

INSPECTION REPORT

ST PIERS SCHOOL

Lingfield, Surrey

LEA area: Non-maintained

Unique reference number: 125453

Principal: Mrs C Davies

Headteacher: Mr R Davies

Reporting inspector: Mrs J Cook
2351

Dates of inspection: 19 – 23 March 2001

Inspection number: 196937

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Non-maintained special school
School category:	Day and residential school for students with epilepsy
Age range of students:	6 to 19+ years
Gender of students:	Mixed
School address:	St Piers Lane Lingfield Surrey
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Roy Williams
Date of previous inspection:	29 April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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9092	Ron Elam	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its students?
13807	Christine Haggerty	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
10198	Kate Burton	Team inspector	Post-16 provision	How high are standards? b) Students' attitudes, values and personal development
31862	Julia Coop	Team inspector	History Music Religious education	
1249	Joe Edge	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Special educational needs (FE)	
16979	Charlie Henry	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Equal opportunities	How well is the school led and managed?
18261	Tony Hill	Team inspector	Art Personal, social and health education	
14563	Graham Pirt	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Special educational needs (school)	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?
10668	David Walker	Team inspector	Physical education Residential provision	
11720	Philip Winch	Team inspector	English Creative arts Modern foreign language English as an additional language	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Piers School and Further Education College is a non-maintained day and residential special school and college for 225 students aged 5 to 19 with epilepsy. The term student is used throughout St Piers. Currently, there are 205 students on roll, of whom 84, aged between 6 and 16, attend the school. Only one student is aged under seven, is in Year 2 and taught with older students of similar ability. There are 121 students in the further education provision, of whom 30 are aged between 19 and 23. Overall, there are almost twice as many boys as girls. There are 184 students in residence. In total, 172 students have Statements of Special Educational Needs. Additional special educational needs include autistic spectrum disorder, communication and language difficulties and difficult behaviour. Just under ten per cent of the students are from ethnic minority backgrounds. There are six black African, five black Caribbean, two Indian, two Pakistani, one further black student, a Vietnamese and a Chinese student. Seven students have English as an additional language, five of whom are at an early stage of learning language. No information is collected on students' eligibility for free school meals. A significant number of students have not attended school, some for over a year, before placement at St Piers. This, together with difficulties stemming from the medical condition and the additional learning difficulties of many students, contributes towards an overall low, and sometimes very low, attainment on entry to the school or college. Since the last inspection, the number of students with more complex needs has increased.

The school and further education college form part of the largest national centre for young people with epilepsy. A specialist medical centre, with a comprehensive medical team, provides essential medical and clinical treatment and support for the students. An assessment centre, attached to the medical centre, has its own teacher. Students, not on the roll of the school, are admitted for multidisciplinary assessment for varying periods, but often for six weeks. At the time of the inspection there were two students in this category.

Students are admitted to St Piers from local education authorities throughout the United Kingdom.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Piers is an effective school and college because the students have very good attitudes and the quality of the teaching is high. Students in the further education college make good progress. Students aged 6 to 16 make only satisfactory progress because what they are taught is not sufficiently planned in the long term. Leadership is satisfactory overall, but management of the school has not ensured that sufficient progress has been made since the last inspection in a number of areas. Value for money is satisfactory.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching by teachers and support staff is good, which helps students learn well in their lessons.
- The provision for further education is very good.
- Students' develop very positive attitudes, good behaviour and strong relationships with each other and with staff as a result of very good provision for students' personal development.
- The teaching and experience of creative arts in school is excellent.
- Staff work well to reduce behaviour problems.
- The range of additional activities for students is very good, notably physical activities.

What could be improved

- What students are taught in school to ensure they make progress from one year to the next.
- The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) in school.
- The effectiveness of the management of developments and the monitoring of provision in both school and residential provision.
- The role of the governing body.
- The level of resources in school.
- Several aspects of the arrangements for health and safety.

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

St Pier's strengths outweigh its weaknesses. However, the weaknesses are significant and will need to be dealt with as a matter of some urgency.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected on April 1997. Since then there has been good improvement in the quality of teaching, resulting in a higher percentage of lessons with good or very good teaching and no unsatisfactory teaching. Students' attitudes, relationships and personal development have improved significantly through the very good improvement in the provision for students' personal development, including increased opportunities for students to learn independently. Educational links between the day, residential and therapy services have been improved by the successful development of the Individual Multidisciplinary Plans. However, improvement overall is unsatisfactory because there has been insufficient improvement in the school's curriculum. Learning does not develop from one year to the next, and it is not sufficiently broad. For example, the curriculum for design and technology and art and design is too narrow and a modern foreign language is not taught to all secondary aged students. There are now accredited courses for students aged 14 to 16 but there are insufficient for more able students. Additionally, the use of ICT in the school is still unsatisfactory. Finally, there has been insufficient improvement in the monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum because the subject co-ordinators and key stage managers have not been in post long enough to ensure that this is effective. There is a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age 11	By age 16	by age 19+	Key	
Speaking and listening	B	B	B	very good	A
Reading	C	C	C	good	B
Writing	C	C	C	satisfactory	C
Mathematics	C	C	C	unsatisfactory	D
Personal, social and health education	B	B	B	poor	E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IMPs*	B	B	B		

*IMPs are Individual Multidisciplinary Plans

Students make good progress towards meeting their targets on their Individual Multidisciplinary Plans. These targets include improvements in behaviour, where appropriate, and increased levels of independence. Students that have English as an additional language and those with additional special educational needs make similar progress to other students because the quality of the teaching is high. Students in school achieve very well indeed and make very good progress in creative arts and in physical education. They do well in interactive music. However, in other subjects their progress and achievement is slowed to satisfactory over time, because there are weaknesses in the curriculum. Consequently, they make unsatisfactory progress and achievement in design and technology, art and design, ICT and a modern foreign language. In the further education college, students achieve well and make good progress towards awards on accredited courses. They make very good progress in land based studies, textiles and ICT.

STUDENTS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Students' attitudes to their work are very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	In school and in the residential provision, students behave well. Those with difficult behaviour improve because they have effective behaviour plans that all adults support.

Personal development and relationships	Students' personal development is very good and they build strong relationships with the staff and with each other.
Attendance	Attendance is good.

All students try hard to be polite, well mannered and helpful. Their strong relationships lead them to strive to do their best to please staff.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of students:	aged 6-11	aged 11-16	aged over 16
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching was satisfactory in 7 per cent of lessons, good in 51 per cent, very good in 38 per cent and excellent in 4 per cent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall in the further education college and very good in land-based studies, ICT, textiles and design and technology including food preparation. In school, teaching and learning are also good, overall. They are good in English, mathematics, science and personal and social education. Teaching and learning are excellent in creative arts and very good in physical education and interactive music. In all other subjects teaching and learning are good, with the exception of religious education, where teaching is satisfactory. The major factor in the success of the teaching is the very high quality of the teamwork between the teachers and the student support workers, which ensures that all students learn successfully. A wide range of methods is used to keep students interested, behaviour is dealt with effectively and resources are used well. In other subjects, communication is taught well; however, the teaching of literacy and numeracy is only satisfactory. The needs of all students are met well through the Individual Multidisciplinary Plans and lesson plans that take account of what each student is intended to learn.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum are unsatisfactory for students in school. It is good for students in the further education college.
Provision for students with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Students make similar rates of progress to others in the class because lessons are planned to meet individual needs and communication skills are taught as a matter of course.
Provision for students' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good.
How well the school cares for its students	All the staff in the school and college show appropriate concern for the needs of the students and provide good role models to encourage their development. The links between the day, residential and therapy services have improved since the last inspection. The procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are satisfactory.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory, overall. There are good links in school but they are too infrequent in college. There are a number of areas of weakness in the school curriculum, particularly concerning progress from one age range to another. There are clear strengths in the provision of activities after school and at weekends, of careers education and guidance, and personal, social and health education in residence as well as in school and college. The provision for design and technology and a modern foreign language does not meet statutory requirements. Good behaviour is promoted very well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of St Piers is satisfactory overall but the management of developments is unsatisfactory. Key staff in the school have not been in post for long enough to be fully effective.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body does not have a well-informed and supportive role. As a result the governors do not play an adequate part in ensuring standards are improved.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is aware of its strengths and weaknesses but is only just beginning to look closely at students' learning: for example, to ensure all students receive an equally high standard of education.
The strategic use of resources	There is a satisfactory use of resources.

The number and expertise of teaching staff are well matched overall, although there are not enough skilled teachers for a modern foreign language or music to be taught to more able students. Staffing in the residential provision is satisfactory. Accommodation is satisfactory, although there are a few weaknesses. The level of resources is unsatisfactory in a number of subjects in school and in the residential provision. The headteacher has only been in post for just over a year and has made good changes to ensure that staff help students improve their behaviour where necessary. Levels of staff absence have hindered progress on the curriculum. The school takes adequate steps to apply the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are helped to become responsible adults. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with concerns. • Their children like school. • Their children make good progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework which students are set. • They would like more information about their children's progress. • They would like the further education college to work more closely with parents.

The inspection team agrees with the positive points made by parents. They partially agree with parental concerns over homework. Although examples of homework being set and evidence of homework completed indicate that appropriate homework is set in a number of subjects in school, it is not consistent. This is partly because there is no policy to give guidelines to staff and information to parents in the prospectus is limited in ensuring they know what to expect. The team found that information provided for parents on students' progress in the school is good. There are opportunities for meetings throughout the year and reports are sent regularly. However, they agreed with parents of students in the further education college and procedures are being reviewed to provide information throughout the year. The team also agreed that further education does not work as closely with parents as it did formerly. This aspect is also under review.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and students' achievements

1. *It is inappropriate to judge the standards of the students for whom this school caters in relation to the National Curriculum or any other national benchmarks. The report does, however, comment on the achievement of the students and on what they know, understand and can do. Also, the success of older students in accredited courses is recorded. Judgements about achievement take account of information in their statements, annual reviews and Individual Multidisciplinary Plans*
2. Over time, students in the school, aged 6 to 16, achieve appropriate standards and make satisfactory progress. They often make good progress in their lessons but this is slowed to satisfactory over time because what they are taught is not sufficiently well planned to build on previous learning. Students in the further education college, aged older than 16, make good progress because they are studying accredited courses with very clear outlines of work to follow. Parents are pleased with the progress their children make at St Piers, notably the good progress against the targets on Individual Multidisciplinary Plans.
3. There is no measurable difference between the progress of boys and girls. Students from ethnic minorities do as well as other students because of the high quality of the teaching. They are given additional support by community service volunteers and by student support workers where appropriate. Lessons are planned to meet the needs of all the students in the class and have a focus on teaching language and communication. This also ensures that students with additional special educational needs such as communication difficulties or autistic spectrum disorder learn effectively. Their learning is enhanced through appropriate therapy, including speech and language therapy. Students with behaviour difficulties make good and sometimes very good progress in learning to conform and behave appropriately.
4. Students aged 14 to 16 make good progress towards achieving modules of the Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts (OCR) Accreditation for Life and Living Skills (ALL) awards. Last year, by the time they were 16, twelve students had gained modules in areas including home management, the world of work, communication, numeracy, information technology and personal skills. Eleven more able students achieved modules in the numeracy and communication areas of the OCR National Skills Profile (NSP). This represents an increase in the number of students involved and an appropriate increase in the number of modules awarded. However, there are fewer higher level awards than the previous year, which is explained by the relatively lower ability of the current group of students. One student gained modules in information technology. Additionally, last year, five students gained grades in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) art examination.
5. In the further education college less able students with more complex needs do well and achieve qualifications such as Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Towards Independence. Last year, five students gained the ASDAN Youth Awards and currently, 30 are studying to gain the Towards Independence award. They achieve very well when their learning is reinforced through the use of their senses, such as touch and hearing. Students also learn effectively in lessons which focus on developing communication, for example the Social Use of Language Programme (SULP) lessons. Standards are very good in many of the vocational courses including art and design, business administration, food preparation, using information technology, land based studies, textiles, metalwork and woodwork. This is partly because students are able to choose courses. As a result they are very keen to learn and enjoy lessons. Teaching of these courses is also very good. Students successfully gain a wide range of qualifications in vocational areas. Last year there were 301 entries for the Surrey and Region Open College Network (SROCN) and all achieved success, the majority at entry level, but also 56 gained level 1. In business administration, three gained level 2. A total of 64 passes were achieved in the City and Guilds text production, number power and word power courses. The great majority, 42, were at level 1. Twenty five National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) were awarded, almost four times as many as the previous year. Seven of these were at entry level in basic business skills, seven level 1 and one level 2 in information technology, five at level 1 in customer services and two at level 1 and three at level 2 in business administration. The greatest number of passes were through the National Proficiency Test Council (NPTC). The number of passes has almost tripled from 223 the

previous year to 619. At Level A there were 134 passes and at level B, 485 passes. Most were in information and communication technology, key skills, the farm and horticulture. There were also passes in design and technology, independent living skills and employment skills. Students make good progress towards improving their literacy and numeracy skills. They achieve well and make good progress in personal social and health education.

6. Students achieve satisfactory standards in English and literacy skills are appropriate. They make good progress in speaking and listening across the age range. They communicate in more detail as they grow older and are more confident in making eye contact. Listening skills become sharper and response to what others say more focused. Younger students find difficulty with reading but they learn to link sound to letter and to look for picture clues to help their reading. This leads to satisfactory progress throughout the school. Less able students interpret signs, symbols and pictures and become increasingly able to understand their significance. Many students learn to form letters clearly, though very few join up their letters, even at age 16. They write about their interests, holidays and school life, and make up stories and poems. Less able students make marks on paper, write over what others have written and start to write their own names.
7. In mathematics the school has satisfactorily maintained the overall level of progress over time seen at the last inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory. However, in lessons, they have improved the progress made by students, so that this is now good, overall, and sometimes very good for students between 11 and 14 years. One of the factors leading to this improvement is the recent introduction of strategies from the National Numeracy Strategy to teaching in many of the lessons. This has helped students gain satisfactory skills in numeracy. The youngest students learn to match items and to count objects. The more able search for patterns and calculate using tens and units. By the time they are 14, most students follow directions, understand 'up' and 'down' and explore shapes. More able students develop the capacity to work out simple calculations in their heads and explore the properties of two-dimensional shapes. The oldest, less able students become more accurate when operating cause and effect programs on the computer and sort shapes and colours. More able students work on time, develop an understanding of odd and even, order numbers and work out change from simple invoices, accurately.
8. In science achievement is satisfactory. The progress achieved in individual lessons is good, overall. To resolve this difference the school is in the process of setting out which topics will be taught year on year and term by term. By age 11, students have explored materials and begun to learn about body parts. Between ages 11 and 14, students increase their understanding of living things. More able students use a wider range of scientific terms with satisfactory understanding. By the time they are 16, more able students know about the functions of parts of the body, for example, breathing. A good range of scientific terms is used, mostly accurately. Less able students develop observation skills and many, with prompting, recall the main facts of the lesson. One Year 10 student is studying GCSE science successfully at a local school.
9. In school, students achieve very well and make very good progress in creative arts and physical education because the quality of the teaching is very high. Students make good progress in personal, social and health education, which leads to very good progress in their personal development. Most also do well in music, although a few more able students do not achieve as well as they should by the time they are 16 because they do not have work that is sufficiently difficult. In these subjects, resource levels are good, overall. In many other subjects, however, resources are inadequate, which contributes to the lowering of standards. In geography, history and religious education students make satisfactory progress. Achievements and progress are unsatisfactory in information and communication technology through lack of a coherent plan for what is to be taught and inadequate resources. Students do not do as well as they should in design and technology, art and design and a modern foreign language. The curriculum is too narrow in art and in design and technology for students aged 6 to 14. Not all students who should study a modern foreign language at secondary age.

