

# INSPECTION REPORT

Belmont School  
Warden Hill Road  
Cheltenham,  
Gloucestershire, GL51 5AT

LEA area: Gloucester

Unique Reference Number: 131549

Headteacher: Mr. M. Bell

Reporting inspector: Steve Crowley

Dates of inspection: December 6 – 10 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708385

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	4 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Warden Hill Road, Cheltenham, Gloucester GL51 5RT
Telephone number:	01242 526919
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Appropriate authority:	Belmont School Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. Vanessa Aris
Date of previous inspection:	NA

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Steve Crowley, RgI	science	characteristics of the school
	art	attainment and progress
	French	leadership and management
Elizabeth Jay, Lay Inspector		efficiency
		attitudes, behaviour and personal development
		attendance
		support, guidance and pupils' welfare
Dr. Alan Dobbin, Team Inspector		partnership with parents and the community
	mathematics	teaching
	physical education	staffing, accommodation and learning resources
George Davies, Team Inspector	equality of opportunity	
	design and technology	spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
	geography	
	history	
	information and communication technology	
	religious education	
Ivor Evenden, Team Inspector	English	curriculum and assessment
	music	
	special educational needs	

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- Enables its pupils to achieve at least as well and often better than they could be expected to achieve by the time they leave school
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to gain accreditation for their achievements
- Develops pupils' speaking and listening skills very well so that by the time they leave school they communicate confidently
- Provides a high proportion of good and very good teaching which effectively addresses the learning difficulties of all the pupils for whom the school caters
- Enables pupils to develop very good work habits and attitudes to learning
- Excellent community and work experience placements provide pupils with opportunities to develop socially and acquire new skills.
- Raises pupils self esteem through positive management of their behaviour and learning
- Promotes very good personal development among the pupils enabling them to form meaningful relationships with other pupils and adults
- Enables pupils to feel enthusiastic about coming to school
- Spiritual, moral and cultural development is good. Social development is a strength of the school
- Provides pupils with challenging educational experiences that build effectively on what they already know, understand and can do
- Provides excellent support for pupils in considering their best options for future education, training or work
- Keeps pupils well informed of their academic and personal progress and well advised as to how they can further improve which enables them to take more responsibility for their own learning
- Develops positive relationships with parents that enables them to feel involved in the child's education
- It knows its strengths, is aware of areas in need of further development and plans effectively for improvements
- Provides strong and effective leadership with an increasing commitment to continuous improvement
- Supports teachers well through an effective system of monitoring and evaluation
- All staff work together as an effective team to achieve the agreed aims of the school
- Makes very good use of the experience, skills and expertise of the teaching and support staff to ensure that their efforts are well –focused on helping pupils achieve to the best of their abilities

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Governors do not yet systematically monitor and evaluate the work of the school
- II. Procedures for the school to evaluate its own performance and set targets for improvement are in the early stages of development and are not yet effective in providing support for the school's commitment to continuous improvement
- III. Planning procedures for pupils' transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 are less secure than between other key stages
- IV. The school has not made the best use of the accommodation to provide opportunities for pupils to fully develop library skills

**Belmont School is a good and improving school with many significant strengths. The weaknesses are far outweighed by what the school does well but they will form the basis of the school's action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.**

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has not been previously inspected. It is well placed to continue to improve.

## Whether pupils are making enough progress

Progress in:	By 11	By 16
Targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B
English:		
listening and speaking	A	A
reading	B	B
writing	B	B
Mathematics	B	B
Science	B	A
Personal, social and health Education (PSHE)	A	A

	<b>Key</b>
	<b>Stage</b>
<i>very good</i>	A
<i>good</i>	B
<i>satisfactory</i>	C
<i>unsatisfactory</i>	D
<i>poor</i>	E

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

### Best progress takes place in:

**Listening and speaking:** As they move through the school, pupils gain confidence in speaking out loud when answering questions in front of the class. By the time they leave school, they can explain their thoughts and feelings well and express their opinions confidently

**Science at Key Stage 4:** The consolidation of very good work habits enables many pupils to understand how to investigate and form conclusions through careful observation, prediction, carrying out a fair test and recording their findings. By the time they leave school they use simple scientific terminology accurately and recognise how some scientific principles can be applied in real life situations.

**Art at Key Stage 4:** Pupils produce their own studies from a variety of sources from which they develop further designs in two and three dimensions using a wide range of materials. By the time they leave school they know that artists throughout the world try to communicate thoughts and emotions through their work.

**Personal, social and health education:** Pupils learn how to think maturely about their lives and those of others.

They consider carefully implications of decisions that they make about their own lives and develop the ability to empathise with those who may be less fortunate than them. By the time they leave school they are well prepared to become good citizens.

## Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
5 – 11 years	Good	English, mathematics, PHSE	Physical education
11 – 16 years	Good	English mathematics, science, food technology	Physical education
English	Good		
Mathematics	Good		
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	Very good		

The quality of teaching is a strength of the school. Teaching was at least satisfactory in all lessons observed. In nine out of every ten lessons teaching was good or better and in four out of ten lessons it was very good or outstanding. In almost every subject and at each key stage there were some very good or outstanding features relating to the quality of teaching. At Key Stage 4, over half of the teaching was very good or better.

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



**Other aspects of the school**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Behaviour	Pupils behave well in and around the school. They understand and respect the expectations placed on them with regard to their behaviour. They are courteous and welcoming to visitors and present themselves in a dignified manner
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory
Ethos*	The school operates within a very good ethos. Increasingly, all adults are working together as an effective team. The aims, values and policies are well understood by all staff and everyone works hard to achieve them. Staff morale is high
Leadership and management	The headteacher provides strong effective leadership and is well supported by the senior management team. Good communication is maintained between governors and the senior management team. Subject co-ordinators understand their roles and responsibilities and carry out their duties well
Curriculum	Overall the curriculum is good. It is suitably broad and well balanced. At Key Stage 4 the curriculum is very good as it is particularly well matched to the needs and interests of the pupils and prepares them well for life after school. The school makes good use of information gained from sound assessment procedures to build on pupils' knowledge, skills and concepts as they move through the school. However, this is better achieved between Key Stages 1 and 2 and Key Stages 3 and 4 than between Key Stages 2 and 3.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Spiritual, moral and cultural development are good. Social development is a strength of the school.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good levels of staffing, reflecting an appropriate range of experience and expertise. The school is well resourced, particularly in ICT. The accommodation is satisfactory
Value for money	The school provides good value for money

*\*Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

**The parents' views of the school**

<b>What most parents like about the school</b>	<b>What some parents are not happy about</b>
<p>V. Parents find the school welcoming when they visit.</p> <p>VI. They appreciate the way staff manage the pupils' behaviour</p> <p>VII. Problems at school are resolved quickly and the pupils feel they can return without becoming too anxious</p> <p>VIII. Parents feel involved in the annual reviews and the setting of targets in pupils' IEPs</p> <p>IX. The school keeps parents well informed about events at the school</p>	<p>X. A few parents would like to see more homework</p>

## **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

In order to build on the good work done so far, the headteacher and the governors should:

- XI. Further develop the good support governors provide by establishing a more systematic approach within the governing body to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school; (Para. 54)
- XII. Implement a system of effective self-evaluation and target setting in order to support the school's commitment to continuous improvement and raising of standards of achievement. (Para. 54)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- XIII. Ensure pupils' knowledge, skills and concepts are as effectively built on between Key Stages 2 and 3 as they are between other key stages; (Para. 83)
- XIV. Make better use of the accommodation in order to fully develop pupils' library skills; (Paras. 59 and 64)
- XV. Make even the paving and asphalt paths surrounding the school so that they safe to walk on; (Para. 48)
- XVI. Relocate the fixed work-stations in the science room to enable safer and easier supervision of pupils during experimental work; (Para 83)
- XVII. Improve the quality of the changing facilities for physical education. (Para. 59)

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Characteristics of the school**

1. Belmont School is a maintained, mixed special school designated moderate learning difficulties, but in fact caters for pupils with a wide range of learning and behavioural difficulties. In common with most similar schools a significant number of pupils on roll have additional difficulties, some complex. The school was established in April 1998 following the amalgamation of Westlands Primary and Brookfield Secondary special schools. The intended roll was 120 pupils aged 4 - 16. However, the Local Education Authority's policy to re-integrate or retain pupils with moderate learning difficulties in mainstream school has led to a marked decrease in referrals, representing a reduction in the school population of 27% in four terms. There are currently 80 pupils on roll. All pupils have Statements of special educational needs. 58 are boys and 22 are girls. Only one pupil comes from an ethnic group other than "white" and there are no pupils for whom English is the not the first language at home. 31 pupils are eligible for free school meals.
2. Belmont is situated on the outskirts of Cheltenham and operates out of two buildings sharing the same site. Primary aged pupils occupy one building, referred to as "lower school", and secondary aged pupils occupy the other building, referred to as "upper school". The campus is shared with a local secondary school and another special school for pupils with severe learning difficulties. The current headteacher was appointed as "head designate" in February 1998 and became the substantive head in April 1998. The headteacher feels that one of the major challenges has been managing the bringing together of staff from the two quite different cultures of the former schools. The school's "mission statement" was established during an INSET day at the beginning of the first term of the current headteacher's appointment. It is called "Learning and Growing Together" and explains that this will be achieved by:
  - encouraging everyone in the pursuit of excellence
  - promoting high standards of attainment and progress in knowledge, skills and understanding of the subjects of the National Curriculum
  - providing stimulating, structured programmes of study enabling all pupils to achieve their targets, leading where appropriate, to a formal recognition of achievement and facilitating a smooth transition into adult life and the world of work
  - providing an ethos which is conducive to learning
  - effective communication, consultation and support, fostering an atmosphere of mutual co-operation and respect
  - regular review and evaluation of all aspects of the curriculum, combined with effective staff development and use of staff expertise
  - providing an environment which promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, raises self-esteem, inspires self-discipline and consideration for others, regardless of race, creed or gender
  - the active promotion of the school, within the local and wider community, by staff, governors, parents and pupils, as a centre of excellence.

