story of Ruth and the Ten Commandments. When studying the Hindu religion pupils develop their knowledge of a range of gods including Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva and of their symbols including lokis and the swastika. They understand the concept of pilgrimage in modern times, for example the Kumbh Mela. In the senior school pupils build upon their learning and discuss modern ethical concerns, for example apartheid and freedom of choice. They know about Gandhi and civil disobedience. Pupils confidently discuss special people including the programme of care in the community.

109. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good subject knowledge and are enthusiastic; these they convey to the pupils and gain their trust, interest and motivate them. Work is marked and annotated with outlines of task, time allocated and help given. Levels are given for all pupils. Positive comments on marked work encourages pupils to move on to the next stage of learning. Teachers' knowledge of pupils' special educational needs enables them to set work suited to the needs of all. Pupils respond well in lessons and are proud of their work. Occasionally their enthusiasm results in answers being shouted out despite teachers' expectations that hands should be raised.
110. The subject is well co-ordinated with policies and schemes of work in place. There has been a clear rationale in prioritising the purchasing of resources for the subject which is now satisfactory despite a shortage in artefacts.