Students' attitudes, values and personal development

10. There have been good improvements in the attitudes, behaviour and relationships of students since the last inspection. Students are now really interested in their work and concentrate well in lessons. Their enthusiasm for learning is often exceptionally good. For example, during a singing assembly, students swayed and bounced in their chairs as they sang to the music. Some willingly volunteered to learn a new dance, which they performed very well. The

audience expressed their approval and the atmosphere was electric. Older students become independent learners accepting responsibility as they gather evidence for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). They are justly proud of their achievements and are highly motivated to move on to the next level. For example, in the Using Information Technology course, a student has already attained NVQ level 2 and his excellent portfolio of work is a testimony to his commitment. Students persevere and complete their tasks even when they are not very pleasant, for example, when mucking out the animals on the farm. They understand the need for good hygiene and husbandry and work diligently. All students respond very well to the positive ethos and sense of purpose at St Piers. They are confident and readily participate in a wide range of activities the school offers. Parents confirm that students are happy at school and note improvements in attitudes and confidence.

11. Students behave well and even those with real difficulties show improvement as a result of behaviour plans and the consistent approach of staff. Students understand what is expected of them and readily comply. In lessons, and as they move around the site, students are friendly, polite and courteous to others. They return greetings with smiles and cheerfulness. In the houses and hostels they do as they are asked and show respect for property. Bullying is rare and is responded to swiftly by staff. There are few exclusions.
12. Personal development and relationships are very good. Students form warm and respectful friendships with staff and each other. They demonstrate care and concern for others: for example, when a student has a seizure others are considerate and helpful. In lessons they take turns well, for example, waiting to clap and sing to Wild West songs during creative arts. They co-operate and work effectively in teams such as during the 'unihoc' competition. In Team Enterprise they are quick to acknowledge and praise the work of others and are very supportive. In the houses and hostels they behave as members of a family, getting on well together and enjoying each other's company almost without exception. Over time they are encouraged to take more responsibilities for looking after their own rooms and property, washing and ironing and preparing meals. Older students increasingly work and study with minimal supervision. They negotiate their learning programmes with their tutors and select vocational areas they want to work in. They confidently carry out their tasks, taking initiative and responsibility, for example, in textiles; they use sewing machines independently and make decisions about stitching and patterning. Students need little supervision and work is completed to high standards. Through experiences such as the travel training and work experience programmes, students develop personal skills and become increasingly more independent.
13. As at the time of the previous inspection attendance is good. Some students are occasionally absent because of medical needs or because they are with their parents for a long weekend. The good relationships with the care staff and with parents result in both residential and day students rarely being late. Registration generally takes place promptly. However, one example was seen of the class teacher not completing the register as required. In addition, registers are kept in the classroom. Both these circumstances could result in not being able to identify which students are on site if there were an emergency evacuation. Punctuality is usually good in the mornings but at times there is some slippage during the day, for example, over long breaks in further education and assemblies or lessons that overrun in school shortening the next session

HOW WELL ARE STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall for students in school and for students in the further education centre. For a substantial number of lessons, just over 40 per cent, the teaching and learning are very good and at times excellent. This is a major factor in the good progress students make during lessons. Teaching and learning are excellent in creative arts in school. A magical Wild West scenario complete with saloon bar and Indian reservation is used extremely skilfully. Students gain and reinforce skills, knowledge and understanding exceptionally well in these very well planned lessons. Teaching and learning are very good in physical education and in interactive music. Both are very well planned. Physical education teaching makes very good use of the varied facilities on site supplemented by those in the local community. The expert mix of music therapy and music in the National Curriculum is very effective as a means of helping students improve their concentration and their communication skills. Teaching and learning are very good in land-based studies. Design and technology is taught well in school, although it is largely food technology for students up to age 14. It is also taught well, in various forms, in further education. Teaching and learning are good overall in other subjects in school, with the exception of religious education where they are satisfactory.

15. The high quality and commitment of the staff are key features. Teachers and student support workers form cohesive, highly skilled teams working with students. Support workers are very well briefed and, like the teachers, know the needs of the students very well. This helps to ensure that each member of a class learns effectively. Students with English as an additional language are given appropriate support to ensure they learn vocabulary and to check the accuracy of their understanding. In many instances, student support workers are assigned to work with particular students. They focus attention on those whose concentration is weak, assist with oral or written communication and work with individuals or groups on activities suited to their level of skill. For example, in a textiles lesson, a student was helped to create designs and beautifully embroider and appliqué a blanket. A number of support staff have successfully trained to be teachers. All staff provide ideal role models for students. They are positive and offer kindness and respect and build very strong relationships. As a result, students try hard to please the adults around them.
16. Throughout the school and further education centre, the range of strategies used to encourage students to learn is extensive. In most classrooms there are well-established routines, which create a working atmosphere and give students the confidence to contribute. For example, in school, students often start the day with a 'hello song' or a whole-class activity then move into groups. Older, more able students in school are encouraged to collect their equipment and books independently. Less able students are questioned and, where necessary, reminded about what happens next and pictures, symbols and objects are used well to focus attention. Horticulture sessions in further education often start in the classroom, conveniently close to the potting shed, with going through what is planned before students start practical work. The establishment of clear routines and structure to the day is very effective in supporting those students with autistic spectrum disorder. In all lessons, very good activities are chosen which will interest the students. In particular, learning is made to be enjoyable. A cat and mouse game is used to reinforce mathematical skills and other students count 'kangaroos' hopping around the room. The Social Use of Language Programme (SULP) is very effective in improving communication skills because the fun and game technique is again successfully used. Students learn the importance of careful listening through passing on a whispered message. Where appropriate, staff use signs and symbols well to support the learning of students with communication difficulties. The use of a number of different activities in a lesson keeps the pace going and maintains the interest of the students. This suits short concentration spans and breaks up the longer sessions in the further education college particularly well.
17. A significant number of students join St Piers with low levels of self-confidence and many have difficulties with their behaviour. Staff are skilled in helping students improve their behaviour, partly as a result of the extensive and effective training they have undertaken. They follow expert advice from the psychology team and the behaviour practice manager and implement specific plans to change behaviour patterns where needed. Most importantly, staff are consistent. Clear parameters are established and unacceptable behaviour is dealt with firmly, but kindly, so interruptions are kept to a minimum and all students are involved in lessons. Students with potentially very difficult behaviour patterns are skilfully included wherever possible and arrangements made to appropriately manage interference with the learning of others. In some instances, attention is diverted successfully to another activity. For example, music that the student is known to like is played. Praise and encouragement are used very frequently, which builds students' self-esteem. They are complimented when they achieve what they are asked to do: for example, to push down on the pedals of the tricycle to make it move or to sit sensibly on a chair, rather than on the floor.
18. The very high quality of teaching in the assessment centre combines effective strategies to discover what a student knows, understands and can do with very skilled procedures for dealing with difficult behaviour. Suitable rewards are established. In one instance an episode from a children's story is watched on video once work is completed. This helps the student to concentrate on the activity to get it finished in time for the next episode.
19. Lessons are planned well using multidisciplinary education plans as a basis for students' learning. Work is pitched at the appropriate level for the students and often involves them working on their own or in small groups. In many instances, high expectations of what students will achieve are evident. This is very clear in the individual objectives set for each student in the further education college. These clearly state what each student will do and the level of help they will receive to achieve the objective. Opportunities are taken to include the teaching of literacy and numeracy in most lessons, which reinforces students' learning in English and mathematics. Skills in using the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are not developed

by all staff but are beginning to be used effectively in some classes in the school. Literacy and numeracy are taught effectively through the key skills programme in the further education college.

20. Despite a lack of resources in a number of subject areas, resources are used well and staff make many themselves or bring their own to lessons. For example, a range of exciting artefacts, including ration books, brought the conditions in the Second World War alive. Good quality fabrics and materials lead to high quality items being produced in textiles. They also widen students' choices: for example, which fabric to make an apron? The student involved was asked why one colour might be better than another. Less able students are helped in their understanding through very effective use of sound and touch. Through the excellent use of an ocean drum, a water spray, seaweed and a string of shells, students had a story about the sea brought alive. They felt the spray, touched the seaweed and the shells and heard the ocean. They listened attentively and concentrated well.
21. There are few weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning. A few gaps in expertise slow the progress of students. In the secondary part of the school, there is insufficient knowledge and understanding to teach art well. Also, not all teachers are sufficiently skilled in using the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies or information and communication technology in school. Inadequate long-term planning of what is to be taught leads to some lessons not building effectively on what has been taught before, particularly at ages 11 and 14. There are inconsistencies in the setting of homework. A number of parents commented that they were unhappy with the amount of homework their children were asked to do. Homework is set, but not regularly in English, mathematics and science. In some lessons, students are given work to finish off. Many continue to work effectively on targets concerning their personal and social development in the residential provision.

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

22. The curriculum (what students are expected to learn) is good for students in the further education college but unsatisfactory overall in school. There has been insufficient improvement since the last inspection in providing a curriculum that readily builds on learning from one key stage to another in school. Plans to change to a different curriculum are being implemented in some areas but are not monitored to ensure adequate links are made. Additionally, the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) remains unsatisfactory. There has been some improvement at Key Stage 4, for students aged 14 to 16, because courses leading to accreditation through Accreditation for Life and Living Skills (ALL) and the National Skills Profile (NSP) have been successfully introduced. There are also opportunities for more able students to gain General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) grades in art and design and, through links with a local secondary school, in science. This represents good provision for many students but is too narrow a range of courses for more able students. Attempts have been made to include higher level courses but those chosen have been abandoned because they were unsuccessful.
23. The statutory requirements for the curriculum are largely met but a modern foreign language is not taught to all students aged 14 to 16. There is not enough time allocated to teaching French for students aged 11 to 14. The one week of French teaching for these students is unsatisfactory and did not occur last year. There is a lack of coherence between the key stages, because many subject co-ordinators are recently appointed and have not had sufficient time to plan outside the key stage they work in. Physical education, creative arts and interactive music are strengths of the curriculum. They are well planned and ensure students build on the experiences, knowledge, skills and understanding they acquire throughout their time in the school. The curriculum for design and technology is narrow until age 14 and does not meet statutory requirements because the focus is on food technology. There is insufficient attention to working with a variety of materials, for example, working with wood, plastic and metal or using construction kits. Art also has a narrow curriculum.
24. The strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are satisfactory overall. The National Literacy Strategy and aspects of the National Numeracy Strategy are used well in many lessons and are effective in helping students increase their progress. However, some staff are still to gain the skills necessary so that they can be used successfully for all students in school.

25. Improvements have been made since the last inspection in the curriculum in the further education college, where farm work, horticulture and textile work are particular strengths. An appropriate range of accreditation is offered in the further education college and this is being widened over time. The curriculum for post-16 students is very good for the most able students and good for those with more complex needs. For both groups of students it is well designed, leads to qualifications and is tailor made to meet individual needs. Important principles such as independence and self-advocacy are fundamental. Students are offered choices and encouraged to express preferences. After an initial foundation term when students sample all available courses, they are able to negotiate their learning programmes with their tutors. Well designed course leaflets help students to make decisions and a flexible student-centred approach enables them to make changes to their courses as interests or aptitudes develop. Courses and lessons are well planned with clearly stated objectives that form the basis for assessment, leading on to accreditation. Detailed records are maintained alongside students' portfolios of evidence for qualifications. The awarding bodies responsible for administering these qualifications frequently praise the college's good work. The overall aim 'to support students in transition to optimum independence' is certainly achieved.
26. A wide range of interesting courses, including vocational courses, is on offer to the more able students. Less able students may also participate in some of these courses if appropriate. Land based studies include horticulture and animal husbandry; both are very popular and successful for students of all abilities. Business administration and ICT teach students about the business world and how to use computers. The most able students gain National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in these areas. Design and technology courses teach students valuable skills working with textiles, food, metal and wood. Students' work is sometimes offered for sale and is of a high standard. The key skills department assists students to extend their literacy and numeracy skills, although these are often assessed within vocational contexts. The sport and recreation department helps students to have fun and maintain their health and fitness through many games and activities such as rounders, unihoc, horse riding and swimming. Creative talents are developed through courses of art, music and drama. There are also very good opportunities for educational visits and trips.
27. Courses for students with more complex needs in the further education college, the additional supported learning groups, are relevant and rightly focus on skills and activities to develop independence and mobility in the community. There is an appropriate emphasis on sensory approaches to learning and good access to facilities such as physiotherapy and the multi sensory room. The Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Towards Independence Scheme provides a good structure allowing the course to be suited to individual students as well as a means of accreditation. However, teachers have a degree of flexibility in organising timetables and sometimes breaks are overlong. Links are being made with hostels to enable the work they do in helping students to look after themselves to be used towards their awards in college.
28. The provision for careers and vocational education is very good. This begins in earnest during Year 9 in school and builds up effectively towards the further education provision. Here programmes for personal and social development and work preparation include important aspects such as sex education, work experience and careers guidance. There is a very good range of work experience, which is part of the work-related curriculum. This enables students to give careful, practical consideration to further education, work or other provision, as they prepare to leave the supportive environment of St Piers.
29. Overall, residential provision is satisfactory. Day-to-day residential care is good. It offers a very stable and caring environment with a wide variety of evening activities. Together these extend and promote the self-confidence, interests and experiences of the students. They foster positive behaviour and attitudes and enable students to start and complete the day in a positive frame of mind. Students feel safe and secure in residence. All residential students have very good opportunities to pursue their interests and extend their learning through evening and weekend activities. For example, they can join local youth and sporting clubs, participate in adult education classes and work for the Duke of Edinburgh Award as well as take part in many exciting activities such as canoeing, rock climbing, swimming and gardening. In the house and hostel for the least able there are sensory facilities to enable students to continue their work on making links between cause and effect and spend time in a stimulating environment. The residential experience extends the classroom curriculum and enhances the overall quality and standard of education provided by the school. However, information concerning what students experience or learn is not always exchanged sufficiently to consolidate gains made.

