

INSPECTION REPORT

THE WOODLANDS SCHOOL

Scarborough

LEA area: North Yorkshire

Unique reference number: 121770

Head teacher: Mr P Edmondson

Reporting inspector: Mr M H Whitaker
1424

Dates of inspection: 22 – 25 May 2000

Inspection number: 198988

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special (Residential)
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	2 - 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Woodland Drive Scarborough
Postcode:	YO12 6QN
Telephone number:	01723 373260
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Aston
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr M Whitaker	Registered inspector	Modern foreign languages	What sort of school is it
		Equal opportunities	The schools results and achievements
			Teaching
			Leadership, management, efficiency
			Staffing
			Accommodation
			Resources
Mrs K Lee	Lay inspector		Pupils attitudes, behaviour, values and personal development
			Attendance
			Welfare, health, safety, child protection
			Assessment and monitoring of academic performance
			Monitoring of personal development
			Personal support and guidance
			Partnership with parents
Mr P Hall	Team inspector	Science	Curriculum
		Information technology	Links with community
		Physical education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
		English as an additional language	
Mrs H Eadington	Team inspector	English	
		Religious education	
Mr P Isherwood	Team Inspector	Mathematics	
		Music	
		Under fives	
Mr D Ward	Team Inspector	Geography	
		History	
Mr M Wright	Team Inspector	Art	
		Design and technology	
		Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Woodlands School is a maintained special school for pupils aged 2 – 16 who have moderate learning difficulties. Because of their special educational needs their attainment on entering the school is below that expected for their age. Within the school, there is specialist provision for pupils with severe communication difficulties, including autistic spectrum disorders. The school has a specialist nursery, and residential hostel accommodation which provides a twenty-four hour curriculum for some pupils. The school is approved for 90 pupils and has 87 on roll. Less than 5 percent of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, which reflects the community it serves. Approximately 35 percent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. All pupils have statements of special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Woodlands school is now an effective school. It achieves standards which are good for the pupils attending, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Standards are very good in the nursery. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. Teaching is predominantly good, often very good and almost always at least satisfactory. Most of the pupils are making good progress in many subjects and in relation to their individual targets. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced with some exceptions and is relevant to the needs of the pupils. Good attention is paid to the welfare of pupils in the school and hostel. Parents are kept informed about their child's progress and are generally happy with the school. At least satisfactory improvements have been made since the last inspection. In some areas they are good and there are clear indications of the school's ability to improve further. It has responded well to the significant challenges it faced. It is well led and managed and now provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The head teacher, working closely with key staff and governors, provides good leadership and management for the school.
- A very effective school development plan clearly identifies the priorities for improvement, and it is being implemented well.
- The quality of teaching throughout the school is predominantly good enabling pupils to learn effectively, develop positive attitudes and to make good progress particularly in literacy and numeracy and in relation to their individual targets.
- Pupils with particular special needs such as behavioural problems or autistic disorders are well managed.
- Nursery provision is very good, with high quality teaching leading to good learning in all areas of development.
- The hostel provides good quality provision for those who require residential facilities.
- Very good procedures are in place for child protection, ensuring pupils' welfare and monitoring and improving attendance.

What could be improved

- Achievement and progress in science, design and technology and information technology are not as good as they should be because there are gaps in what is taught. Statutory requirements are not fully met in design and technology and information technology.
- Subject co-ordinators do not effectively monitor the quality of teaching to determine its impact on learning.
- The governing body does not have systematic procedures for monitoring the standards achieved or the quality of teaching.
- Accommodation for science and design and technology limits pupils' opportunities in these subjects.
- Approaches to assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress are inconsistent particularly between Key Stage 2 and 3.
- Annual reports to parents do not contain all the necessary information.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made at least sufficient improvement since it was last inspected in September 1997, and in some areas improvements have been good. Although further improvement is necessary the school is very clear about areas for development and has good quality plans to move forward. It no longer has serious weaknesses and its capacity for further improvement is good. The school development plan is now a purposeful document and links the use of available finance to the priorities over a carefully planned and appropriate time-scale. There is now a clear sense of direction and staff have a more precise understanding of their roles and the part they can play in moving the school forward. The roles of subject co-ordinators have been clarified and continuity between the various sectors of the school, including the hostel, has improved. Curriculum development and assessment procedures are now satisfactory. Statutory requirements are not fully met in design and technology and information technology. There is a need to continue with curriculum development and the improvements to assessment procedures, so that pupils can continue to build on their learning as they move through the school. Achievement in the subjects and key stages identified as weaknesses in the last report is now good. Opportunities for pupils awareness of cultural issues has improved. In addition the Nation Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are being successfully introduced and are having a significant impact on teaching and learning.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 11	by age 16	Key	
speaking and listening	A	B	B	very good	A
reading	A	B	B	good	B
writing	A	B	B	satisfactory	C
mathematics	A	B	B	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	A	B	B	poor	E

Children in the nursery achieved very well and make very good progress in all areas of learning as a result of the high quality of teaching, planning and assessment. Good progress and achievement are made by pupils throughout the school in all aspects of English, mathematics, personal social and health education and in relation to individual targets.

Achievement and progress in relation to information technology, design and technology and science is restricted because of some imbalances or omissions in the curriculum or because of the quality of the accommodation.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to school. They are enthusiastic. Their interest and involvement in lessons is particularly good when a range of activities matched to their individual needs is presented.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is generally good although a minority of pupils misbehave. When this occurs it is managed well with little effect on the learning of others.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good and pupils respond well to the opportunities provided to take responsibilities and show initiative.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. It is in line with attendance at similar schools. A high percentage of pupils attend very well but the overall level is reduced by a small number of poor attenders.

The vast majority of pupils have good attitude to learning and behave well. They are particularly good in the nursery and within the hostel provision. A small number of pupils do behave inappropriately by shouting out or not paying attention but this generally occurs when teaching is not stimulating or well-matched to their needs. The same group can and do behave very well, displaying positive attitudes to learning when these factors are good. Support staff play an important part in this.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is predominantly good and often very good. It is rarely unsatisfactory and occasionally excellent. In the 92 lessons observed 99 percent was satisfactory or better with 46 percent being good and 38 percent being very good. It is consistently very good in the nursery. Teaching in English and mathematics is good and sometimes very good throughout the school. Literacy and numeracy are well taught. In science it is good overall but varies between very good and unsatisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4.

Strengths in teaching include the generally good knowledge and understanding teachers have of the subjects and the diverse needs of the pupils; the very good management of pupils and the good use of resources, support staff and time. The use of assessment is generally satisfactory although it is excellent in the nursery. The overall good quality of teaching enables pupils of all ages to learn effectively, achieve well and make good progress in many subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum overall although there are areas of some subjects not fully covered. The nursery curriculum is very good. Good provision is made for pupils with autism in Key Stage 1 and 2.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. Provision for personal development is good although it is difficult for the school to track the various areas of the curriculum where this is promoted.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for Child Protection and the welfare of pupils are very good. Systems for monitoring academic progress are satisfactory but there is no consistent whole school approach to assessment. The procedures for promoting and monitoring behaviour are good and those for promoting and monitoring attendance are very good.

Parents have positive views about the school and have seen improvements recently. Good quality information is provided for parents although annual reports do not always provide information about progress in every subject. Statutory requirements are not fully met in design and technology and information technology. Child Protection procedures and procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Good. The head teacher has provided very good leadership and management. He has been well supported by the deputy head teacher and other key staff and overall leadership and management are good.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well. It has become increasingly involved in the overall management of the school and is very supportive of the new head teacher.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has developed satisfactory systems for evaluating its performance. The plans to involve greater monitoring of teaching through subject co-ordinators and governors are yet to be fully introduced.
The strategic use of resources	The strategic use of resources is satisfactory. Accommodation is used to best effect and is enhanced through the use of community resources. Support staff are generally well deployed.

Staffing levels are good and there is a good match between staff expertise and experience and the demands of the curriculum. Resources are satisfactory overall. Accommodation is inadequate for design and technology and science, particularly in Key Stages 3 and 4. The leadership and management are good but the quality of teaching is not yet systematically monitored. Best value principles are applied appropriately.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The leadership of the school.• The quality of teaching.• The support provided for their children.• The school is approachable and their views are listened to.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework set.• The inconsistent use of the home/school diary.• The behaviour of some pupils.

The inspection team agreed with the positive views of the parents. They found that, although some pupils can behave inappropriately this is generally well managed with little impact on the learning of others. Homework is satisfactory overall and good for nursery children for example, in relation to speech therapy. Home/school diaries do vary in their use throughout the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 All children under five attending the nursery achieve well, and in some areas very well, in relation to their earlier attainment. They make, at least, good progress in all aspects of learning. This is the result of consistently very good teaching, excellent assessment and very good planning. The progress they make in personal and social education is particularly good.

2 Pupils throughout the school achieve well and make good progress in all aspects of English. This is a result of at least good teaching and the good leadership of the subject as well as the successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. In Key Stage 1 speaking and listening skills are improved as pupils' listen attentively to stories and their vocabulary develops through their contributions to discussions, gaining confidence through the encouragement and praise they receive. In Key Stage 2 they build on this success paying close attention to others and joining in with more sophisticated role-play. Pupils with communication difficulties achieve well through the use of gestures, pictures and symbols. In Key Stage 3 they contribute well to discussions and their vocabulary grows to include many words relevant to other subjects such as science, history and geography. In Key Stage 4, pupils listen carefully to passages read to them and answer questions confidently, illustrating their understanding.

3 The National Literacy Strategy is used effectively to help pupils to make good progress in reading and writing. In Key Stage 1, pupils enjoy looking at books and treat them with respect. Expressive reading by teachers develops pupils' understanding and enjoyment of books. Through games they learn to match words and pictures and by the end of Key Stage 1 higher attaining pupils have a widening bank of words they can recognise on sight. They develop their ability to overwrite or copy letters and familiar words with growing accuracy. In Key Stage 2 pupils confidently join in shared reading sessions with higher attainers recognising a wide range of common words and reading simple text with increased fluency. In writing by the end of Key Stage 2 they are beginning to draft and redraft their work in order to improve it. Handwriting skills continue to develop well with great emphasis being placed on correct letter formation. Creative writing is enhanced through the range of opportunities provided for writing in different styles, such as narrative and poetry.

