

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **THE DELVES SCHOOL**

Swanwick

LEA area: Derbyshire

Unique reference number: 113033

Headteacher: Mr I Snodin

Reporting inspector: Mr I Naylor  
20906

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> April 2000

Inspection number: 197185

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Maintained
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	5 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hayes Lane Swanwick Alfreton Derbyshire
Postcode:	DE55 1AR
Telephone number:	01773 602198
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M. Swinhoe
Date of previous inspection:	April 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Ian Naylor	<i>Registered inspector</i>		What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the school? How well is the school led? What the school should do to improve further.
Christine Laverock	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work with parents?
Pippa Clark	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Music; Religious education; Special educational needs.	
Andreas Markides	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Geography; History.	
Gordon Gentry	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art; Design and technology; Physical education.	Staffing, accommodation and resources.
Gill Lawson	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Modern foreign languages; Information technology; Equal opportunities.	Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The Delves is a mixed day community special school, with 87 pupils aged from five to sixteen. There are slightly more than twice as many boys as girls. All are from a white ethnic background. All have statements of special educational need, except for one pupil who is being assessed. Most pupils have moderate learning difficulties, but one in five has emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties (EBD). The range of learning needs has broadened, since the previous inspection and now includes pupils with severe learning difficulties, physical difficulties, autism, and hearing impairment. The number of pupils with moderate learning difficulties and additional emotional and behavioural difficulties has increased significantly since the last inspection. Attainment on entry is extremely low, and half of pupils come from backgrounds where there is social disadvantage. Some pupils on admission have experienced exclusion from mainstream schools, and have often had long periods of non-attendance at school.

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

This continues to be a school with many good features, but there remain a number of weaker areas. There is sound leadership and management and effective teaching overall, and these contribute to good standards of achievement and behaviour for the majority of pupils. The range of special educational needs of pupils admitted in the last two years has widened. This has required changes to the curriculum and styles of teaching that have created considerable difficulty and anxiety for staff. Nevertheless, the school is successful in providing pupils with an appropriate education, and gives sound value for money.

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

- Teaching is predominantly good and often very good.
- Achievement is good, and most pupils make good progress over a period of time.
- Very good personal and social development of pupils.
- Very good staff teamwork.
- Good learning opportunities that are relevant and realistic.
- Literacy hour is very good.
- Numeracy strategy is good.
- Very good work experience and preparation for transition to adult life.
- Information and communications technology has seen a dramatic improvement.
- English, mathematics, science, physical education and design and technology (including food technology) remain strong subjects.
- Leadership and management have strong features and are consistently sound.

## **What could be improved**

- The governing body and the local education authority have not given enough consideration to the capability of the school to meet the needs of pupils with a broad range of learning difficulties a significant number of whom have emotional and behavioural difficulties or other significant needs.
- The accommodation needs to be improved for the school secretary, medical area, library, and space for general storage. Facilities need to be provided for science, music, art, visitors to school, therapists, and a social area for senior pupils.
- There is no homework strategy to support pupils' learning or progress.
- There is very little parental involvement in the life and work of the school.
- There is no specialist teacher of music at Key Stage 3 to deliver an appropriate curriculum.
- The very frequent use of the withdrawal room for the management of challenging behaviour is reducing pupils' learning opportunities in the subjects and is not always an effective strategy in reducing unacceptable behaviour.
- The skills of staff in dealing with the difficult and challenging behaviour of pupils.
- The co-ordination for history, geography, music and religious education.

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

Since the previous inspection in April 1996, the overall achievement and progress of pupils has been improved so that it is now good in many subjects. The quality of teaching is good overall and has been sustained in most subjects and improved in Key Stage 2. The Literacy Hour and the National Numeracy Strategy have both been successfully introduced and adapted to the needs of pupils with learning difficulties up to the age of 14. Science in particular has made improvements across the key stages. Information and communications technology has improved.

Pupils are assessed on entry to the school, but there is still more work to be done on assessment in the foundation subjects. There is now a wide range of accreditation for pupils at Key Stage 4. Some pupils have opportunities to be integrated into mainstream schools. Co-ordination of subjects has improved overall, but it is stronger in English, mathematics, and science than in the other subjects. The annual reports to parents have been improved so that they give a clear picture of pupils' achievement and progress.

An attempt has been made to improve the environment of the school with structural alterations to some classrooms, the provision of a hard surface playground, basket-ball court, and by internal re-decoration. However, no improvement has been made to the overall accommodation which remains cramped, lacks essential facilities and has insufficient classrooms for the numbers of pupils on roll. Parents are less involved than at the last inspection. Attendance has fluctuated greatly since the last inspection, but recently has started to improve significantly.



## STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	By age 11	by age 16	<i>Key</i>	
speaking and listening	B	B	<i>very good</i>	<i>A</i>
reading	B	B	<i>good</i>	<i>B</i>
writing	C	C	<i>satisfactory</i>	<i>C</i>
mathematics	C	B	<i>unsatisfactory</i>	<i>D</i>
personal, social and health education	C	B	<i>poor</i>	<i>E</i>
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C	B		

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

Pupils' achievement and progress are good overall across the school. Achievement and progress are good overall in English, with good progress over time in speaking, listening and reading. Writing is less successful, but it is nevertheless satisfactory overall. Achievement is very good in geography by age seven, and in physical education at each age range. They are good in mathematics, science, art, design and technology, history and physical education. Achievement is satisfactory overall in French, information technology and religious education at each age range. They are satisfactory in geography by the ages of 11 and 14. Achievement is unsatisfactory in music at age fourteen. Pupils make very good progress by age 16 in their social skills, vocational education and preparation for college. Many achieve passes in a range of accredited subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Generally good. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and participate well in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The majority of pupils show good behaviour. Some pupils with severe behavioural difficulties make sound progress in reducing their poor behaviour. A few such pupils make little progress with their behaviour and can at times be disruptive and involve some bullying.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils have positive relationships with one another and staff. They grow in confidence and self-esteem, become more independent and well prepared for moving on to college.
Attendance	Satisfactory compared to similar schools, although not as good as at the previous inspection. There has been a recent reduction in the number of unauthorised absences.

The school has maintained the good overall standard of pupils' attitudes and personal development since the last report, despite the disruptive influence of a few pupils. Parents report that their children are very happy at school. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and to the school environment. They are generally good-natured, co-operative and try their hardest, showing interest in their work. They are able to concentrate for appropriate lengths of time. Many pupils form constructive relationships and establish mature attitudes to their work by the time they leave school. The school has a caring and friendly atmosphere, where effort is encouraged and achievement is recognised.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 5-11	aged 11- 16
Lessons seen overall	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.*

Teaching is good overall. It is good in half of all lessons and very good in one in five lessons. Most of the rest is satisfactory and only a very small number is unsatisfactory (2 per cent). Teachers and support staff work effectively together, with very high expectations of pupils' participation and behaviour. Most teachers do not have the specific range of skills needed to deal with extreme and challenging behaviour, although they generally manage the behaviour of most pupils well. Planning is good and the range of activities offered is very relevant, which, together with good knowledge of pupils' abilities and needs, creates a good climate for learning. Teaching is very good overall in physical education and design and technology, history at Key Stage 3, and geography at Key Stage 1. It is good overall in English, mathematics, science, art, French and music at Key Stages 1 and 2. Teaching is satisfactory overall in information and communications technology, and religious education. It is satisfactory in geography at Key Stage 3. It is unsatisfactory in music at Key Stage 3.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is a good range of learning opportunities, including very good vocational education and good personal and social education.
Links with parents	There are effective links with parents to provide information about their child's progress, but there is little expectation of parents' involvement with work provided for pupils to do at home which makes links with parents unsatisfactory overall.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is a good personal and social development programme that includes opportunities for integration into mainstream schools and colleges, work experience and community links. Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is good overall.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory child protection procedures are in place. Provision for welfare and assessment of pupils' achievement is satisfactory. However staff lack skills in dealing with difficult and challenging behaviour and a system of behaviour management is still being developed for these pupils.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The headteacher, senior staff and governors together provide consistent and sound leadership. Strong features include the management of main areas of the curriculum; weaker areas include lack of monitoring of teaching. A range of improvements has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. However, the provision of suitable accommodation in which to deliver the curriculum to match the needs of pupils, a key issue from the previous inspection, remains largely unresolved.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Governors support the headteacher and staff very well and have good procedures in place to carry out their duties effectively. They have some means of checking standards and provision.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has a satisfactory understanding of its own strengths and weaknesses, and most action is appropriate. Suitable targets are set for pupils' achievement and attendance and these are largely being met. However, some issues are not pursued with enough rigour to secure more success, for example, improvements to accommodation.
The strategic use of resources	All funds from whatever source are sensibly spent and help to promote the well being and achievement of pupils. The school has sound systems for ensuring best value in purchasing and contracts. Staffing levels are unsatisfactory given the wide range of learning needs of pupils. Accommodation is poor. The school has made some improvements to certain areas, such as the playground and to internal decoration, but the fabric of the school is poor in many places. There is insufficient classroom space. Key facilities are inadequate or lacking, such as a science laboratory and a social area for older pupils. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall, and good for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Achievement, and progress over time are good.</li><li>• Parents are kept well informed.</li><li>• New parents to school receive a lot of help.</li><li>• Staff are very understanding and helpful.</li><li>• Social development of pupils is good.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Accommodation.</li><li>• Homework.</li><li>• Behaviour.</li><li>• Time available from speech therapy and educational psychologists.</li></ul>

Inspectors agree with many of the views of parents. The accommodation is poor, despite the efforts of staff and governors. Homework could be better organised across the school to support learning. The behaviour of most pupils is generally good. Inspectors are of the view that the school is working hard to contain the disruption caused by a few pupils with challenging behaviour, but more needs to be done. The provision of speech and language therapy and of educational psychology support is not very different from that provided in other similar special schools.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge attainments against age-related national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about achievement, progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and in annual reviews.
2. When making judgements, inspectors have taken into account the disrupted attendance of some pupils, not necessarily during their period at this school, and the fact that some pupils enter the school in Year 7 from mainstream schools. Analysis of pupils' work, annual reviews, reports, individual education plans and information from lesson observations shows that pupils' achievement is predominantly good across the school. A few pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties make less than satisfactory academic progress, although they make satisfactory and sometimes good progress against their behavioural targets. The school has set targets of an 80 per cent pass rate in external examinations, and that three-quarters of all pupils will show an improvement in reading age over the year. These targets have not yet been reached, but there are indications that they will be by the end of the academic year.
3. The number of pupils undertaking nationally accredited courses has risen significantly since the previous inspection. In the City and Guilds Diploma of Vocational Education, pupils have gained a 100 per cent pass rate in the last three years. Similarly, there was a 100 per cent pass rate for the Youth Award Scheme Bronze Award in 1998 and 1999. Most pupils obtain passes in the Oxford and Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts (OCR) Records of Achievement in English, mathematics, science and information technology. Three pupils have recently gained passes in the Certificate of Competence in Business and Finance and Work Experience awarded by the International Curriculum and Assessment Agency (ICAA). Other pupils are making good progress towards gaining this certificate. All pupils in Year 11 attend a further education college weekly link course. They make very good progress in their social skills and in a range of vocational courses, including ceramics, construction, visual arts, painting and decorating, and catering.
4. Achievement is very good in geography at Key Stage 1 and in physical education at each key stage. They are good in. English, mathematics, science, art, design and technology, history and physical education. Achievement is satisfactory overall in French, information technology and religious education at each key stage. They are satisfactory in geography at Key Stage 2 and 3. Achievement is unsatisfactory in music at Key Stage 3.
5. Pupils achieve well in English and there has been good improvement in standards since the last inspection, largely due to the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy (national literacy strategy). Most pupils make good progress in speaking and listening skills. Often this is made possible through role-play and drama. In reading, pupils make good progress over time and in lessons. They gradually become more confident readers and many learn to enjoy books. By the

age of 16, most pupils use their reading skills to help them in their vocational courses, college links and work experience placements. Achievement in writing is satisfactory in lessons and over time. Most pupils use joined writing and can write for a variety of purposes by the end of Key Stage 3. There are good examples of creative writing in poems and stories. There is a steady improvement in spelling, vocabulary and grammar. By the end of Key Stage 4, most pupils achieve good grades in nationally accredited courses for literacy skills.

6. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are good throughout the school, in their lessons and over time. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in addition and subtraction of tens and units. They recognise and calculate values in money, and tell the time to the hour and half-hour. By the end of Key Stage 4, there is an increase in the understanding and use of mathematical vocabulary. Pupils calculate using all four functions. They use computer programs to make graphs and pie charts. They achieve well in accredited courses.

7. In science, achievement is good, and levels noted in the previous inspection have been sustained. Pupils have an awareness of scientific investigation, study living things, understand about different materials, and learn about physical processes such as electricity and magnetism. By the end of Key Stage 2, many pupils can carry out experiments and make predictions about the outcome. Older pupils, at Key Stages 3 and 4, understand the meaning of a 'fair test', and draw conclusions from the results of their experiments. Pupils in Key Stage 4 gain good results in accredited courses.

8. Achievement in art is good. Pupils have skills in planning their work, producing a finished product and evaluating their success. They paint in the style of famous artists, create collages, and paint, for instance seascapes to illustrate battle scenes in the Second World War. There has been an improvement in standards since the last inspection, especially at Key Stage 2.

9. Achievement in design and technology is good and at times very good. Pupils develop a wide range of skills in planning, designing and making, and evaluating. Pupils design and make a model aircraft using resistant materials. In food technology, they make a cereal bar and also the packaging for it. There has been significant improvement in the rate of progress since the previous inspection, particularly at Key Stage 2.

10. Pupils' achievements are good in history at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. Younger pupils know that grandparents and parents are older than they are. Older pupils have a sound understanding of the conditions that prevailed during the Second World War. They make good progress both in their lessons and over time. History is not taught at Key Stage 4.

11. Pupils' achievements in geography are very good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stages 2 and 3. Pupils recognise pictures of their school and can place them on a map of the local area. Older pupils recognise features on a globe, name the equator, and know which areas are land and which are sea. They know the difference between deserts and Arctic regions. Overall, they make satisfactory progress in their lessons and over time. Geography is not taught at Key Stage 4.

12. Pupils' achievement in information and communications technology is satisfactory, and most pupils make sound progress in relation to their age and ability at each key stage. Most pupils can word-process their news and use the keyboard and mouse. They know how to open and close files and save their work. By age sixteen, many can complete well-presented projects using databases, spreadsheets and desktop publishing. They use their information and communication technology skills well to support work in English and mathematics.

13. Overall, pupils' achievement and progress in French at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. It is not taught at Key Stage 4. Pupils know simple phrases for times of the day, and answer simple questions in French. Many speak in sentences confidently and have an extended vocabulary.

14. Pupils' achievement in music is good up to the end of Key Stage 2. They show skills in listening to music as well as developing their skills in performing and composing simple tunes. In Key Stage 3, however, pupils do not build on their previous learning, and their overall progress is unsatisfactory as a result. Music is not taught in Key Stage 4.

15. Physical education is a strength of the school, and pupils make very good progress. Although progress was good at the previous inspection, there have been further significant developments in the subject, particularly at Key Stages 3 and 4. Throughout the school, pupils develop very well in relation to their age and ability because they experience a full range of physical skills, which enables them to plan, perform and join in evaluating their performance.

16. Pupils' achievement in religious education is satisfactory. Pupils learn about the fundamentals of the Christian religion and the main celebrations, important characters and symbolism of other world faiths.

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

17. As in the last inspection, the majority of pupils have positive attitudes to the school. They are keen and eager to learn, showing interest in their work and the range of activities that the school provides. Pupils sustain concentration well when lessons are stimulating and move at a brisk pace. This was seen in a Year 8 science lesson when pupils worked hard experimenting with different materials to test their waterproof properties. Three pupils were observed on work experience during the inspection. They demonstrated a very positive attitude to their employers and a real sense of pride as a result of the success of their placements.



18. The majority of pupils behave well. They have been involved in developing school rules, which in the main they adhere to. They are courteous and trustworthy and friendly to visitors. In assemblies, pupils listen to whoever is speaking and participate fully. In lessons, behaviour varies. Most pupils are attentive to their teacher and do as they are asked. However, there are a few pupils in most classes whose behaviour is at times poor and disruptive. These pupils challenge adults and can behave unpleasantly towards their peers. There are occasions when this behaviour is so extreme that they are removed from their classroom. There is a high incidence of fixed term internal and external exclusions. As a result of this, a small number of pupils are missing a large amount of lesson time.

19. At lunchtimes, pupils behave very well in the dining room. They eat sensibly and chat with each other and with the adults who sit with them. In the playground, behaviour varies. Pupils are divided into three areas according to their age. The youngest pupils play well together, and enjoy the play equipment that is available to them. Junior age pupils also enjoy playing with footballs, and the seniors on the newly installed basketball court. However, a few pupils are sometimes unkind to those around them.

20. Relationships between pupils are good overall. In most classes, pupils relate well to each other and work co-operatively in groups and pairs. Good sportsmanship was seen between pupils in an inter-school football match. There are occasions, however, when pupils are confrontational with one other and with adults.

21. Pupils generally respect others' feelings, values and beliefs. They are able to empathise with those less fortunate than themselves, as was seen in their responses to a story told in a Year 10 class assembly about a young heart transplant patient. They also express delight when others are praised for their efforts, and often spontaneously applaud in classes and assemblies. They are encouraged to reflect on their actions and, as a result, understand their impact on others. They know, for example, that they have to apologise when they have been rude or disruptive.

22. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities. They like to help one another with their work and carry out tasks around the school. Each class has a system of monitors who undertake basic duties. Pupils in Year 11 on work experience demonstrate the ability to take initiative; one with preparing a classroom for an Infant teacher, the other in requesting further work experience from Sainsbury's.

23. Attendance is satisfactory when compared with the average for similar schools nationally. There was a high incidence of unauthorised absence in the last academic year, but recent efforts have improved this considerably. The current number of unauthorised absences is now just above the average for similar schools. Most pupils arrive at school punctually, though there is some occasional lateness, usually caused by school transport being delayed.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

24. Teaching is good overall. There is good teaching in half of all lessons and one lesson in every five is very good. Most of the rest are satisfactory, and only a very small number of lessons (2 per cent) are unsatisfactory. In the previous report, teaching was reported as being of a high standard. There has been a significant improvement because there is now more teaching that is good or very good and less that is unsatisfactory. Teachers and education care officers work effectively together, with very high expectations of pupils' participation and behaviour that underpin their good management of the majority of pupils. Nevertheless, most teachers do not have the specific range of skills needed to deal with extreme and challenging behaviour, although they generally manage the behaviour of most pupils well. Teaching is very good in physical education and design and technology overall, and in history at Key Stage 3 and geography at Key Stage 1. It is good overall in English, mathematics, science, art, French and music at Key Stages 1 and 2. Teaching is satisfactory overall in information and communications technology and religious education. At Key Stage 3, it is satisfactory in geography but unsatisfactory in music.

25. There are many strengths in teaching. Teachers have good and sometimes very good planning for their lessons. This planning, together with good knowledge of pupils' abilities and needs, creates a good climate for pupils' learning. Very careful thought is given to making activities and tasks suitable for individuals, and information from individual education plans is used very effectively. There is very good attention to preparation and organisation, and good use is made of resources. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge and use this to complement their extensive experience and detailed knowledge of pupils' needs so that lessons are interesting, relevant and stimulating. Good use is made of questioning to develop pupils' ideas and thinking, and to check their understanding and recall. Good management and control of behaviour is the product of the very good use of praise, encouragement and high expectations of the performance, effort and involvement of pupils. Management of pupils is better overall in Key Stage 1 and 2, than in 3 and 4 mainly because the majority of pupils with challenging behaviour are in the senior part of the school. Management of challenging and difficult behaviour is variable at Key Stages 3 and 4. Relationships with most pupils are very good, and staff are very good role models to pupils. Good use is made of records and assessment to inform lesson planning in English, mathematics and science and frequent use is made of pupils' self-evaluation. Teachers make good use of literacy across the subjects, especially of pupils' speaking and listening skills.

26. Very good teaching is seen in the English literacy hour, with good use made of pupils' love of reading a 'big book' together. In physical education, lessons are very well managed in a 'fun' atmosphere, for example in gymnastics, where success is encouraged and pupils are praised for their efforts. Pupils discuss what they do and evaluate the performance of others. In a history lesson on the changing role and status of women during the Second World War, a very effective learning environment was created by very good planning, enthusiastic presentation, good participation and learning by pupils and high expectations of their involvement and effort. In design and technology, an excellent introduction to the topic

on completing work ready for Easter led to a very productive working relationship between teacher and pupils. This, together with very good planning and preparation, meant that pupils were very clear about what they had to do and learning is good. In science, very good management of pupils' behaviour skilfully kept them on task during a lesson on 'fair testing', and this supported pupils' learning so that they were able, by the end of the session, to understand the 'sameness' when conducting an experiment.

27. There is very good team-work between all staff. Education care officers make a very significant contribution to teaching and to the good progress and achievement of pupils, especially in personal and social skills. They accept delegation of responsibility very well, teaching with groups and individuals, and are an indispensable part of the success of teaching as a whole and give very good support to pupils' learning.

28. The weaker areas of teaching are relative within the overall judgement of good, but there are some areas that could be improved. Subject knowledge is weak for music as there is no specialist, and this leads to inconsistent standards of teaching. Assessment is less well used in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. Homework is not yet used consistently across the school to support pupils' learning. Pupils need a more structured approach to the use of homework, and this would be in line with parents' wishes. Although there is some inconsistency in the use of information technology across the subjects, there is a rapidly developing confidence in its use by most teachers. The pace of learning for pupils is generally satisfactory, but it is good at Key Stage 4, largely because of the relevance of teaching within the work-related curriculum.