30. The very wide range of extra-curricular sporting, leisure and vocational activities is good. Students have good opportunities to develop new skills, improve their performances, join in activities with friends, take exercise, visit places of interest, and meet with the community outside St Piers. Personal and social education is good and central to the school and college's aims to increase students' independence and manage their epilepsy. Health education is an integral part of personal and social education. It is through this subject area that students learn about friendship and relationships, including sex education and the misuse of drugs. It is also the basis for learning important skills to enable students to make an effective contribution to community life beyond school.
31. Students make good use of the community through educational and social visits. For example, visits are made to the school by the emergency services and others who take an interest in the work of the school. There is a good range of work experience in the community for further education students. This is managed very effectively so that employers and students have a clear understanding of their roles and any difficulties they may face in the work place. Parents and carers are involved in work placements. First year further education students go to a careers exhibition at a local hotel. More able students visit the British Airways Authority at nearby Gatwick Airport. There are social links through local youth clubs and students are able to invite local youngsters to evening and weekend events in the houses and hostels.
32. The school has good links with other schools and colleges, including Comenius links to schools in Holland and France, where exchange visits have been made. There is also an effective business link with a school in Germany through Achievement International. This provides students with opportunities to market products abroad as well as in this country. Staff from the further education college visit other further education establishments. Two local further education colleges take students on summer term link courses, such as vehicle maintenance and textile work. Students from further education sell their business enterprises as part of an accredited business and social training course. The link between school and further education is strengthened when the further education students entertain Year 11 students socially as a part of their accredited course work. This helps Year 11 students make a smooth transition from school to further education.
33. Provision for students' spiritual development has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now very good. Assemblies play an important part in the life of the school; they give students a sense of belonging to a whole school community, celebrating and appreciating each other's contributions and achievements. For example, during one assembly a student who had no speech led the whole school singing, by signing the specially adapted words of 'It's a perfect day'. This was a very moving experience for everyone who attended the assembly. Teachers plan for students to experience feelings of wonder during lessons and they also make very good use of any impromptu opportunities that present themselves, to enhance this provision. During creative arts and interactive music sessions the atmosphere that is created allows students to reflect and enhances their communication skills through the use of music. Students are given an understanding of life and care by being involved with the farm. For example, during the lambing season students become aware of new life, animals feeding and protecting their young and also at times, death.
34. Students' moral development is promoted very well, which is also an improvement since the last inspection. This is partly because the provision for personal and social education has developed well. Opportunities are taken consistently in assemblies, religious education lessons and circle time to deal with problems and concerns. There is a strong moral theme of helping, caring and respecting each other throughout the school. All staff act as good role models. They show tolerance and patience as well as providing very good support for students with very complex difficulties. In all lessons, students are led to behave well, and disruption is not tolerated. Students are taught the difference between right and wrong effectively. Their achievements are recognised very well through certificates, which reinforce positive behaviour and encourage hard work. They are given many opportunities to develop values, such as honesty, fairness, independence and respect. For example, they play team games in physical education and are taught to look after themselves in many of the residential houses and hostels. Students are given an understanding of the outside world by supporting national and international charities such as Red Nose Day and the Romanian Christmas Child Day.
35. Provision for students' social development is very good and results in very positive relationships between students themselves and between students and the staff. This represents a significant improvement since the last report. Many lessons are planned to encourage students to relate to each other through the use of games and activities, some of which are dependent on students

using each other's names. The College Council provides opportunities for students to discuss concerns with adults, students of their own age and with their link, less able, 'buddy' tutor groups. This is having a very positive effect on the personal development and communication skills of both groups. For example, the less able 'buddy' group is teaching the more able students signing skills. There are opportunities for a number of residential trips for each student, which make a very positive contribution to students' personal development and social skills. The staff are very adept at linking the wide range of extra-curricular activities to targets in students' Individual Multidisciplinary Plans, ensuring good progress is made against their social targets.

36. Students' cultural development is very good. Students enrich their knowledge and experience of their own and other traditions and cultures through religious education, art, music and history. Opportunities for students to study Shakespeare resulted in an end of term performance by the students of Romeo and Juliet. There are displays of artefacts from other religions around the school, which are supported by visits to places of worship for their own and other cultures. Work on Aboriginal art is displayed for all students to admire in the further education college. Very good use is made of music from around the world as background for assemblies and stories are often chosen because they are set in another country. The school, further education college, houses and hostels arrange a number of visits with a cultural emphasis, such as to museums, art galleries, theatres and concerts. Creative arts in school had an American Indian encampment complete with a totem pole, wigwam, smoke and a fibre optic waterfall. This provided a wonderful cultural experience for the students.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS STUDENTS?

37. All the staff in the school and college show appropriate concern for the needs of the students and provide good role models to encourage their development. This continues the position at the time of the previous inspection. Parents are pleased with the level of support in the school, seeing it as a caring community where staff are approachable if there are any problems. The links between the day, residential and therapy services have improved since the last inspection. The procedures for assessing students' attainment and progress are satisfactory.
38. All students have Individual Multidisciplinary Plans, which combine all of the needs (educational, care, medical and clinical) of the students. In particular, the students have nominated staff to co-ordinate their support-teachers or tutors for education, key workers for care and key nurses for medical. A major advantage of the medical facility being on-site is that students needing medical support often do not lose any schooling as the treatment is normally provided outside school or college hours. Clinical services provide a wide range of specialists to support the students, guide the other staff and enhance the education the students receive. The use of the multidisciplinary plans ensures, where appropriate, that therapy is carried through into the classroom and the residential provision. Reviews are organised regularly. The annual review of the action plans effectively involves the parents. The care and teaching staff have the opportunity to meet several times a day when the students are taken by the care staff to and from the school and college at the start and end of the day and lunchtimes. However, any conversations are often limited to references to behaviour and whether the student had a good day or night. This limits the opportunities for them to work closely together and build upon each other's contribution to the students' progress. In one instance, when further information was sought by a teacher in school, it was very helpful. With the knowledge gained he was able to prompt students effectively to remember what they had achieved at the weekend. Students' speaking, listening and writing skills were enhanced. In houses and hostels with younger and/or very dependent students, at least one member of care staff is on waking duty all night and other residential staff are readily available on-call, as is medical assistance. There are, however, some occasions when the level of staffing other than at night is too low. For example, when a second member of staff has to deal with a medical emergency, a single member of staff may be left with a group of students. The majority of staff have been trained in safe restraint procedures.
39. Overall, the school has good procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of the students. Two senior members of staff are the designated officers for child protection and the school follows the procedures of both the local and home social services departments. All the staff at St Piers, including administrative and support staff, have received guidance on how to deal with any situations that may arise and know who to report to if necessary. The recommendations following an inspection by the county's registration unit have been, or are shortly planned to be, implemented. Nevertheless, one of the designated officers has not yet

undertaken appropriate training for his role. The provision for first aid is good with many trained staff who can call on the help of the on-site medical centre, which is available 24 hours a day. The health and safety policy is satisfactory, with a very good structure identifying responsibilities from the chief executive downwards. The senior manager with specific duties in this area has a good understanding of the importance of health and safety matters and is advised by a consultant. Health and safety representatives from different parts of the school meet regularly. Good examples were noted of middle managers and other staff diligently carrying out their duties in this area. However, there are weaknesses. In particular, despite this being a statutory requirement since 1992, no risk assessment has yet been carried out for the whole site and all the activities that take place. In addition, the school has not implemented the statutory requirement to separate pedestrians and vehicles. Other problems identified during the inspection have been passed to the governors.

40. The procedures for monitoring students' academic progress and personal development make a satisfactory contribution to raising students' achievement. Satisfactory use is made of the assessment information, particularly lesson evaluations, to guide the planning of lessons. The procedures for assessing students' progress and monitoring how well they are doing are satisfactory overall. There are, however, weaknesses as there is a lack of consistency and the attainment and progress of different groups of students are not monitored as they move through the school. Students aged 11 to 16 are coming to the end of a curriculum cycle and current systems make it difficult to assess and monitor progress in all subjects. They are awaiting new curriculum guidance to be published to introduce new systems. For students aged up to 11, a revised curriculum is already established and a number of good assessment initiatives have very recently been introduced. In some subjects, notably science, design and technology, art and design, information and communication technology and religious education, records of students' progress are unsatisfactory. However, students aged 6 to 11 now have individual termly targets for all subjects, which are planned to be used for monitoring progress and provide the basis of information to parents on how well their children are doing. In addition, for students with additional communication difficulties, the key stage manager has developed an individual communication passport similar to one used very effectively in further education. Developed from information gained from parents, carers and observations within school, these provide 'pen pictures' of the unique communication systems used by individual students and are proving to be a valuable aid. The assessment and monitoring procedures introduced in the further education college are good. Lessons have very clear objectives for each student, which are assessed and recorded.
41. There has been a recent improvement in the procedures for assessing new students. Detailed assessments and observations now provide clear pictures of new students, which are used to set individual targets, with the intention to measure and track progress. In addition to formal assessments, video and photographic evidence form an important aspect of this assessment process. Since the last inspection, Individual Education Plans and Care Plans have been amalgamated to form Individual Multidisciplinary Plans. This is a good development and provides a valuable approach to monitoring students' progress.
42. Externally accredited courses provide a good basis for assessing students' progress. Students aged 14 to 16, for example, work towards clear criteria from such schemes as Accreditation for Life and Living Skills (ALL) and the National Skills Profile (NSP). In further education, assessment is very focused and students' progress is tracked very well. Objectives are selected for each student from accredited courses, for example, in a number of courses including horticulture, food preparation and textiles, against Surrey and Region Open College Network (SROCN) criteria. Progress is assessed and recorded at the end of each session. Students' all round progress can also be tracked through the National Record of Achievement, which is finalised when they leave.
43. Since the last inspection an effective assessment facility attached to the medical centre has been established. This consists of a valuable six-week, multidisciplinary assessment service for students of all ages from around the United Kingdom. Working closely with families, schools and health services, the facility provides an intensive period of evaluation. A medical analysis of the student's epilepsy and associated conditions is complemented by a close analysis of the student's learning and behaviour. A wide range of educational assessment procedures is undertaken in a sensitive manner, using formal activities and play including games to develop and determine social skills. This forms the basis of a detailed and personalised teaching approach, which is used to recommend suitable provision and strategies to help the student learn effectively.

44. The monitoring of progress of students' personal development is very good. The multidisciplinary plans identify ways to support the students to improve their skills, for example in self-help, co-operation, health and hygiene. These are followed closely by the teaching and residential staff with their progress reviewed regularly. The students' personalities develop with the various strategies used to raise self-esteem. These include the awards of merit points or stars at the end of the day to reflect their good work and positive attitudes. Students regularly receive certificates in assemblies. In the school, break-time is used well to develop students' social skills, asking each other what they want, making the drinks and passing snacks to each other as well as the staff encouraging them to talk. In the college this process develops into a more formal personal and social development programme, for example, to increase their understanding of the wider society. Students who have particular problems make use of the counselling service provided by staff in clinical services.
45. The procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour are very good. This has been a priority. The policy emphasises a positive approach to improving students' behaviour. Staff receive very appropriate training and guidance. Staff in school, college and residential houses and hostels are consistent in the way they deal with students. They continually praise and thank the students for positive behaviour and gently guide and encourage them where necessary. The action plans developed for each student highlight the strategies to be used. If teachers or care staff are concerned about any changes in behaviour, they can quickly consult the medical or clinical staff to determine whether a change of medication or a seizure is a cause. If necessary, an interdisciplinary meeting is called to decide how to offer further support. For students who show especially difficult behaviour guidance and support are provided by the psychology team and a specialist behaviour practice manager. Together with the child protection officers, the behaviour practice manager also advises and supports any students who may show aggressive or bullying behaviour. Behaviour in the residential areas is maintained at the same high standard as that which exists in the school and further education college setting.
46. Overall, the procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance and punctuality at the start of the day or after lunch are good. The great majority of students stay in the houses and hostels on the site and the care staff work hard in the morning and at lunchtime to ensure students arrive to lessons on time. Occasionally, lessons do not start on time because activities overrun or, in the further education college, breaks are extended. This is not monitored. Any unexplained absences of students at the start of a session results in the teacher telephoning the residential home or, for day students, the parents. The teachers keep running totals of absences. These help the key stage managers in the school, during their weekly check of the registers, to identify any students whose attendance may be of concern and take effective action.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. Most parents are pleased with what the school provides and achieves. They feel comfortable in approaching the school with any concerns. However, some parents of students in the further education unit would like more information about their child's progress.
48. Overall, the information provided to parents is satisfactory but, within this, there are wide variations between the information provided for parents of the younger students and for parents of students in the further education unit. The parents of students aged 6 to 16 receive a termly record of achievement for their child. This includes the student's own evaluation of progress. Parents are invited to contribute, by proforma, suggestions to be included in the students' Individual Multidisciplinary Plans, which are reviewed every six months. Reports from specialists are sent to parents before the annual review meeting takes place; this allows parents time to reflect and to have informed discussions during the meeting. Parents are also sent the student's annual report on academic progress; this is very informative and clearly shows what students know, understand and can do in all subject areas. Targets for improvement are clearly identified and discussed with parents at the annual review.
49. During the annual review meeting in school, teachers and parents work in partnership discussing progress and new strategies that will help and support the student at home and at school. For example, one parent finds her daughter's behaviour difficult when they go shopping. The shopping programme used at school is successful and this will be made available to the parent to ensure a consistent approach is used. Parents are also given good

advice on how to help their child at home with various strategies to improve their numeracy and literacy skills. Parents make a major contribution to the target setting meeting that takes place immediately after the annual review meeting. These targets are formally reviewed after six months and again parents are kept well informed. A new interim report, on the progress which students are making towards the targets on their Individual Multidisciplinary Plans, is currently being piloted for students aged 6 to 11. These reports are of a high quality and provide parents with accurate information. There is a wide range of information provided for parents through the governors' annual report, handbooks from the houses and newsletters from each key stage manager and the school. Parents are also provided with advance notice of the topics which their children will be studying. There are some very good examples of home-school contact books which contain useful social and academic information. The prospectus is helpful but does not provide all the necessary information: for example, parents are not reminded of their right to withdraw their children from religious education and from collective worship. Although homework is mentioned in the prospectus, a number of parents expressed concern about the amount set. There is no policy to guide staff sufficiently and inform parents at present. Some parents would like more contact with tutors when they call to collect their child from the school at weekends or at half term.