4 By Key Stage 3 most pupils' reading skills have developed sufficiently for them to study simplified texts from literature, such as Shakespeare. Their writing improves through the extended range of opportunities provided for example, writing letters, newspaper reports and book reviews. Good progress continues through Key Stage 4 through reading and discussing a comprehensive range of literature. Role-play and drama play a significant part in developing pupils' understanding of character and plot. Most pupils' work shows increasing awareness of a range of writing styles and growing confidence in the use of punctuation. These skills are effectively used for practical purposes such as completing application forms.

5 Pupils in all key stages achieve well in mathematics and make good progress. There has been good improvement since the last inspection when progress was unsatisfactory in Key Stage 4.

6 In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in their understanding of number. Lower attaining pupils need help at the beginning of the year to match and trace over numbers, by Easter they identify and name numbers to five. Average attaining pupils order numbers to 10 and carry out simple addition and subtraction. They identify circles, triangles and rectangles, whilst higher attaining pupils use information from 'pie-charts', for example to answer questions about animals in a field. In Key Stage

2 pupils build on their learning. Lower attaining pupils work with numbers from five to 10, whilst average attainers solve number problems such as how many biscuits are left if a certain number are eaten. Higher attaining pupils measure in centimetres and are developing an understanding of times tables. In Key Stage 3 pupils develop their understanding of number, lower attainers work with two digit numbers. Whilst average attaining pupils have improved understanding of multiplication tables up to 10×10 . The higher attaining pupils use their mathematical knowledge to answer problems such as working out the distance from Shrewsbury to Welshpool. They use calculators well to work out problems. In Key Stage 4 the pupils work towards Units of Accreditation and Numeracy Certificate of Achievement. The pupils show good progress in their development of mental mathematics strategies. Lower attaining pupils need aids such as number boards when they work out addition and subtraction using two digit numbers. The average and higher attaining pupils answer questions such as 'what is $3 \times 3 \times 3$ squared?'. The average and higher attaining pupils use fractions and decimals, for example, to find 25 percent of 28, a pupil explains that 14 is half of 28 and 7 is half of 14. The pupils identify two and three-dimensional shapes and show understanding of reflective symmetry. They measure with increasing accuracy.

7 In science pupils' achievements and progress are satisfactory overall. Achievement is good in Key Stages 1 and 2, generally satisfactory in Key Stage 3, and satisfactory in Key Stage 4. This represents slight improvement since the last inspection where results were satisfactory throughout the school. Further improvement in Key Stage 4 in particular is unlikely to occur until opportunities for specialist accommodation has been extended since this leads to some imbalance in the curriculum.

8 In Key Stage 1 pupils learn about forces during 'bell/push' experiments. They are able to predict what might happen if the angle of the ramp changes, and which cars might go fastest. Higher attaining pupils begin to grapple with what factors might lead to particular cars going farthest. Pupils can name major external parts of the body. They sort everyday materials into groups and observe what happens when hot water and jelly meet.

9 Key Stage 2 pupils can predict which objects are likely to sink, and which to float. In a well-developed investigation they can explore the permeability of a range of materials and use that information to predict their uses. Pupils use a small range of components to complete an electrical circuit and are delighted with their success. Some pupils complete a circuit diagram with recognisable symbols.

10 Key Stage 3 pupils build useful workbooks recording their endeavours, often in the form of completed work sheets. These do not always challenge higher attaining pupils. By the end of the key stage pupils show progress from the earlier years. They show a mature approach to health and sex education lessons, and are able to name female and male changes at puberty, using the correct language for developing sex organs without embarrassment. Year 8 pupils make good use of the opportunity to conduct experiments in distillation, evaporation and condensation. They set up experiments well, taking care when using heat sources and hot liquids. They observe the changes between liquid and gaseous states closely, seeing how the process can be used to separate solids from liquids. Pupils can sort a range of materials into those that are man-made and those that occur naturally.

11 In Key Stage 4 pupils can correctly identify when circuits are complete and will light up. They can use diagrams to show the behaviour of light in pin-hole cameras. Older pupils develop an understanding of the relationship between breathing and exercise and are able to explain this.

12 Pupils throughout the school make good progress and achieve well in religious education and in music. In history and geography in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and in French in Key Stages 3 and 4 progress and achievement are good. These subjects are not taught in the other key stages. In art achievement is satisfactory and sound progress is made throughout the school.

13 In physical education progress and achievement are good in Key Stages 3 and 4 and satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2. Progress and achievement in information technology and design and technology are unsatisfactory. This is because some aspects of both subjects are not fully taught and statutory requirements are not met, for example, there are limited opportunities for control technology and for work with resistant materials. However, progress in the food elements of design and technology is good and in information technology some pupils achieve well and make rapid progress in Key Stages 3 and 4.

14 Pupils of all ages make good progress in personal, social and health education and in relation to the targets in their individual education plans.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15 The vast majority of pupils have good attitudes to their work and to their life in school. This has been maintained since the last inspection. These are particularly good in the nursery and within the hostel. Younger pupils are especially attentive and interested in their lessons. The level of attendance is satisfactory, similar to that of similar schools. This has improved since the last inspection. A high percentage of pupils attend school very regularly but the level is reduced by a small number of poor attenders, for example, one pupil has remained on the school register although the local authority is making temporary alternative provision. Pupils arrive at school punctually although transport arrangements can affect this.

16 Most pupils are enthusiastic in lessons and try hard to do well. This is often due to the good teaching, the carefully planned lessons and the good level of support which keep pupils motivated and working hard. For example, in a mental mathematics session, Year 8 pupils found the card game devised by their teacher interesting and were keen to win. The game helped the pupils to develop their understanding of numbers.

17 Behaviour is generally good in the classroom and around the school. Most pupils are well behaved in lessons. They are polite and friendly to adults and to each other. Occasionally, for example in Year 9, pupils can behave inappropriately when the teaching is not stimulating or the lesson is not matched sufficiently to their needs. They do respond sensibly when the lesson holds their interest and the behaviour is managed well by staff. There were 7 fixed period exclusions in the year prior to inspection. These have been used appropriately to deal with instances of unacceptable behaviour in a small minority of pupils.

18 The personal development of pupils is good. Pupils do understand how their actions and words can have an effect on others through the consistent efforts of class teachers and support assistants to draw it to their attention. They listen to each other in class and work well in pairs, for example when copying data on to the computer work was speeded up when one pupil read out the letters and the other one typed. When given the chance, pupils are able to take responsibility for routines such as "Today's special helpers" in class 2. Pupils in the hostel benefit from the excellent programme of activities offered. The members of the School Council are clearly confident in their role, proud of the improvements they have initiated and feel valued in school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19 Teaching is predominantly good and often very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are now taught in age-appropriate groups and teachers have developed greater confidence. They are clearer about their responsibilities. It is rarely unsatisfactory and occasionally excellent. In the 92 lessons observed 99 percent was satisfactory or better with 46 percent being good

and 38 percent being very good. It is consistently very good in the nursery. Teaching in English and mathematics is good and sometimes very good throughout the school. In science it is good but this includes a variation between very good and unsatisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4.

20 Strengths in teaching include the generally good knowledge and understanding teachers have of the subjects and the diverse needs of their pupils; the very good management of pupils and the good use of resources, support staff and time. The use of assessment is generally satisfactory although it is excellent in the nursery. The good quality of the teaching enables pupils of all ages to learn effectively, achieve well and make good progress in many subjects.

21 The teaching of children under five is consistently very good. This has been maintained since the last inspection. Lesson planning is of a high quality clearly identifying the learning objectives for each child and showing the level of support to be available. Support assistants make a significant contribution to the progress made by children. Relationships between the staff in the nursery are excellent and this has a very positive effect on the learning of children. The needs of every child in all areas of learning are clearly understood and these are reflected in the planning, ensuring that work is well-matched to the needs, based on detailed assessments enabling children to build on their learning.

22 In all key stages teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and how to adapt their teaching to ensure that all pupils can benefit from the teaching. In music, for example, the teacher's very good subject knowledge is used very effectively to develop pupils' technical language using terms such as croquet and quaver. In English in Key Stages 3 and 4 good knowledge of literature is used effectively to use simplified texts from Shakespeare or adapted passages from other literature to enable pupils to extend and develop their understanding and this challenges them intellectually. The use of specialist teachers for music and for information technology in the secondary department has had a positive impact on pupils' learning.

23 Planning in all key stages is good. The literacy and numeracy strategies have helped teachers to develop their understanding of planning and has led to clear learning objectives, usually closely matched to targets in individual education plans although the link is not always clear in some English lessons. Planning in mathematics has improved since the last inspection. Lessons are planned to meet the needs of pupils, who become stimulated, motivated and eager to learn. Planning in modern foreign languages is very good. Tasks and activities are clearly identified to meet the needs of groups of pupils of different levels of attainment so that all can learn effectively. For example, in a Year 11 lesson, following whole class role play of a shopping expedition one group continued their development of spoken French through additional role play, whilst others worked in pairs to match sentences and phrases, using dictionaries to write shopping lists. The work was well matched to the individual needs of pupils using assessment information and clear learning objectives were identified. As a result all pupils learned effectively. In geography good forward planning enables pupils to make good progress, for example by taking photographs of locations to help pupils follow a picture map.

24 Expectations are high in Key Stages 1 and 2 and satisfactory overall in Key Stages 3 and 4. Although in some subjects, for example modern foreign languages, history and geography, they are also high for older pupils. In art expectations are not always as high as they could be. In English, throughout the school, teachers have high expectations and set work which challenges pupils to develop further. For example, in studying literature mentioned earlier, pupils are challenged to explain the meaning of texts and develop their understanding. In modern foreign languages pupils are challenged to speak regularly in French, persisting even when they find it difficult.

25 Teachers use a good range of teaching methods to ensure that all pupils are involved in lessons. Again the nation literacy and numeracy strategies have been effective in developing the methods. In history and geography a good range of practical work, investigative work, discussion and writing over

time maintains pupils' motivation and interest in all key stages when the subjects are taught. Similarly in French, lessons move at a brisk pace with regular changes of activity. In a Year 8 lesson, for example, the lesson started with an alphabet song, quickly followed by identifying different jobs in French from photographs and finishing with a matching game where words or job titles had to be matched to photographs. The pace of the lesson and the range of activities ensured that pupils were fully involved and good learning took place.