29. Many teachers, despite managing the behaviour of most pupils well, have considerable difficulty managing pupils with severe and challenging behaviour. They then resort too readily to the school policy of internal exclusion. However, this procedure does not satisfactorily meet the needs of these pupils as it takes them away from lessons with their peer group and does not solve the problem of what goes wrong with behaviour in the classroom.

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

30. The school has sustained the best parts of the curriculum noted in the last inspection, and other areas have been improved so that the curriculum overall offers a good range of learning opportunities, including good provision for pupils' personal and social education. The vocational educational programme continues to be strong and is now very good. During Years 10 and 11, pupils are offered a range of options that prepare them extremely well for the transition to college or work at age sixteen. There is now a wider range of accredited courses, including the Award Scheme Development Accreditation Network (ASDAN), and the Diploma of Vocational Education (DOVE) courses. Work experience is also very strongly featured, being well organised and managed and enjoying the co-operation of a

range of local employers. It is also accredited through the International Curriculum and Assessment Agency, with pupils gaining Certificates of Competence. These courses are effective, well planned and relevant to the majority of pupils at Key Stage 4, most of whom do not meet the standards required for GCSE entry. A small number of pupils are being considered for entry to GCSE in some subjects as appropriate. Careers advice and education is available to all pupils from Year 9, with good links to the Careers Service.

31. At Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, the curriculum has been significantly enhanced by the implementation of the National Strategies for Literacy (NLS) and Numeracy (NNS). This is an obvious improvement on provision since the previous inspection. The National Literacy Strategy has been in place for two years and is operating very successfully. The National Numeracy Strategy was implemented in September 1999 and is now well established, and making a significant impact upon learning and progress. Both of these strategies have been carefully adapted to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties in Key Stages 1 and 2, and they have been extended to offer good and highly relevant provision to pupils in Key Stage 3.

32. The curriculum remains broad and balanced overall. It covers the current requirements in art, geography, history, music and physical education at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. The timetable reflects requirements well and gives good opportunities for the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy as well as for a range of vocationally based activities at Key Stage 4. All subjects now have relevant policies and schemes of work, except music at Key Stage 3, and religious education. The curriculum in science and information and communication technology has been improved by better schemes of work that ensure pupils make progress as they move across each key stage. However, science still suffers from not having suitable facilities, and this limits the coverage of certain aspects of the programmes of study. There is good provision for personal and social education, and the separate lessons at Key Stages 3 and 4 help to promote pupils' personal and social development very well. Sex and drugs education is suitably included as part of the personal and social education scheme of work.

33. Religious education is well established on the timetable for each year group. At Years 10 and 11, it is taught as part of the Award Scheme Development Accreditation Network programme. There is no scheme of work, but informal planning follows the locally agreed syllabus.

34. Opportunities are created for some pupils, where relevant, to attend mainstream schools regularly on an integration basis. This is mainly for specific lessons; for example one pupil attends a weekly physical education session at the local comprehensive school.

35. The school makes good links with other community services. For example, there is a multi-agency curriculum package for two disaffected Year 10 pupils, which involves them in part-time schooling and support from home tutors.

36. There is satisfactory provision for extra-curricular activities. Arrangements are limited by the distance that most pupils travel to school and complications involved in transport arrangements. Many pupils have opportunities during their time in school to go on residential trips that expand the curriculum well. A recent initiative, in conjunction with the local health authority 'Health Promoting Schools' project, has seen the introduction of related activities for pupils at lunch times. Other opportunities for extra-curricular activities at lunch-time are limited. A good range of sporting opportunities is available through East Midlands Sports Disability Foundation. A local soccer league of friendly matches is held with other special schools.

37. Good links are made with two colleges of further education. Year 11 pupils attend regularly for one day per week to take part in very good vocational transitional courses, such as ceramics, building construction and motor maintenance. Most pupils move successfully to full-time further education at age 16.

38. The school has sustained its good provision overall for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Arrangements for developing pupils' moral and social development are good, while those for their spiritual and cultural development are sound.

39. Assemblies are well planned and meaningful, with good opportunities for prayer and reflection. Displays of pupils' work and public and private praise for genuine efforts make an important contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils grow in pride and self-esteem when they receive acknowledgement at whole school assemblies. They receive certificates and medals with delight, and applaud each other enthusiastically. Pupils develop self-knowledge in personal and social education, where there are some opportunities for them to gain a real understanding of other people's lives and beliefs. There is now planned provision for a daily act of collective worship, which is an improvement since the previous inspection.

40. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. Pupils are regularly reminded of the need for good behaviour. They understand when they have done something wrong and are contrite. The week ends with an assembly in which pupils' achievements are recognised and valued, and where moral and social standards are promoted. Staff help pupils to value themselves and their relationships by celebrating their achievements and their uniqueness, and by teaching them to value those of others.

41. The provision for pupils' social development is good. There are opportunities in a range of subjects for pupils to work in pairs or in small groups, helping them to co-operate with others. Many older and more able pupils help and support those less able, particularly at lunchtimes. Pupils in Key Stage 4, working on the Youth Award Scheme as part of their Award Scheme Development Accreditation Network course, work together well in planning and carrying out surveys and challenges. Reports from work experience providers indicate that pupils conduct themselves in a sensible and creditable manner. Pupils learn good team building and independence skills through a range of residential trips. Respect for others, courtesy and politeness are all promoted well.

42. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils learn about their own culture in a range of subjects, including the study of Shakespeare in English, local studies in history, sporting achievements in physical education and visits to museums and theatres. The school celebrates a range of festivals from different cultures, for example Diwali, and there are displays around the school showing that pupils learn about others' beliefs, customs and cultures in several subjects. Visitors to the school and occasional days to celebrate people from other lands enhance this. For example, the school recently had a 'Caribbean day' with music, clothes and food from the West Indies. Although there are some opportunities in religious education, English, French, history and geography for pupils to learn about other cultures, there is no multi-cultural policy, and the curriculum does not promote awareness of Britain's many different cultures as strongly as other aspects.

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

43. Staff know pupils and their particular circumstances very well. Staff talk and listen to individual pupils well. This is effective in providing support and help to those who need it, and it provides good support to the progress of the majority of pupils. However, some staff are less effective in dealing with those pupils who display challenging behaviour. There are also some pupils who have been identified as having additional needs, such as sensory disabilities, and this is not being fully catered for.

44. The steps taken to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are satisfactory overall. First aid is carried out appropriately. Staff are well trained and have prepared themselves well for any medical eventuality. The school nurse is supportive, making regular visits to the school and working closely with staff on health education programmes. The caretaker takes good care of the site and deals with any identified health and safety concerns swiftly.

45. Whilst the hall is a good size for physical education lessons, it is cluttered around the edge as a result of a lack of storage elsewhere in the school. It also can be slippery for lessons after lunch, which makes it unsafe when pupils are running around. The school has not addressed the concerns identified in the last inspection about the quantity and quality of supervision of pupils outside at lunchtime and this needs rectifying as a matter of urgency. There is no medical room in the school, and staff have to make use of other rooms for medical examinations and when pupils feel unwell.

46. Arrangements for child protection are satisfactory. The head teacher is the designated teacher and uses the procedures well to report concerns that have been identified. Teachers and education care officers are aware of signs to look out for and what to do if they have any concerns. Lunchtime staff have received no training though, and lack awareness of how to deal with issues which may arise.

47. Pupils receive a friendly welcome when they arrive in school each day, and their attendance is registered at the beginning of each session. Absences are coded accurately, although reasons for absence are not systematically recorded. The school has reduced the incidence of unauthorised

absences recently by chasing parents for the reasons for unexplained absences.

48. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are unsatisfactory overall. Some teachers manage the behaviour of all pupils very effectively, but this is not the case in every class. As a result, a few pupils are often removed from their classroom. Few staff have received training in how to deal with the extreme behaviour displayed by these pupils. The withdrawal room is not used effectively to bring about long-term improvement in the behaviour of the individuals concerned. Lunch-time staff also need training in dealing with problem behaviour. The school development plan has identified as a priority the need to train staff in how to deal with extreme behaviour.

49. For the majority of pupils, the school's strategies for rewarding good behaviour are providing an incentive to behave well. Pupils take great pride in being entered in the 'Good Book', and are motivated by the range of rewards appropriate for their age. Inside the school building, pupils are closely supervised so that oppressive incidents are not allowed to take place. However, this is not always the case in the playground where pupils are not always watched. Vulnerable pupils sometimes find it difficult to deal with others who are physically or verbally aggressive.

50. Pupils on work experience are provided with very good support. They are supervised and visited by their class teacher, who ensures they are coping well with their placement.

51. Overall, assessment procedures are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the school has made significant improvements by establishing assessments on entry, introducing standard procedures for assessing English, maths and science, and extending the accreditation available for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4. The assessments on entry are effective in guiding pupils' initial individual education plans. These are then reviewed regularly, involving both pupils and their parents. Assessment is good in English, maths and science where the 'Small Steps' system is used consistently to monitor progress and inform planning. It is satisfactory in French, where there is some external accreditation, in information and communications technology, design technology and physical education. However, it is unsatisfactory in religious education, music, geography and history. In these subjects there are no consistent procedures in place for assessment or recording.

52. The majority of pupils with additional special needs make satisfactory progress in line with their abilities. A minority, however, particularly those with the most challenging behaviour, miss a significant amount of time from lessons through the regular use of the 'withdrawal' system, both by external and internal exclusion, with the inevitable consequence that these pupils are at risk of underachieving.

53. The school has good support from the local health trust, although parents would like more speech and language therapy. There is satisfactory cover from other support agencies, including the School Psychological Service, the Education Welfare Office, the Careers Service, the Social Services and the police.

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

54. Parents' views of the school are generally very positive with the exception of two areas. Parents feel their children are happy and making good progress. They feel well informed and find staff approachable and accessible. The two areas they are less happy about are homework and the range of activities that the school provides outside lessons. The school provides a satisfactory range of lunchtime clubs and sporting activities as well as residential trips. There is no after-school provision, but this is difficult to provide as most pupils are transported home by bus or taxi. There is no whole-school approach to homework, and arrangements vary between and within classes. This hinders parents' involvement with their child's learning at home.

55. School's links with parents are underdeveloped, and this is a worse position than noted in the previous report when links were described as good. There is no parents' association and only two parents help in lessons. There is a home-school agreement, but only fifteen parents have signed this. Parents are very supportive of school productions and sporting events, which many attend.

56. Parents are kept well informed about their child's progress. Annual reports, along with termly and annual reviews, provide a good analysis of each pupil's strengths and weaknesses. Targets are set for pupils' future development, and suggestions are made for parents to assist with their child's learning at home. Open evenings are held each term, but only a third of parents attend. However, these take place straight after school, which can be a difficult time for working parents. The school might improve relationships if it consulted parents more about convenient times for meetings.