50. Annual reviews for all students are planned six months in advance but some parents would like dates of reviews, consultations and special events at the beginning of the academic year to allow them to plan and attend all meetings, workshops and productions.
51. The information provided by the further education college to parents on their child's progress is unsatisfactory. However, the college is aware of this and is currently reviewing the information which it provides. Parents of college students are only involved in target setting at their child's annual review meeting. Home-school contact books are only available to parents who request them. The hostel handbooks for students and parents are informative and helpful. Some handbooks are currently under review, with students playing an active role in planning and deciding the hostels' aims. The college is planning to include more detailed information on students' academic progress in students' annual reports and to provide termly interim reports on progress. There are a number of informative leaflets available to parents outlining the courses which are available at the college. However, parents are not provided with advance notice of the modules or topics which students will be studying as part of their courses.
52. In response to parents' concerns, the medical services have increased the number of key nurses to ensure that parents are given all the up-to-date information as quickly as possible after each multidisciplinary meeting. It is recognised that clear channels of communication are necessary between the clinical services, such as the speech and language department and the occupational therapy department, to ensure that parents know who is responsible for providing them with information.
53. Parental involvement in their children's learning is satisfactory in the school and in the further education unit. The school and college provide two meetings per year where parents have the opportunity to talk to the tutors and to attend a number of workshops and lectures. This enables parents to have a greater understanding of their children's complex needs and to become more involved in their learning. Approximately 50 per cent of parents attend these meetings. Scrutiny of house and hostel records show that many parents phone on a regular basis for information. House parents make regular contact with parents and also provide home-school contact books. There are some good examples of a regular dialogue between home and school. Scrutiny of some tutors' records of calls to parents shows no entries. There is little consistency in setting regular homework and this limits the involvement of some parents in their children's learning, although many students read to parents at weekends. The play skills therapist provides parents with literature explaining how parents can help their child to learn through play; this is effective in supporting the work of school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The headteacher of the school, principal of the further education college and other senior staff have a clear view for the future of the school and show a genuine commitment to improve. They have identified the priorities well and provide satisfactory leadership towards achieving necessary changes. There are detailed plans to show how development can be managed. A number of valuable developments have been successfully achieved, including the effective Individual Multidisciplinary Plans. However, overall, there is unsatisfactory management of these changes. There is insufficient rigour in ensuring current and previous plans are consistently implemented and monitored, particularly with respect to important aspects of curriculum management and the provision of information and communication technology (ICT)

throughout the school. There has been unsatisfactory improvement in these areas, which were identified as key issues for improvement by the previous inspection. No single member of staff monitors what is to be taught throughout the school.

55. Key stage managers, relatively recent appointments, have made considerable changes within each age range (5 to 11, 11 to 14 and 14 to 16). However, these key stage managers and the subject co-ordinators in the school have not been long enough in post to perform an effective role in ensuring that the students' learning develops progressively throughout their schooling. Planning is not adequate for this important aspect. These problems do not arise in the further education college due to the nature of the accredited courses and the integral monitoring of such courses. The failure to ensure that these agreed priorities are consistently implemented within the school has been exacerbated by a range of factors. These include the change of key staff members during the last two years, the relatively recent appointment of the headteacher of the school and the extent of his role in managing both school and residential provision. In addition, the high level of staff absence, due both to professional development and illness, has had a significant effect on the management of the school. Key staff have to take classes to cover for much of these absences and are, therefore, unable to fulfil all of their management responsibilities. The management of the residential provision lacks sufficient rigour. There are too few checks on the day-to-day procedures, including some health and safety matters. House and hostel staff have a high degree of autonomy and, although records of their meetings are kept, they are not regularly communicated to the relevant head of care.
56. The school's stated values of 'empathy, honesty, integrity, respect and trust' are reflected well in the work of all staff with students. There is a strong commitment towards providing good support for all students. However, the school's monitoring of its performance as a basis for improvement is unsatisfactory. There has been a lapse in the cycle of monitoring teaching, although this has been addressed recently as part of a new performance management programme. The strategy and arrangements for this performance management of all staff are satisfactory. The school has also only recently started to monitor students' achievements by analysing the targets met on their Individual Multidisciplinary Plans. This does not yet form a basis for planning towards raising students' standards, nor are these results analysed to ensure that all students receive an equally high standard of education and achieve well. There is good use of new technology to support the work of staff, including the developing networking of computers across the campus, allowing valuable communication through electronic mail. Good use is made of a large number of mobile phones to ensure immediate contact by staff with support services if students' health requires this.
57. A major difficulty for the governing body is the breadth of its responsibilities for the whole national centre. Although this clearly includes the school and the college, there is not sufficient focus on raising the standards of the students. There is a recognition of the need to comply with trust law, as set out in the Department for Education and Employment Circular 14/99, to separate responsibilities for managing the trust and running the school and college. The governing body substantially fulfils its statutory duties, apart from ensuring that requirements are met for teaching a modern foreign language and that necessary information is included in the prospectus. It is effectively involved in steering the future direction of the school and the college. There are appropriate subcommittees to monitor the work of the school; however, some important areas of information that would aid their work are not routinely discussed or obtained. These include detailed reports on the progress of the governing body's action plan from the previous inspection and of the School Development Plan. The governing body did not ensure sufficient progress was made and sustained following the last inspection. There is not a regular programme for governors to visit classes during the school day or to talk with teachers. There are no governors who are specifically linked with key areas of school activity, such as literacy. As a consequence, the governing body does not have a satisfactory, first hand understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school in order to support staff to raise the standards of education. A further consequence of this limited contact with the governing body is that some staff feel insufficiently aware of and involved in the development of the school and their morale is low.
58. The school and college have effective procedures to manage their budgets. Monthly summaries are provided to key managers and the governing body to ensure accurate monitoring of actual against planned expenditure, including any specific grants received. There is not yet effective budget delegation to subject areas through subject development plans, largely due to the early stage of development of the role of the subject co-ordinator. The school and college have given some consideration to applying the principles of best value in the review

of its role compared with other similar establishments; however, these principles are not used as a matter of course in all of its work.

59. The number, qualifications and experience of teachers and student support workers well match the demands of the curriculum, with the exception of the teaching of a modern foreign language where there is insufficient teacher time available. Additionally, in school there is some lack of expertise in art, ICT and the numeracy and literacy strategies. There are effective procedures for the induction of new staff. They feel well supported and able to fulfill their roles very quickly after appointment. There is a wide range of opportunities for all staff to receive further training, for example, in the management of behaviour and concerning autistic spectrum disorders. There are also opportunities for staff to achieve formal qualifications that may aid their career development. The school is successful in providing initial teacher training, in partnership with Brighton University. This investment in training has been enhanced by the recent appointment of a senior member of staff as professional development co-ordinator. The number of staff in the residential provision is satisfactory, overall. However, there are occasions when the number of staff on duty in a house or hostel is insufficient. For example, in one instance, because of the need to accompany a student to hospital for emergency treatment to a cut, five students were being supervised by one houseparent. In another, two relatively inexperienced house staff were left with five students with very high dependency and complex difficulties while the house parent accompanied a sixth child to the medical centre for attention.
60. The provision of resources is unsatisfactory overall and has deteriorated since the last inspection. There are insufficient resources in several subjects in the school, including English, mathematics, art and design, geography, history, ICT and religious education. The lack of readily available, good quality resources is a contributory factor to students' progress being lower than would be expected, despite staff often making or supplying what is needed themselves. Currently, the library is being rebuilt and books are packed away. As a result it was not possible to assess the quality of books and students are not able to use the facility. In contrast, the musical equipment and instruments are very good and the equipment for ICT in the college is of a high standard. The provision of the open learning centre in the college is a very good facility. It provides opportunities for students to use computers, books and reference materials with guidance where needed. Resources and equipment for design and technology, physical education and personal and social education are good in both the school and in the further education college and creative arts resources are good in school.
61. Resources are barely satisfactory in the residential provision. Each house or hostel has a communal television and video and in many there are computers for the students to use. Each has a small and insufficient collection of reading books and table games, such as jigsaws and snakes and ladders, freely available but many of these are in poor condition. Therefore, the toy library, which offers a more extensive and stimulating range of table games, is a welcome innovation. It is well used and allows an efficient sharing of resources. Some houses and hostels have larger games such as table football and pool and table tennis tables. Students have independent telephone access and calls in and out may be made with reasonable ease and privacy. The Childline number is displayed and is in most student handbooks. The school's facilities, particularly those for physical activities, are extensively and very well used for clubs, to enhance the residential provision.
62. Overall, the accommodation is satisfactory. The college is housed in a very good, attractive, newly built block though some old buildings still have to be used for some subject areas. The computer suite in the new building is particularly good and design and technology has good accommodation. Although creative arts in the college has a large room, it is unsatisfactory for drama or art because it lacks facilities such as storage or appropriate lighting. The accommodation for the school has limitations. The buildings are older and the narrowness of the doorways causes difficulties for wheelchair users. The facilities for art and design were unusable during the inspection due to the effects of the bad weather. However, the space available for music and creative arts is very good. Staff use the creative arts area particularly well to set the scene for students' learning.
63. There is a good range of facilities for physical education including a sports hall, swimming pool, mini-gymnasium and a boathouse. Additionally, extensive outdoor facilities including a lake, playing fields, woodland and 'confidence' trails are used well. The farm was only visited by the registered inspector prior to the inspection because it was subsequently closed to visitors due to a nationwide outbreak of foot and mouth disease. It is an excellent teaching resource, particularly for land based courses. The condition of the buildings around the site other than the college block shows considerable variations. Some are modern or in a good state of repair;

others are poorly decorated and some paintwork is flaking. The residential accommodation varies greatly and in many respects has changed little since the last inspection. A new house and hostel, which have been purpose built, are very good. They meet the needs of the students very well. For example, the hostel has a large recreational room and there is a sensory room in the house. Other accommodation has been refurbished and there are plans for an extensive replacement. However, many houses and hostels are in urgent need of redecoration, both inside and out. The cubicle arrangements in the older houses and hostels are functional but do not inspire the students to take a pride in their sleeping areas. On the whole there is reasonable personal space but few sleeping areas are sufficiently large to contain desks at which independent study or homework may be carried out undisturbed. If necessary, dining tables may be used for this purpose, but this arrangement is unsatisfactory. Although students did not complain, there is a lack of privacy in the shared accommodation and very little space in some to open drawers and cupboards. Some bathroom facilities also lack privacy and are inadequate by today's standards.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. The governors, chief executive, principal, headteacher and staff of the school and the college should:

- Improve what is taught in school by:
 - providing schemes of work for all subjects that meet the range of ability within the school and continue from one year to the next to enable students to make progress over time; *
 - increasing the opportunities for accreditation for more able students;
 - broadening the provision for design and technology and art and design;
 - ensuring statutory requirements are met to teach a modern foreign language to all secondary age students;
 - where necessary, improving the expertise of staff in teaching art and music, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.
(Paragraphs 6-9, 21-24, 59, 66, 72, 75, 80-81, 85, 94, 110, 113-115, 118-119)
- Improve the provision for information and communication technology in school by:
 - increasing the expertise of staff; *
 - ensuring there are clear plans showing how students will improve their standards throughout the time they are in school;
 - increasing both hardware and software resources.
(Paragraphs 9, 88, 107-112, 133)
- Improve the management of developments in school and the monitoring of provision in both school and the houses and hostels of the residential provision to ensure:
 - planned improvements are carried through and maintained;
 - the curriculum is overseen by a senior member of staff;
 - the role of curriculum co-ordinators is effective across the school; *
 - procedures are consistently carried out in the residential houses and hostels.
(Paragraphs 22, 23, 54 – 56, 73, 84, 88, 98, 102, 106)
- Enable the governing body to:
 - increase their knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and further education college;
 - focus on raising the standards of students;
 - support the management and the staff effectively.
(Paragraphs 57, 113)
- Increase the level of resources in school, particularly in English, art, geography, history and religious education. (Paragraphs 20, 60, 73, 80, 89, 102, 106, 112, 127)
- Address the health and safety issues listed to the governing body including those connected with risk assessments, the separation of pedestrians and traffic and location of registers. (Paragraph 39)

65. The governors, in drawing up their action plan, may wish to consider the following points relating to minor weaknesses identified in the report: -

- Improve integration between care and education. (Paragraphs 29, 38, 45)
- Improve information for parents in the further education college. * (Paragraphs 4, 8, 51)
- Ensure that the level of staffing in the residential provision is sufficient at all times. (Paragraphs 38, 59)
- Ensure that the assessment and recording of students' progress in the subjects they are taught continues to improve. * (Paragraphs 41, 110, 128)
- Address the small amount of time slippage. (Paragraphs 13, 46)
- Allocate subject budgets linked to subject development plans. (Paragraph 58)
- Ensure the programme of monitoring teaching is maintained. * (Paragraph 56)
- Ensure a homework policy is written and communicated to parents. (Paragraph 21, 49)
- The child protection officer lacks the necessary qualification. (Paragraph 39)
- Some accommodation requires attention, notably in art and in some of the residential provision. (Paragraphs 62-63, 88)

* Denotes an issue already identified by the school and included in its development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	154
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and students	121

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	38	51	7	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's students

Students on the school's roll	Y2 – Y13+
Number of students on the school's roll (FTE for part-time students)	205
Number of full-time students known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y2 – Y13+
Number of students with statements of special educational needs	172
Number of students on the school's special educational needs register	205

English as an additional language	No of students
Number of students with English as an additional language	7

Student mobility in the last school year	No of students
Students who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Students who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	N/A
National comparative data	N/A