26 Pupils are effectively managed in lessons in Key Stages 3 and 4 and very effectively in Key Stages 1 and 2. As a result behaviour is good and effective learning can take place. One class in Key Stage 3 needs to be managed effectively to ensure good behaviour. In the vast majority of lessons teachers are very good at organising the group, setting demanding tasks which challenge and motivate the pupils enabling good learning to take place. On the odd occasion where the management is less effective because tasks are not clear or fully explained, pupils can become distracted and learning is affected. Similarly in a Key Stage 4 science lesson less effective management of pupils led to some inappropriate behaviour and reduced the effectiveness of the learning.

27 Pupils' learning support assistants play an important part in pupils' learning and are effectively deployed in lessons to promote learning. In English lessons throughout the school they have clear roles and responsibilities either for groups or individuals which enable all pupils to be fully involved in lessons, and in mathematics lessons support is carefully targeted to enable low attainers to develop their knowledge skills and understanding. Resources are generally well prepared and readily available, for example in the geography and French lessons referred to above the availability of resources was a significant factor in the quality of teaching and the progress made by pupils. Lessons generally move at a lively pace maintaining pupils' interest.

28 The use of homework is satisfactory throughout the school in supporting learning.

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

29 The school has worked hard to meet the curriculum issues raised in the last inspection report. In this it is being successful in almost all aspects, providing a generally broad curriculum, including religious education to the locally agreed syllabus, for all its pupils. However there are elements that lack balance or are not present, or well developed, and the statutory requirements are not met in design and technology and information technology.

30 The curriculum for children under five is well structured and is taught very well against the nationally recommended desirable learning outcomes, providing appropriate assessment and access for the range of needs of the children.

31 The curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 is both broad and balanced, with the exception of information technology, which is not systematically taught as a discrete subject. At present its provision is largely the use of software to support the learning of English and mathematics. Some use of a mouse and modified keyboards is also taking place, contributing to the development of fine motor control. Science would benefit from a clearer strategy to teach experimental and investigative work, although other aspects of the subject are well covered in the planning. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are in place, and extending into Key Stage 3. The strategies have a positive impact on the quality of provision, including teaching methods, and are beginning to contribute to the raising of attainment in these aspects of learning.

32 The curriculum in Key Stages 3 and 4 now benefits from recently improved access to computers and specialist teaching is taking place within a relatively narrow range at present. The

curriculum is generally board and balanced although statutory requirements are not met in design and technology and insufficient attention is paid to investigative work in science. Science and design and technology provision remains limited by the lack of specialist accommodation and resources, restricting opportunities for experimental work and work with resistant materials such as wood, plastic and metal. In the meantime integration projects with local schools and colleges are contributing well for Year 8 pupils who enjoy specialist science teaching, and for older pupils to widen their access to information technology. These opportunities are having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

33 There has been improvement in pupils' access to accreditation in Key Stage 4. Nationally recognised and certificate courses have been introduced for English, mathematics, science, design and technology and information technology. This has led to improved standards and greater expectations in these areas.

34 Subject policies and medium term plans are now in place, and the school has developed an overall curriculum map, following a restructuring of classes into year groups. Gaps in balance and continuity have been identified and subject co-ordinators' plans are in place to overcome these. However, inconsistent assessment procedures do lead to some lack of continuity for pupils, particularly between Key Stages 2 and 3. There is very little regular extra-curricula activity at present, although there is a very strong planned programme for pupils who spend time in residence. The quality of the curriculum, and the degree of access to it, is enriched by the inputs from specialist staff from many disciplines working alongside teaching staff. Evidence of their expertise and co-operation is seen on a daily basis, and further evidenced in the good quality of the annual review processes and reports. Although targets are set during the annual review meetings these are not always translated into precise targets in individual plans or lesson plans. As a result targets are not fully addressed in every lesson and progress is sometimes hindered.

35 The provision of personal and social education is often strong, particularly in the early years and in work related and careers education, and very effective and sensitive health and sex education programmes. Although there is no clear scheme for teaching these subjects in the primary classes, it is clear from the improvements that pupils make, that individual teaching and support from staff teams who know pupils well is having a beneficial impact. Pupils improve their personal skills and learn to modify behaviour, respect each other and grow in confidence, a point made by many parents.

36 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is satisfactory, an improvement since the last inspection. The spiritual development of pupils is satisfactory, where some good developments have been made in the quality of the work since the last inspection. Good use is made of religious education lessons, class and school assemblies to extend the pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils enjoy a range of curriculum opportunities to appreciate the diversity of natural forms and become aware of the life cycle of insects, the sexuality of human beings, growth cycles and patterns of change in the natural world. They enjoy opportunities to reflect on their own and other's actions. They demonstrate their understanding of the feelings of others when writing stories and poems about World War II. Pupils learn to share and celebrate the success of others in the classroom, during assemblies and in the hostel when in residence. When on well-organised walks from the hostel, pupils become closer to nature, appreciate stillness and silence, and listen with wonder to the sounds of the evening birdsong. The overall programme provides pupils with a knowledge and insight into the values and beliefs of others.

37 The moral development of the pupils is now satisfactory. They make good progress in school in modifying and developing their social skills. They clearly understand right from wrong and, in general, behave well and pay due regard to class and school rules. In lessons they develop opinions and express them clearly in relation to health matters, environmental issues and the outcomes of war. A mixed Year 9 class were helped to talk with refreshing and surprising honesty and care about the

changes that take place in puberty, and grew in stature in each others eyes as a result. School staff teams consistently foster the values of honesty, fairness and respect, acting as valuable adult role models. The personal, social and health education programme, where pupils discuss important matters as a whole class and work within the careers programme and in the hostel, all allow them many opportunities to develop and explore these values to increasingly good effect.

38 Pupils' social development is generally satisfactory and often it is good. They work conscientiously in the classrooms, relating well in most cases with peers and adults. They learn to take turns when using equipment and willingly share resources with others. Pupils behave well around the school and during meal times where they collaborate to create a calm atmosphere, which is convivial and enjoyable. On arrival and departure and during structured times, pupils are enabled to demonstrate an increasing social awareness of the needs of others. They are consistently polite and courteous. This grows during work experience when pupils extend their skills in a variety of community based settings. Pupils who stay in residence enjoy additional opportunities to develop their social and independence skills, particularly within the 'Design for Living' course element of the Gateway programme. However, in general there are too few planned opportunities for pupils to demonstrate independence or personal skills. Good opportunities were provided during the creation of a 'French café' for Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 pupils, to work together, share ideas and enjoy a social experience.

39 Pupils' cultural development is now satisfactorily provided for, and represents significant progress since the last inspection. While the experiences are not always discretely planned for, nor are all the outcomes individually recorded, the planned curriculum now provides a more consistent cultural development. Pupils are becoming more aware of the diversity of cultural life, sometimes leading to a deeper understanding of their own. Examples of pupils developing and understanding of aboriginal art, or the work of European artists are more frequent. In dance, drama and humanities they learn of Greek and European legends using musical skills to full advantage. Pupils enjoy opportunities to visit art exhibitions, museums and cultural centres. Some visits are made by pupils to extend their cultural awareness and support the celebration of festivals. This has led to an improvement since the last inspection.

40 There are few regular opportunities for extra-curricular activities, partly as a result of the difficulties of the wide catchment area of the school.

41 Where the school has access to limited specialist accommodation, resources or teacher expertise, a range of valuable integrated activities with nearby schools and colleges are providing enrichment, raising expectations and providing further opportunities for pupils to extend their social confidence in new settings and to prepare them for the next stage in their education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42 The school has extensive but inconsistently used arrangements and procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. They are satisfactory overall, with good practice in individual subjects, key stages, or by individual teachers. These arrangements, coupled with good teacher knowledge of their pupils, provides extensive information of pupils' progress. However the lack of overall co-ordination and guidance limits their usefulness between key stages, or as a tool to guide whole school curriculum planning. In this respect the procedures remain unsatisfactory, as they were at the time of the last inspection.

43 There is very good and detailed practice in the nursery class, providing very effective information for parents, teachers and other professionals. Recording against the planning of both the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is often good and becoming consistent across Key Stages 1, 2 and 3. Some subjects, such as physical education, history and geography have very detailed

recording and assessment schemes in the secondary department, but they do not link clearly to the systems used lower down the school. Other subjects such as information technology have no systems in place and this is unsatisfactory.

44 Very useful portfolios of examples of pupils' work in most subjects are kept for each pupil, and moderated against National Curriculum levels. However, for lower attaining pupils the steps between levels are too great to provide useful information on progress. This, linked to the lack of precision in some education plan targets, means that small steps in pupils' progress are difficult to identify and report. There is an example of good recording of achievement to be found in the Gateway programme for pupils in residence in the hostel. Accreditation is being developed in many subjects in Key Stage 4, providing clear requirements for assessment at the conclusion of each module.

45 Annual reviews are systematically planned and conducted to a good standard and result in curriculum targets and reports covering most subjects, but they are not consistently translated into specific targets within classroom planning. The marking of pupils' work in their books is sometimes good, but sometimes missing. This is another area where a more consistent approach is needed. However, staff know pupils well and use their knowledge to adequately match learning to pupils with additional special needs. Detailed knowledge leading to thoughtful and accurate planning is a strong feature of the work of care staff in the hostel programme, particularly when planning trips and visits, and represents good progress since the last inspection.

46 The amount of assessment and recording activity is very extensive, and time consuming. However, the inconsistencies in approach reduce its usefulness and efficiency in developing planning. The school is aware of the need for a more manageable and consistent approach and plans to tackle the issue once the work on curriculum development is complete.

47 The school takes very good care of its pupils. Many improvements have been put in place since the last inspection. There are now very good procedures for child protection, which the school ensures are known to all staff. The Childline number is displayed in the school and the hostel. Procedures for health and safety work well and regular fire drills are held. The school has effective links with many support agencies to the benefit of pupils' health and welfare. The level of personal support provided for pupils and the creation of a secure learning environment has a positive effect on pupils' learning.