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

57. The leadership provided by the head teacher, senior staff and governors is satisfactory overall, and this sustains the position reported at the last inspection. There are a number of relative strengths, but also areas of weakness. Great efforts have been made to address the key issues arising from the last inspection, and many improvements have been made. Appropriate targets for whole-school performance have been set and are largely being met. The school has improved its curriculum, raised pupils' achievements through improved teaching, and much has been done to improve the learning environment of the school. A greater amount of accreditation is available to pupils at age sixteen, and there are very good opportunities for work experience and college links. There are good links made with other schools for pupils to attend on integration placements. Despite inadequate accommodation and an influx of pupils with challenging behaviour, standards of achievement and teaching have continued to rise. Most pupils are managed successfully. Attendance has been improved. The head teacher gives strong support to staff, and has a clear view of what is needed for the majority of pupils. He works well with the governing body, and makes a sustained effort to liaise appropriately with the local education authority (LEA), though with little success.



58. Weaker areas of the leadership and vision of the school include a slow response to changes in the organisation of special education provision. Most notable in these changes is the local education authority's policy of broadening the type of need met at the school by the referral of pupils with emotional and behavioural needs, as well as moderate learning difficulties. These changes were noted in minutes of governors' meetings two years ago, but it is only now that the head teacher and the local education authority are planning discussions of the school's capability for meeting the needs of such pupils. The local education authority for its part has done little to help the school to make the necessary changes, and seems to have been inflexible in its insistence on such referrals. This is despite the fact that the school has been able to display convincing arguments that the change has upset the stability of its learning environment. For example, there was a huge increase in the number of pupils that were excluded during the first six months when these pupils started to be admitted in larger numbers, although this position is now stabilised. Admissions have been allowed into class groups, particularly those aged between 11 to 16, that were already full, which has had a negative impact on the learning of some pupils, particularly those with emotional and behavioural needs. Neither the leadership of the school nor the local education authority has a clear idea of what is required to move the school forward. Changes to the curriculum and styles of teaching have been needed to meet the wider range of special educational needs of pupils admitted in the last two years. This has created considerable difficulty and anxiety for staff, who are nevertheless successful in providing pupils with an appropriate education. The head teacher has worked hard to give staff reassurance and support.

59. The school should urgently establish the range of needs that it can be expected to cope with, and the numbers of pupils that the existing accommodation can viably support.

60. The head teacher and governors have made good attempts to improve facilities and staffing levels recently. However, they have not convinced the local education authority of the need to improve accommodation and facilities for existing pupils, as well as for the new type of referrals, despite this being a major criticism of the previous inspection. Consequently, staff have to struggle to cope with a broader range of pupils' needs in inadequate accommodation.

61. The management of the school has similar stronger and weaker aspects. The school development plan is a good strategic document in many respects. It sets appropriate priorities for development, particularly in the curriculum, and the action points from the previous inspection have been resolved, with exception of accommodation. Staff have been well guided in their introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, together with other national initiatives concerning targets and information technology. The curriculum has been greatly strengthened by clearer delegation of responsibilities to subject co-ordinators, and each contributes through subject development plans to the school development plan. These co-ordinator roles are now best in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, and information technology. Some of the other subjects have weaker co-ordination.

62. Management has been slow to react to the issue of pupils with challenging behaviour. The school development plan has identified the need for more staff and more space, and it has given governors clear indications on how best to spend the school's budget. It also identifies the need for whole-staff training in behaviour management and restraint training. Nevertheless, only a few staff have received appropriate training in this area, despite the urgency expressed by parents and staff. There is adequate funding available to the governors, but action to increase the number of education care officers has only just been taken. Similarly the senior management has initiated consultation with local education authority officers in a Quality Development Dialogue (QDD), but as yet has not managed to secure support for a number of key areas of development, such as the management of challenging behaviour. Teaching is not monitored systematically, either by subject co-ordinators or senior management, although there are sound plans in the school development plan to do so from next term.

63. Despite some of the above concerns, the governing body is generally good at carrying out its responsibilities. Governors have undergone a change in their composition and membership recently that has made them stronger, and they are united behind their chairman. They are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The governors have supported the head teacher in his bid to establish clearer admission procedures, but they have not intervened directly, which might have had more effect. They have supported the head teacher in the appointment of staff, and recognise the school's need for more staff.

64. There are good administrative procedures, and the school office is run very efficiently and effectively by the school secretary, despite the cramped space she has to work in. An local education authority internal school audit since the previous inspection has shown administration to be sound and its recommendations have been satisfactorily acted upon. There was considerable underspend on the school budget in the last financial year of between 5 and 10 per cent. This was as a direct result of unexpected savings on staff costs made by the long-term secondment of a teacher to the local education authority, and the subsequent employment of temporary staff to cover. Use of specific grants is good, such as those for the National Grid for Learning, which has been used to contribute to the purchase of information and communication technology equipment in the classrooms. As yet the governing body does not have independent monitoring of financial procedures.

65. The school has sound procedures for establishing the principles of best value, and governors make sure that proposed spending is in line with the development of the school and is evaluated against previous spending decisions.

66. In general, the school provides satisfactory equality of access and opportunities for all of its pupils to learn and make progress. However, there is inequality of access and opportunity for a minority of pupils who are excluded from class as a behaviour management strategy.

67. The ratio of staff to pupils has increased slightly since the previous inspection, but it is still low in relation to the range of pupil needs and when compared with similar schools. Concern expressed in the last report about the absence of specialist mathematics and science teachers is now less significant since it is not having a negative effect on these subjects. Provision in music is, however, affected by the lack of a music specialist, though the school is actively seeking to make a suitable appointment. In other respects, teaching and support staff are suitably qualified and experienced to deliver the overall curriculum. A number of staff are inexperienced in using information technology, but the school development plan has sound plans to provide the training needed.

68. There has been an improvement since the last inspection in the involvement of education care officers in planning. These staff generally feel now that they are valued colleagues. They join teachers in all relevant training and help to draw up pupils' individual education plans. A strong feature of the school is the collaborative teamwork between teachers, educational care officers and ancillary staff in providing good support to pupils.

69. Procedures for staff induction and appraisal are satisfactory, although they are guided by only a general outline in the staff handbook rather than by specific policies. The appraisal process is not rigorous, but there are procedures for staff review by the senior management and these have been sufficient to enable the school to achieve the Investors in People Award.

70. Accommodation is generally poor in terms of the space and facilities available for the age range and specific needs of pupils. It does not adequately support the full range of pupils' curriculum needs, and there has been little improvement on the serious deficiencies noted in the last report. The head teacher and governors have taken some action to good effect on improvements and essential maintenance. There is now a hard surface playground, a basketball court and improved internal decoration. The staff and pupils keep the interior of the building bright and attractive, with good displays of pupils' work. However, the exterior of the building is very shabby and needs a considerable amount of repair work and redecoration. The accommodation for the school secretary remains poor. There is no medical room or accommodation for visiting professionals, such as speech and language therapists, or for interviews, or for visitors, including parents. The accommodation for the library is unsatisfactory, as it is too small for the range and number of books required in an all-age school. The technology room is also used for teaching science and other subjects, and therefore is restricted in what it can offer to design and technology. There are no separate facilities for science, music or art. With the increased numbers of older pupils, there is an urgent need for a dedicated area where they can work towards independence and interact socially. In particular, there is no suitable area for the withdrawal of pupils for counselling and support. Support from the education authority following the last report has been minimal in accommodation issues. Even with the serious shortages of space, the local education authority still uses a valuable room for education support services that have a minimal input to the school. A serious weakness not highlighted previously is the unsuitability of the hall for physical education. A number of safety and security issues require urgent attention. Storage facilities throughout the school are poor.

71. In general, resources are satisfactory, though there has been no audit of what is available. In some areas, such as physical education, resources have been greatly improved and are now good. Weaknesses include insufficient age-appropriate and subject-specific information and communications technology software, inadequate music equipment, a shortage of history, geography and religious education artefacts, and the poor library.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72. In order to sustain the school's many strengths and to address the weaker areas;
- The school and the local education authority should:
    - \* quickly re-affirm the schools' admission capabilities and reach agreement on those pupils whose needs it can meet the best, so that the school can move forward in its planning;  
(Paragraph: 59)
    - \* work together to continue make improvements to the overall facilities and accommodation for pupils and staff to match the demands of the curriculum.  
(Paragraph: 70)
  - The head teacher and governors should:
    - \* review the use of internal exclusion and carry out the plans to increase all staff skills in the restraint and management of difficult pupils;  
(Paragraph: 62)
    - \* appoint a music specialist for pupils at Key Stage 3 to improve standards;  
(Paragraph: 67)
    - \* increase the opportunities for parents' involvement in the work of the school by developing a consistent approach to homework throughout the school, including the use of homework diaries and providing guidance to parents so they know how to help their child with work at home;  
(Paragraph: 54)
    - \* actively encourage parents to attend regular reviews of their child's progress by consulting them about timings for meetings;  
(Paragraph: 56)
    - \* improve the co-ordination of music history, geography, and religious education by reviewing the schemes of work; introducing procedures for marking and assessing pupils' work and by monitoring of teaching and learning so that they match the standards set by other subjects.  
(Paragraph: 61)

73. Other weaker areas that the school should consider in its action plan:

- \* learning resources in history, geography, music and religious education should be improved to provide a greater range of artefacts, books and CD-ROMs with suitable storage and access to them;
- \* supervision of pupils at lunch-time;
- \* overall staffing ratios to be increased to match the broader range of curriculum needs of pupils.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

62

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

134

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	23	50	25	2	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	87
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	22

#### **English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### ***Attendance***

#### **Authorised absence**

	<b>%</b>
School data	8.5

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	<b>%</b>
School data	3.3

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	<b>No of pupils</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	87
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	<b>Fixed period</b>	<b>Permanent</b>
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	202.5	2
Other minority ethnic groups	202.5	2

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



***Teachers and classes*****Qualified teachers and classes:****Y1 – Y16**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.3
Average class size	11

**Education support staff: Y1 – Y16**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	275

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

***Financial information***

Financial year	<b>1998/99</b>
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	<b>£</b>
Total income	553158.00
Total expenditure	532789.00
Expenditure per pupil	5550.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	38852.00
Balance carried forward to next year	59201.00

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	87
Number of questionnaires returned	14

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
My child likes school.	86	7	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	29	0	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	57	14	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	31	38	8	0
The teaching is good.	71	21	7	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	71	21	7	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	14	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	29	7	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	57	36	7	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	71	21	7	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	21	0	7	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	64	7	14	7	0

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

### **ENGLISH**

74. Pupils achieve well in English. The good improvement since the last inspection is due to effective teaching, underpinned by the introduction of an appropriately adapted version of the National Literacy Strategy in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. It is also due to the revised schemes of work and the extended range of accreditation at Key Stage 4.

75. Many pupils enter school with limited meaningful communication and restricted vocabulary. By age seven, most learn to speak clearly, listen carefully and follow simple instructions. Pupils follow a well structured reading course, which links in well to the national literacy strategy and ensures the thorough teaching of reading skills. Higher attaining pupils know many sounds and recognise some words. They can read simple familiar books at an appropriate level. Lower attaining pupils look at books, help turn the pages and express interest in favourite characters. A few pupils can write their name independently, with letters that are evenly formed and correctly oriented, while the majority write over or copy words written by their teacher.