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	N/A
National comparative data	N/A

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Too few students to report

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Too few students to report

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered students in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2000	5	9	14*

* 1 student was not assessed

	Working towards level 1	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
English	5	2	6	0
Mathematics	6	4	3	0
Science	6	3	4	0
Design and technology	5	2	6	1
Information and communication technology	5	4	3	2
History	5	6	2	1
Geography	5	5	3	1
Modern foreign language	14	0	0	0

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	2000	16	7	23

General Certificate of Secondary Education

Art

5 students gained grades including 4 at A - C

Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts (OCR) Accreditation of Living and Learning (ALL)

World of Work

1 student gained 2 modules

3 students gained 3 modules

Home Management

2 students gained 2 modules

6 students gained 1 module

Communication

4 students gained 3 modules

4 students gained 1 module

Numeracy

4 students gained 3 modules

6 students gained 1 module

Information and communication technology

4 students gained 1 module

Personal Skills

1 student gained 3 modules

2 students gained 2 modules

1 student gained 1 module

Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts (OCR) National Skills Profile

Numeracy

5 grade 1 certificates were awarded

41 grade 2 certificates were awarded

4 grade 3 certificates were awarded

Communication

4 grade 1 certificates were awarded
 36 grade 2 certificates were awarded
 5 grade 3 certificates were awarded
Information and Communication technology
 3 grade 3 certificates were awarded

Attainment at Post-16

Awarding Body	Programme Area	Number entered	Entry Level	Level 1	Level 2	Passes
Surrey and Region Open College Network	Design and Technology	34	17	17	0	34
	Sport and Recreation	29	21	8	0	29
	Farm	20	20	0	0	20
	Horticulture	21	21	0	0	21
	Key Skills	7	7	0	0	7
	Business Administration	36	21	12	3	36
	Information and Communication Technology	35	25	10	0	35
	Work preparation	12	12	0	0	12
	Food Preparation	60	60	0	0	60
	Textiles	47	38	9	0	47
	Totals	301	242	56	3	301
City and Guilds	Text Production	17	0	9	8	13
	Key Skills Number Power	25	6	19	0	25
	Key Skills Word Power	26	12	14	0	26
	Totals	68	18	42	8	64
National Vocational Qualification (NVQ)	Information Technology	8	0	7	1	8
	Basic Business Skills	7	7	0	0	7
	Business Administration	5	0	2	3	5
	Customer Services	5	0	5	0	5
	Totals	25	7	14	4	25
National Proficiency Test Council (NPTC)		Number entered	Level A	Level B		Passes
	Design and Technology	34	13	21		34
	Farm	123	2	121		123
	Horticulture	114	0	114		114
	Key Skills	147	70	77		147
	Employment Skills	6	0	6		6
	Information and Communication Technology	158	45	113		158
	Independent Living Skills	37	4	33		37
	Total	619	134	485		619
Award Development Accreditation (ASDAN) Scheme and Network						
	Youth Award	5	3	2		5
	Towards Independence	30				

Ethnic background of students

	No of students
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	6
Black – other	1
Indian	2
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	185
Any other minority ethnic group	3

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y2- Y11 & Post 16

Total number of qualified teachers* (FTE)	48.5
Number of students per qualified teacher	4.2
Average class size	7.9

* Includes unqualified and training teachers and instructors

Education support staff: Y2– Y11 & Post 16

Total number of education support staff	87
Total aggregate hours worked per week	2923

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	8797517
Total expenditure	8697775
Expenditure per student	42637
Balance brought forward from previous year	2231064
Balance carried forward to next year	2330806

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	205
Number of questionnaires returned	67

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	31	2	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	51	45	0	3	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	54	5	2	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	20	32	22	12	15
The teaching is good.	59	33	2	3	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	37	10	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	19	1	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	36	6	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	54	33	10	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	67	27	2	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	77	18	2	2	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	76	13	9	1	0

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

ENGLISH

66. Students' achievement in English is satisfactory over time. For all age groups, achievement is good in speaking and listening, and satisfactory in reading and writing. In lessons, students achieve well in all aspects of English because the quality of teaching is good, but the co-ordination of the subject has been a significant weakness, holding back progress over time.
67. The youngest students enter the school with very low levels of literacy and teachers work hard to help them improve. More able students speak clearly in simple sentences and briefly explain likes and dislikes. Students with language difficulties convey by sound and sometimes gesture what they are thinking. Standards in communication are improving well. Most students listen and respond well. For example, in a lesson where students were looking at a big book of nursery rhymes, students pointed to objects named by the teacher. Students with complex learning needs concentrated hard on a story about a rainbow fish and showed by facial expression and by sounds of excitement that they were listening carefully. In reading, more able students follow a commercial scheme. They learn to link sounds to letters, to read short sentences, and to use picture clues to aid understanding. Less able students read signs and understand that illustrations tell a story. In writing, these students are learning to hold a pencil and make marks with it, while the more able improve letter formation by copying or by overwriting and write their own names.
68. Students in the 11 to 14 age range communicate in greater detail than younger students. They say what they did at the weekend, express a view, for example, about football teams, and speak in a series of sentences. In a lesson for less able students, very good progress occurred through social discussion, for example, about the weather, the date and the daily timetable, sometimes with gesture and head movements. Students listen well and learn to follow instructions carefully, such as when the teacher explains what work must be done in the lesson. They read with greater confidence, though with little expression, and show basic understanding. For example, at the end of a reading lesson, students gave the names of characters in their reader and a brief account of the story. Students learn to be more independent writers, though there is little evidence of joined-up writing. More able students use word lists to assist with spelling and increase their vocabulary. They write in sentences, conveying ideas clearly and using full stops and capital letters. Students can spell correctly a small number of common words. Less able students do not express ideas in writing but use signs or symbols to record thoughts successfully.
69. The oldest students in school communicate well, either in developed sentences with limited vocabulary, or through facial expression, gesture and vocalising. Most can convey feelings and opinions. Students listen well and make good eye contact with the speaker. Less able students increase eye-hand co-ordination, which improves their control, for example, of communication aids and crayons and pencils. They also benefit from speech and language therapy programmes. The more able students read fluently, though without variation in pace, and enjoy sharing their own writing with others. For example, these students read aloud their creative writing with confidence and accuracy. Other students are much more hesitant but try hard. Students with complex learning difficulties interpret symbols added to reading books, such as 'me', 'sitting' and 'Mum', and study pictures, making sense of them. A few are beginning to read three letter words, though they do not always grasp initial letter sounds. Students make satisfactory progress against the targets in their Individual Multidisciplinary Plans (IMPs). More able students sustain writing for three or more paragraphs. Often, punctuation is a weakness but students learn to improve spelling and know that words with the same endings, such as -ace, and -ick, can be used to make different words. Students also increase vocabulary. For example, in a lesson where students were continuing a story from a given paragraph, they chose words such as 'mumbling', 'stunning' and 'preserved' to make their work interesting. Students write on a range of topics, such as weekend events, stories and school visits. For example, a student wrote enthusiastically on his trip to the Guildhall where he met the Prime Minister. They describe their Christmas holidays in draft form and then word-process the paragraphs in different fonts to fulfil the requirements of the National Skills Profile award. Students who find writing more difficult copy correctly from a worksheet, for example a World War II recipe for bread and butter pudding, or tell their ideas to a student support worker, who records them. Many less able students write their own names or write over what others have written. Letters are well formed but there is still very little joined-up writing.

70. In the further education college, students communicate with greater confidence and many can sustain an interesting conversation. They listen courteously to others and to their teachers in class. They improve their reading skills using CD-ROMs based on a published reading scheme and enjoy the instant feedback received. This helps them to make good progress in lessons. Written work is well linked to their needs when they leave college. They practise letter writing, composing messages and making reports. However, for many students, spelling and grammar remain weaknesses and vocabulary is limited. Computers are very effectively employed to aid presentation. Less able students do not sustain writing for long, though most can write their full name and a few sentences, with support.
71. Work in other subjects enables students to improve in speaking, listening, reading and writing. There are good opportunities in science, French and interactive music for students to speak and listen. In creative arts, the final session of each lesson allows students to discuss their own performance in clear sentences. Teachers give students the chance to improve communication by verbal and non-verbal means in most lessons and encourage good listening to others. During a mathematics lesson, very good use was made of signing during a song helping students to count to five. Students read information in the course of their work, such as on native American people and ration books from World War II, and they read recipes. This helps them improve literacy skills. During art lessons, less able students study pictures and sign their approval. Older students read aloud National Skills Profile worksheets in mathematics, using word building strategies to decipher 'dedication'. In religious education, students read a simple fact sheet to find pieces of information about Mother's Day. Students practise writing skills in some subjects but opportunities are too few. However, in history and science, more able students manage independent writing, while others copy. Less able students write over what others have recorded and manage a few words of their own.
72. Teaching and learning are good, overall. In half the lessons observed, they were very good and very occasionally excellent. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of language and strategies to help students improve communication skills. For example, in an excellent lesson for younger students with severe learning difficulties, the teacher used an interesting range of resources to tell the story of 'The Rainbow Fish'. Together with the student support assistants, she enthralled the students with her lively interpretation and the students excitedly touched the octopus, fish and string of sea shells, showing very good understanding. In all lessons, relationships are very good. Students want to learn. Most co-operate well and work hard. Teachers give appropriate emphasis to basic literacy skills, although not all use the National Literacy Strategy as well as they might. Additionally, insufficient emphasis is given to teaching joined-up writing. Teachers plan well to increase students' interest in language. For example, in a very good lesson for 14-16 year olds, the teacher gave students the opportunity to relish the sounds of words as they studied a Spike Milligan poem. They then wrote their own in similar vein. Students enjoyed substituting 'Ning, nang, nong' with 'Hing, hang, hong' and 'Sing, sang, song' and acquired a very good feeling for rhythm. Teachers manage students well, deal firmly but kindly with disruptive behaviour and sustain a good pace. As a result, little time is wasted and students acquire new skills effectively. Teachers frequently ask clear questions to assess students' understanding and to encourage better speaking. They provide a wide variety of activities within each session to cover all communication skills and to maintain student involvement. Teachers are dedicated to helping students improve and, with the very good assistance from student support workers, they enable students to make good, or sometimes very good, progress in lessons.
73. The curriculum successfully deals with speaking and listening, reading, and writing, but there are no up-to-date schemes of work, nor is English work co-ordinated across the age ranges. Teachers do not know enough about what is happening in English in the rest of the school because the management of the subject has been poor. Accreditation is successfully used; for example, more able 16 year olds take the National Skills Profile tests and students in the further education college follow the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) and Social Use of Language Programme (SULP) courses. There is no common assessment system so it is difficult to track a student's progress. However, teachers keep their own record of their class's progress to ensure students are learning the right things and that the needs of students, identified in the Individual Multidisciplinary Plans, are met. The appointment of a subject co-ordinator is very recent but early indications are that she is getting to grips quickly with the weaknesses already referred to. Students' progress is limited by a lack of resources and the incomplete application of the National Literacy Strategy. Resources are unsatisfactory because there are insufficient books, especially for older students. Teachers often bring in their own resources to supplement their teaching and this is helping students to achieve well in lessons. Teachers make best use of accommodation, displaying students' work, colourful

posters and key words to create a pleasant environment for learning. Students in older classes have the opportunity to visit the local public library to increase research skills, as the school is currently without a functioning library of its own.

74. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are better. For example, there are now no low expectations. Students continue to make satisfactory progress, though resources are still inadequate. Recording of achievement no longer lacks detail and precision but there is no common system because of weaknesses in subject co-ordination. Greater emphasis is given to speaking and progress in reading, which was unsatisfactory, is now satisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

75. Most students make good and sometimes very good progress in mathematics lessons and this is a good improvement from the previous inspection. However, overall, the progress of students over time is satisfactory. This is due to the fact that the curriculum does not follow what went before in a sufficiently structured manner. This is further affected by the recent changes to the curriculum content that are not sufficiently planned or monitored to ensure they are linked to what has gone before. This level of progress over time has been maintained at the same level as the previous inspection.
76. The quality of teaching and learning is mostly good and, at times, very good for students up to the age of 11 and very good for students up to the age of 14. Students up to 16 receive good teaching. Consequently, most students achieve well in relation to their specific targets for learning described in the Individual Multidisciplinary Plans. The school divides students into classes based on ability and therefore numeracy is largely taught to groups of similar ability. The school has worked effectively to raise standards since the previous inspection and the quality of teaching shows good improvement from the previous inspection. This is particularly the case where the methods of teaching are beginning to be influenced by the National Numeracy Strategy. In those lessons where teaching is very good the planning is very effective in describing what students are to learn and this helps in providing them with a rich range of work in numeracy. The school has not yet introduced the National Numeracy Strategy in full but many teachers are now implementing aspects of this strategy in their numeracy lessons. An effective emphasis is put upon improving students' skills in mental arithmetic.
77. Less able students up to the age of 11 make good progress in lessons, concentrating well as the teacher engages them effectively in number games, tells them number stories and sings number rhymes with them. Games, such as one involving 'mice' being eaten by a 'cat', interest and involve the students well. They begin to understand that the numbers go down when there are fewer mice, gleefully reacting to the fact that there are none left at the end. Lesson planning is imaginative and very effective in promoting communication. When students are presented with colourful bags containing a range of objects, which they have to search for, they show clear delight on their faces as they remove a colourful pair of gloves or a set of animals. They follow with interest as the teacher and student support workers assist them to count the fingers in the gloves or how many animals there are. More able students up to the age of 11 are reading and ordering numbers to 25 and looking for patterns in numbers up to 100. Students enjoy the work and maintain interest and concentration when they are taking part in a game of number bingo. Other students working on individual worksheets remain very involved in completing them. They have to give considerable thought to the challenging calculations that they have to undertake when writing "number sentences", describing addition and subtraction of 10's to and from numbers up to 100. Teachers have good subject knowledge providing students with relevant activities, for instance when very good use is made of a switch playing recorded sounds of the bottle breaking in "Ten green bottles". This interests the students very well.
78. Students up to the age of 14 who are less able make good progress in lessons by joining in the class efforts to move a parachute and control a ball supported on it. They follow the instructions to move the parachute up or down. Staff provide very effective support and ensure that students attend well, helping them to learn effectively. Students who have more complex learning needs are given activities well matched to their particular needs. Resources are chosen well to provide good visual and sound effects to capture their interest and help them to learn. This was shown when they selected toys from a 'feely bag' and explored them with help. Students respond by looking and making movements to explore the shapes to learn more about them. Staff are vigilant when noting responses and looking for new learning. More able

students in this age group often make very good progress in lessons and participate well in the mental mathematics starter to the lessons. Here they rapidly identify numbers up to ten from a fan containing the numbers. They move on to balancing various objects with counting blocks. Some of them accurately estimate how many blocks will be needed to balance the object. When working with two-dimensional shapes students recognise and name shapes, by touch, that are hidden in a bag. Teachers provide good activities that help the students to remain interested in what they are doing. During morning sessions when students are welcomed into the class, they make good progress in improving their numeracy skills. For example, students are asked to count those present. More able students are asked how many there would be if they counted themselves in the total. Many learn the order of days of the week through regular practice, with all becoming increasingly familiar with the symbols for the lessons in the day.