48 The hostel provides a safe and secure environment with high quality care which helps pupils continue to learn and make progress throughout the whole day. It is a provision which is valued by staff, governors, parents and pupils.

49 There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Staff have high expectations of behaviour. The very good management of pupils by class teachers and support assistants ensures that even when some pupils display challenging behaviour this does not disrupt the work of the class. There is an anti-bullying policy with clear procedures to be followed. The school monitors and promotes good attendance very well with the governing body awarding certificates for full attendance.

50 The school raises pupils' self-esteem and supports their personal development through the effective use of praise. Pupils respond well in lessons to the good relationships between them and all adults. The regular assembly for the whole school to celebrate achievement and effort is a fine example of pupils' sharing in and enjoying each others' success.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51 The links with parents are good and most parents are very supportive of the school. They are happy with the teaching and the new leadership. They are also pleased with the way the school supports their children so that they make good progress and become mature and responsible. The inspection team agrees with all these favourable comments.

52 A few parents are less happy with the amount of homework set and the consistency in the use of the home/school diary. The team finds that the nursery makes very good use of homework and that parents work very well in partnership with their children's learning, for example with speech therapy targets. The use of homework throughout the rest of the school is satisfactory. Although not extensive it is used where appropriate to support learning in a number of subjects. A number of parents were unhappy about pupils' behaviour. The inspection team found that, although a minority of pupils can behave badly, they are well managed and there is little effect on others. The majority of pupils behave well.

53 The quality of information for parents is good. This has improved since the last inspection. Parents appreciate the new prospectus which contains very useful information including a clear summary of the behaviour policy. Regular letters home inform parents of events and school matters.

54 Parents are most involved in their children's learning through their annual reviews. Parents feel the school is approachable and willing to listen to any concerns they may have. This view is shared by inspectors. They play a full part in the reviews which are a valuable exchange of information between home and school. The reviews give a clear summary of children's progress but some do not report on all subjects of the curriculum. This means that they do not always meet statutory requirements.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55 The quality of leadership and management is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The relatively newly appointed head teacher has introduced a range of systems, re-defined roles and responsibilities of key staff and enabled an effective school development plan, linked to the school's finances to be established. He has provided a very good lead for the school and has been well supported by the deputy head teacher and governing body. A very clear sense of direction has been established, there is a shared commitment and enthusiasm to raise standards and all staff are clear about the role they can play. Clear plans are in place to improve the school further and, as a result, the capacity to develop further is good.

56 Much work has been undertaken to ensure that the school development plan is an effective vehicle for school improvement. As a result, very clear priorities for development have been identified, costings have been included so that there is a clear link with the finances available, responsibilities are clear and criteria for evaluating the impact of developments are included. All staff and governors have been involved in determining the priorities and developments are already starting to have an impact on the school. As a result of the analysis for example, secondary pupils are now all taught in age-related class groups and a class for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders has been relocated to a more appropriate part of the school. Learning support assistants are carefully allocated to support groups or individuals. The plans are hampered to some extent by reviews by the local authority which affect the residential provision and the assessment status of the nursery. Good plans have been established to improve the quality of accommodation for secondary science and design and technology.

57 The roles and responsibilities of subject co-ordinators are now much clearer. They have been given financial responsibilities for their subject development, are ensuring that long and medium term plans are in place, particularly to develop the continuity between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 by having responsibility for the subject throughout the school. The head teacher and deputy head teacher

are involved in a School Self-Evaluation course and are introducing the principles into school by beginning to extend the role of the co-ordinator in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and in determining its impact on learning. This is not yet in place in the majority of subjects. The governing body fulfils its statutory obligations and is very supportive of the school. However, statutory requirements are not met in design and technology and information technology. An appropriate committee structure has been established to carry out these roles. The school is fortunate in having governors as Chairs of committees who have a professional background in related areas. They have all worked very closely with the new head teacher in determining the way forward. As a result they have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are fully involved in plans to improve it further. They regularly receive reports from staff and are developing their role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. This is not yet systematic however, and needs to be developed further.

58 A clear link between educational and financial planning, absent at the last inspection, is now fully understood. There has been a large carry forward but there are clear plans to spend this to improve the quality of accommodation and much has already been achieved. The budget is allocated according to priorities and carefully evaluated to determine the effect. Financial systems are sound and recommendations following a full audit on the arrival of the new head teacher have been acted upon. A new bursar has been appointed and new technology is appropriately used. The school follows best value principles in its financial policies and actions through tendering procedures. It now provides value for money. Specific grants are effectively used.

59 The match of teachers and pupils' support assistants to the demands of the curriculum is good. Teaching staff are well qualified and there is a sufficient number to teach the range of subjects and the number of pupils. The recent addition of a music specialist has improved the provision in this subject.

60 Pupil support assistants are also well qualified and make a valuable contribution to learning. Although no formal induction programme is in place, good support is provided for new staff, for example a recently appointed teacher has followed the local authority induction programme for newly qualified teachers despite not being a newly qualified teacher. All staff have been involved in professional development interviews which has helped to identify training needs and informed the school development plan.

61 Accommodation is satisfactory overall. It has been improved recently, particularly in the hostel. Good plans are in place to develop better facilities for secondary science and design and technology where accommodation is currently unsatisfactory. Resources are satisfactory overall.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62 In order to improve further, the head and governors should:

1. Improve pupils' achievement and the progress they are able to make in science in Key Stages 3 and 4 and in information technology and design and technology by:
 - (a) ensuring that all aspects of information technology and design and technology are fully taught and that statutory requirements are met; (Paragraphs 57, 104, 117 and 130)
 - (b) ensuring that a more balanced programme is taught in science, particularly in relation to practical and investigative work; (Paragraphs 32 and 92)
 - (c) improving the quality of accommodation for design and technology and science. (Paragraphs 32, 61, 95 and 109)
2. Improve the overall leadership and management of the school by:
 - (a) developing the role of subject co-ordinators to include monitoring the quality of teaching to determine strengths and weaknesses and its impact on learning. (Paragraph 57)
 - (b) developing the role of the governor through a more systematic approach to monitoring and evaluating the standards achieved and the quality of teaching. (Paragraph 57)
3. Improve the systems for monitoring and assessing the progress made by pupils by ensuring a more consistent approach across the school, particularly as pupils move between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. (Paragraph 46)

In addition to the above key issues the governors should also ensure that annual reports to parents always contain information about the standards achieved and the progress made by their children in all subjects. (Paragraph 54)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	92
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	15

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	38	46	14	1	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	35

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	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	10.0	School data	0

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	78
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YN– Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.6
Average class size	8

Education support staff: YN – Y11

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	442

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999 - 2000
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	£
Total income	898,931
Total expenditure	865,915
Expenditure per pupil	10,188
Balance brought forward from previous year	58,317
Balance carried forward to next year	91,333

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	92
Number of questionnaires returned	27

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	37	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	37	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	33	22	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	42	15	4	8
The teaching is good.	74	22	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	63	26	7	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	15	0	0	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	33	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	48	33	11	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	52	44	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	37	0	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	38	8	4	12

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

63 The children in the nursery make very good progress in their learning in all aspects of the areas of learning for children under five years. They achieve well and in some areas very well, in relation to their prior attainment. All children who enter the nursery have significant special education needs and their attainment when joining the school is below or well below that of children of a similar age.

64 The school develops **personal and social education** very well. The children respond very well to the adults in the room. Although occasionally children find it difficult to concentrate because of their special needs, most sit quietly waiting for their turn at milk and juice time. The children choose their own activities at times, as a boy did when he asked to role play in the 'chip shop'. Most of the children work or play alongside each other but there are times when they sit together looking at books. The children move around the classroom and play-area sensibly. Children's attitudes to work are good. They enjoy the activities offered and want to learn.

65 The children are developing their **language and literacy** skills very well. They listen to the teacher and other adults and respond well to questions and directions. Some children explain what they want by speaking, other use simple Makaton signs. The children are making good progress, for example a child said 'thank you' clearly for the first time ever, in an observed lesson. A number recognise their own name when name cards are held up. Some children are able to use pencils to join dots on the dot-to-dot caterpillar. The children handle books well with some recognising that pictures and words have meaning.

66 The children develop their **mathematical** skills very well. They join in number songs. One child shows good counting skills and counts up to 10 objects. With assistance from adults the children are starting to recognise simple patterns and to match items. The children are beginning to understand words like big and little. Water play helps the children to develop an understanding of capacity.

67 In **knowledge and understanding of the world** the children learn about living things when they look after a mouse, fish and African land snails. They learn about their environment both in the classroom and on visits out of school. The children roll out pastry and use cutters to make pastry shapes. When using the computer the children handle the mouse confidently.

68 **Physical development** is very good. The children pedal and push cars and trikes. They climb with increasing confidence. Catching and throwing skills are developed when the children use the basketball and net. In **creative activities** the children use paints well. They are developing correct techniques when using a brush. There are good links between creative activities and mathematics, for example when children stick shapes on paper.

69 The quality of teaching is consistently very good and this has a very positive effect on the children's achievement and good progress. All lessons are very well planned. Regular very high quality assessment which clearly records what children have learned ensures that the work is matched to meet the needs of the individual child and helps them to move to the next step in their learning. Relationships between the staff in the nursery are excellent. Everyone knows exactly what is happening. This consistency of approach has a very positive effect on children's learning. The teacher is very well supported by the pupil support assistants. All staff in the nursery know the children very well and show a very high degree of care. This has a very positive effect on the personal, social and academic development of the children.

70 The nursery has improved the high standards reported in the last inspection by refining procedures. The resources for learning are used well. There are close links with the parents through the 'Home/School book'. The nursery teacher carries out home visits and encourages parents to reinforce the school's work by carrying out programmes at home.

71 The nursery provides very good quality education and is a strength of the school.

ENGLISH

72 Throughout the school, most pupils achieve well and make good progress in all aspects of English. This is an improvement from the inconsistent, and sometimes unsatisfactory, progress identified in the previous inspection report. Pupils' progress has improved because the subject is well led, and because teaching throughout the school is now always at least good, frequently very good and occasionally outstanding.