76. At age 11, pupils listen accurately and respond appropriately in a variety of situations. Most speak clearly and some use a varied vocabulary, though a few have remaining difficulties with listening and attention skills and their speech is indistinct. The speech therapist works with staff and individual pupils in all key stages to support those with difficulties in communication. Generally, pupils listen carefully to each other, show interest and make sensible contributions. Pupils continue to build on their phonic skills and, encouraged by the introduction of 'big books' and attractive new resources, they develop a genuine enthusiasm for books and for shared reading. They can identify the title, author and illustrator of their book, and find information from factual books quickly and efficiently. Pupils reading the life cycle of a salmon could explain clearly the difference between factual books and fiction. Higher attaining pupils described the stages in the salmon's development, using the correct terminology. Lower attaining pupils make good use of picture clues, phonic sounds and the labelling in pictures to read unfamiliar words and discover meaning. By the end of the key stage, most pupils can complete simple sentences with support. They work hard to write accurately with the correct punctuation. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to use adjectives well in their creative writing. Lower attaining pupils are careful to copy spellings correctly, to form their letters well and write on the lines. A few pupils over-write or copy the sentences they dictate to adults.

77. At age 14, most pupils can talk clearly, with good understanding, about the books read in class. Higher attaining pupils discuss the plot and characters in some detail, and can retell the story of their book accurately. They can predict story endings sensibly and read confidently. For example, in a lesson using the book 'Carrie's War', they recognised and could explain clearly the influence of certain characters and the importance of the key scenes.

Pupils listen to each other with interest and work well together in a group. Most recognise familiar words and use more than one strategy to work out more complex, unknown words. Pupils begin to write for a range of purposes in sequences of sentences, which are organised and clear. They draft and redraft their work with support, and pay great attention to the presentation of work. They are more aware of the audience they write for, and many begin to write creatively, for example in their own poems and their response to literature.

78. At age 16, pupils tell others their news and talk about their reading. Most can use language appropriately in formal and informal situations. For example, they give directions clearly and politely. A few are less confident in speaking, but they listen carefully and are successful with the support of their teacher. Higher attaining pupils read books, at their appropriate level, accurately and fluently. They show a good understanding of the plot and characters of books. Pupils write for a range of purposes and audiences. They complete coursework projects accurately and with a good awareness of purpose. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 write creatively and perceptively in response to Shakespeare and modern day classics. Pupils' presentation of work is good, as is seen by their work on display and in their examination work. They make good use of word-processing, and use illustrations well to enhance the quality of their writing. Higher attaining pupils' handwriting is usually joined up and neat.

79. At all key stages, learning and progress in English is good. The successful introduction of the national literacy strategy and the establishment of a clearly understood, highly structured reading scheme has raised pupils' confidence and interest in reading, and improved their ability to break down and read unfamiliar words. Pupils develop a genuine interest in books and have an increased confidence in their approach to them. They have a developing understanding of information-finding skills and the organisation of books. Pupils' learning and progress in speaking and listening is also good, with some examples of very good progress in Key Stage 1 and 2. It is particularly good where pupils have opportunities to engage in role-play and drama. Younger pupils develop confidence and learn to take turns in conversation. Older pupils learn to structure their talk logically. They gain confidence in speaking in a variety of formal and informal situations.

80. Learning and progress in writing is satisfactory in lessons and over time. Younger pupils develop sound skills in pencil control and letter formation, and use the computer with increased confidence. Many older pupils begin to develop a handwriting style, taking pride in writing in a cursive script with evenly formed letters. They develop sound skills in functional writing, and have a developing capacity for a creative and enthusiastic response to literature. For example, there are good examples of pupils' response to poetry and modern classics, such as 'Animal Farm', in displays and in their folders. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 enjoy and show a developing understanding of the plot, characters and certain key scenes chosen from Shakespeare. A group of Year 10 pupils thoroughly enjoyed the staging and acting out of the 'Bite your thumb' scene from 'Romeo and Juliet'. They had a growing recognition of the importance of the setting, atmosphere and pace of delivery, and they made perceptive and interesting observations during the evaluation.

81. Pupils' attitudes to language work are very positive. They enjoy sharing their news and retelling experiences. In most lessons, they are keen to answer questions. They listen to each other and are proud of their work. Pupils at all ages develop an enthusiasm for books and enjoy sharing them with adults. They value each other's views and the work on display, and are proud of their own successes. They have good relationships with each other and their teachers. Pupils are generally polite, and work well independently or in small groups.

82. Teaching is never less than satisfactory, and a significant majority of lessons are good. Two lessons in eleven are satisfactory and one in eleven is very good. The best teaching shows careful planning and preparation of a varied and interesting range of activities, designed to motivate pupils and broaden and extend their knowledge. Teachers use the right balance of pace and challenge to extend and develop pupils' confidence and ideas, and they have good relationships with pupils. Teachers have clearly defined learning objectives and they communicate this well to pupils. They keep detailed, useful records of pupils' progress to ensure that they are learning the right things and their needs are being met. The close working relationship between teachers and skilled education care officers has a positive impact on pupils' progress by ensuring a uniform approach to skills' teaching and behaviour management.

83. The co-ordinator gives clear educational direction and manages the department well. The National Literacy Hour, together with a very well structured and established reading scheme, has had a positive impact on pupils' progress in reading and writing. The English schemes of work have been revised and now include a strong literature content. Accreditation has been extended to include the Oxford and Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts (OCR) Record of Achievement in English.

84. Pupils at all key stages use their English skills well in other areas of the curriculum. In their vocational course, for example, pupils discuss the economy of crocodile farming and are able state their opinions clearly. They research details on the Internet using a range of alphabetical indices. Most lessons include a reading and writing task, and teachers are very aware of pupils' literacy targets and their literacy skills, and reinforce learning in these areas.

85. Unfortunately, access to the school library is limited as it is used as a withdrawal room or for visiting professionals. It too small for adequate movement and has no space for a study area. The quantity and quality of books in it are inadequate for the numbers and age range of pupils, and consequently it does not support higher order reading skills, which limits pupils' development in reading.

## MATHEMATICS

86. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are good throughout the school. Progress follows the same pattern as achievement, with most pupils and students making good progress both in their lessons and over time. Teachers are becoming more confident with the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS), and its successful introduction is having a positive effect on the achievement and progress of pupils throughout the school.

87. By age seven, higher achieving pupils are able to count to 10 and are beginning to understand the idea of the number before or after a given number. Most of the pupils recognise numerals 0-5 and understand the meaning of 'one more'. They take part in songs, rhymes and number games involving counting and simple addition, and a few of them know, for instance, that  $5+2=7$ . They are introduced to time and shape. Some of them are able to put 2 or 3 pictures in their proper sequence, and most recognise familiar shapes such as a square and a circle. They are given a good foundation in pre-number work and concept formation, and make good progress over time.

88. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils maintain their good progress so that, by age 11, higher achieving pupils can count up to a 100 in fives and tens, and know that a metre has 100 centimetres. Most of them can count in twos up to 20, but have difficulty in counting backwards. Pupils understand the concept of addition and subtraction, but only the higher achieving pupils begin to understand simple multiplication and division. Their understanding of time and coins shows considerable progress. Most of them recognise the hour and half-hour, but have not yet developed the concept of a minute. They know the value of some of the coins, and a few of them can give the correct change to 50p in a shop game. They are given a wide variety of opportunities to measure and estimate length, weight and capacity, but very few understand the basic concepts. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 refer to kilograms and grams, and know the basic vocabulary such as scales, balance and pointer, but only one or two understand the concept of a gram or a kilogram. Most pupils match two and three dimensional shapes, such as triangle, square, circle, sphere, cylinder and cube. A few pupils describe some of the properties of these shapes.

89. By age 14, students increase their mathematical vocabulary to a sound level. They know the sequence of months, though some find difficulty in naming the month before or after a given month. Higher achieving students solve simple problems involving the four processes, and understand the meaning of simple fractions such as halves, thirds, and quarter. They tell the time accurately in minutes, and are able to measure length in centimetres. They draw and interpret simple bar graphs and show a basic understanding of decimals and scales. They add two and three digit numbers, and understand borrowing in subtraction involving tens and units. Lower achieving students count up to 20 and give the correct change from a 20p coin. They solve simple problems involving addition and subtraction up to 20, and begin to understand multiplication using the two and three times tables. Most of them recognise the time on the clock, but very few are able to move the clock forward one or two hours. Most students find difficulty in estimating time, and only a tiny minority know that one hour has 60 minutes and one minute has 60 seconds. They recognise familiar shapes, and a few know the meaning of a right angle.

90. During Key Stage 4, pupils follow a relevant and realistic course in mathematics based on the 'Schools Mathematics Project - A. Series', which leads to a profile of mathematical achievement. By the time they leave school at the age of 16, higher achieving pupils tell the time in minutes past and to the hour, and solve simple problems involving all four processes. They know the multiplication tables to 10 and can carry out accurate measurements of length and weight. They understand rates of pay and can compare bargains, costing and paying for their shopping accurately in a confident manner. They change simple fractions to percentages and understand the meaning of simple graphs. For example, pupils in Year 11 are able to build up a table of frequencies, feed the obtained values into the computer, and produce bar and pie charts. They interpret these charts correctly by providing the right answers to questions such as, 'What is the most/least favourite drink?', 'Which is the most/least successful team?' Lower achieving pupils can add up to 100 using two digit numbers, can carry out simple shopping assignments involving paying and receiving change from a 50p coin, and understand simple multiplication and division. They can measure length and weight with some accuracy; they can tell the time in terms of 'o'clock' and 'half past' and can represent numbers 0-10 in graphical form, using bar charts.

91. Pupils throughout the school are interested in mathematics, settle down quickly and get on with their lessons in a business-like manner. They are willing to learn, listen carefully to instructions and co-operate well both with their teachers and one another. They seek information from various sources, are willing to talk about their work, and show pride in their achievements.

92. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is consistently good throughout the school, and sometimes it is very good. Teachers are well prepared and have a secure knowledge of the subject. They know pupils well and plan lessons carefully, taking individual needs into consideration. Pupils are provided with a varied and rich diet of mental and written mathematics. Teachers encourage active participation in lessons and welcome pupils' contributions. They present challenging tasks in small incremental steps, building on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding, thus facilitating learning. They deal with minor behaviour problems in a sensible and sensitive manner. Sometimes, however, the behaviour of a small number of pupils with emotional and behaviour problems is very challenging and teachers do not have the strategies to cope. Teachers and education care officers work in unison to provide good individual and small group support, and this contributes significantly to pupils' learning and progress. Pupils' numeracy skills are practised and reinforced in lessons across the curriculum. For example, they count in music and physical education, use dates and time lines in history, record geographical data, and use their number skills when solving problems in science and design and technology.

93. The quality of assessment of pupils' work is good throughout the school. All pupils are individually assessed and comprehensive records are kept. Targets in their individual educational plans are regularly reviewed. Teachers make extensive use of assessment results, especially in teaching and planning to meet individual needs.

94. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator is well informed and provides sound leadership and support for her colleagues. However, little time is allowed within the timetable for her to monitor teaching and planning. The policy statement is satisfactory and forms a sound basis for future developments. The school has plans to review the scheme of work and incorporate new developments in numeracy. Planning throughout the school is sound. Half-term and weekly plans are well thought out and relate to the special needs of the pupils. Learning resources are adequate and used well, but storage space is poor.

95. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Standards of teaching are higher. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented, following appropriate training for the co-ordinator and all teaching staff. Records on pupils' progress and achievements are comprehensive. Students at Key Stage 4 follow a realistic and relevant course in mathematics that prepares them better for adult life.

## **SCIENCE**

96. Achievement in science is good in relation to pupils' age and abilities, because they have opportunities to develop an awareness of scientific investigation, study living things, understand about different materials and learn about physical processes such as electricity and magnetism. By age seven, pupils have explored the world around them and the need to look after themselves and the environment. They know that plants and animals need food and light to live, and have experimented with trying to grow plants in the dark or without water. They know that there are five senses and have recorded things they see, hear or taste. They sort materials by colour or texture, and know they are used for different purposes; for example, paper is to write on and food is to eat. Pupils are introduced to physical properties and are aware of the need for certain safety procedures when dealing with electricity.

97. By age 11, pupils are developing an interest in carrying out experiments for themselves, making predictions about what might happen, and testing their ideas. For example, they understand which substances will dissolve in water and which remain unchanged. They discuss the need for healthy eating and what foods are good for them, such as fruit, and food that is not healthy, such as fat and chocolate. They investigate the properties of light and electricity, know that light travels in straight lines and how shadows are formed. Higher attaining pupils make a simple electric circuit and know that a circuit must be complete before it will work.

98. By age 15, pupils have developed a greater understanding of the principles of scientific investigation and the meaning of a 'fair test'. They can measure accurately and record their results on bar graphs. Higher attaining pupils explain the result of their experiments and draw conclusions from them. They know which fabrics are waterproof or shower-proof, and what that means in terms of usage. This year, the progress achieved by pupils means that they will all be entered for the Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) for the first time, with many likely to reach the nationally expected level.



99. Pupils in Key Stage 4 study for national accreditation with Oxford and Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts (OCR). All the pupils in Year 10 are working towards the Record of Achievement Bronze Award, with the expectation of achieving Silver or Gold by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 11.

100. The quality of teaching is good in most lessons, sometimes very good and never less than satisfactory. Teachers' good and sometimes very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and high expectations for behaviour and learning mean that pupils respond well and learning is effective. Good planning and preparation enables lessons to be taught at a good pace, with appropriate challenges to maintain pupils' interest, concentration and motivation. Clear instructions, especially when introducing new experiments, and the use of good questioning ensure that pupils not only understand the tasks to be done but also find solutions and answers for themselves. Teaching encourages higher attaining pupils to think, predict and test their own work. Teaching is enhanced by the use of the excellent 'Small Steps' scheme for Key Stages 1 and 2, as this provides good opportunities for assessment.

101. Pupils throughout the school enjoy science and their attitude to learning is nearly always good. However, a small minority of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties can occasionally spoil the learning environment for others, particularly among older pupils in Key Stage 4.

102. There has been good improvement since the last inspection in the development of a policy and schemes of work, which provide staff with clear guidelines, and the introduction of relevant and rewarding courses leading to accreditation for older pupils. The department is very well co-ordinated, but there is no monitoring of teaching due to pressure of time. There are adequate resources for teaching the scheme of work for Key Stages 1 and 2. However, the lack of a science room and the necessary laboratory facilities restricts what can be taught in Key Stages 3 and 4, which reduces the options for accredited courses.

## **ART**

103. The achievement of pupils in relation to their age and ability is good. This results from a broad range of experiences enabling them to develop skills in planning work, producing a finished product and evaluating the degree of their success. There has been an improvement since the last inspection when some pupils were not getting the benefit of such experiences, especially at Key Stage 2.

104. By age seven, pupils create different textures in paint, recognise similarities and differences in a range of paintings of the same subject. They create scenes and displays, using a selection of printing and painting techniques and a variety of shades. For instance, they made a collage based on their literacy hour study of the 'Gingerbread Man', using of a range of materials to illustrate the story. They know how to use visual and tactile qualities.

They pause frequently to talk about and assess their own work, and can say why and how they make choices. They use the example of a sunflower picture by Van Gogh to help develop their own work, and extend their ideas by using a computer to create flower pictures. They use clay to make plant pots, successfully experimenting with pottery tools. Classroom displays of pupils' work show that their progress and achievement are very good.

105. Pupils in Key Stage 2 successfully build on their early experiences so that, by age eleven, some pupils achieve at levels comparable with those of any pupils of their age. They make good gains in confidence and progress during lessons and over time. Pupils have a very good knowledge of the visual elements of colour, tone and shape, and understand how to apply this to their work by using correct brush techniques. They make a series of tones by mixing a colour with black and white, and create excellent pictures of a flower with this limited palette. They engage in a sensible and sensitive discussion about their work, and compare it with that of famous artists. They make valid judgements of the work of other pupils, and use this comparison to improve their own efforts. Pupils use art effectively to support their topic work and to illustrate other subjects such as numeracy, history and geography.

106. At age 14, pupils extend their art to more ambitious levels, and their progress and the quality of their work are good. For instance, they paint a seascape as part of a series of Second World War landscapes after a mature discussion about the possible themes and content, including shadows in the sea. All pupils then show a sense of colour, tone and shadow to produce very effective watercolour visual effects. Their brush technique develops well, and they have sound creative ideas, which develop strongly in their artwork.

107. Teaching is always good and at times very good. Teachers make very good use of pupil discussion and evaluation of their work, allowing it to grow in sensitivity, maturity and quality of critical judgement as pupils move through the school. Teachers are sensitive to the wide range of pupils' abilities. Pupils are encouraged to produce very good artefacts by the teachers' skilful use of demonstration, evaluation and praise. Staff encourage pupils to take pride in their personal creations and this helps them to gain in confidence. Teachers accumulate an extensive range of materials allowing pupils to make choices and enjoy ownership of their work. Staff have a good knowledge of the subject and communicate considerable enthusiasm to the pupils. They have high but realistic expectations and lessons move at a good pace. All staff show a sound understanding of the individual needs of pupils and approach the work with sensitivity. Relationships are very good and help pupils to work productively.

108. The quality of learning is always good and at times very good. Pupils make very good progress in learning to plan their own work and so they grow in independence. They are able to discuss their plans with peers, and evaluative discussion is a key part of the learning process. They enjoy art and respond well. Most show sustained concentration and effort, participating in all aspects of lessons enthusiastically. They have good or very good attitudes and behaviour. Higher attaining pupils show considerable initiative and originality in their paintings.

109. Whilst the staff work well as a team and demonstrate considerable commitment to the subject, the overall management of the curriculum is weak. The co-ordinator is on a temporary contract and does not feel motivated to initiate the necessary revision of the curriculum. There is no system of assessment, reporting and recording for the subject, and documentation is weak. The current very creditable level of achievement could be further enhanced by the introduction of updated schemes of work and regular structured assessment that is used to inform planning. The co-ordinator acknowledges the need for training in curriculum planning and management. There is a need for improvement of facilities for the subject. There is no separate art base, and the Key Stage 3 room does not have the basic facility of a sink and water in the classroom. Pupils benefit greatly from occasional visits to art galleries and contacts with local artists and potters, and such provision could usefully be extended to build on pupils' keen response to the subject.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

110. Achievement in design and technology is good and at times very good, in relation to the age and ability of the pupils. This is because pupils are given the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills in planning, designing, making and evaluating their products at each stage of the school. A criticism of the last inspection was the poor experiences of some Key Stage 2 pupils, and this has now been fully rectified. No lessons were seen at Key Stage 1, but analysis of pupils' work and records, including displays, shows that pupils have had good experiences in the subject by the age of seven. Much of the work is linked to the literacy scheme. At an early stage, they use card to make a folded letter A. They use boxes to make a home for the story character 'Barnaby Bear'. They make a hat to keep Barnaby dry and another for the sun. In cookery they make a ginger bread man with moving eyes and mini pizzas. In designing and making, they improve their making skills by producing doll's house furniture and other artefacts. Pupils increasingly put forward their own ideas, discuss and evaluate their work. They also make their own designs following the example given by the teacher. Lower attaining pupils make sound progress.

111. At age 11, pupils design and make a class book about fish. They discuss the various parts and use their knowledge of art to support the work. They contribute creative ideas and grasp the concept that designing comes before making. Whilst lower attaining pupils make a colourful page for the book, higher attaining pupils list the materials required and methods to be adopted in assembling it. In food technology, based on a topic about ancient Egypt, pupils examine some dates and make some date halvahs, together with colourful packaging. The acquisition of making skills is good and pupils have a creditable grasp of health and safety issues. They use appropriate vocabulary well. They grow in confidence and express considerable satisfaction with the results of their efforts. Very good peer and staff-pupil relationships lead to high levels of co-operation.

112. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 3 so that they reach good standards overall by age fourteen. Most pupils show impressive results in making and designing in a range of materials, including food technology. Pupils design a model aircraft, making a pattern in cardboard and then producing a finished version in wood. They make a model snooker table with a reversible top which converts to a chess table. Ability to design is developing well and the need for accuracy and precision is coupled with a degree of creativity.

113. In Key Stage 4, pupils continue to make good progress and achieve at a good level. By the age of 16, they are confident in discussion and good at evaluating their own work and that of others. They know the importance of finishing a project, and understand the requirement to use a range of materials. In food technology, pupils make a cereal bar and design the wrapping paper. Pupils have a good knowledge of ingredients, and understand and use health and safety precautions. In a mini-enterprise, pupils produce indoor putting equipment and have raised a considerable amount of money by selling it to local golf clubs. Pupils use information technology very well to support their work in design.

114. Teaching is always at least good, and in half of lessons it is very good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, who respond to them with enthusiasm. Throughout the school, lessons are characterised by careful planning and preparation, and always commence with a class discussion, which evokes excellent participation from the pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and they use resources appropriately. The pace of lessons is good, which retains pupils' interest throughout. On-going evaluation during lessons is used to very good effect, and pupils are increasingly able to evaluate their own work. Knowledge of individual pupils and good deployment of support staff ensure that pupils are achieving at appropriate levels and they are making good progress. Excellent relationships lead to high levels of co-operation between pupils and staff and the use of group work is very good.

115. The quality of learning is never less than satisfactory and in the majority of lessons it is good or very good. Pupils make very good progress towards designing their own artefacts and freely discuss these with their peers. They make good progress in learning to evaluate as they move through the school, and there is a very good attitude to accepting constructive criticism. Attitudes are generally very good, and this is matched by commendable behaviour even from potentially difficult pupils. Pupils listen attentively, join discussions, work hard and enjoy the work.