79. The oldest students in the school make satisfactory progress building upon what they have learnt in previous lessons. Progress in lessons is good as the most able students show that they have an understanding of the passage of time and compare the use of egg timers to the clock. They predict how many activities can take place for different types of egg timer. They establish how to add coins and give change. Students are attentive and they improve their skills in predicting passage of time, recognise odd and even numbers with confidence. They respond well to the high level of difficulty of the activities and the way that all the resources are organised efficiently for them to use. This helps them to concentrate well for the whole period. Lower ability students improve their understanding of cause and effect, for example, through touching a coloured ball on the touch screen of a computer, which knocks a coconut off a post. Further work on sorting shapes leads to some recognition of the differences between them. Relationships between students are very good, where students take an interest in each other's work. This enables them to consider each other's tasks. Staff provide effective praise and encouragement for students and this helps them to understand how well they are learning, raising their self-esteem. Students in the class for the oldest, less able, students make similar good progress. Teachers encourage students to complete suitably difficult activities through effective support and high expectations that students will succeed. The teacher and school support workers know the students' needs extremely well and tailor activities accordingly. There is a high level of encouragement and students receive clear instructions on how to proceed. This makes a very significant contribution to ensuring students behave well during lessons.
80. The subject co-ordinator is in a temporary role during the maternity leave of the post-holder, who is herself newly appointed to the post. Although the temporary co-ordinator has a good understanding of the position of the subject in the age range in which he works, systems are not effective enough to allow him to have knowledge of how the subject develops throughout the school. There are plans to improve the curriculum for mathematics and a start has been made but this is not sufficiently planned, co-ordinated or monitored. However, there is a shared commitment by staff to promote numeracy well. This is reflected in the very high quality of some of the resources that staff have prepared themselves for the subject. There are insufficient resources of high quality available beyond these. There is insufficient use of computers in lessons allowing students to explore aspects such as data handling. Teachers work hard to ensure that all students are included in the range of class activities. A strength of the provision for numeracy is the way that teachers provide good opportunities to promote numeracy within other lessons and at the start of the day. Here they use number songs particularly well to teach counting, adding and subtracting and emphasise sequence through repeating days of the week and studying the timetables.

SCIENCE

81. Standards of achievement in science are satisfactory overall. The progress achieved in individual lessons is good but progress over time has weaknesses. The difference is because the systems used to plan which topics will be taught year on year, and term after term, have not been effective, although a new system is being trialled. The tracking of how much science each student has understood is not effective.
82. By the time they are 11, students have explored materials and begin to learn about body parts. The more able record 'yes' and 'no' responses on worksheets, with help. Less able students learn by direct experience and use senses to help them gain knowledge and understanding of the world in which they live. Students make collections and start to learn the names of parts of plants. By the age of 14, students have increased the range of scientific terms that they understand. For example, they can label diagrams of the human body to show which features

have a genetic basis; blond hair, eye colour and so on. Understanding is at different levels: for example, in a class of mostly 13 and 14 year old students, one boy confidently explained that his torch needed batteries. His partner learnt the effect of the switch on turning off the light and started to investigate what happened when the batteries were removed. More able students, aged 14 to 16, learn about the functions of parts of the body, including the heart, lungs and the digestive system. A good range of scientific terms is used, mostly accurately. Less able students improve their understanding of how materials change. For example, they watch carefully as jelly is placed in hot water to see it dissolve. One student accurately described the change as "melting". Most students focused on other less abstract matters, such as worries about the risks of something hot. One Year 10 student is doing well studying towards a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in science at a local secondary school.

83. Teaching and learning of science are good throughout the school and there is no unsatisfactory teaching of science. The especially effective features of teaching include the way teachers ensure support staff know what strategies to use to make sure each student participate well. For example, teachers and support staff deal with difficult behaviour calmly yet firmly. As a result the pace of work is productive and students make good efforts to grasp the ideas and to communicate clearly and sensibly. Staff expect high standards and teachers plan ways to make sure the content of the lesson gives good opportunities for learning. The extent of the gains in knowledge, skills and understanding, is overall, good in almost all lessons. Students enjoy most lessons largely because staff make sure that relationships are very good. Much is done to enhance students' independence and confidence, alongside the science.
84. The science co-ordinator is very new in post. Sensible steps have been taken to set up a programme of topics and for staff to use a common framework to describe the content for their units of work. As yet the co-ordinator lacks an overview of the standards attained by students as a result of this planning. However, at present the school is not making sure that the good outcomes from individual lessons are building up to a substantial overall progress over time. There is too little formal monitoring of progress, or of teaching and learning. Broad targets are not set about the progress which should be made in science over time. Too little time is set aside for the processes of review and improvement. The resources for science are satisfactory. The link with a local secondary school is a good feature because it provides access to specialised resources and external accreditation where appropriate. Standards and provision now are broadly in line with those reported by the previous inspection. However, despite improvements in teaching overall, progress is now less good between the ages of 11 and 14. This is due to the lack of co-ordination about what is taught to students in different age ranges in the school. Students' attitudes to their work are improved. The role and impact of the co-ordinator remains a weakness.

ART AND DESIGN

85. Standards of achievement in lessons are good overall and students make good and sometimes very good progress in lessons. However, work seen indicates that students' progress over time is unsatisfactory, because what is taught does not ensure students develop systematically the key skills and the knowledge and understanding of art and design. A small, select group of more able students has been able to gain good General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) grades by the time they are 16. This group benefited from the tutorial support of a well-qualified art teacher, who is currently the acting co-ordinator for art and design. Between the ages of 6 and 11, where lessons are planned around the work of famous artists such as Monet or L. S. Lowry, the achievements of students are very good. Further education students benefit from the guidance of a professional potter and they work to an appropriately high standard in their coiled pottery forms. They also research the work of art movements, such as surrealism, and make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of art.

86. By age 11, students have experienced a good range of two and three-dimensional media. They learn about the work of important artists and experiment in their styles. They recall the name of the artist Lowry and know that he painted from his study of working people in factories. They identify his painting entitled 'Going to Work' and are able to pick out some key shapes in the background, such as circles, squares and rectangles. More able students draw fine detail in copying the background buildings, whilst the less able students are delighted by their free drawings from the picture, when they are enlarged on the overhead projector. Students in Year 4 respond enthusiastically to Monet's 'Water Lilies' and, through the excellent use of a multi-sensory approach, they experience the delicate blending of colour in the 'wet on wet' technique they use. By age 14, the more able students show a good grasp of perspective in building city skylines from cut shapes. They recall shapes used in the previous lesson: square, rectangle and triangle. Less able students are starting to understand the importance of placing shapes behind shapes, although their skylines lack a sense of perspective. By age 16, there is evidence of effective learning in etched clay slabs. Students have experienced a range of natural and man-made textures, with which they decorate their slab tiles. More able students draw well-planned logos and lettering on squared paperboards. Most need support in cutting the paper shapes from the board but they apply interesting natural and man-made scrap materials to give texture and colour to their planned designs. Students older than 16, working towards the Surrey and Region Open College Network (SROCN) accreditation, are patient and hard-working in seeking a good finish to their clay forms. They enjoy embellishing them with incised and applied clay designs. They use good drawing skills to design their pots from forms used in ancient cultures and the more able students show very good control in building and decorating their symmetrical form.
87. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and very good on occasion for students aged 14 and over, including those in further education. It is never less than satisfactory. It is very good and on occasion excellent for students aged 6 to 11. In the best lessons teachers plan and prepare their work very well, ensuring that appropriate resources, such as overhead projectors, are ready for use. Lessons are made interesting and exciting by skilled and enthusiastic teaching that interests the students and ensures they put a lot of creative effort into their work. The use of signing to support communication, where appropriate, is good and all students enjoy evaluating their work at the end of the lesson. Student support workers are valued and effective in all lessons because they understand the needs of the students very well. They all sign well and are able to support less able students in learning basic art and design skills by hand on hand methods. There is very sensitive teaching that enables seizure activity to be handled without fuss and with a minimal interruption to learning. Students are encouraged to be independent, which they demonstrate well in the further education college.
88. The recently appointed subject co-ordinator is providing good leadership, which is reflected best in the current efforts to re-shape the curriculum in line with the new National Curriculum orders. However, the curriculum has not been planned effectively. At present it is a patchwork of experiences, rather than a fluent programme of learning that would ensure the steady progress of students in acquiring the skills and knowledge of art and design. There is, as yet, no use of an established baseline of attainment from which to track the progress of students. Teachers do not yet make sufficient use of computer aided art programs and the general level of resources is unsatisfactory in all areas of the subject, at all key stages. The accommodation for art is unsatisfactory. Pottery has to be carried some distance from the new further education building for firing in a kiln that is in an unventilated room. The room used for art is shared by classes for the performing arts and has very limited storage facilities. In the school, the specialist art room has been rendered unusable by recent bad weather.
89. The response of the department to the last inspection report is satisfactory. The quality of teaching is now good and, as a result, the progress that students make has improved. The accommodation remains unsatisfactory and resources have deteriorated to an unsatisfactory level. The range of media is too limited.

CREATIVE ARTS

90. Students' achievement and progress in creative arts in the school are very good. Younger students learn to follow instructions carefully, to echo a simple rhythm produced on a drum and to join in a country and western dance by folding arms and changing partners. Older students collaborate well in pairs, show concern for the well being of others, for example, when opening the bar doors to Black Jack's Saloon, and appreciate when it is time to be physically active and when to be calm, as in the darkened room. All students show care when exploring the

equipment. At the end of lessons, most can express clearly what they enjoyed best and give a sensitive view on how others progressed. For example, a 13 year old student, who speaks fluently, commented on how well a less able student performed that day. Students progress very well in body control, for example, in the hoedown, and in using language to talk about what they have achieved.

91. Teaching and learning in creative arts are excellent. The teacher and the teaching assistant work very well as a team to give students an invaluable experience of dance, drama, and music. There is a good emphasis on sensory experience, especially for those with complex learning difficulties. The teacher has an excellent knowledge and understanding not only of her subject but also of how students of differing abilities learn. Her excellent lesson planning and the creation of very positive relationships lead to a very good response from students, who thoroughly enjoy the weekly sessions, as seen in the way they enthusiastically join in. The teacher is careful to vary tasks, for example, when students move from the noisy, physical activity in Black Jack's Saloon to the peaceful atmosphere of the Indian encampment. This helps students to learn rapidly and to remain involved throughout the hour lesson. The carefully structured review of individual performance at the end of each lesson helps students to improve speaking and listening skills and gives the teacher an excellent opportunity to assess progress and to emphasise learning points.
92. The curriculum is very well planned for students of all abilities. The teacher gives considerable time to creating a new environment each term and to linking with other subjects, such as history and religious education. Topics such as the Tudors, World War II, the jungle, and pirates and the sea are well resourced; the computer, with an optical beam, is effectively used in all lessons to produce lighting effects and music. The teacher enables students to improve their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education through the opportunities she creates for them to work with one another, and to reflect on their experience and on how people in other lands live. The student support worker makes an excellent contribution with his piano playing, his working with students and his control of the computer. The subject reinforces the school's ethos excellently and raises students' self-esteem.
93. In the further education college, students achieve well and make good progress in the creative arts (drama). They learn the importance of warming up exercises and the need to concentrate hard. In a discussion on script planning, they listened well to one another and respected the views of others. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers relate well to students and encourage independent thinking, hence students feel free to express ideas and they learn well. They work hard to keep students going during the long afternoon session. In a lesson seen about half the group performed well while others watched appreciatively. Teachers' subject knowledge enabled them to give good advice, which led to improved performance. The drama area is spacious but lacking in essential equipment such as lighting, sound effects and acting blocks, and this restricts progress in the ASDAN performing arts course.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. Students' standards of achievement in school are unsatisfactory overall. This is because there is too little progress made in designing and making items, or in working with a variety of materials and using textiles. There is satisfactory progress overall in food studies, in both the areas of making and designing. This unsatisfactory balance of what is taught leads to unsatisfactory standards of achievement overall for students aged 6 to 14. Students aged 14-16 achieve well and make good progress because a wider range of materials and further aspects of design and technology are covered well. The achievement and progress of students aged over 16 is very good in vocational studies, including metalwork, woodwork, food preparation and textiles.
95. By age 11, students have mixed ingredients to make cakes, eggy bread and other straightforward dishes. Some students need considerable help with physical tasks, others cope with the skills satisfactorily and are well aware of the processes. The most able understand from the start that the purpose of the techniques is to change ingredients into palatable dishes. Students' knowledge, skills and understanding of food studies continue to improve to a satisfactory extent between the ages of 11 and 14. However, these students lack knowledge and skills about working with other materials. By age 16, students have made considerable gains. The most able use sketches to design before they make, such as detailing how they will decorate a cake. More able students have a sound awareness of the decisions required to make sure a dish is of a good standard, such as whether to add sugar if you use

condensed milk in place of skimmed, in a recipe. Most students use equipment competently and with reasonable independence considering their special educational needs. For example, 16-year-old students joined wood to make a box. Almost all sawed the wood to the correct shape, located the parts accurately and used the glue gun to make a secure joint. Students in the further education college develop a good range of skills, which they use well to complete projects to a high standard. Less able students are helped to achieve these outcomes and their finished projects are simpler but to the same high standard. All students are proud of their completed work. For example, a more able student has made a standard lamp, individually designed and lathe-turned. This is a very good step on from early skills learnt when the student turned a pair of bowls. The skills are accredited. Less able students complete the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN), Towards Independence accreditation. Others make good progress towards completing the Surrey and Region Open College Network (SROCN) entry level and some gain level 1 in textiles and design and technology. A further qualification in design and technology at levels A and B is gained through the National Proficiency Test Council (NPTC)