73 Pupils in Key Stage 1 are making good progress in the development of their speaking and listening skills. They listen attentively to stories and their vocabulary develops well, because teachers and classroom assistants explain new words clearly, repeat them often and give plenty of opportunities for pupils to practice them. Questions are very well matched to each pupil's needs. This encourages all pupils to contribute to discussions, and their confidence is further promoted by the smiles and praise they receive when successful. During Key Stage 2, pupils build effectively on their earlier learning. They pay close attention when others are speaking, and are able to join in more sophisticated activities such as role-play, waiting their turns sensibly. Pupils who find it difficult to communicate verbally also achieve well, because staff teach and encourage them to use gestures, vocalisation, pictures and symbols.

74 At Key Stage 3, most pupils join in plenary sessions well and are keen to contribute to discussion. Their vocabulary continues to grow to include many words relevant to other subject areas such as science, history and geography, and high attaining pupils use these terms confidently when discussing their work. Pupils in Key Stage 4 listen attentively to passages read to them, and show in their answers to subsequent questions that they understand the main points. Lower attaining pupils tend to limit their responses to short phrases and need encouragement to extend their answers. However, some high attainers ask perceptive questions, and see speaking and listening as a way of formulating their ideas as well as expressing them.

75 Teachers effectively use elements of the National Literacy Strategy to help pupils make good progress in reading and writing. At Key Stage 1, pupils enjoy looking at books and learn to treat them with respect. Their enjoyment and understanding of stories is enhanced by teacher's expressive reading, and by the use of very good book bags containing toys and models to illustrate stories. Pupils begin to recognise letters and to learn the sounds they represent. Through a variety of games, including information technology programs, they learn to match words to pictures. By the end of Key Stage 1 some higher attainers can blend sounds to read single vowel words such as 'bus' and 'man', and have a widening bank of words which they recognise on sight. Pupils overwrite or copy write letters and familiar words with growing accuracy. Good progress is maintained in Key Stage 2, where pupils confidently join in the shared reading sessions, many using intonation for emphasis. Higher attaining pupils make good use of picture cues, and many pupils recognise a wide range of common words and read simple texts with increasing fluency. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are beginning to draft and re-draft their writing in order to improve it. Their handwriting skills continue to develop well, because teachers emphasise correct letter formation and provide a well-structured range of activities to support daily handwriting practice. Pupils benefit from studying a wide range of texts, and from having

opportunities to write in different ways, such as narrative and poetry, and in subjects such as science, history and geography.

76 By Key Stage 3, most pupils' reading skills have improved sufficiently for them to study simplified texts from Shakespeare, and other extended literature. They complete worksheets which are associated with their reading, and are well-matched to their different abilities. Pupils' work improves because they are given many opportunities of writing for a range of purposes including diaries, letters, newspaper reports, poetry, group stories and book reviews. Drafting and re-drafting their work extends pupils' understanding of how they can take responsibility for improving their writing. Most pupils take pride in achieving a good result, often with the use of information technology skills. High attainers can write in fluent, joined script with evenly sized and spaced letters, but this is not used in all subject areas routinely. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 4 and respond positively to reading and discussing a comprehensive range of literature, including adapted passages from 'Romeo and Juliet', 'Macbeth' and 'Swiss Family Robinson'. Role-play and drama continue to play a significant part in consolidating pupils' understanding of character and plot. This was very effectively demonstrated in work on 'Buddy' in which the main characters were portrayed with empathy and sensitivity. Many Key Stage 4 pupils can read independently and with enjoyment, but lower attainers continue to need support in developing confidence in talking new words. This group of pupils is benefiting from a recently introduced system focussing on the phonic elements of reading and spelling. Most pupils' work shows increasing awareness of a range of writing styles, and growing competence in the use of commas, question marks and speech marks. At Key Stage 4, teachers have created an ethos in which pupils are encouraged to develop their English skills so that they can be applied for practical purposes, for example in completing application forms. Key Stage 4 pupils now gain external accreditation in literacy skills and the school is seeking to extend these further.

77 In most lessons pupils behave well. As many find it difficult to sustain concentration on one activity for extended periods of time, they respond most positively when lessons have a balance of speaking, listening, reading and writing. This is well seen in the enthusiastic response of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils to their daily literacy sessions. When occasional instances of inappropriate behaviour occur they are dealt with promptly and effectively so that learning is rarely disrupted. Pupils know what is expected of them, and most try hard to do their best.

78 The consistent progress made by pupils is due to the good and very good teaching throughout the school. Teachers know their pupils well, have high expectations of them and frequently challenge them to do better. Lessons are normally well-planned, although learning objectives are not always clearly linked to pupils' individual education plans. Classroom assistants make a significant contribution to the progress pupils make, by assisting small groups of pupils or individuals to play a full part in lessons. Teachers effectively use a range of skilled teaching methods. The good relationships between teachers, classroom assistants and the pupils enable pupils to become confident as learners.

79 The subject has developed well since the last inspection. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced in Key Stages 1 and 2, although time-table restrictions allow insufficient time for a daily hour-long lesson. Elements of the national framework are proving successful in Key Stage 3, and are to be extended to improve the transition from the primary to the secondary department of the school. Additionally, teachers now have a clearer understanding of the main elements of the subject, and good examples were observed of lessons that focussed on subject language, for example in history and geography. There are a small number of pupils with specific learning difficulties in literacy whose needs are not being fully met, but systems are in place to identify these pupils and ensure that work is well matched to their abilities. Assessment and recording of pupils' progress is now satisfactory, but is not yet sufficiently consistent to closely identify and monitor pupils' attainment and progress throughout the school, or to guide curriculum planning. The school has identified this as an area for

development in the near future.

80 The co-ordinator is both enthusiastic and knowledgeable. She is leading the subject's development well. At present the impact of teaching on pupils' learning is not monitored in a systematic way. Resources have been improved and priorities for future development have been identified. The library has been expanded and the stock colour-coded to enable pupils to make their own selections. However, the library is underused to promote pupils' independent learning, and from next term, every class will have a weekly lesson aimed at improving this. English makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are encouraged to respect other's opinions by listening quietly in discussion, and to respect property in the way they handle and look after books. They reflect on moral issues, and experience wonder and excitement through a variety of literature and drama. Good team-work throughout the school, and in partnership with the speech and language therapist, has resulted in good provision and significant pupil achievements. There is limited use of drama throughout the school although role-play is used effectively in a number of key stages but particularly in the nursery.

MATHEMATICS

81 The pupils in all key stages achieve well in mathematics and make good progress based on their previous learning. There has been good improvement since the last inspection when progress was unsatisfactory in Key Stage 4. The introduction of the numeracy strategy has been effective and it is supported in a number of subjects.

82 In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in their understanding of number. Lower attaining pupils need help at the beginning of the year to match and trace over numbers, by Easter they identify and name numbers to five. The average attaining pupils order numbers to 10 and carry out simple addition and subtraction. They identify circles, triangles and rectangles. The higher attaining pupils use information from 'pie-charts', for example to answer questions about animals in a field. In Key Stage 2 the pupils build on what they have already learned. The lower attaining pupils work with numbers from five to 10. The average attainers solve number problems such as the number of biscuits left if some are eaten. Block graphs are used to record an investigation on how far cars roll. The higher attaining pupils measure in centimetres and are developing an understanding of times tables. In Key Stage 3 the pupils continue to develop their understanding of number. The lower attainers work with two digit numbers. The average attaining pupils have improved their understanding of multiplication tables up to 10×10 . They use their knowledge to answer money problems and work out times of television programmes. The higher attaining pupils use their mathematical knowledge to answer problems such as the distance from Shrewsbury to Welshpool. The pupils use calculators well to work out problems such as 'convert $17/20$ to a percentage'. In Key Stage 4 the pupils work towards Units of Accreditation and the OCR Numeracy Certificate of Achievement. The pupils show good progress in their development of mental mathematics strategies. The lower attaining pupils need aids such as number boards when they work out addition and subtraction using two digit numbers. The average and higher attaining pupils answer questions such as 'what is 3×3 squared?'. The average and higher attaining pupils use fractions and decimals. They explain how they have worked out their answer. For example to find 25 per cent of 28 a pupil explains that 14 is half of 28 and 7 is half of 14. The pupils identify two and three-dimensional shapes and show understanding of reflective symmetry. They measure with increasing accuracy and the higher attainers convert imperial measures to metric.

83 The pupils have good attitudes to mathematics and this has a positive effect on their learning. The majority of pupils listen well to the teacher in introductory sessions. They are keen to take part in the mental mathematics activities. In the main body of the lesson the pupils concentrate on their work. There are a small number of pupils who find this difficult and they misbehave. The teachers deal with

this effectively and, as a result, it does not have an adverse effect on other pupils.

84 The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, when it was sound with a range from unsatisfactory to very good. The quality of teaching is now good with some teaching being very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced in the school. The lessons are well planned and well presented by staff, this stimulates the pupils' interest and ensures that they are well-motivated and eager to work. The methods used catch the pupils' imagination and keep them interested. For example, a 'card game' develops number skills in Key Stage 3 and pupils enjoy a version of 'Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?' in Key Stage 4. Teachers use questioning well to check pupils understanding, for example in mental mathematics session pupils are asked to explain how they reached their answer. Work is set at levels that meet the pupils' needs and as a result the pupils are able to consolidate their learning and move on to the next stage. Pupil support assistants are well used in the lessons, for example giving support to the lower attaining pupils. This support has a positive effect on the progress the pupils make in lessons. There is some use of information technology in mathematics but this is not yet fully developed. Teachers use mathematics in other areas of the curriculum, for example, measuring and recording in science and weighing in food technology lessons. This is not yet systematically planned to help develop pupils' mathematical skills.

85 There is good co-ordination of the subject. The co-ordinator has revised the policy document and schemes of work. She has monitored some classroom teaching. These developments are helping to raise standards. The co-ordinator is having a positive effect on raising standards in the subject. Assessment in mathematics is satisfactory but it relies at present partly on individual teacher knowledge of pupils. There is no coherent whole school assessment scheme to guarantee the step-by-step development of learning as pupils move through the school.

86 The school has made good progress in mathematics since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

87 In science, pupils' achievements and progress are satisfactory. They are generally good in Key Stages 1 and 2, generally satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and satisfactory in Key Stage 4. This represents slight improvement since the last inspection where results were satisfactory throughout the school. Further improvement in Key Stage 4 in particular is unlikely to occur until specialist accommodation has been provided.