116. The subject is very well co-ordinated throughout the school, and there is a very good spirit of co-operation between staff. In the secondary department, the specialist facilities for food technology and design and making are used well. Staff work extremely well together, and support staff are well integrated team members, contributing to a high commitment to pupil learning. Documentation including the scheme of work is very good. Assessment and recording is thorough. It is based on the 'Small Steps' system used for English and mathematics, and is used to inform planning. There has been good progress since the last inspection in the range of opportunities on offer to pupils. There is a weakness in the accommodation in the secondary department, because the design and making room is shared with science and other subjects. This is unsatisfactory. There are sound plans in the school development plan to increase external accreditation.

## **HISTORY**

117. Pupils' and students' achievements in history at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 are good. They make good progress both in their lessons and over time. History is not taught at Key Stage 4.

118. No lessons were observed at Key Stages 1 and 2. Evidence was gathered from an analysis of pupils' work, displays in classrooms and around the school, schemes of work and discussion with the co-ordinator and other teachers. By the age of seven, pupils work well with a variety of activities that emphasise sequence and order. Some of them know the sequence of days of the week and can differentiate between old and new regarding toys and clothes. They understand the meaning of 'before', 'after', and 'a long time ago'. They know that 'old' things are kept in a museum. Most pupils are beginning to understand simple sequencing of pictures, and know that grandparents and parents are older than they are. All of them enjoy stories of the past. For example, they learn about the great fire of London and Florence Nightingale, and some of them can recall a few facts.

119. By age 11, most pupils have an improved sense of chronology and are able to arrange pictures in sequence. They know the days of the week, and some recite the months of the year in their correct order. They have a better understanding of 'old' and 'new' in terms of toys and houses, and can differentiate artefacts from the past and the present. They know some basic facts about ancient civilisations. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, know about Classical Greece, recognising the Parthenon, and can recall some of the myths about the gods and temples.

120. By age 14, most students expand their historical vocabulary and begin to understand that events and ideas in the past have influenced the present. Some pupils have a sound understanding of the conditions prevailing during the Second World War. They understand the role of Churchill and the Royal Air Force. They recognise Hitler in photographs. Pupils understand some of the horrors suffered by people in the war, such as casualties, evacuation and rationing. Most pupils in Year 9 understand the role of women during the war and the contribution they made.

121. Pupils throughout the school enjoy history. They show interest, ask questions, appreciate the displays, and co-operate well with one another and with their teachers. They talk willingly about their work and show pride in their achievements.

122. No history lessons were observed at Key Stages 1 and 2, so it is not possible to make judgements on the quality of teaching. Only one lesson was observed at Key Stage 3, and the quality of teaching in this lesson was very good. The teacher's very good subject knowledge was expressed with enthusiasm, and pupils were encouraged to participate. Pupils were engaged in discussion and praise was well used to reinforce their efforts. Challenging tasks were set with high expectations. Pupils were encouraged to think for themselves and to contribute and express their own ideas. Teachers throughout the school encourage pupils and students to seek information from various sources, such as historical artefacts, videos, posters, pictures, textbooks, visits to museums and places of interest. Pupils are given opportunities to revisit topics to consolidate their learning. All pupils are well supported in class by teachers and education care officers.

123. A co-ordinator has been appointed recently and has good ideas for developing the subject. Procedures have not yet been implemented for assessing pupils' progress and for monitoring planning and teaching. Nevertheless, the subject is effectively delivered throughout the school. The school has made little progress in implementing the recommendations made in the last report. In particular the scheme of work has not been developed. Existing resources are used well, but they are poorly stored and documented, and overall they are unsatisfactory.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

124. Pupils' and students' achievements in geography in Key Stage 1 are very good. In Key Stages 2 and 3 they are satisfactory. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in their lessons and over time. Geography is not taught at Key Stage 4.

125. At Key Stage 1, pupils are offered a relevant geography curriculum, with content based on their school and the surrounding local area. Most pupils recognise pictures of their school and can identify on a school model their class, the playground, the car park, the entrance and the road. They recognise pictorial symbols for hill, church, road, traffic lights and a river, and use them when discussing and writing about their work. The local area around the school is used effectively, which promotes learning based on practical experience. For example, pupils aged five and six identify the local church, the pharmacy, the fish and chip shop and also state their respective uses. When walking outside school premises, they show a good sense of road safety and understanding of the function of traffic signals.

126. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 2. Evidence was gathered from an analysis of pupils' work, displays in classrooms, school documentation and discussion with the co-ordinator, teachers and pupils. By the age of 11, most pupils increase their geographical vocabulary and become more aware of their surroundings. They know how to use a globe, and some of them know that the world is divided into land and sea. Most are aware of seasonal changes in weather. Some can name the equator and recognise pictures of deserts. They associate palm trees and camels with deserts, and a few know that the Nile and the pyramids are in Egypt.

127. By age fourteen, pupils expand their knowledge of the world, and most of them know some basic facts about broad climatic regions such as the tropics, the deserts and the arctic. They know that the world is divided into countries, but only a few can identify one or two prominent countries. For example, pupils in Year 7 know some basic facts about India, its climate and its people, but very few of them can position India on the globe. Most are aware of environmental issues such as conservation and pollution, and some of the older pupils are able to give examples and voice their concerns. Visits to local factories enhance their understanding of transport, industry, trade and employment.

128. Most pupils show interest in their geography lessons. They respond positively to instructions, co-operate well in class and are willing to learn. There is, however, a small number of pupils with emotional and behaviour problems whose behaviour is a severe distraction to others, and which demands a disproportionate amount of the teachers' attention.

129. No geography lessons were observed in Key Stage 2 so it is not possible to make judgements on teaching. Teaching at Key Stage 1 is very good. Teachers are well prepared, with very good knowledge of the subject that is presented effectively and with enthusiasm. Teaching provides pupils with a rich linguistic environment, encouraging them to listen and take turns in an orderly manner. Rapport with pupils is excellent, and this enhances good behaviour and learning. Teaching presents new knowledge in small incremental and interconnected steps, and this reinforces learning by maintaining the interest of pupils. Teachers work closely with a education care officers to provide a stimulating environment.

130. In Key Stage 3, only two lessons were seen, both in Year 7. The teaching in this year group is satisfactory. There are good explanations and all pupils are engaged and encouraged to participate. However, there is very little time for discussion. Good use is made of praise to reinforce effort and to keep pupils focused on their tasks. Management of pupils is satisfactory, but a minority of pupils with emotional and behaviour problems misbehave during the lessons, which has a detrimental effect on teaching and learning.

131. The subject is unsatisfactorily managed. Very little progress has been achieved in the co-ordination of this subject since the last inspection. Schemes of work lack detail and provide little guidance for continuity and progress. There are no agreed procedures for marking, grading or assessing the work of the pupils. Teaching and learning are not monitored. Existing learning resources are adequate but are poorly stored and are not properly recorded. There are too few artefacts.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

132. Pupils' achievement in information and communications technology (ICT) is satisfactory, and most pupils make sound progress in relation to their age and ability at each key stage.

133. Pupils learn information and communication technology through other subjects in Key Stages 1 and 2, but in Key Stages 3 and 4 they have separate lessons in information and communication technology skills. Pupils follow the syllabus for the Oxford and Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts (OCR) Record of Achievement in information and communication technology in Years 10 & 11.

134. By age seven, pupils listen to talking stories, choose colours, and match objects and symbols on computers in English and mathematics lessons. They word-process their news using the keyboard, and can print their work with some support. They begin to use an art program and acquire good mouse skills. By 11, pupils use information and communication technology to communicate their ideas and information in different ways. With some support, they can save their work and retrieve it. For example, they use a digital camera to record each other at work and interesting events at school. They use the images well for display, photographs and posters.

135. At age 14, pupils use the mouse effectively to select the program of their choice. Most switch with confidence from one menu to another. For example, in using an art program, most pupils access and select the paint and draw tools accurately. Higher attaining pupils select, copy and move objects around the screen. Lower attaining pupils change the colour or pattern, following the instructions on their work card. Most pupils can save and print their work. Higher attaining pupils know how to enter commands on a programmable toy (Roamer) and can estimate distances and turns. They link commands to perform a specific task. They use word-processing well to improve the presentation and accuracy of their work, importing well chosen illustrations into the text.

136. By age 16, pupils follow a nationally accredited course and are working towards independence in information and communication technology. They complete a series of well presented and accurate projects, ranging from spreadsheets to posters. They use information and communication technology well to support their work in English and mathematics. For example, in an English lesson, pupils word-process their response to a scene in Macbeth, producing posters, poems and letters with striking illustrations, showing a good understanding of both the scene from the play and the use of information and communication technology. In an information and communication technology lesson, Year 11 pupils use data, spreadsheets and simple formulae to estimate an increase in the fox population on farmland. They display their work well using a range of graphs, and can clearly explain the processes they have used. By the time they leave school, most pupils have developed basic skills of loading, saving and printing. They have the skills to use the majority of the programs run by the school, although they need more instruction on how to speed up their use of the keyboard. Pupils know how to access the Internet and to use E-mail.

137. Information and communication technology is a developing subject in the school and the present courses and scheme of work are relatively new. However, most pupils are making satisfactory progress, and a few are making rapid progress particularly in Year 11. This is due to more effective teaching, supported by a sound level of planning to ensure that pupils have a wide range of information and communication technology experiences and are able to consolidate their learning and build on acquired skills.

138. Pupils enjoy using computers. Older pupils are particularly excited by the new developments in technology and are most enthusiastic users of the Internet and e-mail. Pupils respond well to their teachers, listen carefully and work co-operatively together. They concentrate for surprisingly long periods of time. Their behaviour is generally good, and they can be trusted to use the computers sensibly.

139. There are no discrete information and communication technology lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2. Teaching is generally satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and 4. Teachers are more confident now when teaching information and communication technology than at the last inspection. Pupils respond with enthusiasm and interest and are highly motivated to learn. Lessons are well planned and in the better lessons there are high expectations backed with a strong level of support, and pupils work at a brisk pace. This ensures that pupils build systematically on their skills and are totally involved. They have successful results and are proud of their finished work.



140. There has been satisfactory improvement in the subject since the last inspection due to effective leadership and careful planning. A programme of whole school staff training has been partially implemented; long and medium term planning is in place and is well used. These developments, although at an early stage, have led to an improvement in teacher confidence. The impact of recent staff training can be seen in the use of a wider range of information and communication technology applications in lessons for all subjects. Out-of-date machines have been replaced and the range of software improved to promote more effective learning. This, in turn, has encouraged the increased use of information and communication technology to support learning in some subject areas. The co-ordinator manages the subject with energy and enthusiasm and has good systems in place to monitor information and communication technology access, progress and achievement at appropriate levels. Because there is no information and communication technology technician, teachers spend time on managing machines and the network, which takes them away from tasks directly related to teaching.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **FRENCH**

141. All pupils take French in Key Stage 3, and their achievement, and progress over time are satisfactory overall. The sound standard of work reported at the last inspection has been sustained. Key Stage 4 pupils have been disapplied from the National Curriculum to allow additional time to follow a work-related course.