• **Key indicators**

• **Attendance**

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:

		%
Authorised Absence	School	5.7
	National comparative data	NA
Unauthorised Absence	School	3.6
	National comparative data	NA

• **Exclusions**

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	9
Permanent	0

• **Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	44
Satisfactory or better	100
Less than satisfactory	0

## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### **Attainment and progress**

1. *It is inappropriate to judge the attainment of pupils for whom the school caters against age-related national expectations. This report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about progress and references to attainment take account of information in pupils' statements, annual reviews and individual education plans.*
2. Progress is good overall. Across the school, pupils make good, or better, progress in almost nine out of every ten lessons. In over four out of every ten lessons progress is very good. Evidence in pupils' work, records and teacher assessment documents show that pupils make good, or better, progress over time, steadily building on their knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils' progress is best, and most consistently good or very good at Key Stage 4. Pupils' progress improves as they move through the school due to their increasing maturity, improved attention to their work and good teaching. There is no significant difference in the progress made by pupils relating to ethnicity, gender or social class. Lower attaining pupils progress at a similar rate to their peers.
3. Overall, pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science is good. In art, design and technology, French, geography, history, information and communication technology, music, personal and social education and religious education pupils make good progress overall. In physical education pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Progress is very good at Key Stage 4 in English, science, art and personal and social education.
4. In speaking and listening skills pupils make very good progress during all key stages. During lessons pupils gain confidence as they move through the school in speaking out loud in front of their peers. They are keen to answer questions and listen well to each other. Speaking and listening skills are effectively consolidated in all areas of the curriculum. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils demonstrate their progress as they prepare for a nativity play. They listen carefully for their cue to begin and recognise when it is the turn of others to perform. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils are able to recall in sequential order work carried out earlier in the term. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils use more complex sentence structures as they explain their thoughts and feelings.
5. In reading, pupils make good progress against prior attainment at all key stages. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils enjoy books. They recognise that books can be used to find out about subjects that interest them. Most are developing good strategies for understanding the written word and some are beginning to read with expression. In design and technology pupils read instructions on paint tins and glue tubes with care and use simple recipe books with confidence. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils use contextual clues well to add to their knowledge of phonics as they read increasingly difficult texts. By the end of Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils follow instructions provided in writing to complete tasks in science and design technology, for example. Lower attaining pupils need some help to achieve this.
6. Pupils make good progress in writing at all key stages. For many pupils, writing has been and continues to be an activity that is a source of high anxiety. However, all pupils gain confidence as they move through the school and present their work carefully and relatively neatly. Good use is made throughout the school of opportunities to use word processing to give pupils greater confidence in the presentation of their work and enables them to be less anxious about making mistakes. By the end of Key Stage 2, higher attaining pupils are forming letters correctly and write simple sentences with little assistance. Others understand that language and thoughts may be recorded and communicated in writing. By the end of Key Stage 3, most pupils approach writing tasks with increased confidence. Higher attaining pupils understand basic grammar and use capital letters and full stops appropriately. Sentences remain simple but pupils try to make their writing interesting by thinking of alternative words or phrasing. Lower attaining pupils have a less secure understanding of even basic punctuation but recognise how to use it when receiving help from support staff for example. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils understand that different writing needs to be different in style according to match its purpose and audience. For example, they use word processing very well to construct formal invitations to people outside the school to attend functions at the school and to write less

formal letters to a friend in which they are just relating the events of the last few weeks. All pupils are aware that writing is a useful and valuable means of communication.

7. In mathematics, at Key Stage 2, lower attaining pupils are working at the pre-number stage. They have learned to count on from 1 to 10 and can select appropriate visual aids and apparatus to help recognise numbers and to group by number. Higher attaining pupils can count on in 1's and 10's and know the number pairs that make 10. They have learned subtraction with decomposition, addition to hundreds, tens and units and are beginning to learn the concept of division. By the end of the Key Stage 3, higher attaining pupils accurately use the four rules of number and easily transfer these to the manipulation of money, time and distance. They use mathematics terminology well and explain their work using appropriate terms. By the end of the Key Stage 4, almost all pupils are functionally numerate and most can use their skills to plan a journey with reference to time and money.
8. In science, at Key Stage 2, pupils use their senses well to investigate a range of materials and begin to distinguish the difference between the "feel" of a variety of surfaces. They are all becoming more aware of the world around them. Some ask pertinent questions about how things work. At Key Stage 3, all pupils can explain how to separate sand from water and salt from water. As they use scientific apparatus they begin to use the correct terminology for items they have to handle, such as "filter paper" or "funnel". Some pupils begin to use more difficult words such as "soluble" when describing their findings. Less able pupils still need help to set up the apparatus but they do gradually learn to do more for themselves over time. All pupils have a growing awareness of issues relating to safety in the science room. At key stage 4, pupils use existing knowledge well to help them understand newly introduced knowledge and concepts. For example, during a lesson with Year 10 some pupils who had previously learned that metals came from the ground began to understand the concept of pure metals and impure metals. They learned that impure metals exist as ores and went on to be able to identify gold and silver as pure metals. They conduct simple experiments from which they begin to understand how reactive or non-reactive metals can be identified. By the end of the Key Stage, pupils understand from their experiments how solar panels are used in everyday life to convert heat generated by the sun into energy that can rotate a wheel, for example.
9. In art, at Key Stage 2, pupils experiment with colour using paint applied with their fingers. Some become engrossed in the activity as they watch the effect of colours mixing on the paper. They work contentedly using plasticine or modelling clay and begin to recognise that the figures and shapes they make are of interest to others. Some begin to make observational drawings which show the early signs of pupils considering proportion and tone. Key Stage 3, pupils become increasingly aware of the influence of artists from other cultures. They make studies of the work of others from which they create their own designs. Pupils gaining greater understanding of pictorial composition as they carefully consider the design elements in their paintings in relation to the frame in which the painting will be contained. At Key Stage 4, pupils make detailed studies using a variety of media, in preparation for their main piece of work. They work confidently in clay demonstrating the development of good technique as they make thumb and coil pots. They decorate their three-dimensional pieces of work with colourful designs showing the influence of their knowledge of design elements found in other cultures, such as in Egyptian Art.
10. In design and technology, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils investigate a need, develop a design, make the product and evaluate whether it reflects the original brief. When making rod puppets for their Christmas play pupils explained their choice of materials and methods of attachment. Pupils are able to cut, paste, join and finish work using a variety of techniques and show an awareness of the need for safe working practices when using appropriate cutting tools and when using heat sources in food technology. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils achieve a balance between having too much or too little detail in their designs; their designs more accurately reflect their skill levels and they are more articulate when explaining what they want to do. Pupils work with increasing precision when cutting and shaping resistant materials. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils undertake large scale projects, such as making clocks, which involve design and making skills of a high order. Detailed designs are produced; the suitability of various materials are considered and the need for the best finish possible is underlined. In food technology pupils use previous learning to decide what constitutes healthy food, they make judgements about what can be considered as portable snacks and choose recipes, utensils and equipment that enable them to realise their brief. Pupils work independently and safely in design and technology particularly at Key Stage 4.
11. In geography, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils read simple plans and maps; know the main points of the compass and can follow routes either through responding to compass points directions or through reading maps. They know about the different types of settlements and are beginning to understand the reasons for their location and growth. By the end of Key Stage 3 the pupils are more consistent in their use of correct

terminology; they interpret maps with greater accuracy and confidence and understand more about factors that contribute to the world's weather. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils are more aware of ecosystems as a consequence of their work on the Forest of Dean. They record and retrieve data from surveys in a variety of forms through the use of ICT. Pupils extend their understanding of primary, secondary and tertiary industries.

12. In history, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are developing an understanding of chronology. They are able to compare life, events and artifacts from the past with their own experiences. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils understand the main reasons for the First World War. They can realistically reflect upon the horrors of trench warfare. Their work on the Ancient Greeks consolidates their understanding of chronology. Visits to Gloucester cathedral enables them to use its architectural and decorative features to extend their knowledge of church architecture.
13. In information and communication technology (ICT), by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils name and understand the purpose of the key components of the computer stations that they use. They are competent in the use of the key board and mouse and they access and save their own files. Lower attaining pupils require help to produce word processed text or to import simple images that enhance text. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' competency with the key board and mouse has significantly improved. They manipulate text, self-generated images and imported images with increasing confidence and they select different fonts as well as changing font size and orientation. As a result of their increasing technical skills they are able to focus more on the design elements of tasks when creating posters and newsletters. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils ICT capability is as such that they confidently use it across the curriculum. They produce graphs in mathematics lessons; use word processing packages in English and produce posters and front pages for folders and projects in YAS.
14. Over time, pupils' progress in French is good at both key stages. At Key Stage 3, pupils know the French words for a range of familiar foods, including fruits and typical items to be found on a restaurant menu. They design their own menus in French. As they move through the key stage they know the French words for members of the immediate family and most are able to count to ten. By the end of the key stage, pupils recognise the names of famous French brand names and some can give the name of two principle cities in France. At Key Stage 4, pupils extend their knowledge of the correct words for numbers up to twenty. Some can respond in French to the question "How old are you?" and a few understand the question "What time is it?". Pupils know the names of some famous French artists, such as Monet and recognise that the French cuisine is famous throughout the world.
15. In music, at Key Stage 2, pupils develop a lively interest in sounds and begin to realise that music can be used to create mood and produce images in the mind of the listener. One class was able to progress from recall of the life of Mozart to the playing of his nursery tune *Twinkle, twinkle little star* and then to discover for themselves the nature of a variation through the related *Baa, baa black sheep* tune. Pupils enjoy singing together and learn to listen carefully to each other in order to achieve harmony while singing. They recognise familiar tunes and higher attaining pupils can explain their preferences. At Key Stage 3, pupils follow complex sequences within a passage involving a variety of percussion instruments while accompanied by another pupil playing a keyboard.
16. Pupils' progress in personal, health and social education is very good throughout the school. As they move through the school they learn to reflect on their lives and consider their future in an increasingly mature and insightful manner. They develop a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities and begin to understand the concept of "good citizenship". They carefully consider the possible outcomes of decisions they are required to make in their future lives and as they get older they show increased understanding of how others may feel.
17. In physical education pupils make satisfactory progress at each key stage. By the end of Key Stage 2, their walking and balancing skills have improved significantly. They have learned to be confident in the water although most continue to require the use of flotation aids. In gymnastic activities most pupils can sequence three movements together to a controlled finish. At Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils consolidate skills learned during rock climbing activities and begin to develop improved technique in swimming, cricket and short tennis.
18. Overall progress in religious education is good. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have an understanding of

themselves within a family at home and at school; they understand the need for rules and have developed a concept of right and wrong. They know that other faiths have their special people, special books and special symbols and understand that religious beliefs in all religions apply to every day life. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have further consolidated their work on other faiths as they study religious texts and beliefs in greater detail - the Torah, the Bible and the Koran - and they know about a wider range of people who care - Mahandra Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils discuss Christian parables with greater insight. They have more detailed knowledge and understanding of Sikhism and through continuing studies of sacred lives and people who care they link their studies in a realistic manner to real life issues.