88 In Key Stage 1 pupils learn to think about forces during 'pull/push' experiments. They are able to predict what might happen if the angle of the ramp changes, and which cars might go fastest. Higher attaining pupils begin to grapple with what factors might lead to particular cars going farthest. Pupils can name major external part of the body, and carefully overwrite labels on their diagrams, they begin to sort everyday materials into groups and observe what happens when hot water and jelly meet.

89 Key Stage 2 pupils can predict which objects are likely to sink, and which to float. In a well developed investigation they explored the permeability of a range of materials and used that information to predict their uses. Pupils use a small range of components to complete an electrical circuit and are delighted with their success. Some pupils complete a circuit diagram with recognisable symbols.

90 Key Stage 3 pupils build useful workbooks recording their endeavours, but as they are often in the form of completed work sheets they offer little opportunity for higher attaining pupils to extend themselves. By the end of the key stage pupils show progress from the earlier years. Year 7 pupils produce some useful computer-aided graphs of the results of cars running down ramps but overall the

use of computers to support the subject is rarely evident. They show a very mature approach to health and sex education lessons, and are able to name female and male changes at puberty, using the correct language for developing sex organs without embarrassment. Year 8 pupils make good use of the opportunity to conduct experiments in distillation, evaporation and condensation. They set up experiments well, taking care when using heat sources and hot liquids. They observe the changes between liquid and gaseous states closely, seeing how the process can be used to separate solids from liquids. Pupils can sort a range of materials into those that are man-made and those that are manufactured. Some extend this to show they can identify the materials in familiar manufactured objects.

91 In Key Stage 4 the opportunities for accreditation are too recent for work to be fully completed, but early modules have been completed successfully and pupils are making satisfactory progress. They can correctly identify when circuits are complete and will light up. They use diagrams to show the behaviour of light in pin-hole cameras. Older pupils are aware of the relationship between breathing and exercise and know that oxygen is absorbed into the blood stream and carbon dioxide is exhaled. Measurement skills are general are too approximate for this stage in their development.

92 Pupils' responses to science are generally good. They are good in Key Stages 1 and 2 where pupils show a lively interest in investigations and are excited by their discoveries. They are very good in health education lessons in Key Stages 3 and 4 where pupils respond extremely well to the skilled and sensitive teaching. They quickly overcome any giggling or nervousness at the start of lessons and are soon deeply absorbed in the topic, able to ask the questions they need to. They are less good in these key stages in the occasional lessons when the structure of the lesson is insufficiently challenging for the higher attaining pupils. Occasionally challenging behaviour becomes bad behaviour. Overall pupils are not developing sufficiently rigorous approaches to investigation (predicting, recording, measuring, fair testing) throughout the school. Thus limiting the progress possible.

93 Teaching of science is good overall. It is consistently good in Key Stages 1 and 2, varies between very good and unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3 and is satisfactory in Key Stage 4. In Key Stages 1 and 2 teachers plan clear topics which provide good opportunities for investigation. Groups and support staff are well organised to create the maximum opportunities for participation and promote good learning. Pupils are being encouraged to think and to predict, but opportunities to record predictions and compare with actual observations are often missed.

94 In Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils are given many opportunities to explore the conditions needed for growth in living things and to predict the effects of withholding elements. Lessons are conducted at good pace and often with good humour, promoting enjoyment and involvement. Year 8 pupils benefit from a valuable and well taught integration opportunity at a nearby school, where greater subject expertise and specialist accommodation combine to allow a broader range of work to be covered. As a result pupils make better progress and achieve higher standards. Pupils' confidence and understanding is clearly enhanced by these opportunities. In a few lessons the range of ability has not been sufficiently well catered for. Lower attaining pupils are well supported, but high attainers, particularly those who also exhibit some challenging behaviours, are not stretched and can become argumentative or disruptive. The teaching of sex education is very well done. Expectations are very high and responded to. Pupils are genuinely interested and work within the mature ethos established to build on their knowledge and understanding, and to respect each other's contributions.

95 The science curriculum is broad and balanced in Key Stages 1 and 2, however there is no formal description of how investigative work is to be developed across the primary department. The curriculum in Key Stage 3 draws substantially on the Key Stage 2 programmes of study, but like Key Stage 4, is restricted by the poor accommodation and limited resources in what it can provide for practical and investigative work. The senior accommodation is, in fact, a paper rich art room. There

has been no risk assessment and it is clearly unsafe for the full range of practical work needed. Despite the positive arrangements for one class to work at a local school, this weakness is creating an imbalance in the curriculum offered at present. The introduction of accredited courses for Years 10 and 11 is to be welcomed, but will further highlight these difficulties.

96 Systems for assessing and recording pupils' achievements and rate of progress are satisfactory, being a mixture of good practice in particular classes and key stages and developing school practice, limited by the current stage of curriculum development. The development of portfolios of assessed work is beginning to be effective, and science reports contribute to annual reviews, however pupils' work-books are often unmarked. Recent developments in the subject co-ordinator's role have included responsibility for the subject throughout the school but, as yet, there is limited opportunity for monitoring the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.

ART

97 Pupils' achievements in art are satisfactory and a few high attaining pupils demonstrate good levels of competence. Pupils make satisfactory progress in all key stages. They learn to manipulate a range of media to create attractive friezes and collages. A few pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 achieved levels which are age appropriate when working in the style of recognised artists and often when working in clay. Individual pupils make good progress when drawing from direct observation, recording the tread on mountain bicycle tyres and when accurately drawing glass candlesticks. As pupils develop in confidence they use colours with skill and care, working confidently in the style of Monet, Riley, Warhol and Hockney. They learn to control pencils, crayons, pastels, clay, papers and fabrics and a range of paints using appropriate sized tools and brushes with good effect. The most able pupils learn the skills necessary to create good designs and effective pictures and models. They develop an understanding of the properties of colour and are confident when mixing primary and secondary colours. Some pupils make good use of the skills, drawing repeating patterns, landscapes and portraits. Pupils also demonstrate their skills by using a range of printing techniques.

98 Pupils respond well in art lessons and sustain their concentration and finish the task set for them, even though, on occasions, particularly in Key Stages 3 and 4, this will take several lessons. Pupils in Key Stage 1 collaborate well together when developing collage figures as part of a topic about people who help us. Pupils with autism, carefully make sponge prints and paintings of railway engines with some direction and support from the staff. In all key stages pupils take pride in their work and enjoy discussing it with others. Most pupils enjoy their art lessons and quickly settle to work. However a few pupils who feel that they have failed to achieve satisfactory results in their previous schools require sensitive and timely management by the staff before they will settle down and start work. This is particularly true with pupils in Year 9. Attitudes to learning are good and, as a result, pupils make satisfactory or even good progress in most lessons. Behaviour is generally satisfactory and is best in lessons where pupils are motivated by the topic and the work is carefully matched to their individual level of competence.

99 The quality of teaching in art lessons is never less than satisfactory and often it is good, and when pupils are developing their creative skills in the hostel during residential placements. In all key stages teachers have sufficient subject knowledge and expertise to ensure that the planned curriculum can be effectively taught. However, even within the satisfactory and good teaching observed, there are weaknesses. The particular strength evident in all lessons is the quality of relationships which the staff establish with the pupils. The excellent knowledge the staff have of the pupils and careful preparation of resources in order that the pupils can succeed with the planned tasks all have positive impacts on the progress the pupils make. The particular areas for developments include the need for more details in planning in order to identify clearly the key skills and learning objectives to be taught in order to ensure

that pupils make steady and continuous progress as they move through the school. The lack of detailed recording of skills and competence's in some cases, leads to a lack of rigour in the teaching. Expectations are not as high as they should be and the higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenged. This is particularly true in Key Stages 3 and 4. There is not, as yet, consistency in the planning or assessment strategies used throughout the school, particularly in relation to the short-term lesson planning.

100 The curriculum covers all essential elements of the National Curriculum. Whilst the curriculum is balanced overall, on occasions insufficient emphasis is given to the opportunities for pupils to work on free compositions, and to develop an understanding of sculpture, photography or an understanding of the history of art. However, the emphasis given to clay work, printing, free design and pattern work has a marked impact on the progress the pupils make in these aspects of the curriculum.

101 The long and medium-term planning represented good coverage of the National Curriculum. All statutory requirements are fully met. Short term planning, however, especially in Key Stages 3 and 4 is not always sufficiently detailed to ensure that the pupils' key skills are targeted and the pupils can build progressively on their earlier learning experiences. Because some of the current daily assessment information lacks precision it is unable to fully guide future short-term planning. There are no consistently used procedures to carefully track the development of individual pupil's skills and knowledge and understanding.

102 Learning resources are adequate and staff have sufficient subject knowledge and expertise to teach the full curriculum. The accommodation is adequate and satisfactory for its purpose.

103 The subject co-ordinator has developed a sound policy and scheme of work but has not yet developed strategies to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. He has however, carried out an audit of departmental strengths and weaknesses and this is beginning to be used to inform developments. The subject co-ordinator is fully aware of the areas for development and has access to time in the near future for training with the staff.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

104 The teaching of design and technology still fails to meet statutory requirements in particular with regard to the range of opportunities provided for pupils to learn and develop their knowledge, skills, and understanding of work with resistant materials in Key Stages 3 and 4. There has, however, been some progress made since the last inspection. Curriculum planning is now in place to enable statutory requirements to be met within the forthcoming academic year. Staff have undergone specific training in order to be prepared for changes ahead. Adaptations to the accommodation planned to begin during this term will also facilitate the necessary processes of change. Pupils in all key stages now experience planned technology lessons which in Key Stages 1 and 2 fully meet the statutory requirements.

105 In the elements of technology taught pupils achieve well and many make at least satisfactory progress in all key stages. Good progress is made in food technology in all key stages and when pupils work with textiles. Pupils make satisfactory progress when working in areas of control, light crafts and when making and designing junk models and bridges. When working with fabrics and, particularly in Key Stages 3 and 4, the pupils develop good levels of competence, when selecting appropriate materials, sewing by hand and using electric sewing machines. They learn to prepare a variety of foods and planned menus paying due attention to the principles of healthy eating. Pupils have the confidence to prepare simple meals both in the food technology lessons and when in the hostel as part of the

Gateway, a Design for Living course.