96. Standards and provision now are similar to those reported after the previous inspection. There is still a lack of a cohesive approach to the work for students aged 6 to 16. The work remains narrow because it is mainly food studies to age 14. Previously it was centred on wood.
97. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and are now good, overall. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and some teaching and learning are excellent. Teaching and learning are consistently very good from age 14 onwards. They are good for students aged 6 to 11 and satisfactory for those aged 11 to 14. The strengths in teaching up to age 16 lie in the overall planning to ensure that students learn other basic skills as well as food studies. For example, strategies to improve confidence, strengthen relationships and to practise oral skills and number work are included. Teachers expect a lot from students and because of this students make substantial efforts, both physical and intellectual. All teaching is a very good team effort with support staff fully involved. In most lessons each student benefits from significant one to one attention skilfully planned to ensure he or she works at a productive pace. They concentrate as much as possible and work as independently as the teacher has assessed to be appropriate. An additional strength, which increases the skills and knowledge of students aged over 16, is the very good expertise of the teachers and student support workers. Assessment procedures are very good for students in the further education college. The process is fully computerised and skills are recorded when achieved. Students are full partners in the process so that they understand the strengths and weaknesses in their learning.
98. There are considerable weaknesses in the management of the subject, curriculum provision and the use of resources in the school. The co-ordinator lacks the time to lead the subject effectively and is out of touch with the overall provision across the school. A structure is now in place to ensure that students undertake new work year on year, which aims to lead to improved standards. This includes a plan showing what will be taught each year and a common format for planning units of work. However, these structures are recent. The weakness is that there is a significant lack of oversight of both teaching and learning, and of provision. The co-ordinator is aware that what is currently taught lacks important elements of the statutory curriculum but has not yet made clear how this will be resolved. The missing elements are designing and making artefacts, working with a variety of materials, using textiles and use of information and communication technology. These gaps lead to overall unsatisfactory progress in school even though learning in lessons is good, overall. There are good resources for all elements of design and technology. The school has expert staff, specialist rooms for food studies and for work with resistant materials and sufficient good quality equipment. However, the specialist room and equipment for resistant materials is barely used. This is a contributory factor to the narrowness of what is taught. Provision for students in the further education college is very well managed. Some of the accommodation remains in old buildings but is used well. Resources are good.

GEOGRAPHY

99. Only one lesson of geography was observed during the inspection. Judgements about the students' progress and achievements are therefore based upon discussions with teachers and the co-ordinator for humanities, a detailed scrutiny of work, students' records and displays around the school and the study of photographic records of visits and activities that have taken place. The satisfactory progress and achievement identified in geography during the last inspection has been maintained.

100. The youngest students make a positive start to their understanding of the world as they appreciate different types of weather. They also make visits to the immediate locality to look at the school farm and its animals and to the local towns. Older primary age students continue to make satisfactory progress in their start to compare cultures and climate in Africa with those that of this country. Different aspects of the cultures are examined, often through the diets of the countries, as they improve in their understanding of a world that is "far away" from the school. Secondary age students' awareness of other countries and regions is further extended through more detailed work on rain forests, desert and arctic regions. They have explored eco-systems within these different environments and linked them with environmental considerations in this country. They have also learnt about the Indian sub-continent.
101. There are indications that the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and at times, as in the lesson observed during the inspection, it is good. A notable feature of this lesson was the effective use of behaviour management plans by the staff that ensured students were able to work with little distraction when researching the bald eagle, moose and grey wolf.
102. The subject co-ordinator has only been in post for a matter of weeks. There is a policy that reflects the aims of the school but which does not reflect the latest aspects of the National Curriculum's guidelines for the subject or the new curriculum model that the school is to implement. Long and medium-term plans are linked together within the existing planning and this helps to promote learning. Resources are insufficient in quantity and quality. There are adequate numbers of books and maps but insufficient videos, software for computers, artefacts or equipment.

HISTORY

103. During this inspection, no teaching of students aged up to 11 years was observed. Due to the curriculum arrangements there has been no teaching of history so far during this current academic year. Evidence available for analysis was extremely limited, therefore it is not possible to judge progress and achievement for these year groups. Evidence from lessons seen for students aged 11 to 16 years, planning, photographs and annual review reports indicate that satisfactory achievements and progress are made by most students. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection.
104. Students aged 11 to 14 years are currently studying the lives of the native American people. More able students are growing increasingly aware of how the lives of these people have changed and have used their skills to research the origins of the Buffalo Dance using computer technology. Less able students enjoy the creative aspects of this topic. During the making of moccasins, for example, because of skilled questioning by staff, most could recall the names of different clothing worn at that time. This topic however, does not relate to the National Curriculum for history. By the age of 16, students have studied the Second World War. More able students examine ration books and recall some key facts about this period. They consider why some foods were difficult to buy. One student speculated that it was perhaps because 'ships couldn't get through'. Less able students enjoy making bread and butter pudding from a war time recipe and begin to appreciate how the sugar shortage affected the lives of people during this time.
105. Teaching and learning overall are good, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers use a wide range of activities and resources, such as World War II artefacts, which they have borrowed, to involve students of all abilities in appropriate practical sensory experiences. These effectively support learning and develop students' enthusiasm and confidence. Links with other subjects, in particular with the creative arts, widen the scope of the subject and benefit learning. Students greatly enjoy acting out events from the past, for example the 'tea dance', and this enables them to consolidate their understanding. The contribution made by student support workers is significant and teachers ensure that they are not only fully briefed but actively support learning. For example, they help students produce pencil rubbings of wartime coins or helping read contemporary newspaper reports.
106. The very recently appointed co-ordinator has accurately identified the lack of a relevant subject policy and weaknesses in what is being taught. A good start has been made through producing a clear action plan. This identifies the need to ensure the revised National Curriculum and the needs of the students are taken into account. There is some repetition of work at present for

secondary aged students and inadequate recording of progress for those of primary age. Resources remain, as at the last inspection, unsatisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

107. Students make good progress overall within lessons, with very good progress for students on ICT courses in the further education college. However, the progress of students aged 6 to 14 is unsatisfactory due to weaknesses in the curriculum. Progress over time improves to satisfactory for students aged 14 to 16 and is very good for those in the further education college.
108. Between the ages of 6 and 11, students learn about the keyboard and increase their accuracy of controlling the mouse. Less able students understand that they can change the image on the screen by moving the mouse or by clicking a switch. By the age of 11, some students enter simple text to make a list and can print their work. Many do so without prompting. Some less able students increase their understanding of the effect of the mouse on changing what they see on the screen and can drag icons around the screen. By the age of 14, many students can use word processing and import clipart to make cards for important occasions, such as Christmas and Mothers' Day. They use text to annotate pictures in the portfolio of achievements and to record their diary. Less able students use a Big Mack switch to make changes on the computer screen. By the age of 16, an increased number of students make satisfactory progress and achieve success in the Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts (OCR) National Skills Profile (NSP) and Accreditation for Living and Learning (ALL) awards. Some print information from the Internet, for example a weather map. They use CD-ROM resources, such as finding out about World War II for history and researching about animals in geography. Simple word processing programs are used to record poetry and copy recipes, involving changing the font and letter size. Attractive party invitations are produced. Less able students can move images on a touch screen and use simple switches to make changes. In the further education college, less able students make a range of items using text and clipart; these include posters about how to take care of floppy discs and cards for family celebrations. They scan pictures and use a digital camera and then use these images into their work. More able students on National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) courses contribute to a business enterprise with a school in Germany. They use their ICT skills to communicate with their partner school and market articles made at St Piers. They keep simple spreadsheets and databases. They also undertake tasks for other parts of the school, including scanning for making learning resources for members of staff. This work fulfils parts of their course requirements.
109. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. It is satisfactory for ages 6 to 11, good from age 11 to 16 and very good for students in the further education college. The best teaching uses resources that are of interest to students. For example, a piece of text used to practise word processing for the oldest students in the school involved recent news about two film stars; also a student in the further education college was encouraged to bring in his list of videos as a resource to learn about making a database. This approach encourages students' concentration and enthusiasm. Teachers have very good relationships with their students and help their learning by closely monitoring their work and skilfully asking questions. These relationships encourage students' confidence so that they try to work independently and attempt things for themselves. Lessons are consistently well planned and most show the different expectations for individual students. Assessment of what students have done and their learning is recorded on these lesson plans. However, except for students aged 14 to 16 and those in the further education college, where assessment is part of the accredited courses, this evaluation is not always used as a basis for further work. As a consequence, students do not learn as much as they could do. Not all staff are confident in the use and teaching of ICT.
110. The last inspection identified the need to develop ICT throughout the school. However, there has been only limited development since. The school's subject co-ordinator has only been in post for a short time. He has made a valuable start improving students' learning with the production of an initial analysis of the subject's strengths and weaknesses and an outline plan for addressing these. The school's curriculum policy is out of date. It does not describe how ICT is to be approached throughout the school and does not reflect changes to the National Curriculum. There is not yet a curriculum that enables school students to build on their progress from one year to the next. Not all students are timetabled to receive specific ICT lessons nor is there a planned approach to use ICT in other subjects, for example, in science and design and technology. The recent adoption of the 'Equals' curriculum at Key Stages 1

and 2 (ages 5 –11 years) has yet to be implemented throughout the school meets the needs of some students but is not sufficiently difficult for the most able students. Students aged 14 to 16 work towards accreditation using Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts (OCR) National Skills Profile (NSP) and Accreditation for Living and Learning (ALL). The progress of these students is assessed and recorded using the schemes' required procedures. There is unsatisfactory assessment in ICT when used elsewhere in the school.

111. Management of courses in the further education college is very good. The students follow a range of accredited courses, which allows them to progress to more advanced courses, covering basic word processing and use of clipart through to National Vocational Qualification at level three. Given the low level of subject knowledge as students move into the further education college from the school, this range of courses is appropriately difficult. Assessment and records of progress against the accreditation criteria are kept very well and allow the students to be responsible for managing their learning.
112. Resources in the school's ICT room are unsatisfactory. It contains computers that are relatively old and all, except two, are unable to take the most recent software; only one computer has a CD-ROM drive. These resources present a significant restriction on the teaching and learning for class groups. All classrooms in the school have computers of satisfactory quality; however, these are not used sufficiently to develop students' learning of ICT, nor in applying this learning to other subjects. There is a narrow range of educational software, although this is supplemented by resources belonging to members of staff. The hardware and software resources in the specialist room within the newly built further education college are of a very high standard. They are well matched to the demands of the courses being followed.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

French

113. Achievement and progress in French are unsatisfactory for students aged 11 to 14 and for older students with complex learning needs, because the provision is inadequate. These students receive the equivalent of only 15 minutes a week, taught in a one week block each year. Last year there was no such provision and consequently, statutory requirements to teach a modern foreign language to all secondary aged students were not met. The way the curriculum is organised causes students not to make the progress they should. In previous years, however, students aged 8 to 11 also benefited from this provision. For the more able students, aged 14 to 16, achievement and progress are good. These students count from 1 to 20, sometimes to 30, use social vocabulary such as 'bonjour', 'merci' and 'au revoir', read basic French words and copy sentences correctly. They increase their vocabulary, for example, of food items, and learn how words of similar spelling are related, such as 'achat' and 'acheter'. The highest ability students can change words in familiar sentences, substituting their own and showing sound understanding of the language.
114. Teaching and learning in the three higher ability classes in the 14 to 16 age range are always good. The teacher has good knowledge and understanding, which enables her to structure the hour-long sessions well with a variety of activities covering all the required elements of the National Curriculum. For example, lessons begin with speaking and listening practice, followed by reading and writing tasks. This helps students to learn well because their interest is sustained. Students' enjoyment of the language is seen outside French lessons. For example, in a mathematics lesson a student was heard counting to herself in French, and in a history lesson a student was proud to share the words she knew with an inspector. The teacher provides work that matches students' different abilities. For example, students in the highest ability class are encouraged to remember vocabulary through word games. Paired work is used effectively, as in shop dialogue, to allow students to improve reading and listening skills.
115. The draft policy for French refers to a good variety of topics linked to the National Curriculum. For example, students follow units of work on family, pets, shopping, home, and weather. Student files show regular assessment of learning and good progress throughout the year. The inadequate provision arises from there being only one French teacher at present. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Theoretically, provision has improved in that all students aged 8 to 16 should receive at least a taste of languages teaching. However, practically, last year, some students did not. Good progress has been maintained for students who are taught French regularly and resources, including books, are better.

MUSIC

116. Students' progress and achievements in music are good, overall, in the school and in the further education college. This is an improvement since the last inspection and is partly because teaching is now very good. Also, the stimulating, interactive way the subject is taught is very effective. Students' musical skills are developed as well as other areas of learning. For example, through musical games, students increase their knowledge and understanding of language and develop confidence to improve their communication. Teaching of music in this way is positive and very effectively bridges the gap between therapy and National Curriculum music for students with complex learning needs. However, a small number of more able students do not make the progress they should because they do not study music at an appropriately difficult level.
117. By age 11, most students respond joyfully to music. They recognise the significance of a variety of hello and good-bye songs. More able students can play and repeat simple rhythms using a tambourine and can identify instruments by their sound. They can play loudly or softly and can stop and go on request. Creative arts contribute effectively to progress that is made and less able students enjoy listening to a variety of music in this stimulating environment. By age 14 students play a variety of tuned and untuned instruments and can identify patterns, repeating them and composing their own rhythms, playing them in accompaniment to the guitar. Less able students respond to music and because of effective support enjoy using a variety of methods to make sounds. By age 16, and in the further education college, more able students have continued to develop their responses to music and to appreciate different types. For example, in one class, after listening to classical music and current chart hits, students painted pictures to interpret their feelings. Music plays an important part in the life of the school and assemblies are used well to encourage students to join in with familiar songs that have been composed by members of staff. During one assembly, for example, one older student stood in front of the school confidently signing the words of a popular song.
118. The teaching and learning of music are very good. Student support workers are thoughtfully and thoroughly involved in lessons to ensure that students are able to benefit fully. The relationships between students and staff are very good and this encourages students to want to do their best. A wide range of very effective, stimulating, interactive musical activities, which use a variety of instruments and hand made resources, captures the interest of students. Lessons are well planned. Individual targets, set for each session, are used to plan relevant activities and as a means to assess students' progress. The familiarity of the structured sessions gives students confidence to learn and to enjoy what they do. However, more able students, as they move up through the school and develop confidence and skills, are not given sufficient opportunities to compose, respond or play a range of instruments to a sufficiently high level. In this respect, what is taught is unsatisfactory for more able students aged 14 to 16.
119. The management of the subject is very good, overall. The methods used have been very well researched and developed effectively within the school. An area that has been identified for development is the need for subject expertise to enable the more able older students in school to be taught at a suitably difficult level.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

120. Standards of achievement and progress in physical education are very good in school and in the further education college. Students do particularly well and make the best progress in swimming lessons. This is directly attributable to the high quality of teaching and the keenness of the students. In all physical activities progress is at least good and usually very good. There is good improvement since the last inspection in this subject.
121. By age 11, the most able students are able to dress independently. They show confidence in the water by pushing off from the side, jumping up and down and swimming, with floatation aids, across the width of pool. Some students achieve the Amateur Swimming Association Water Skills Grade 1 certificate and begin working towards Grade 2. Many students reach national expectations by swimming 25 metres. By age 14, students continue to practise their swimming skills. They learn athletic techniques and increase the height and length they are able to jump by good coaching and encouragement. They simulate throwing the javelin and

discus using a sponge javelin and frisbee in the sports hall, beginning to evaluate their achievements by measuring and recording the distances and comparing their results after each attempt. By the time they are 16, students are able to use fitness equipment, though they need help to operate the programming unit for the treadmill, rowing machine and cycle. Less able students are given a high level of expert support so that they can use the equipment at their appropriate ability level. Students demonstrate real enjoyment of using their unihoc skills during a festival with other schools. Students continue to improve in Water Skills reaching Grade 3.