19. All pupils make good progress against targets set in their individual education plans. They are very aware of what is required to achieve the target and are mostly keen to do their best.
- 21.

#### **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

20. Pupils' attitude to work is very good. They settle down to work quickly and take pride in their work. They concentrate more effectively as they move through the school. Pupils work well on their individual educational plans. They are aware of the academic and social targets they have agreed and attentive to the progress they are making in achieving them. They enjoy opportunities provided for them to work independently. For example, some younger pupils were seen to be working quietly and purposefully together, using the computer to record a previous history lesson about life during the second world war. Most pupils work well together and can be supportive of each other. They recognise and are sensitive to each others' problems. For example, a small group working together in a 'game' at the end of a lesson tried to persuade the one who was not joining in to do so by moving closer to the group
21. Relationships between all adults and pupils in the school are very good. Taking into account the problems that some of the pupils have, the calm, ordered and purposeful atmosphere reflects the quality of relationships throughout the school and the professional skills of the staff. Pupils react well to an ethos in which they are clearly valued. This promotes good behaviour. The behaviour of pupils is good not only in the classrooms, in the playgrounds and in the dining room where meals are enjoyable, social occasions enabling pupils to practice social skills. Pupils behave well on residential visits, some organisers having written letters to the school to express their appreciation of the pupils' behaviour. Parents are very satisfied with the behaviour of the pupils. Exclusion rates are falling.
22. Increasingly pupils take responsibility for their own learning and are fully involved in discussions about their own progress. The excellent community and work experience placements provide pupils with opportunities to develop socially and acquire new skills. They respond very well to these challenges. Year 11 pupils have some whole school responsibilities such as being library monitors. Pupils contribute to the life of the community both through community, such as on an environmental project with park rangers, and taking part in local events such as Year 8 pupils creating a Christmas banner which was hung in a street in the middle of Cheltenham as part of the Christmas decorations.

24.

#### **24. Attendance**

23. The attendance is satisfactory. The unauthorised rate of absence is similar to that of other schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. It has improved throughout the current term. Parents report that their children enjoy coming to school. Some two thirds of pupils are brought to school by taxi, This does cause problems of punctuality for pupils living a long way from the school.



## 25. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### 25. **Teaching**

24. The quality of teaching is a strength of the school. In 44% of lessons it is either very good or excellent. In nine lessons in ten is good or better. In the other lessons it is satisfactory. The small number of pupils in most lessons, the very good knowledge teachers have of the subjects they teach and their high expectations for pupils' learning are major contributors to the quality teaching seen throughout the school.
25. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subjects they teach and a good awareness of the relevant Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum. The very good or better teaching is based on their understanding of the needs of pupils. Individual educational plans are well formed and, especially in mathematics and English, help direct teaching to the advantage of the progress pupil's make.
26. Teachers set high expectations. For example, in an excellent lesson in personal and social education pupils recognised the work opportunities available in a home for the elderly and decided if they would wish to work in such a situation. The planned presence of two support assistants in the lesson helped ensure that each pupil had time to discuss their feelings for that type of work and to recognise what they liked or did not like about the work. This was the first step to deciding the characteristics of the job they would realistically like. In the best lessons detailed planning in the use of resources and for the deployment of support assistants, helps pupils make very good progress.
27. Long, medium and short term planning is good. Lesson plans are easily derived from planning documents. The objectives for lessons are clearly stated, and for National Curriculum subjects they link closely to attainment targets. Most lessons are a mixture of different strategies. Whole class work is limited, most often pupils work in small groups or as individuals. This approach allows teachers to make a good match between the lesson tasks and pupils' individual needs. In this they benefit from the very effective contribution of the support assistants who take small groups or individual pupils.
28. The very good management of the pupils and the enjoyment pupils gain from working with each other creates a positive environment for learning, which also helps to promote progress. At Key Stages 2 and 3, teachers make good use of lesson time and of the school's resources. At Key Stage 4, lesson time is very well used.
29. In many subjects, especially English and mathematics, day-to-day assessment recognises pupils' attainment. In each subject, teachers are good at identifying the gains pupils make through oral feedback, or more systematically through the checklists, which identify the skills and knowledge relevant to these subjects.
30. The school's homework policy operates well. The regular giving and completing of homework helps to link the work of the school with the home. This benefits the progress pupils make.

32.

### 32. **The curriculum and assessment**

31. The curriculum at all key stages is well-planned and meets all statutory requirements. It offers a broad, relevant and balanced pattern of studies that takes account of pupils' prior learning, their gender and their disabilities. A strong feature that runs throughout is the development of all pupils as individuals with a strong emphasis, at key stage 4, on preparation for life and work. There is equality of access and opportunity. Pupils' interests and special educational needs are central to each pupil's passage through the school and carefully kept records and targets sharpen the curriculum each pupil follows. The strong personal, social and health education programme that includes drugs and sex education strengthens pupils' response to learning and encourages improvement. Religious education and the spiritual and moral dimensions frequently explored in other subject areas give the pupils an opportunity to make better informed choices in life based on a sound moral code. Schemes of work are in place and are well referenced to the National Curriculum programmes of study.

32. Planning is good and the curriculum is delivered with the support of co-ordinators and assistant co-ordinators (in the other phase) who take responsibility for specific subject areas. Good subject policies ensure that teachers follow a common agreed direction as they plan their work. Throughout the course of planning, there is a strong emphasis on building continuity of learning, including continuity between phases although there is still room for development in this area. Long, medium and short term plans are made. These build on prior attainment and take into account the statutory statements, the individual education plans and, where possible, include visits, invited visitors or specific projects that seek to extend pupils' experience within the curriculum. A good special educational needs policy describes how curriculum should take account of the needs of individual pupils in order to improve their attainment.
33. Recently, there has been a rapid expansion of provision for information and communication technology which is taught as a discrete subject and as an extension of work in other subject areas. This is developing into a strong feature of the curriculum. The excellent careers education provision for Key Stage 4 pupils is particularly effective in preparing pupils for the world of work. It makes good use of external agencies and leads on to a work experience programme that has been graduated to move from simulated experience to placements linked to the careers programme and later to a 'freer' choice driven by pupils' interests. Confidence building is a central feature of the six week programme spread over Years 10 and 11. Its success can be judged by the fact that all those who left the school at the end of the last academic year found a training placement or employment.
34. The school endeavours to enhance the curriculum whenever possible. Examples include student placements at colleges, shared musical and drama events with a neighbouring comprehensive, participation in inter-schools sport, a wide range of visitors to the school (including people from business), environmental projects and visits to libraries, museums, supermarkets, farms, places of worship and country fayres. Extra curricular activities are severely restricted by the taxi contracts and the lengthy distances some pupils travel. The lunch time break is also very short. The school does, however, consider these activities important and reviews from time to time what can be provided. Over recent years a programme for residential experience has emerged. This has involved younger pupils in residential riding experiences, included a Year 7 two-day visit to France, a Year 8 visit to a special schools camp in the Forest of Dean, a Year 9 visit to a guest house in Torquay (where a full programme of activities had been organised), a Year 10 visit to various places in France (including a particularly successful visit to Paris in 1999) and a visit for Year 11 to London. Although good use is made of local sports facilities, there is at present no extra-curricular sport.
35. Assessment procedures to monitor pupils' attainment are sound. The school management team is working with co-ordinators to improve the quality of information held about each pupil but already good records are kept and preserved examples of work enable teachers and pupils to make judgements about progress. A feature of the work throughout the school is the very good use made of assessment information to inform curriculum and lesson planning. Many learning tasks undertaken in the classroom are structured in order to cater for the wide range of attainment found within every class.

37.

37. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

36. Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for the promotion of pupils' social and personal development is a strength of the school.
37. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Subject policies reflect guidance provided in the school policy for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and contain references to the need for this area of development to be fostered through the subjects. The school's long term plan for this area further identifies by key stages, a wide range of activities that directly and indirectly contribute to the pupils' spiritual development - the major religious festivals, visits to a variety of religious venues and the celebration of Saints' days. The very good assemblies provide opportunities for prayer and reflection as well as for the consideration of moral and social issues. Senior pupils responded very well to the encouragement to consider questions about values and beliefs as exemplified by the story of the Good Samaritan, while younger pupils watched and listened carefully to the class performing their "play" about the tax collector whose spiritual experience on meeting Jesus caused him to change his life. Additionally, the pre-lunch grace provides a clear opportunity for quiet reflection. The school's provision for religious education makes a very positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual development. Younger pupils primarily, but not solely, reflect on

spiritual issues when stimulated by stories from the Bible and tracts from other major religions while older pupils demonstrate their spirituality primarily but not solely through reflecting on the lives and work of special people and people who help us.

38. The school provides a good moral framework within which pupils are taught to distinguish between right and wrong. The values of honesty, fairness, good manners and tolerance are promoted consistently and are underpinned by the school's key tenet of developing in pupils a respect for others, property and themselves. All staff provide good role models and pupils are aware of the high expectations of staff who encourage them to be responsible for their own behaviour and to treat others as they themselves would wish to be treated. Discussion in lessons, in depth at Key Stage 4, allow pupils to express their moral values and to explore a range of issues including their rights and associated responsibilities. The high quality of such discussion is directly linked to the pupils' knowing that staff listen to and value their ideas. Parents feel that their children are developing an understanding of right and wrong and many agree that the school is actively promoting good behaviour and positive values and attitudes.
39. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Pupils become more confident and independent as they progress through the school. Within lessons pupils are given good opportunities to work co-operatively and independently. Teachers use questions and prompts effectively, during lessons and at other times, to enable pupils to express their views with confidence. For example, at Key Stage 4, pupils provide feedback about their work experience with clarity and insight. At Key Stage 3, pupils describe their reaction to the knowledge they gain from the study of life in the trenches during the First World War and at Key Stage 2 pupils carefully consider how to improve the "stage directions" required for their puppet theatre presentation. The many visits linked directly to the curriculum; the college links with Hartpury and Gloscat the Joint Challenge of Industry days and the phased opportunities for residential experiences - at home and abroad - extend the pupils' social development in different contexts. Inter schools sporting activities, the use of a range of community sports facilities, and support for charities also provide excellent well structured opportunities for social development which involve all of the pupils. In school, pupils of all ages show initiative in class as they help their teachers set up for or tidy up after lessons. Opportunities are also created for some of the older pupils to take responsibilities for the library. They help in the hall during and after lunch and, when they are ready, are given the opportunity to act in a socially responsible manner through making their own way to school and to go off-site during the lunch hour when in Year 11. Additionally, the very well organised Personal, Social and Health Education and Careers programmes make a significant contribution to the pupils' personal and social development.
40. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils learn about Britain's cultural traditions through visits to places of interest, such as museums. History and geography lessons provide opportunities for pupils to appreciate other cultures. Religious education includes the study of cross cultural faiths. Pupils attend music and drama festivals with pupils from another school and in art they learn about famous artists and their work. The music department presented a concert in which parents and pupils performed in a choir or instrumental groups for the Christmas service. Displays around the school such as a painting in the style of Lowry, copies of Egyptian wall paintings and the newly created "stained glass window", inspired by a visit to Gloucester cathedral, all contribute effectively to the pupils' cultural development.
42. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**
41. The school is a purposeful community which has at its centre the support, guidance and welfare of its pupils. The staff know their pupils very well. Constant watchfulness, and much quiet questioning to set high standards for kindness and good behaviour. There are good formal procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour. The behaviour policy effectively underpins the practice of using praise and encouragement to reinforce success. For example, there is a "pupil of the month" award, which is valued by pupils. Improving behaviour may be included in a pupil's targets for the term and the pupil and classteacher regularly discuss the pupil's progress towards meeting the target. Where there are isolated incidents of unacceptable behaviour including a few rare incidents of bullying, they are carefully logged and effective action is taken and recorded. Parents who attended the pre inspection meeting were clear that bullying is not a problem in the school and the records support this.
42. There is careful monitoring of all aspects of pupils' development through meticulous record keeping of pupils' academic and social progress. Pupils set themselves targets, which can relate to improving identified concerns in areas such as spelling and handwriting. The targets are then reviewed each half term with the class teacher. and this review includes a check on progress in each subject by comparing the teacher's

comments with the pupil's assessment of progress.