106 In all lessons pupils enjoy their technology experiences and they work diligently and sustain their concentration. They collaborate well together when making junk models and particularly when working together in Year 8, making the clothes for their stick puppets. The pupils develop independence, social skills and language skills when planning min-enterprise activities to raise funds in the hostel and when organising a French café during school time. Relationships are always good between pupils and with a wide range of adults.

107 The quality of teaching in all key stages, from evidence gathered in lessons, from planning documents and from scrutiny of pupils is almost always good and occasionally it is very good. Teaching is at its best in lessons which are clearly planned and led by precise learning objectives which target the key skills necessary for pupils to learn. In the very best lessons, learning objectives are very clear and teachers' assessments are used well to guide future planning. The teachers know their pupils well and match work carefully to their needs. They work in close collaboration with classroom support assistants. This is particularly effective in lessons where pupils with additional special needs are present, for example when developing an understanding of control using electrical switches and in the textile lesson when making seascape collages. In all the lessons teachers and classroom support assistants sensitively guide pupils to make suitable choices of materials, offering help, guidance and direct teaching in a manner which is valued by the pupils. The good relationships and sensitive interventions provided by the staff ensure the creation of a learning environment in which the pupils feel secure. Instructions are always clearly given and good verbal reinforcements are used to keep pupils engaged with the activities, for example when they are learning to use the sewing machines or cookery equipment. The good teaching has a very positive impact on the progress made by individual pupils including those with additional special educational needs.

108 The technology curriculum, is now planned to ensure that teaching is of a broad and balanced curriculum throughout all key stages and this will be implemented in the new academic year. The policy is clear and both long and medium-term planning is very detailed identifying clear learning objectives and providing a framework against which progress can be carefully assessed. This detailed planning is not used effectively to support short-term planning and progress is reduced in some lessons as a result. The level of curriculum planning and assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection and are developing well. Arrangements to ensure that pupils have access to a small range of externally accredited courses have been made and this is beginning to have an impact on levels of expectation and on the progress made by pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4.

109 Learning resources are adequate to ensure that the current curriculum can be taught. Staff are making preparations to ensure that the broader and more balanced curriculum planned for the new academic year can also be fully taught. The levels of staff knowledge, skills, expertise and confidence are now adequate. The accommodation for both food technology and construction work with resistant materials in Key Stages 3 and 4 is unsatisfactory. There are plans in hand for these problems to be resolved before the end of this academic year.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

110 At Key Stage 1, 2 and 3, pupils achieve well and make good progress in geography and history. This represents a good improvement in standards since the previous inspection. Geography and history are not taught at present in Key Stage 4.

111 Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn how to associate pictures and signs in simple map reading exercises. They follow picture maps which include photographs of buildings and road junctions which

they identify as they make an expedition in the neighbourhood of the school. They make frequent visits to places of historical interest, for example Scarborough Castle, and look at pictures of old objects in order to begin to build a sense of past events. Map reading develops well in Key Stage 2. Pupils use large-print maps and may have a basic understanding of grid references which they use to pinpoint locations on their trips, such as to the local Tram Museum. In their lessons they begin to understand the social implications of what they see on their visits. For example, the teacher prompts them to ask why people would wish to visit their town in the summer. In history, they learn how machines have developed, by looking at forms of transport. In one lesson they watched a video film of bicycles ranging from the boneshaker to the modern mountain bike, after which they arranged their own pictures of cycles in historical sequence.

112 At Key Stage 3, pupils continue to focus on broad social aspects of geography and history. In their studies of people's movement from rural life to industrialisation after 1750, they imagine how these people actually felt about the changes. In one lesson about more recent events, they learnt about the Second World War and the horrors of the blitz. They play-acted an air raid, in which a sound track of sirens and planes was played, as a result of which they took shelter under the classroom desks. In another lesson, pupils in Year 8 used computers to make block graphs and pie charts showing numbers of people involved in a variety of jobs.

113 At all three key stages, pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Most of them show interest in their lessons and are clearly pleased when they achieve particular tasks well. They work hard and maintain interest throughout lessons. A small number remember facts particularly well, and ask challenging questions in order to further their understanding. Most pupils behave well in lessons, and complete the tasks they are given very willingly. They co-operate well in their learning, for example, by helping one another with computer skills. Boys and girls work well together. A significant minority of pupils show challenging behaviour but this is almost always managed well by teachers and pupil support assistants. Most pupils are very tolerant of peers who have deep-seated behavioural problems. Usually, the potentially disruptive actions of particular individuals do not prevent the majority from getting on with work.

114 Throughout the school teaching is good. During the inspection two of the lessons were judged to be very good. Teachers have sufficient knowledge of geography and history to enable them to move the pupils forward. Where particular projects are undertaken, teachers prepare for lessons in great detail and with imagination, for example, by taking photographs of locations to help pupils follow a picture map. In those lessons which were judged to be very good, teachers and support assistants constantly challenged pupils to think by asking them pertinent questions. Lessons are planned well to ensure that there is an interesting mixture of methods which retain pupils' interest. Topics fit well into the overall curriculum plan for geography and history. Pupils are well managed; most teachers adopt a firm yet kindly approach. Lessons proceed at a good pace and time is used well. Pupil support assistants make a very good contribution to classroom management, always in accord with the class teacher's approach. Teachers consistently assess pupils as they work. They know the pupils very well, and make suitable allowances and set appropriate challenges for them. Lessons usually include particular targets in the lesson plans, both for individuals and groups. A satisfactory level of homework is set, although there is some inconsistency across the school about what should be expected for pupils of different ages.

115 Overall, pupils' learning is good in lessons. Learning tasks are mainly practical and pupils are enabled, through skilful teaching, to see the relevance of their studies to their daily lives. Lessons encourage pupils to think about the implications of what they learn, for example, how industrialisation leads to heavily populated areas and to the social and economic problems associated with this. Most pupils produce an acceptable amount of work in lessons, they understand what they are doing and appreciate the relevance of the material that they study. They have a realistic understanding of their

own capabilities and know what they need to do to improve further.

116 Geography and history are co-ordinated well by an enthusiastic teacher who is based in Key Stage 3. This arrangement is relatively new and, whilst there is an overall understanding of what is to be taught in each year group, teachers are insufficiently clear about the whole geography and history curriculum. Although teachers know their pupils very well, and can confidently assess what they know, understand and can do, there is as yet, no agreed system for grading, recording and reporting what pupils achieve as they move up the school. This leads to some inconsistencies in lesson planning, and to imprecise evidence of individual pupil's achievements as they move up the school. The impact of teaching is not yet monitored in a systematic way across the school. The school is aware of these weaknesses and has formulated a plan to improve the procedures. Provision for these subjects has improved well since the last inspection. The school has good potential to raise pupils' achievements further.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

117 Pupils' achievements in information technology are satisfactory within a narrow range in Key Stages 1 and 2 where they are primarily concerned with support for literacy and numeracy, but are unsatisfactory across the full range of programmes of study. There is little evidence of any work concerned with data handling, graphics work, control or modelling. As a result statutory requirements are not fully met in Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils do show good levels of confidence in using the mouse and occasionally an adapted keyboard, to work through a simple program. By the end of the primary phase pupils can point accurately and click to select or move objects. Others choose from simple menus. Some simple word processing is seen in entering and printing labels of text for other work.

118 In Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils' achievements were good in the lessons seen and pupils in a number of classes are making rapid progress. The bulk of the work is word processing, although examples of data handling, desk-top publishing and the use of e-mail occur. Pupils have used computers to support work in English, mathematics and French and to interrogate databases as part of a careers program. Pupils' handle the computers confidently, can open and close a range of programs, select from drop down menus, make decisions about font size, type style, introduce pictures or colour and create decorative borders. They print out their own work and are justly pleased with the results.

119 Pupils' attitudes to information technology are never less than good and are often very good. They are highly motivated, but prepared to take turns. They handle equipment sensibly. As they get older they are learning good independence skills, for example, not asking for help until they need it. Key Stage 4 pupils offer help to less skilled peers without prompting.

120 Teaching is generally good. Few examples of direct teaching were observed in Key Stages 1 and 2 because information technology is not formally taught as a discrete subject and individuals, or pairs, are usually assisted, effectively, by support staff. From discussion teacher expertise and confidence is variable, although beginning to benefit from some recent access to a certificated course. The two specialist teachers in Key Stages 3 and 4 are both very good most of the time, with the occasional good lesson seen. They have good subject expertise in the aspects being regularly taught. They use their very good relationship and management skills to make best use of the limited number of machines available. Lessons are well designed to be relevant to other aspects of pupils' learning, for example, their careers programme and the need to develop curriculum vitae for work experience employers. There is a clear ethos in lessons, based on relaxed but hard work, and a move towards independence and self-confidence. Information technology is not yet systematically integrated across the curriculum, but there are encouraging signs of other teachers beginning to use it more regularly in some subjects.

121 The curriculum and related assessment systems are not well documented, most of the recent development has been concerned with resources and staff development. There is no formal curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2, where computers are used largely in support of literacy and numeracy. However, a recently purchased commercial curriculum will overcome many of these deficiencies as it is adapted to the school's needs. Key Stage 4 pupils are benefiting from the introduction of a nationally accredited course and from partnership arrangements with a local school and a college, until the school's planned developments are fully operational. There is no system for recording and assessing pupils' learning which is, clearly, unsatisfactory.

122 The school is working hard to develop staff skills, specialist accommodation, equipment and resources. The recently appointed subject co-ordinator, together with the head teacher, have a clear sense of how they wish the subject to develop and have the active support of the governors in this. All staff recently attended a first level accredited course and this has clearly led to increased interest and confidence. Hardware and software is being purchased to create compatible high quality systems across the school and there are plans for further specialist accommodation. There is every sign that the subject is now developing rapidly after a slow response to the last inspection.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

123 Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 achieve well in French and make good progress. This is largely the result of the consistently good teaching which ensures that lessons are well prepared, provide a stimulating range of experiences to maintain pupils' interest and are well-matched to the wide range of attainment evident in each class. Consequently pupils at all levels of attainment are able to build on their knowledge and understanding as they move through the year groups.