142. By the age of 14, many pupils are confident in reciting French words that are familiar to them. They know phrases for times of the day, for example “l’après midi” and “ Il est huit heures moins le quart”, days of the week, seasons, numbers and colours. They listen carefully to one another and their teacher, and follow instructions successfully. Higher attaining pupils can answer a limited range of questions in French. They begin to build up a vocabulary of French words and short phrases, which they read and write correctly, taking care with pronunciation. They match words with the right objects. Younger pupils in Years 7 and 8 are consolidating the vocabulary associated with food and drink and the home. They can identify items of clothing for example, “le pantalon, une casquette, les chaussettes”, and name them using the correct grammar. Lower attaining pupils in the key stage begin to understand and respond to some everyday phrases. They answer questions requiring them to state whether a statement is “Vrai ou faux?” By the time they are fourteen, some higher attaining pupils are able to speak some familiar, well-rehearsed sentences confidently. For example they respond to greetings appropriately and can answer the question “Quelle couleur?” with “C’est rouge”. They steadily extend their vocabulary and increase the accuracy of their pronunciation and writing.

143. Teaching has an even balance of good and satisfactory lessons. Teaching expertise is generally sound, with better lessons characterised by the teacher making confident use of the target language. However, teachers who lack confidence in spoken French do not use the language enough, which means there are missed opportunities for pupils to rehearse their language skills. Nevertheless, teachers use their good relationships with pupils effectively by encouraging them to

participate confidently and persevere with their efforts. Where French is spoken for a good proportion of the lesson and the teacher is consistent in requiring and encouraging pupils to use and understand it, pupils make good progress in all areas of French. Pupils enjoy the activities in French lessons and learning is good. They are curious about France and its culture, and are keen to try out phrases in French. They listen carefully and persevere in their attempts to pronounce words correctly. They stay on task and work sensibly together.

144. The subject is satisfactorily managed. The co-ordinator has had successful in-service training, and more training is planned to take place over the next few months. Pupils are now following nationally accredited examination courses. The long and medium term planning now in place ensures that pupils build on their skills over time and do not repeat work unnecessarily. The school policy for modern foreign languages is under review to accommodate the new orders for the National Curriculum, the new scheme of work and the examination course. The curriculum is now more balanced, and has been extended to include a broader coverage of the programmes of study, and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Assessment procedures are now in place. However, there is still a need for more training to develop subject expertise and it is important that this takes place. At present, there are no opportunities to enhance pupils' knowledge and experience by French-based activities out of the classroom, where pupils might get the chance to practice their skills in real situations and learn more about the culture of France.

## **MUSIC**

145. Pupils' achievement is good to the age of eleven because they have opportunities to listen to and enjoy music as well as developing their skills in performing and composing simple tunes. In Key Stage 3, however, music was only reintroduced into the timetable in September 1999. From the limited evidence available, pupils do not appear to be building on their previous learning, and their overall progress is unsatisfactory as a result. Music is not taught in Key Stage 4.

146. By age seven, pupils have experienced a variety of music. They sing nursery rhymes and action songs together and make sounds using un-tuned percussion instruments. They learn to follow hand signals for starting and stopping singing or playing, and, as a group, they perform before an audience at school concerts.

147. By age 14, pupils sing in unison and in parts. Last year, a group sang a 'round' in the Harvest Festival celebrations. They begin to learn the basic rules of notation and can follow a simple musical pattern. They understand that music can be loud or quiet, slow or quick to convey different experiences and feelings. Pupils become more skilled at controlling the playing of instruments, and attempt to compose simple tunes for themselves. They also develop greater musical appreciation, and can express their preferences for different styles by identifying likes and dislikes. Pupils in Year 9 choose appropriate songs to give atmosphere for the drama they are rehearsing, on the 'Life of Joseph'. However pupils' achievement is restricted by the lack of a structured curriculum between 11 and 15, and overall it is unsatisfactory.

148. Music is not taught in Key Stage 4, but pupils are encouraged to bring their own compact disks to school so they can enjoy music in their free time.

149. The quality of teaching is consistently good in the Key Stages 1 and 2. Staff have high expectations of good behaviour, and, in providing a calm supportive atmosphere, they ensure that pupils have the confidence to make individual effort, so achieving to the best of their ability. Teachers have sound knowledge of the subject for the level of work offered and teach with enthusiasm, using a variety of appropriate resources, such as songs and instruments, to hold pupils' interest and concentration. Staff receive valuable support from the visiting pianist. In Key Stage 3, the quality of teaching is variable. Staff have worked hard since last September to provide music lessons. However, they are restricted in the depth of curriculum they can offer because they have had no training to develop their own knowledge and understanding of the subject, and there are no appropriate schemes of work to guide the content of their lessons. In most lessons learning is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy music, listen attentively and follow instructions. They are proud of their achievements and will clap voluntarily at others' success, such as when someone sings or plays an instrument on their own. Throughout the school, pupils usually sing with enthusiasm, although they show less interest when the songs chosen are not age-appropriate. The learning of some older pupils is unsatisfactory in a few lessons, because teaching lacks variety and pace, and resources are not appropriate for the age of pupils concerned; for example, infant songbooks are used with pupils in Key Stage 3. Consequently pupils are bored and become disinterested and disruptive.

150. The subject is managed satisfactorily in Key Stages 1 and 2 where there is a policy and scheme of work, although there is a need to develop systems for assessment, recording and recording. Management in Key Stage 3 is unsatisfactory. There is no planned curriculum for pupils aged eleven to fifteen. The school policy makes no mention of Key Stage 3, and there is no scheme of work, no assessment and no system for recording. The lack of a music specialist in the senior department of the school fails to ensure that pupils receive an appropriate curriculum and satisfactory standards of teaching.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

151. Physical education is a strength of the school. The subject received a good report at the last inspection, and there have been very significant developments, particularly at Key Stages 3 and 4. Throughout the school, pupils develop very well in relation to their age and ability because they have experiences in a full range of physical skills, which enable them to plan, perform and join in evaluating their performance. Discussion and ongoing assessment in lessons and other activities is a strong feature throughout the school.

152. Although it was not possible to see a lesson at Key Stage 1, teachers' records and assessments show that pupils by the age of seven have grasped the concept of space, learnt to explore it by running and jumping and use a range of small equipment for simple games. They become aware of the response of the body to activity. They use their skills in simple gymnastics and dance, employing hands and feet to move in different directions. They learn ball skills, developing footwork and catching. Support staff help teachers very effectively by working closely

with lower achievers and others who need individual attention. By age 11, pupils develop their early skills and widen their range of experiences. In a swimming lesson at the local leisure centre, pupils up to the age of eleven are seen achieving at a level appropriate for their age. They change for swimming in an independent manner and their behaviour is excellent. They listen carefully to instructions and are very attentive to safety. They have made good progress over time and are seen to make further progress during a lesson, a number showing good use of the breaststroke in swimming commendable distances. Pupils show skills in floating on the back, and develop growing confidence in the water.

153. By the age of 14, pupils have developed their skills very well. Most are able to swim several widths using the front crawl. They can glide competently, using floats, and change to the back crawl. In gymnastics, pupils have learnt the importance of warm-up exercises before moving to more strenuous activity. They take part in competitions outside school, and, during the inspection, won a soccer match against another school, showing good team skills and exemplary sportsmanship.

154. The quality of teaching is never less than good, and it is very good in most lessons. Lessons are carefully prepared and planned to suit pupils' needs. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and support staff are well deployed. A strong feature is the frequent use of praise, after which pupils are clearly seen to gain in confidence and self-esteem. Teachers create opportunities in lessons when pupils can discuss their progress and learn from the good practice of others. Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good and enhance the learning process.

155. The quality of learning in all activities is always good. This enables pupils to make very good progress, and this is seen particularly when pupils are happy working within groups and demonstrating their abilities to the class. Their attitudes are always at least good and often very good or excellent. Behaviour is very good, and pupils are a real credit to the school when involved in off-site activities and competitions.

156. The subject is very well managed. Documentation is excellent, with clear and appropriate schemes of work that help non-specialist teachers to be effective. Sound records are kept using the Derbyshire system. The senior management team has been very supportive. An outstanding improvement since the last inspection has been in the broadening of the curriculum, especially at Key Stages 3 and 4, and the use of facilities outside the school. The school now belongs to and uses the Midland canoe club and the Amber Valley sports development, as well as using a local youth centre for activities such as archery. Pupils now participate in competitions and in residential outdoor pursuits. There has been a considerable increase in resources, which are now good. Good use has been made of grants and funding from the Princes Trust and other organisations.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

157. Pupils' achievement in religious education is satisfactory. They learn about the fundamentals of the Christian religion, and are introduced to the main celebrations, important characters and symbolism of other world faiths. By age seven, they begin to understand about themselves and the need to care for each other and the world around us. They learn about Jesus' life, the story of 'His'

birth and the significance of Easter. They celebrate Harvest Festival and take part in the school Harvest and Christmas performances.

158. By age 11, pupils continue to study stories from the Bible, extending their understanding of the significance of such stories. For example, they are aware of why Jesus was angry with the moneylenders in the Temple. They study the Christmas and Easter stories in more depth. For example, the higher attaining pupils understand the significance of the Last Supper in the celebration of Holy Communion in the Christian Church. They have learned about Jonah and the Whale from the Old Testament, and can explain that things happened to Jonah when he disobeyed God. Pupils are made aware of other world religions, such as Hinduism. They know about Rama and Sita, and that Hindus celebrate Diwali, but their knowledge is limited to basic facts and they have little real understanding.

159. By age 14, pupils study the life stories of Biblical characters such as Joseph. They discuss in some detail the events and why characters behaved as they did. For example, why Jacob believed his son Joseph had been killed by a lion, and why Joseph felt he had to trick his brothers in order to force them to bring his Father to see him. Year 9 pupils write and rehearse a play on 'Joseph' to be performed for the school. Pupils extend their awareness of other Faiths to include Judaism. They understand the Koran is an important book like the Bible and draw pictures of the Menorah, but they are unclear of its religious significance.

160. In Key Stage 4, religious education is taken as one of the modules towards accreditation for records of achievement, and pupils study two world religions over a two-year cycle. Evidence of teaching and pupils' achievement is not available this year because religious education is a topic for the summer term.

161. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and sometimes good. In all lessons, the good relationships and positive atmosphere ensure that most pupils listen attentively and join in with group discussions to the best of their abilities. Where learning is good, teachers plan well, use a variety of activities and resources, and keep the lesson moving at a good pace, so that pupils remain on task. Teachers' skilled use of questioning makes sure that most pupils can understand the meaning of a Bible story in terms of their own experiences. The quality of pupils' learning is always satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils generally behave well and sit quietly, especially when watching the well chosen videos. They show interest and ask appropriate questions. Occasionally, particularly in Key Stage 3, they are disinterested, stating they do not enjoy the subject.

162. The subject lacks effective co-ordination. There are no recording or assessment procedures. Individual teachers select from the Derbyshire Agreed Syllabus, the topics they plan to teach within a year group, but there is no monitoring to ensure that topics are not repeated or missed altogether. There has been no in-service training for staff and no clear planning for the future.