43. The school takes the monitoring of attendance very seriously. Senior pupils are responsible for noting their own weekly attendance, under supervision of the staff. The school emphasises the importance of good attendance by awarding pupils certificates when attendance reaches 93 per cent in a term. The school works closely with the educational welfare officer, who visits each week and is very aware of difficulties being experienced by some families.
44. The monitoring of personal development is done informally on a daily basis in addition to more the formal procedures of recording assessments each term in the lower school. Throughout the school pupils are set suitable targets following discussion with parents and pupils as part of the annual review process. This forms an integral part of the careers guidance and preparation for work experience in which placements are carefully tailored to each pupil's stage of readiness. Provision for careers guidance and preparation for life after school is excellent. The pupils' welfare and guidance are effectively supported by a full and well planned PSHE programme.
45. There is a nominated person for child protection and LEA procedures are consistently adhered to. Clear written guidance is given to staff although no formal in-service training has been provided recently. However all staff understand how to implement the policy effectively and do so with confidence.
46. The school has a good health and safety policy. Suitable procedures are in place for regular inspection and of the premises and of equipment. The school is rightly concerned that there are large areas of paving and asphalt paths surrounding the school which are so uneven that they are a hazard to pupils and adults.

48. **Partnership with parents and the community**

47. The school has established good relations with the parents of its pupils. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and those who answered the questionnaires expressed support and gratitude for the work that the school does for their children. A group of parents support the school by organising social events such as discos and barbecues and raise funds in this way. The school is exploring new ways to involve parents in the life of the school and a successful 'Bring your parent to school' day was held in which over half the parents of pupils in the upper school spent an enjoyable day of shared activities such as music making. Parents meetings for pupils in the lower school begin in the afternoon and continue until early evening. Parents feel well informed about their children's education and progress. There are home school diaries for younger pupils, and reading books are sent home each day. Homework increases as pupils move through the school and parents are satisfied with this aspect of the school.
48. The school takes the involvement of parents in the annual review of pupils' special educational needs very seriously and helps with transport if it is a problem. Consequently almost all parents attend these annual reviews. The annual reports to parents are carefully linked to this review. Reports give clear information about the work that pupils have covered and a summary of what pupils have achieved. In the most recent reports specific targets for information technology are included. This is a helpful addition. Letters to parents are informative and friendly. Newsletters contain invitations to contact the school to discuss any problem.
49. There are very good links with the local community. This is particularly valuable in the school's programme of work experience. The school, through its detailed knowledge of local industry and through the education business partnerships, is able to arrange placements which reflect and promote the pupil's stage of development. Pupils also gain from their community work in play groups and on an environmental project with park rangers. During the inspection week, pupils were learning to hedge. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm of their work placements. Members of staff of a local company have recently painted games on the lower school playground which the younger pupils use and enjoy. Charitable organisations within the city also raise funds for the school. There are further links with two churches: ministers take assembly about once a month and the Christmas service is to be held in one of the churches.

## 51. THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

### 51. Leadership and management

50. The quality of leadership and management at the school is good with some very good features. It effectively provides very clear educational direction for the work of the school and ensures that the whole process is conducted within a very good ethos for teaching and learning. This has a positive impact on pupils' academic progress, behaviour and personal development.
51. The work of the governing body fully meets all statutory requirements and it provides effective critical support for the headteacher and senior management team. The governing body has established appropriate committees, acting under suitable terms of reference, to ensure that the work of the school is adequately monitored and evaluated. However, this aspect of the governing body's work has suffered as issues relating to the future of the school have absorbed much of their time. The quality of strategic planning is very good. Governors are very well-informed with regard to the challenges facing the school in planning strategically for the future within the context of significant changes in the local education authority's policy and provision for pupils with special educational needs. It prepares the school well for the future by planning effectively for a number of possible future scenarios.
52. The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. The school's aims, values and policies are well understood by all relevant parties and are almost entirely achieved. Effective measures are in place to ensure that pupils and staff have equal opportunities. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the strengths and development needs of the school and maintains effective communication with the chair of governors. The school's capacity for evaluating its own performance through a system of self-evaluation is currently being considered as an appropriate future aim for the school. At present, existing systems are only in the early stages of development. The school is beginning to set realistic targets for improvement, but again these are only in the early stages of development. The constitution of senior management team provides suitable representation for primary and secondary phases of the school and ensures that pupils' academic and personal development throughout the school is continually reviewed. Individual members carry out their duties effectively and increasingly demonstrate good communication and effective teamwork. They have the full confidence of the staff. This has a positive impact on the very good ethos. The quality of the support and monitoring of teaching and curriculum development is good. Effective use has been made of expertise within the LEA to support well-established procedures within the school, to provide teachers with helpful advice following direct observation.
53. Roles and responsibilities of subject co-ordinators are clearly defined. They carry out their duties effectively and demonstrate a good working knowledge of strengths and needs relating to the development of their subject areas. All staff demonstrate an increasing commitment to continuous improvement by supporting each other through open and honest critical appraisal. This has led to the emergence of a shared sense of common purpose, effective teamwork and increasingly high staff morale. Anxiety about the future of the school does have a negative impact on staff morale but this is kept to a minimum by the supportive ethos.
54. The school development plan is well understood by all staff and experienced as an effective tool. The process by which priority areas for development are identified enables all staff to feel involved and valued. The plan is detailed in the short and medium-term but intentionally less so in the long-term. This is appropriate given the uncertain future of the school. Development planning has effectively addressed and continues to address issues faced by the school as a result of the decreasing roll. Procedures for review, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the plan are good.
55. At the meeting for parents held prior to the inspection, parents expressed their full confidence in the leadership and management of the school. The findings of the inspection support this view.

**57. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

56. The school has an appropriate number of well-qualified teachers and special support assistants. Collectively, teachers have a wide experience of teaching pupils with learning difficulties. They are deployed well and most lessons are taught by teachers with an appropriate subject specialism. Most of the support assistants have completed an appropriate qualification and all are experienced. They have gained from participating in a good range of training. Arrangements for the induction and training of new staff are good. The recently introduced procedures for the professional development of staff focus suitably on the needs of the school and on the individual's future interests. Increasingly, they are positively affecting the work of the school through the identification of annual targets for each teacher and the support assistants. The evaluation and dissemination of information and skills gained in training is well planned. Job descriptions for senior managers and curriculum co-ordinators are good.
57. The premises provides suitable accommodation for pupils up to the school's registered admission number of 89. The caretaker and cleaning staff maintain both buildings very well. Over the last two years, there have been a number of improvements to the accommodation and both sites show attractive and appropriate displays, which are designed to demonstrate and to rehearse learning. Changing facilities for physical education in the upper school are unsatisfactory. Both sites have libraries. In the upper school the number of books and the method for selecting books are good, but the small size of the library limits its usefulness in supporting teaching and learning and in the development of pupils' investigative skills. The lack of specialist facilities in the science room, for example, a fume cupboard, makes difficult the full presentation of the Programme of Study at Key Stage 3 and coverage of the syllabus of the GCSE and the CoEA at Key Stage 4.
58. The school has made good use of the monies gained to support the National Literacy Project. The quality and quantity of resources in English are very good throughout the school. The school has a very good number of computers, located in classrooms and in the computer suite, to support gains in IT skills and in teaching and learning across all subjects. Resources to support learning are good in mathematics, art, geography and music. They are satisfactory in the other subjects.

**60. The efficiency of the school**

59. Overall, the efficiency of the school is good.
60. The quality of financial planning is good. It ensures that educational developments are well supported and has been able to respond effectively to the demands created by changes in LEA policy regarding provision for pupils with special educational needs. The finance committee provides the governing body with good quality, up to date reports of its monitoring of expenditure and remaining funds available for future developments. Suitable consideration is given to alternative strategies for managing expenditure and handling contingencies. This has a positive impact on the effective management of the amalgamation of the budgets inherited from the previously separate schools and on the financial implications of the decreasing school population. Good communication and effective co-operation with the LEA has also contributed to the successful management of the budget throughout this period of transition.
61. Teaching staff are very well deployed making full use of existing expertise and experience. Very good use is made of the support staff. They feel fully involved in all aspects of school development, have a very clear understanding of their role, are well inducted and are encouraged to pursue training opportunities that are beneficial to their professional development and in keeping with the interests of school development. They have a significantly positive impact on pupils' academic and personal development. Administrative staff, the school's premises officer, cleaners and cooks all work effectively to make a valuable contribution to the efficient running of the school.
62. Good use is made of the accommodation following careful consideration of a range of options. However, the school has yet to make full use of opportunities to provide high quality library provision. Learning resources are generally well used and in some subjects, such as English and careers, very good use has been made of the resources. Computers are used well to support learning in some subjects, for example in personal and social education at Key Stage 4 and in literacy in the lower school.

63. The quality of internal financial control and school administration is good. The work of the administrative staff effectively supports the central purposes of the school. All recommendations from the recent external financial audit have been fully implemented. Relevant staff have been suitably trained to operate financial procedures and systems. Accurate up to date information is quickly available for consideration of the headteacher and governors.
  