124 Pupils in Year 7 can name the subjects of the school curriculum in French and can speak in short phrases or sentences to explain whether they like the subject. They develop their use of 'j'aime' and 'je n'aime pas' to talk about food and clothes. Pupils' vocabulary increases in Year 8 when they can name different parts of the body correctly. They develop their written and spoken ability using the names of body parts in full sentences. Many speak with improved accents and are not afraid to try new words with increased confidence. By the end of Key Stage 3 many pupils use their knowledge to describe the work they do in school, for example, one boy who has only been studying French for 2 terms since joining the school, writes "Mardi – nous avons education physique" and is able to read it aloud and explain what it means, demonstrating his knowledge and confidence by using similar phrases to describe other days.

125 By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils can use their knowledge in role-play situations when, for example, buying clothes. Their grammatical knowledge has improved and they can distinguish masculine and feminine for example applying petit or petite and grand and grande when describing articles of clothing which are too big or too small. Pronunciation improves for most pupils but those with speech and language difficulties demonstrate their knowledge well given patience from the teacher. Pupils in both key stages and at all levels of attainment have positive attitudes to French. They enjoy their lessons and are motivated by the good quality of teaching which provides a wide range of activities to stimulate and interest them. Young pupils are encouraged to develop their interest in French through the "French Breakfast Club" where they join Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils. They are encouraged to speak and think in the taught language and are able to ask guests if they would like croissant and orange juice, in French.

126 The quality of teaching is always good and is a significant factor in the pupils' enjoyment and the progress they make. Lessons are very well prepared, with a wide range of activities to stimulate and motivate pupils. Good use is made of singing to develop pupils' confidence and pronunciation. In one lesson, for example, pupils sing an alphabet song and then use their knowledge to spell words. Work is well-matched to the different needs of pupils to enable all to make progress. In a Key Stage 3 lesson, for example, some pupils role-played shopping whilst others used dictionaries to create shopping lists, research words and spellings for themselves. Expectations are high and lessons move at a lively pace with the teacher's energy and enthusiasm motivating pupils. Good use is made of pupil support assistants to enable all pupils to be involved. In a Year 9 class when the potential for misbehaviour is higher, support assistants worked closely with individuals.

127 The subject has been developed well by the co-ordinator who has created an appropriate range of resources to support learning. Regular assessment and recording supports teaching and planning well and the subject material is constantly reviewed to meet the diverse range of needs.

MUSIC

128 The pupils in all key stages achieve well in music. They make good progress. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when pupils in Key Stages 1 and 4 made satisfactory progress.

129 The pupils in Key Stage 1 join in songs and hymns in the hall. They play percussion instruments for example, when making train sounds in a Unit 1 lesson. They are enthusiastic when they shake, pluck or blow instruments. The pupils are developing a good sense of rhythm. In Key Stage 2 the pupils develop their sense of rhythm by clapping out their names and the names of classmates. They listen to pieces of music and start to recognise some differences, for example, when they listen to Bizet's 'Carmen' and Ladysmith Black Mambazo's 'O Shohoza'. Composing skills are developed very well using noises from a building site. In Key Stage 3 the pupils recognise the instruments of the orchestra. They identify the brass, string and woodwind sections, naming instruments including trumpet, violin, flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon. The pupils develop their composing skills by using 'electronic music'. They use keyboards, drum pads and computer software to create their own compositions. The pupils enjoy this type of work, although occasionally there are slight clashes of personality if equipment is placed too close. Most pupils compare and contrast 'electronic music' with classical music. The pupils in Key Stage 4 study aspects of music as part of an 'Expressive Arts' curriculum. The pupils are keen to learn. In one lesson observed, within 15 minutes of hearing a new song a pupil sang it tunelessly with very good expression, his classmates joined in the chorus. The pupils sing well when they are in the hall. They are enthusiastic and confident. The pupils' good attitudes have a positive attitude on the good progress made in music.

130 The quality of teaching in music is very good in the majority of lessons. Occasionally it is excellent. This has a very good effect on the progress pupils make in music. The lessons are enthusiastically presented in a very well planned manner. This motivates the pupils and keeps them interested. The teacher asks questions about the previous lesson to check what the pupils have remembered and understood. She then develops this by telling the pupils what they are going to learn in the present lesson. The children then understand what they have to do. Resources are very well used to reinforce learning. For example, in a Year 7 lesson the pupils handle a trumpet, clarinet, oboe, flute, bassoon and a violin. A wide range of music is used to develop pupils' appraisal skills, including African and Asian music. The teacher has very good knowledge of the subject and develops the pupils' technical vocabulary, for example, when she talks about crochets and quavers.

131 The subject is well co-ordinated and this has a positive effect on the progress the pupils make in the subject. There is good assessment of pupils' work but this is not yet used to plan future learning.

Visiting musicians and opportunities for the pupils to perform for parents and others enhance the curriculum.

132 The school has made good progress since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133 Pupils' achievements in physical education are satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2 and good in Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils additionally achieve well in swimming in Key Stages 1 and 2 with some pupils continuing to achieve at or beyond levels expected for their age.

134 In Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils develop pre-games skills, learning to strike, throw, catch and dribble balls individually and in pairs. Hand and eye co-ordination is not easy for many of the pupils but practice is leading to satisfactory gains in skills. Older pupils learn to throw both underarm and overhead with increasing accuracy and speed in small pair competitions with several examples of pupils helping 'team-mates' readily and without prompts.

135 In Key Stage 3, most pupils have learnt to change promptly, are familiar with the warm up routines and readily carry and help set up equipment. Pupils practice catching and throwing with some success, and learn to chase a moving ball along the ground, picking it up with a backwards hand movement before returning it to the wicket. Pupils find the complex instructions of over-arm bowling hard to follow, but some manage to match the demonstration well. Key Stage 4 pupils enjoy their leisure option in which they choose a range of programmes in the community. They discuss the progress they have made, learning to care for and ride horses confidently, and gain pleasure from ten-pin bowling both as a new skill and as a social experience.

136 Pupils' attitudes to physical education are positive throughout the school, they enjoy the activities, taking part willingly, showing pleasure in their own and others' success. They generally work well in pairs or small teams, supporting each other well. One Key Stage 3 girl showed great care and patience, helping her male partner over and over again to throw and catch the ball, until he had linked the skills involved and gained some success. Some pupils with greater energy and ability than the majority behave less well when they have completed their activity easily, but usually respond quickly to reminders.

137 Teaching of physical education is good. It is satisfactory in the early key stages and good, occasionally very good, in Key Stages 3 and 4. Lessons are well planned, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves when changing, although some time is lost here, and for setting out equipment. Staff work well as teams ensuring good levels of participation, and encouraging those who are reluctant, or show short episodes of challenging behaviour. In some lessons the more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged and this, occasionally, leads to frustration and off-task behaviour that is unhelpful. In the secondary department, where subject knowledge is good, planning and recording takes place in some detail.

138 The curriculum is broad and balanced, with particularly good access to swimming in the early part of the school and good leisure programme developing for senior pupils. Pupils benefit from programmes developed against their special needs, some of which are taught by teachers and some by therapists. There is very little in the way of extra-curricular activity at present. Assessment is not consistent between aspects of the subject, or across the school, although there are extensive records kept.

139 Staffing expertise, grounds, accommodation and resources are all at least satisfactory, and

good use is made of provision in the community. The subject co-ordinator is aware of the strengths and weakness in whole school approaches and is keen to move the subject further forward. However, no systematic monitoring procedures are yet in place.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

140 Pupils' achievement and progress in religious education are good in all key stages. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when progress was satisfactory.

141 Key Stage 1 pupils are increasing their knowledge of celebrations, especially birthdays, and know that Christmas is the birthday of Jesus, who is a special person. They learn that God cares for everyone and understand that there are other people in their lives who also care for them, such as their parents, teachers and policemen. During Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in furthering their knowledge of festivals. They know that Christmas is a special Christian celebration and that harvest and Easter are also important occasions. They understand that when people pray they are talking to God, and begin to appreciate that there are people, such as Mother Teresa, who spend their lives serving others.

142 By Key Stage 3, pupils can express opinions on why individuals are valued and, through discussion of the Ten Commandments, they learn that God expects Christians to follow His laws. They know about aspects of other religions, including Islam and Sikhism, and are beginning to realise why the festivals are different from those of the Christian faith. Pupils recognise that candles and light are important symbols in all religions. During Key Stage 4, pupils' knowledge of other religious customs, festivals and beliefs grows considerably. They are also becoming aware of minority groups with their own beliefs and customs, such as the Maoris and Iroquois Indians. Pupils benefit from opportunities they are given to consider issues such as human rights and personal responsibilities, and their recorded work shows thoughtful responses to these areas.

143 Pupils usually enjoy their religious education lessons. They are attentive, listen well and are eager to join in activities. They try hard to understand difficult ideas, such as life being a journey. Occasionally, when learning objectives are unclear and activities are insufficiently challenging, pupils are reluctant to become involved in discussion and this restricts their progress.

144 Teaching is almost always good. Lesson planning is usually detailed and clear. As a result, in most lessons, tasks are well matched to pupils' needs. This helps pupils to make good progress, particularly when the focus of teaching is on an abstract concept such as "service" or "symbolism". The good use of resources, effective activities and relevant use of pupils' own experiences, make most lessons in religious education interesting and lively. Assemblies provide an effective means of promoting spiritual, moral and social development. They reinforce pupils' understanding of caring and sharing, and the celebration of achievement. In Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils are given insufficient opportunities to record their learning, but in Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils use a range of writing styles and drawings to record their work, and this enables them to review their own progress.

145 Religious education, based on the North Yorkshire agreed syllabus, is offered to all pupils in the school, and the curriculum meets statutory requirements. The local authority's recently produced guidelines for monitoring pupils' achievement in religious education, have been welcomed as providing the basis for a school assessment procedure. The co-ordinator has not yet had opportunities to monitor teaching and learning in classrooms, and this is restricting the identification of targets in relation to teaching and learning. The school is aware that this is an area for development. Since the last inspection resources have been improved and are now satisfactory. Priorities for further development have been identified and are appropriately linked to curriculum planning. Religious education, and the

ethos in which it is taught, provides good support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.