122. By the time they leave school, students are generally very confident in the water. They know they need to warm-up and are familiar with such routines. They enjoy the trampoline very much. All students take part at a level appropriate for their skill and help by watching other students to see they are using the trampoline safely. They get on and off the trampoline in a safe and correct manner and the more able can perform tuck jumps, star jumps and seat drops. Less able students enjoy lying on the trampoline and experiencing the sensation of bouncing. Other students show good control of cycles and a marked improvement in confidence and ability.
123. The quality of teaching and learning in physical education is very good, overall. In the best sessions, the planning is very good. What students will learn is very clearly identified and opportunities are devised for all the students to be tested physically and to improve their independence. Staff deal with any difficult behaviour well. Lessons are organized carefully and include interesting and varied activities to keep the students involved and ensure that no time is wasted. Students enjoy physical education and want to improve and do more. Relationships with staff and between students are very good, and sometimes excellent, resulting in high levels of co-operation. Teachers give clear instructions and good demonstrations, which students try hard to copy, and this results in an improvement in their performance. All involved in teaching physical education activities have good coaching skills. Very good teamwork between student support workers and teachers ensures that all students participate fully. Lessons are presented enthusiastically and all staff have high expectations of the students. A combination of expertise and the support given to students by teachers and student support workers enables them to make particularly good progress in swimming. Students are given encouragement and assurance through an exciting and confidence-building range of floats and buoyancy aids so that, by age 11, many students have reached the national expectation of swimming 25 metres. There is good assessment and recording of students' skills and, as a result, teachers are well aware of what their students know, understand and can do. There is a praiseworthy attention to detail. All lessons are conducted with an inconspicuous but very high regard for safety. Students are taught to play by the rules, respect the decision of the referee and to be a good sport. This was seen to advantage during an inter-schools unihoc meeting. In this way physical education makes a significant contribution to the social and moral development of students.
124. The curriculum for physical education has been very carefully planned. It includes all required elements and other exciting additions, for example, fitness training, a 'ropes' course for confidence-building, horse riding, canoeing and other leisure options. It is broad and balanced and greatly enriched by activities outside the school day. Achievement is carefully assessed and recorded but does not yet allow for progress to be readily monitored over time, either individually or by groups. Swimming and trampolining are given a high priority and the school is very successful in developing students' confidence in the water and their ability to swim. In addition, students gain certificates and awards, including the nationally accredited water skills and personal survival schemes in swimming and British Trampolining Awards. For less able students the curriculum co-ordinator has developed a range of preliminary awards, which give evidence of the students' increasing achievements and mark their progress in a tangible way. Accommodation and resources remain as reported at the last inspection. These are good, overall, although there continue to be some weaknesses, in particular the lack of adequate drainage that would allow the playing fields and other outside facilities to be used after continuous heavy rain. The local community is very well used to improve the facilities of the subject and the experiences of the students, for example, the local fitness centre in the village and local leisure pools, where students can gain further water confidence from experiencing wave machines and water chutes, though considerable travelling time is involved. The teacher who leads the subject is head of physical education and activities manager for the school and residential provision. This is managed and co-ordinated very well. He is highly effective and keen to raise the profile of the subject and to celebrate the success of students.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

125. There are now appropriate plans for all students to be taught this subject, which is closely linked to personal and social education. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, due to the organisation of when the subject is taught, there were no religious education lessons during the inspection for students up to the age of 11 years. Records are limited for these students and it is not possible to report on progress or achievement. For other students aged from 11 to 16 their achievement and progress is satisfactory, as it was at the last inspection.
126. By age 14, students have made satisfactory progress and have growing awareness of other faiths, their festivals and associated symbols. Through participating in assemblies, celebrations and the re-enactments of key festivals such as Harvest and Divali, and examining the creation myths, more able students are increasingly aware of the important religious events from different world cultures. Less able students also enjoy these sensory experiences, for example, through examining articles from the Jewish religion belonging to the teacher, more able students were able to recall key facts, such as the name of the Torah and why it is different to the Christian Bible. Less able students recognise in simple terms that Hebrew writing is different to our own. By age 16, students have continued to make satisfactory progress. Currently, they are becoming aware of the significance of food in key ceremonies and religious stories, for example, thinking about the miracle of the loaves and fishes after listening to a well told story of the event. Work in this lesson had been well adapted to suit the needs of each of the students. Consequently, the more able students could recall the symbolism of the bread and wine in Christian Holy Communion and enjoyed reading their work out to visitors.
127. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers use role-play and stories appropriately to reinforce and encourage learning. For example, in one lesson the use of actual items of food and an ocean drum to represent the sound of Jesus sailing over water captivated students, who listened carefully. They enjoyed the subsequent activity that used a symbolised version of story to reinforce learning. Teachers try hard to provide a range of experiences using as many of the senses as possible to help students learn. This frequently entails their using personal items to aid learning because the range of resources in school is unsatisfactory.
128. The very recently appointed co-ordinator has appropriately identified areas for further development within the subject. Especially relevant is her appraisal of the current policy and timetable arrangements, which do not clarify the overlap between personal and social education and religious education. In consequence, it is difficult to ensure all students are being taught sufficient religious education. The inadequate procedures for recording the progress of students aged 6 to 11 have recently been replaced but difficulties remain in ensuring that students' learning is developed throughout the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

129. Students in school and in the further education college make good progress against the targets set for their personal and social development. Their progress is sometimes very good between the ages of 11 and 16. Students' progress is assisted through the work that they do in the houses and hostels but there are insufficient links between what is achieved in the houses and hostels and in school and further education college. Opportunities are missed to enable the knowledge and understanding of students, gained in one area, to be shared fully with others. However, Individual Multidisciplinary Plans, which set individual learning targets in personal and social development are used effectively and are the key to the good improvements that students make.
130. The personal and social education is taught in lessons that follow a well-planned programme and through the work of house and hostel support workers using targets from the multidisciplinary plan in the house and hostel accommodation. It is also taught through the many opportunities that are planned as parts of the self-help skills programme, which is central to the students' progress towards independence and self management of their epilepsy. By age 11, less able students can express their choice of activities by gesturing and vocalising. Some use signs to indicate their needs. More able students learn to dress independently and behave appropriately when drinking or eating together. For example, they join in conversations at the table and are generally sociable and friendly with each other. In lessons students learn about appropriate touch and social behaviour with family, friends and strangers. With the very committed and caring support of teachers, student support and care support workers, they make good progress in managing and living with epilepsy. They participate in social and

educational visits and learn to shop for themselves and others. Students begin to look at future education and work opportunities, using role play to practise interview skills, and to learn appropriate and honest responses to questions that may be asked of them. By the age of 16, students know and follow the rules of activities. For example, during 'circle time' they take turns and only contribute if they are in possession of the beanbag or are spoken to directly. Those with communication difficulties work hard to develop listening, eye-pointing and gesturing skills. Further education students have developed their independence to the point of most insisting that they do things for themselves. They learn about health and hygiene and looking after themselves sensibly. Through a wide range of opportunities their social skills are developed to enable them to behave in an increasingly mature and responsible way. Where appropriate, students are helped to use public transport independently. Many gain a good insight into the working environment. They develop an awareness of health and safety requirements and responsibilities within the work place. Students prepare applications for jobs or training and seek information, for example, from the Internet.

131. The quality of teaching is good and occasionally very good for students aged 11 to 16. The planning for self-help skills is particularly good and the support from student support workers is sensitive and caring. In some break-time drinks sessions they take full responsibility for the students and follow the Individual Multidisciplinary Plans carefully to ensure good progress against individual targets. Staff expect further education students to act in a mature way and they respond well to being treated responsibly. They are confident in social settings and are polite and friendly to staff and visitors. Signing, pictograms and photographs are used well to ensure that the less able students can understand and meet the personal and social targets set for them. Staff set clear guidelines on behaviour in their lessons and use good strategies to deal with any inappropriate behaviour swiftly so that it does not disturb others in the class.
132. The curriculum is well planned and the extensive work in personal and social education is well monitored to ensure that students make good progress towards independent living skills. The subject makes very good provision for the moral and social development of students and reflects the school's aims and values very well. It benefits from very good leadership and management and committed and hard-working teachers and support workers, both in school and in the residential settings. This indicates that the subject has a very good-shared capacity to improve its provision, notably for students who face considerable barriers to their learning. Individual Multidisciplinary Plans, and the planning of teachers to support and monitor them, are strength of the provision.
133. There has been good improvement in this subject since the last inspection report. The quality of teaching has improved and, in consequence, students' progress has increased. Schemes of work showing what will be taught throughout the school have been developed. Resources have been built up effectively, although there is insufficient use of computers in school.

POST-16 PROVISION

134. As found at the last inspection, the provision for students aged over 16 is very good and it continues to be a strength of St Piers School. Standards are good and students gain qualifications in a wide range of vocational courses. The level of achievement is high, with some students, who already have National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at level 2, moving on to level 3. Less able students make good progress towards gaining Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) awards. They develop strategies to help them get to know people successfully and learn how to manage potential dangers such as drug misuse. During key skills sessions, students use computer programs effectively to improve their mathematical skills and improve their reading. They take turns to work as receptionist to the college. This important role improves skills in dealing with a whole range of people appropriately. They ensure visitors are signed in, answer questions effectively and give clear directions. They also carry out other secretarial roles involving the use of data bases or word processing. Students make good progress as knowledge, skills and confidence develop. For example, one group discovered that changing a wheel on a car was not so easy when the bolts are very tight. However, they overcame the difficulty and discussed what they had done. It is particularly noticeable that students' skills in working with wood improve. For example, high quality lathe work results in beautiful turned bowls. During sport and recreation, students learn new skills participating in trampolining, dance and gymnastics. They also improve their all round fitness by working out in the fitness centre.

135. The high quality of teaching and learning makes a major contribution to the good standards achieved. Teaching and learning are consistently good and in many lessons they are very good or sometimes even excellent. Teachers and instructors have good subject expertise. Their enthusiasm for what they teach makes lessons exciting. Students respond very positively. They find learning interesting and confidently develop new skills. For example, when working on the farm, students of all abilities demonstrate understanding and sensitivity for living things. They wait in hushed silence and awe as baby lambs are born. They handle the newly born lambs with care and confidently undertake tasks such as docking tails. They know how to look after animals and keep them healthy.
136. Another very good feature of teaching is the way students are encouraged and supported to become independent learners. In lessons teachers and lecturers adopt the role of facilitator. They develop students' observations and knowledge through searching questions and prompts. They use praise effectively to raise self-esteem. Students respond very well to these strategies. They are proud of their achievements and will often initiate discussions on their work. This can be seen in the Team Enterprise initiative. Twenty five students are involved in this competition and all have positions of responsibility in the company they have set up. During the week of the inspection they deservedly gained a place in the area finals.
137. Students are helped to collaborate and work in teams, for example when working together to change tyres on a car. Through the examples set by staff, students learn to value and respect each other. This can be seen when students participate in games such as rounders. They try hard to win, have a good team spirit and respect the views of the umpire. However, they also show a willingness to accept the difficulties of others and do not complain if these students are assisted or given another chance.
138. Lessons are successful because many are set in the real context of work. For example, in information and communication technology, more able students undertake work tasks for clients and take pride in doing a job well. Others are encouraged to work to high standards because they make goods for sale and understand the need to keep their customers happy. Less able students show amazing perseverance and ability to complete a task; for example, during a woodwork lesson one student carefully sanded a lid for a box he had made until it fitted snugly. He was delighted when he demonstrated how well he had made it fit and thoroughly enjoyed the teacher's praise. In horticulture, less able students are taught to carefully plant up containers and learn to name and use tools such as dibbers. Students can see the relevance of their work and are very keen to do their best.
139. Teachers and instructors work very effectively with student support workers and together they are able to provide the individual support needed. As a result students with the most complex difficulties are assisted to participate fully and to make good progress; for example, these students concentrate well during yogacise (a combination of yoga and exercise) lessons. They listen attentively, follow instructions and do their best to perform the familiar routines. Students take pleasure in the skills teachers and instructors help them to acquire, for example in textiles, where they make garments and household items for themselves and others. In food preparation lessons they collaborate to make and enjoy meals together. They are justly proud of all their achievements and thrive on the variety of courses offered.
140. The curriculum is good for all students. It is very good for the most able due to the exceptionally wide range of accredited courses offered. Courses are very well planned and organised. They engage students in stimulating activities that capture their interest and enable them to learn successfully. The quality of courses and the standards of students' work are assured by the school's well-developed systems for internal verification in addition to the awarding bodies' quality assurance. The leadership and management of the post-16 provision are effective. Senior managers ensure that members of staff are very well deployed to assist students' learning. Resources are adequate in all areas and for some, for example, information and communication technology, they are good. The new building provides very good accommodation in some respects, although areas such as creative arts remain underdeveloped. Accommodation is adequate in the older facilities but the school has extensive plans to improve many areas.