64. Given the context of the school, including the pupils' often complex special educational needs, the good and often very good teaching, the very good support and guidance provided for the pupils, good management and very good ethos, the school provides good value for money.

## 66. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

### 66. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

#### 66. English

65. Overall pupils make good progress in English. Progress in speaking and listening is very good at all key stages and in reading and writing it is good. The school has laid particular emphasis on the acquisition of literacy and has promoted good development through the pursuit of well-conceived policies. English is taught at Key Stages 1 and 2 by class teachers and at Key Stages 3 and 4 by two specialists. This is a good arrangement that is beginning to show positive improvement in standards across the school. The good attitudes of pupils, fostered by good teaching, contributes significantly to pupils' achievements. In all classes very good opportunities are given for pupils to develop skills in speaking and listening. They willingly answer questions and listen well to each other. Well-directed questions enable them to re-call previous work and to focus on the task in hand. Many pupils are confident when speaking aloud. These effective oral sessions at all levels contribute to the good learning process. Some effective drama work is undertaken in the lower school. Good preparations for a nativity play were in progress. Some older pupils are well able to commit short pieces to memory.
66. Suitable emphasis is laid on developing reading skills and pupils are listened to regularly. Pupils also take a reader home and most parents listen to them read. Pupils at all levels are keen to read aloud and at Key Stage 4, one group made a very good attempt to read aloud the text of *Romeo and Juliet* with obvious enjoyment. Although all pupils make good progress against prior attainment, less able pupils still have serious difficulties while those capable of higher attainment move forward quickly. Even in the primary phase, some are able to read with good expression. To some extent, progress can be related to the length of time the pupil has attended the school. At all levels, books are carefully chosen to match reading competence and pupils respond, in general, by a readiness to try to reach the next goal. Recent high spending on improving literacy has resulted in the provision of excellent reading resources both in class and in the lower and upper school libraries. This has a positive impact on the progress made by pupils. The use of library books, however, to promote learning across the curriculum needs further development.
67. Writing standards are low at all key stages but progress against prior attainment is good. Strong features of the work are the good quality of presentation, the pride taken in what is written and the careful preservation of written work so that pupils can see their improvement for themselves. The written work of almost every pupil is legible. The emphasis laid on writing continuous prose pieces properly minimises the use of filling in blanks on worksheets. Many of the pieces written at all levels display lively imagination and good understanding of what has been asked of them. Presentation of written work is regularly enhanced at Key Stages 3 and 4 by word-processing which is undertaken by pupils as a final extension of the task that began with a first draft.
68. Teaching at all key stages is always good, sometimes very good and occasionally excellent. It is driven by sound preparation, directly related to the prior attainment of the class and a very good appreciation of pupils' needs. This stems from the high quality of record keeping, the application of criteria laid out in individual education plans and the imaginative use of suitable strategies to ensure that every child is stimulated to improve. The lively conversations between teachers and pupils is a notable feature of all English teaching. Throughout both phases, tasks set enable each pupil to work at his or her own level. Expectation is high and there is very little unprofitable activity. Time is very well used and pupils are rarely permitted to drift 'off task'. At the same time, teachers are acutely sensitive to the disabilities of pupils and compensate for them wherever they can. Homework in the form of reading practice is encouraged throughout the school and other tasks are regularly set for homework in key stages 3 and 4. Their teaching skills are supplemented by the good contributions of support assistants.
69. A good measure of thinking about the improvement of literacy standards has already been undertaken. Proper re-consideration of examination goals is on-going. Throughout the school, there is a continuous sharing of good ideas. The commitment to improvement makes a significant contribution to the good progress that is being achieved.



71. **Mathematics**

70. In mathematics, pupils make good progress over all the key stages.

71. The national strategy for numeracy informs the curriculum in mathematics at Key Stage 2 and at the beginning of Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 2, the lowest attaining pupils are working at the pre-number stage. They have learned to count on from 1 to 10 and can select appropriate visual aids and apparatus to help recognise numbers and to group by number. The highest attaining pupils work at Level 2 of the National Curriculum. For example, they can count on in 1's and 10's and know the number pairs that make 10. They have learned subtraction with decomposition, addition to hundreds, tens and units and are beginning to learn of division. They can apply these skills to counting money and manipulating distance and time. They can collect simple data, which they have learned to present in the form of a bar chart. At Key Stage 3, a small number of pupils continue to attain at pre-level 1 or at Level 1, but most attain at higher levels. By the end of the key stage, the highest attaining pupils accurately use the four rules of number and easily transfer these to the manipulation of money, time and distance. Their vocabulary of mathematical terms is considerable and they are good at explaining their work using appropriate terms. At Key Stage 4, pupils work toward the GCSE. Most will be entered for this award, but a few will take the CoEA in the subject. At the end of the key stage almost all pupils are functionally numerate and most can use their skills to plan a journey with reference to time and money or plan an evening of television watching, which may be helped by setting a video-recorder.

72. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good. Over all key stages they behave very well. They readily take part in mental arithmetic at the beginning of lessons. During Key Stage 2, they enjoy counting on aloud and the praise they receive for their good work. The highest attaining pupils are expected to contribute to their own understanding by, for example, exploring the relationships in number tables. At Key Stages 3 and 4 they enjoy completing their work with the help of number tables, calculators or the computer. They work well as individuals and as members of small groups. As they progress through the school, they increasingly sustain their concentration. The good quality teaching and the very good relationship which all who teach mathematics have with their pupils contributes to developing and maintaining their positive attitudes to their work in the subject.

73. Over all key stages, the quality of teaching is good and often very good. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of mathematics and of the relevant Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum. Their high expectations for pupils' learning, the very good management of pupils and the careful planning are important factors that contribute to the very good use of lesson time and the good progress that pupils make. At Key Stage 2, the contribution of the learning support assistants is very good. Their involvement in lessons is well planned and throughout the lessons the help they give individual pupils or small groups of pupils is very effective. The good choice of teaching methods that allow pupils to be active in their learning and to undertake lesson tasks that match their abilities also helps progress.

74. The subject is very well co-ordinated over all the school. The planning documents are good. They outline what has been covered over a key stage and identify how new information can be based on what pupils already know. The targets for mathematics in pupils' individual educational plans provide good guidance for teaching and learning. Assessment and recording of attainment is good, including the records of pupils who are working at pre-level 1. At Key Stages 2 and 3, due regard is paid to the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum and all attainments targets are appropriately covered. Key Stage 4 pupils follow the syllabus for the GCSE, which is closely linked to the Key Stage 4 Programme of Study.

76.

76. **Science**

75. Pupils' progress in science is good at Key Stages 2 and 3. At Key Stage 4, pupils make very good progress. This is because they develop such good work habits in science as they move through the school.

76. At Key Stage 2, pupils use their senses well to investigate a range of materials and begin to distinguish the difference between the "feel" of a variety of surfaces. They are all becoming more aware of the world around them. Some ask pertinent questions about how things work. They are in the early stages of beginning to use scientific terminology with accuracy and confidence. As they move through the key stage, they are

increasingly aware of the sequential position of the planets in relation to the sun and begin to gather some idea of the huge distances between the planets.

77. At Key Stage 3, all pupils can explain how to separate sand from water and salt from water. All pupils make pertinent observations during experiments. They make sensible predictions as to the expected outcome of the experiment, compare them to the actual outcomes and record their findings accurately. In using scientific apparatus they begin to use the correct terminology for items they have to handle. For example, during a lesson involving Year 8 pupils, in which they were required to separate sand from water and salt from water, pupils made reference to “filter paper” and a “funnel”. Some pupils begin to use more difficult words such as “soluble” when describing their findings. Less able pupils still need help to set up the apparatus but they do gradually learn to do more for themselves. All pupils have a growing awareness of issues relating to safety in the science room.
78. At Key Stage 4, pupils use existing knowledge well to help them understand newly introduced knowledge and concepts. For example, during a lesson with Year 10 some pupils who had previously learned that metals came from the ground began to understand the concept of pure metals and impure metals. They learned that impure metals exist as ores and went on to be able to identify gold and silver as pure metals. They conduct simple experiments from which they begin to understand how reactive or non reactive metals can be identified. By the end of the Key Stage, pupils understand from their experiments how solar panels are used in everyday life to convert heat generated by the sun into energy that can rotate a wheel, for example.
79. Pupils approach science with real enthusiasm. They are keen to commit their learning to memory. Pupils respond very well to the clear expectations, good classroom organisation and the variety of activities which helps to engage them. They behave very well. Boys and girls work together effectively. Pupils concentrate for long periods and persevere to achieve the best results they can. Pupils understand and adhere to suitable health and safety procedures through all lessons.
80. The quality of teaching in science is good overall. At Key Stage 4, it is very good. Where teaching is good, materials and apparatus are well organised and appropriate to the task in hand. This enables pupils to feel confident as they attempt to learn new skills. The teacher and support staff ask questions that challenge the pupils to think deeply or to relate their learning to real life situations. This helps pupils to recognise how science affects their lives and motivates them to find out more. Teaching is very good where pupils are very well briefed before each activity which helps them to enter in to the task in a more confident frame of mind and overcome any anxieties they may experience as they enter new areas of learning.
81. The subject is well managed. The curriculum is broad and balanced and well referenced to the National Curriculum. Knowledge, skills and concepts are systematically built on between Key Stages 1 and 2, and between Key Stages 3 and 4. However this less secure between Key Stages 2 and 3. The subject co-ordinator is aware of this as are the teachers in the lower school. The science room is poorly designed for effective classroom management. There is sufficient space but the placement of the fixed work stations is crucial for support staff to be present during experiments to ensure that safe practice is maintained at all times.

## 83. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

### 83. Art

82. Pupils make good progress at Key Stages 2 and 3. At Key Stage 4, pupils' progress is very good. The rate of progress increases as pupils become more skilled in their approach to studying the subject. By the time pupils reach Years 10 and 11 they have developed good working habits in the art room and feel confident to work independently.
83. At Key Stage 2, pupils experiment with colour using paint applied with their fingers. Some become engrossed in the activity as they watch the effect of colours mixing on the paper. They explore a range of media with growing fascination at the results they achieve. All pupils are improving the control they have when using pencils, crayons, paintbrushes and glue. Pupils are able to give thoughtful reflective explanations to explain why they like or are pleased with a particular piece of work they may have completed. By the end of the key stage, most can identify the name and work of a few famous artists. Some can explain the difference between two and three dimensional work . Some begin to make observational drawings which show the early signs of pupils considering proportion and tone.
84. At Key Stage 3, pupils become increasingly aware of the influence of artists from other cultures. They make studies of the work of others from which they create their own designs. Pupils are learning about pictorial composition and this is increasingly reflected in their work. They carefully consider the scale of the various elements in the work in relation to the size of the border in which they are working. Pupils become comfortable and confident about working in three dimensions. From two-dimensional studies they develop their ideas using clay and consolidate their understanding of techniques associated with clay work. By the end of the key stage almost all pupils provide thoughtful appraisal of their own work and that of others.
85. At Key Stage 4, pupils make detailed studies using a variety of media in preparation their main piece of work. Most demonstrate good technique as they apply paint to achieve desired effects or prepare clay for a "slab" pot. They can roll out a slab of clay to an even thickness and know how to join two slabs of clay effectively. Pupils organise their work in a thoughtful and reflective manner. Their work is clearly influenced through earlier study of art from other cultures such as the designs characteristic of those Ancient Egypt or the sand paintings of Native Americans. They decorate their three-dimensional work with vibrant colours and are unafraid to experiment or take risks in order to achieve a desired effect.
86. Pupils are excited by the prospect of art lessons and approach tasks with enthusiasm. They mostly work in groups during which they relate in a relaxed friendly manner. Boys and girls relate well to each other. Pupils understand and follow the required code of conduct while in the art room. On a few occasions the behaviour of a very small number can become inappropriate, as some pupils find the slightly more informal structure of art lessons more challenging in terms of self-control. Pupils mostly respond positively to the strategies used by the teachers and are usually re-engaged in the task without a great deal of fuss. However a few do require clearer and more regular reminders to behaviour boundaries in order for them to remain focused.
87. The quality of teaching in art is good at all key stages. There are some very good features at Key Stage 4. In the lower school the class teacher is responsible for the lessons while in the upper school two subject specialists share the responsibility. This is an effective arrangement. Teachers have at least good subject knowledge. At Key Stages 3 and 4, it is very good. Lessons are well planned and suitable activities are provided to enable pupils to feel both challenged and excited about their own learning. This is significantly enhanced by the obvious enthusiasm that the teachers have for the subject. Pupils' knowledge, skills and concepts are systematically built on as pupils move through the school. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to make progress against targets set in their individual education plans. Where teaching is at its best, with a Year 10 class, for example, who were working with clay on the theme of "peppers", the teacher stops the lesson to allow the group to observe the work of others and to comment on the quality of the execution of techniques used, such as "sponging" in order to soften the edges when working with clay.
88. The curriculum is broad, balanced, well matched to the needs and interests of the pupils and suitably referenced to the National Curriculum. It is well co-ordinated. Detailed long, medium and short-term plans

provide pupils with a wide range of activities, including photography, which systematically builds on skills, knowledge and concepts. Pupils' work level of attainment and the progress they make is accurately assessed and recorded. The information is used well to inform the planning process. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop an awareness of the artistic traditions in other cultures. The art room is well lit and spacious. Full use has been made of these qualities to provide a very busy but visually stimulating environment that reflects the current areas of study. This effectively motivates pupils to observe and be influenced by a wide range of artistic approaches. The subject is well resourced. Very good use is made of the resources available.

## **Design and technology**

89. Pupils in all key stages make good progress in design technology. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils understand the need for a staged approach to making products. They investigate a need, develop a design, make the product and evaluate whether it reflects the original brief. When making rod puppets for their Christmas play pupils explained their choice of materials and methods of attachment. When making a Millennium card they demonstrate their ability to discuss design features; the quality of the finish and discussed fitness for purpose with significant insight - different to a Christmas card. When making mince pies and shortbread in food technology they clearly show that they are aware of the need for hygiene when working with food and identify by name all the utensils that they use. Additionally they use correct measures and are beginning to use correct techniques when mixing ingredients and rolling and shaping pastry. Key Stage 2 pupils are able to cut, paste, join and finish work using a variety of techniques and show an awareness of the need for safe working practices when using appropriate cutting tools and when using heat sources in food technology.
90. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' design skills are well developed. They achieve a balance between having too much or too little detail in their designs; their designs more accurately reflect their skill levels and they are more articulate when explaining what they want to do. Pupils work with increasing precision when cutting and shaping resistant materials which include wood and plastic; they make choices about the suitability of tools for given tasks, such as which files and saws to use when shaping acrylics and which glues are suitable for attachment. They show an ability to think ahead when they make decisions about which is the best way of attaching a name plaque to a door - nails, screws or impact glue - and are increasingly aware of the need to persevere to achieve the best finish to their products. In food technology they continue to use the design, make and evaluate sequence and make informed choices as they compare mixtures made from packets with those that they have made and whether it is better to use an oven or micro wave for a given task. They read instructions on paint tins and glue tubes with care and use simple recipe books with confidence.
91. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils undertake large scale projects, such as making clocks, which involve design and making skills of a high order. Detailed designs are produced; the suitability of various materials are considered and the need for the best finish possible is underlined. Their presentation techniques at design and finished product stage involve working in 2D and 3D drawings and they use a variety of methods - monochrome, colour, pencil shading and high lights - to enhance their designs and representations of the finished products. For their work in Youth Award Scheme (YAS) pupils use a range of skills - measuring, cutting, folding, joining - to respond to a "challenge" involving reading a working diagram, making an accurate template and from the template making the product - a cardboard box. In food technology pupils continue to use the three stage approach as they respond to tasks such as preparing a range of healthy snack meals. They use previous learning to decide what constitutes healthy food, they make judgements about what can be considered as portable snacks and choose recipes, utensils and equipment that enable them to realise their brief. The ability of the pupils to work independently and safely is a strong feature of design and technology work at this key stage.
92. The quality of the pupils' response to design technology is consistently good and sometimes very good. Their positive attitudes are reflected in their high levels of concentration and their willingness to persevere when striving to achieve the best finish possible to a product be it made of card, plastic or pastry. They show real enjoyment when they complete a task successfully. Pupils at all key stages work without constant supervision or help and work collaboratively when required. The level and quality of collaboration shown when pupils were tidying up after a food technology lesson at Key Stage 2 was significantly above that which would be expected. Pupils are confident when contributing to discussions and show respect for the views of others. Pupils' behaviour is consistently good; they relate very well to each other and staff, show care for the equipment that they use, and demonstrate due care for the rules and working conventions that

apply when in specialist rooms.

93. The teaching of design technology is good overall. It is sometimes very good and is never less than satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and they reflect the requirements of the scheme of work. Teachers identify what is to be taught, learning targets are clearly established they build on previous learning. The methods and organisational strategies employed reflect the subjects' design, make, and evaluate approach and match the content of the lesson as well as the varied abilities of the pupils. Praise and sensitive prompting has pupils responding to the teachers' high expectations both of their behaviour and work. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the subject with the result that they provide challenge levels which realistically match group and individual needs. The high quality of the team work displayed by teachers and support staff creates an ethos in lessons which has a very positive effect upon the pupils' learning and the progress that they make. Time and resources are effectively used. Lessons start on time, they maintain a good pace and in most lessons pupils complete work and evaluate what they have done. Resources consistently match the requirements of the topic and the varied needs of the pupils.
94. The subject is well managed. A clear policy reflects the schools' aims and the requirements of the NC and is developed through long and medium term plans which facilitate detailed lesson planning. The scheme of work reflects the requirements of the statutory orders and has balance and breadth. The list of targets under the headings of terminology, skills and tools across all key stages provides a valuable structure for monitoring progression and continuity in the subject and also provides a structure for the assessment of individual progress. Self-assessment - evaluation of the finished product - also contributes to this process. Assessment is also used to help programme planning. The resources available for design technology, including accommodation, are of satisfactory quality, suitable, and sufficient for work at all key stages and are very well organised.

## Geography

95. Overall progress in geography is good and is never less than satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils read simple plans and maps; know the main points of the compass and can follow routes either through responding to compass points directions or through reading maps. They know about the different types of settlements - villages, towns, cities - and are beginning to understand the reasons for their location and growth. Local studies provide them with an understanding of how a community is made up of different types of buildings - houses, shops, factories, leisure facilities - and they are able to contrast two different types of localities such as Cheltenham and Highnam. They understand the role of and need for weather forecasts and through their study of the Severn know about past and current roles of rivers. Imaginary journeys around the world enables them to look at the rainforests of South America; provide an opportunity to contrast Castries and St Lucia and to develop their abilities to name major world land masses, oceans and countries.
96. By the end of Key Stage 3 the pupils are more consistent in their use of correct terminology; they interpret maps with greater accuracy and confidence and understand more about factors that contribute to the world's weather. They understand the water cycle as a process; understand the difference between arable and dairy farming and through their detailed visit and study of a trout farm know that farming is a "business". The pupils' work on climate is linked to the different crops that are found around the world in hot, warm, wet, and cold countries and they extend their understanding of the effect of climate in general and in particular how it effects the food that people grow and eat in different parts of the world. Work on settlement is refined as they re-study Cheltenham as a large town and Gloucester as a city. Pupils now know that there is a wide range of industries in the British Isles as they also know through their work on Lancashire textile industry that drastic changes can take place in such industries.
97. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils are more aware of ecosystems as a consequence of their work on the Forest of Dean. Their work on leisure increases their knowledge about the role of country parks and Country Codes and they are more competent when carrying out surveys. They record and retrieve data from surveys in a variety of forms through the use of their ICT capability and as a consequence of their studies in the Work module they use their work experience to extend their understanding of primary, secondary and tertiary occupations.
98. The quality of the pupils' response to geography is good. They listen attentively to their teachers and are

eager to succeed. They respond positively to the challenges set and show good levels of concentration. The majority of pupils at all key stages can work independently and collaboratively when required, such as when pupils in Key Stage 2 worked effectively together to identify parts of the school on a large plan and when pupils at Key Stage 3 spontaneously helped each other to read difficult words when reading aloud to the class. Pupils show respect for the views of others when working collaboratively and show confidence when contributing to class discussions. The high quality of class discussion, including the use of correct terminology, was clearly seen when pupils at Key Stage 4 were investigating farming as a "system". The very good relationships that exist between the pupils and between pupils and their teachers and support assistants has very positive effect upon behaviour and the progress that they make.

99. The overall quality of teaching is good. It is never less than satisfactory and is sometimes very good. Lessons have aims and objectives and the high expectations that teachers have of the pupils are clearly identified in terms of lessons' outcomes. Lesson plans reflect the requirements of the scheme of work and the methods and classroom organisation employed match the abilities and needs of the pupils. Recapitulation at the start of lessons is effectively used to link previous learning to current objectives with the recalling of the visit to a trout farm to introduce new work on farming systems providing a good example of this. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. They use a range of presentation strategies; use questions and prompts effectively and provide challenge levels which realistically match group and individual needs. The relationships between staff and pupils are very good with the very good team work that exists between teachers and support staff being the product of the shared planning. Time and resources are effectively used; lessons start on time, have good pace and pupils have opportunities to review what they have done at the end of lessons. Resources consistently match the requirements of the topic and the varied needs of the pupils.
100. The subject is well managed. The policy for geography reflects the schools's aims and the requirements of the NC and is underpinned by long and medium term plans which provide good guidance for lesson planning. Planning in the subject provides for continuity and progression. The scheme of work has balance and breadth across all key stages with the work at key stage 4 making a significant contribution to the programme that is preparing the pupils for a post school life of further education, work and leisure. Assessment is effectively used to help with programme planning with the coordinators recognising that there is a need to continue to refine their processes for individual assessment. Resources are of very good quality; they are suitable and sufficient for work at all key stages and are supplemented by the good use that is made of a wide range of community resources, including very well targeted visits.

## **History**

101. Overall progress in history is good. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are developing an understanding of chronology; they use primary and secondary sources with greater insight and are able to compare life, events and artifacts from the past with their own experiences. They visit Whitcombe Roman villa and Corinium Museum in order to have first hand experience of life during Roman times and they use the visit to enhance their work when comparing and contrasting the lives of the Romans with the lives of Celts. Food technology lessons which include a study of rationing during world war two provides additional information about this period and their comparison of Victorian toys with those of the 90s further helps their understanding of changes over time. The study of daily life in ancient Greece introduces pupils to world history and their detailed work on Tudor times, particularly Tudor houses, extends their historical knowledge from the local setting to the national. The interview of a member of the school's caretaking staff about living in Cheltenham during World War II provided pupils with an opportunity to practice their inquiry skills; to have a greater understanding of why there are different ways of interpreting the past and further helped their understanding of chronology.
102. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have a better understanding of chronology; are more accurate in their interpretation of primary sources observed during visits or artifacts handled in class and are more confident and perceptive when discussing issues generated by visits or during lessons. They understand the main reasons for the First World War with their "letter home from the trenches" confirming that they can realistically reflect upon the horrors of trench warfare. Their work on the Ancient Greeks consolidates their increasingly better understanding of chronology - the near past and distant past - and the visit to Gloucester cathedral enables them to use its architectural and decorative features to extend their knowledge of church architecture. This visit additionally provides them with the opportunity to study Thomas Becket and his murder in Canterbury Cathedral while the study of Emily Pankhurst and suffragette movement allowed pupils to link the work of one person to significant changes in the parliamentary system.

103. The quality of the pupils' response to history is consistently good. Pupils listen to their teachers, show an enjoyment for the subject and are eager to succeed. They respond positively to the challenges set; show good levels of concentration and many pupils at all key stages work without direct supervision. Pupils work collaboratively when required. The respect that pupils show for the views of others makes a significant contribution to the quality of discussion and collaborative work. Pupils' behaviour is good across key stages; they settle quickly to work and persevere with difficult tasks. Pupils' relationships with teachers, support assistants and other pupils are good; they treat each other with courtesy and show care for the equipment and materials that they use. Lower attaining pupils respond particularly well when successful in their use of well targeted work-sheets while the higher attainers enjoy discussion.
104. The overall quality of teaching is good and is sometimes very good. Lessons are well planned. They have a clear focus; teachers identify what is to be taught; and their aims and objectives are shared with the pupils. Lesson plans consistently reflect the requirements of the scheme of work and build on previous learning. The methods and classroom organisation employed are good. Teachers match tasks and activities to the abilities and needs of the pupils with the result that all have the opportunity to participate, respond and succeed. Praise, careful questioning and sensitive prompting has pupils responding to the teachers' high expectations. The teachers' secure knowledge and understanding of the subject provides challenge levels that realistically match group and individual needs. The relationships between staff and pupils are consistently good and the quality of the team-work displayed by teachers and support staff creates an ethos in lessons which has a very positive effect upon the pupils' learning and the progress that they make. This team work is a strong feature of teaching in this subject. Time and resources are effectively used. Lessons maintain a good pace and in most lessons pupils complete work and have opportunities to review what they have done. Resources consistently match the requirements of the topic and the varied abilities of the pupils.
105. The subject is well managed. A clear policy reflects the school's aims and is underpinned by good long and medium term plans which reflect the requirements of the National Curriculum. Planning in the subject provides for balance, breadth and continuity and progression. The medium terms plans provide a sound basis for detailed lesson planning and assessment which helps curriculum planning and the monitoring of individual progress.
106. Resources are of good quality and suitable across all key stages, however there is a need to build up the stock of reference books. Very good use is made of community resources, including the provision of very well targeted visits to a wide range of venues including historical buildings and sites and relevant museums.

### **Information and Communication Technology**

107. Overall progress in information and communication technology (ICT) is good. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils name and understand the purpose of the key components of the computer stations that they use; they are competent in the use of the key board and mouse and they access and save their own files. The lower attaining pupils, with help, produce word processed text and are importing simple images to enhance their text or as designs in their own right. They use simple graphic packages to create their own images and in conjunction with text editing involving cutting and pasting they manipulate images that they have created or imported from a clip-art bank in order to produce Christmas Cards or simple posters. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to understand how to create and interrogate simple data bases.
108. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' competency with the key board and mouse has significantly improved. They manipulate text, self-generated images and imported images with increasing confidence and they select different fonts as well as changing font size and orientation. As a result of their increasing technical skills they are able to focus more on the design elements of tasks when creating posters and newsletters and are able concentrate more on the correct use of English when using their word processing skills. They continue to develop their understanding of data bases as tools that enable them to carry out surveys, and through using them to sort they are able to carry out simple research. Pupils increasingly appreciate that ICT capability is of significant value across the curriculum and is increasingly used in other subjects and in particular the production of good copy of text, the production of graphs and simple images using draw/paint programmes.

109. By the end of Key Stage 4 the pupils ICT capability is as such that they confidently use it across the curriculum. They produce graphs in mathematics lessons; use word processing packages in English and produce posters and front pages for folders and projects in YAS. The YAS "challenges" additionally provide a focus for their work as they demonstrate an understanding of ICT in the home and school, use ICT to produce news-letters, brochures and leaflets, use more powerful graphics programmes to create CD album cover and use CD ROMs for research.
110. The quality of the pupils' response ICT is consistently good. Pupils show an enjoyment for the subject; are eager to succeed and concentrate well on their work. The majority of pupils respond very positively to the challenges set and show an ability to persevere when faced with new problematic tasks. This was clearly demonstrated by pupils at Key Stage 2 when trying to "plug" the holes in their images as the paint "leaked" through and when an older pupil finally managed to place and orient his print according to his original design. All pupils show real pride in their finished work with examples of genuine wonder being shown by younger pupils as a new graphics technique enabled them to generate a "painting" of worth. Most pupils at all key stages work without constant supervision or help - a marked feature of all ICT lessons - with those requiring help fully observing the conventions established about asking for help and waiting their turn. Pupils show respect for the work of others as they also show care for the equipment and materials that they use. As pupils progress through the school they demonstrate an increasing ability to show initiative and will often help their peers. Pupils' relationships with teachers, support assistants and other pupils are very good.
111. The teaching of ICT is good overall and sometimes very good. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject; their expectations of learning are high and their lesson planning enables pupils to build systematically on their past learning and to practice and refine their skills. The content of lessons reflects the requirements of the scheme of work; are very well organised and there is a good balance in the teaching and learning strategies employed. Explanations are clear; questioning is well used to check on pupils' understanding and every opportunity is taken by teachers to identify as many of the pupils as possible when demonstrating good work or significant effort. As a consequence of the teachers' careful matching of tasks and activities to overall group abilities and their provision of well targeted individual support, all pupils have the opportunity to participate, respond and succeed. Lessons have good pace and the time available is effectively used. The relationships between staff and pupils are very good with the very good quality of the team-work displayed by teachers and support staff creating an ethos in lessons which has a positive effect upon the pupils' learning and the progress that they make.
112. The subject is well managed with the coordinator and shadow coordinator meeting on a regular basis. The rapidity with which recently acquired new equipment has been brought on line and fully used to support ICT bears good witness to the high quality of the collaboration and coordination that has taken place. A clear policy reflects the schools' aims; it drives good long and medium term plans with the whole curriculum having a balance and breadth which reflects the needs of the National Curriculum and the special educational needs of the pupils. Planning in the subject provides for continuity and progression and the detailed medium terms plans provide a sound basis for detailed lesson planning. As a consequence of the recent significant upgrading of provision the subject is very well resourced. The school has a dedicated ICT room in the upper school, a very well equipped system in a class base in the lower school and at least two computers in most class rooms. The coordinator identifies the need to bring the soft-ware resources for the lower school into line with the level in the upper school. Assessment is used effectively to help with planning and to identify the progress that pupils make.

#### 114. **Modern Foreign Language**

113. Over time, pupils' progress in French is good at both key stages.
114. At the beginning of Key Stage 3, pupils know the French words for a range of familiar foods, including fruits and typical items to be found on a restaurant menu. They design their own menus in French. They can make sensible comparisons between French and English customs and are aware that sentences construction is different in French to that in English. As they move through the key stage they know the French words for members of the immediate family and most are able to count to ten. By the end of the key stage, pupils recognise the names of famous French brand names and some can give the name of two principle cities in France.



115. At Key Stage 4, pupils extend their knowledge of the correct words for numbers up to twenty. Some can respond in French to the question “How old are you?” and a few understand the question “What time is it?”. Pupils know the names of some famous French artists, such as Monet and recognise that the French cuisine is famous throughout the world. Pupils at both key stages demonstrate a good understanding of French culture and way of life. Most know that projects such as the development of “Concorde” and the “channel tunnel” were Anglo-French projects.
116. Pupils at both key stages were keen to stress that they enjoyed learning French and finding out about the French way of life. They find the activities interesting and take pride in the work they do. All pupils interviewed thought that they had made good progress in their understanding of the differences between life in France and life in Britain. They are confident in their attempts using the language, taking risks in front of their peers without fear of ridicule.
117. During the inspection, insufficient opportunity was available to observe the teaching of French to form a reliable judgement regarding the quality of teaching in French. However, scrutiny of teachers’ planning documents and records indicate that lessons are well planned making good use of a wide range of activities, suitably referenced to the National Curriculum programmes of study.
118. The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and appropriately emphasises areas relevant to the pupils’ needs and interests. This helps to maintain pupils’ motivation. The planned programmes of study build systematically on pupils’ existing skills, knowledge and concepts using a good range of teaching styles to meet the needs of different learning styles. Pupils’ work is soundly assessed and helpful comments are made in the marking of pupils’ work explaining what they have done well and how improvements may be made. A suitable range of resources are used well to ensure that pupils respond to written and oral material. Good visual displays support areas currently studied.
120. **Music**
119. Pupils’ progress in music is good at both key stages.
120. At Key Stage 2, pupils develop a lively interest in sounds and begin to realise that music can be used to create mood and produce images in the mind of the listener. By the end of Key Stage 2, they enjoy singing together and learn to listen carefully to each other in order to achieve harmony while singing. Pupils recognise familiar tunes and higher attaining pupils can explain their preferences. Pupils progress from recall of the life of Mozart to the playing of his nursery tune *Twinkle, twinkle little star* and then to discover for themselves the nature of a variation through the related *Baa, baa black sheep* tune.
121. At Key Stage 3, pupils follow a complex sequence of passages involving a variety of percussion instruments, mostly of eastern origin, while accompanied by another pupil playing a keyboard ground bass as they prepare to accompany a Key Stage 2 dance class at a performance before the school during the week following. Another class were able to combine the playing of glockenspiels with an electronic keyboard, drums and hand chimes. That piece required considerable self-discipline and concentration. Quite complex rhythms were also explored through clapping and percussion. A guitar club group were able to play together in more formal style. Other work (not seen) involves such wide activities as Indian ragas, rap singing, mediaeval music and playing electronic keyboards. Singing together is included at all key stages.
122. Music lessons lay emphasis on performing but the composing and evaluating elements are integrated into the activities. Sol fah, traditional and other alternative notation is also taught. Standards of performance are good. In music lessons, there is lively preparation that often requires patience from pupils, readiness to practice (sometimes alone or in pairs) and concentration to achieve a good performance. A notable feature of this subject area is the emphasis placed on learning about music of other cultures as well as our own.
123. The high standards are achieved by the good attitudes of the pupils who enjoy playing together and because expectations of them are so high. Occasional minor disruption occurs but this is invariably on account of frustration caused by a disability or because of over-enthusiasm. Lessons are well sustained by

the positive response of practically every pupil.

124. Teaching by a class-teacher and by the specialist music teacher is good or very good. Both are good musicians and their relaxed manner, matched by sound subject knowledge, ensures co-operation. Good preparation, including careful matching of task to performer, enables them to make considerable demands on their classes. The specialist teacher is ably assisted by the support assistant who contributes significantly not only by helping individuals learn their parts but by also participating with pupils as a performer.

125. The department's resources encourage high standards. There is an exceptionally wide range of instruments available for use, good sound equipment and a recently-acquired computer for further development of composing skills. There is also a good range of music cassettes. The specialist teacher supplements the range available from her own resources. Unfortunately, no facilities exist for recording pupils' own performances so that they could better evaluate their work..

## 127. **Physical Education**

126. Progress in physical education for pupils at each key stage is satisfactory.

127. At the beginning of Key Stage 2, the lowest attaining pupils are learning to throw and roll balls of different sizes and textures during the development of early games and athletic skills. By the end of the key stage, their walking and balancing skills have improved significantly. They have learned to be confident in the water although most continue to require the use of flotation aids. In gymnastic activities most pupils can sequence three movements together to a controlled finish. The curriculum is effectively extended through the very good use of the Riding for the Disabled programme. Both tuition and resources at the Cheltenham Racecourse are very good. Pupils' co-ordination skills benefit from their riding and they gain in both skills and knowledge sufficiently for them to take the bronze and silver awards of the Riding for the Disabled Association.

128. At Key Stages 3 and 4, much of the work in physical education is taken by specialists in the activity and not by teachers at the school. For example, pupils take rock climbing, swimming and multi-gym work at local facilities under the direction of local staff. Also, they learn cricket and short tennis from national coaches for the sports. Their tuition is very good and is supported by the use of very good resources, for example large numbers of soft balls and racquets of reduced size for short tennis. The Programmes of Study at Key Stage 3 and at Key Stage 4 are not fully covered. However, the experiences gained by pupils are worthwhile and their gains in the skills and understanding of the activities they take part in, including dance, are substantial.

129. Pupils' attitudes to learning in physical education are good. They dress appropriately for the lessons. Their response to lessons held at school in either of the two halls, at the equestrian centre or in the swimming pool is uniformly good. Behaviour is good. They listen to instructions well and accept support from the staff when it is required. They enjoy being active in their lessons and when they compete against other special schools in the area.

130. Overall, the quality of teaching in physical education is good, although not all lessons are taught by teachers at the school. The lessons taught by the school's teachers and those taught by specialists are well planned. Pupils are managed well and lesson time and resources are well used. Teaching strategies, generally, match well with the needs of the pupils. Support assistants are deployed well in helping match pupils needs to the demands of the lesson tasks. For the lessons in school and for those outside of school due regard is taken for the risks inherent in the activities. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress over lessons vary with the activity. Mostly, pupils are observed in the lessons and their effort and attainment levels are recorded on an assessment sheet.

131. The subject is disadvantaged by the lack of specialist training among the staff. Nevertheless, co-ordination is good and the use of outside specialist tutors and very good local facilities provide experiences of good quality, but over a limited range of the subject as it is fully expressed in the orders of the National Curriculum.

## Religious Education

132. Overall progress in religious education is good. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have an understanding of themselves within a family at home and at school; they understand the need for rules and have developed a concept of right and wrong. Their making of a Christingle helps them to understand the symbolism associated with the Christian faith - the candle, the blood, - while their more detailed study of the Christmas story extends their understanding as they act a playlet involving the Magi and their symbolic presents of gold, myrrh and frankincense. Their study of special places has developed their understanding of the church, the mosque and the synagogue with further understanding of other religions developing as they look at how special events such as weddings and christenings are celebrated in other religions. They know that other faiths have their special people, special books and special symbols and understand that religious beliefs in all religions apply to every day life.
133. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have further consolidated their work on other faiths as they study religious texts and beliefs in greater detail - the Torah, the Bible and the Koran - and they know about a wider range of people who care - Mahandra Ghandi, Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa. Their work on "the rites of passage" has enabled them to understand more about how birth, marriage and death are celebrated in a range of religions and they are more consistent in their use of correct terminology as applied to other beliefs. Pupils show increasing understanding of how different religious beliefs have common threads and are able to link belief to a wider range of moral and ethical issues that apply to every-day life.
134. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils are discussing Christian parables with greater insight; they have more detailed knowledge and understanding of Sikhism and through continuing studies of sacred lives and people who care are linking their studies in a realistic manner to real life issues. Their religious education studies are very closely linked to the work done during their PSHE and YAS lessons with the latter providing clear opportunities for discussing and developing an understanding of "faith in action". The quality of discussion during the lesson about Dr Barnado provided clear evidence of the pupils' ability to understand how belief can be linked to action. A Christmas Quiz confirmed that the pupils are able to use their factual knowledge as the basis for informed discussion, including the discussion moral issues on a world stage.
135. Pupils' responses to religious education are consistently good. They listen carefully, show an enjoyment for the subject and are eager to succeed. They respond positively to the challenges set; show good levels of concentration when working independently and show real enjoyment when working collaboratively. The quality of collaborative work was demonstrated clearly by pupils at Key Stage 2 as they prepared their presentation for the cathedral service and by small groups of pupils at Key Stage 3 as they "performed" their scripts about Dr Barnado. The respect that pupils show for the views of others makes a significant contribution to the quality of discussion across all key stages with the teacher's questioning and sensitive prompting ensuring that all pupils have opportunities to contribute fully. Pupils' behaviour is consistently very good as are their relationships with teachers, support assistants and other pupils. Both the behaviour and quality of relationships demonstrated make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning and the progress that they make.
136. The overall quality of teaching is good. It is never less than satisfactory and is sometimes very good. Lessons are carefully planned; they have a clear focus and the challenges set are appropriate. Teachers are very secure in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. The methods and organisation that they use match the needs of the topic as well as the special educational needs of the pupils, and lesson plans consistently reflect the requirements of the scheme of work. Praise, careful questioning and sensitive prompting has pupils responding to the teachers' high expectations both of their behaviour and work. Time and resources are effectively used. Lessons start on time, they maintain a good pace and in most lessons pupils complete work and have opportunities to review what they have done. The very good relationships that exist between staff and pupils and the high quality of team work displayed between teachers and support staff make a very positive contribution to the pupils' enjoyment of and progress in this subject.
137. The subject is well managed. The policy for religious education is underpinned by good long and medium term plans which reflect National Curriculum and agreed syllabus guidance. Planning provides for continuity and progression across key stages with the medium term plans facilitating detailed lesson planning. The scheme of work has balance and breadth and the time allocated for the subject is satisfactory. The clear links that exist between religious education and elements of PSHE and YAS work at Key Stage 4 is

a particularly strength of the programme at this key stage. Resources are of good quality and suitable for the programme at all key stages but there is a need to build up the stock of artifacts representing the different religions.

138. The assessment system used to help with programme planning is good as is the quality of day to day assessment in lessons. However, the documents used for individual assessment need to be further developed in order to provide more detail about individual progress and needs.

139. The school's provision for religious education makes a very positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

141. **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

141. **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

140. The school was inspected by five inspectors, including a lay inspector and a total of 57 hours were spent observing lessons. School documents, including the school development plan, staff handbook, prospectus, minutes of the governing body, curriculum and other policy documents were scrutinised, as well as a proportion of pupils' work, their statements of special educational needs and individual education plans, All teachers were interviewed and their lesson plans scrutinised. Discussions were held with the chair of the governing body, classroom assistants visiting specialists and many of the pupils.

141. Thirty-two parents responded to the questionnaire and 9 attended the meeting called for parents to express their views.

## 144. DATA AND INDICATORS

### 144. Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Y1 – Y11	80	80	80	31

### 144. Teachers and classes

#### 144. Qualified teachers (Y1 – Y11)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):

11.4
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Number of pupils per qualified teacher:

7.02
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#### 144. Education support staff (Y1 – Y11)

Total number of education support staff:

8
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Total aggregate hours worked each week:

202
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### 144. Financial data

Financial year:

1998/99
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	£
Total Income	629946
Total Expenditure	631278
Expenditure per pupil	6788
Balance brought forward from previous year	19245
Balance carried forward to next year	17913

144. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:	80
Number of questionnaires returned:	32

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	50	47	-	3	-
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	75	22	3	-	-
The school handles complaints from parents well	54	34	6	6	
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	58	18	12	9	3
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	57	34	3	6	-
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	57	37	3	-	3
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	63	28	6	3	-
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	64	27	3	6	-
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	51	31	12	6	-
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	57	28	12	3	-
My child(ren) like(s) school	60	34	-	3	3