

INSPECTION REPORT

WENNINGTON HALL SCHOOL

Wennington

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119873

Headteacher: Mr. J. Prendergast

Reporting inspector: Jed Donnelly
23637

Dates of inspection: 19th – 22nd June 2000

Inspection number: 215525

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Residential and day special school for boys with emotional and behaviour disorder
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Male
School address:	Lodge Lane Wennington Nr. Lancaster Lancashire
Postcode:	LA2 8NS
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Lady Shuttleworth
Date of previous inspection:	24 th June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Jed Donnelly	Registered inspector	Information technology	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
		Physical education	The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Teaching and learning
			Leadership and management
			Key Issues for action
Julian Sorsby	Lay inspector	Residential provision	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Partnership with parents and carers
April Dakin	Team inspector	Mathematics	Pupils' welfare, health and safety
		Art	
		Design and technology	
Anne Heakin	Team inspector	Music	Personal development
Malcolm Padmore	Team inspector	English	
		Geography	
		History	
		Equality of opportunity	
Christine Richardson	Team inspector	Science	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		Religious education	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Wennington Hall is one of two secondary emotional and behavioural difficulties residential schools in Lancashire. It offers 46 residential places for boys who live throughout Lancashire and 24 day placements for boys who live in the Lancaster and Morecombe areas. No pupils have English as an additional language.

Since the last inspection, the number of pupils on roll has increased to 65 from 44, and their needs have become more complex, including special learning difficulties and attention deficit and hyper activity disorder as well as emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school is categorised as a 'large special school'. Another major change has been the appointment of a new Headteacher and key staff.

Attainment levels on entry are low and assessment on entry demonstrates this and most pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The school provides a balanced and, as far as possible, individualised learning experience. This is carried throughout the curriculum, both in class and houses. The school is benefiting from its considerable investment in improved physical resources.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Wennington Hall is a vibrant school where pupils make very good progress overall in personal development. The headteacher provides very good leadership and the school staff are committed to the education of pupils with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. The residential element makes a very good contribution to pupils' progress overall. The school ethos and excellent team work throughout the 24hr curriculum are exemplary. The school gives very good value for money. Teaching is good overall.

What the school does well

- Standards in science, art, design and technology and physical education at Key Stage 4 are good.
- Teaching is good overall and often very good and occasionally excellent.
- Leadership and management by the Headteacher is very good.
- Parents' views of the school are excellent.
- Pupils' progress in personal development is very good.
- The residential provision makes a very positive contribution to pupils' overall progress.

What could be improved

- Standards in mathematics.
- The quality of pupils' individual education plans.
- The quality of some teaching at Key Stage 3.
- The facilities for teaching art.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was inspected in June 1996 and overall the school has made good progress since the last inspection. The capacity for further improvement with the current staff is very good. Since the last inspection, staff have continued to develop the curriculum. Meetings are well established and the subject co-ordinators regularly meet with the other teachers who share the delivery of those subjects.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets as identified in the Statements of Special Educational Needs.

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

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

Based on prior experiences and pupils' low attainment on entry to the school; progress overall is good. Progress in personal development, confidence and self esteem is very good. This is a result of the high expectations of the staff.

Standards in science, art, design and technology and physical education are good, in mathematics standards are unsatisfactory. Pupils make good progress as they move into Key Stage 4. In Year 11, in comparison with similar schools, pupils' achievements in external accreditation are above average overall. Standards are satisfactory in English at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to the school including the residential programme are very good. Most pupils' attitudes to school and learning are very good. Many expressed their pleasure with the school, and demonstrated how highly they value and respect it and its staff. Pupils show considerable enthusiasm towards many areas of school life and towards the activities provided for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	In the context of pupils prior patterns of behaviour, pupils for the most part are learning to develop self control and make choices for themselves. Pupils' behaviour overall is good.
Personal development and relationships	In many aspects of personal development throughout the 24hr curriculum pupils make very good progress. Older pupils demonstrate good levels of maturity and take responsibility.
Attendance	Based on a comparison with similar schools attendance is very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 16
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

Teaching is good overall, often very good and occasionally excellent. Teachers know their pupils well and have high expectation of pupils' behaviour. There is a clear focus on learning, good use of humour and very good use of question and answer sessions. In good teaching there is confident teaching, pace and expectation and pupils are appropriately challenged. Teachers give pupils positive role models. Where there are weaknesses in teaching they are due to lack of planning where lessons are not thought through, the failure to match work to pupils' ability, the overuse of worksheets and lack of spark in lessons means pupils do not make the progress they should. Teaching over time in mathematics is unsatisfactory but, in the lessons observed by the recently appointed subject specialist, teaching was often good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school curriculum provides a broad range of highly relevant and interesting opportunities for learning. The extensive range of extra curricular activities and very good arrangements for preparation for life after school and with the community are particularly strong features.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision, which includes personal development is very good overall. The schools' commitment to fostering social and moral development of pupils, particularly through the very good use of staff role models, in the planned programme of personal and social education throughout the day and the residential provision contributes to very good progress pupils make.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The procedures for child protection and pupils' welfare and support are very good with many excellent features.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The committed and enthusiastic leadership of the headteacher is very good. The senior management team of the school is clearly focused on raising standards and maintaining the very high expectations of behaviour and learning.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The Governing Body is very effective and fulfils its responsibilities with energy and commitment.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher, senior management team and governors are aware of the schools strengths and weaknesses and the schools development plan recognises this.
The strategic use of resources	The use of resources is good and is clearly focused in improving teaching and learning throughout the 24hr curriculum. The school makes very good use of its available budget.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open communication. • Residential activities. • The progress their children make. • The management by Headteacher. • The impact and positive change it has made to their sons' quality of life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more efficient telephone system to facilitate contact with their child.

The school has been successful in establishing and monitoring an excellent, mutually supportive relationship with parents.

There is no better testimonial to the excellence of the school's partnership with parents than the comments of one parent interviewed during the inspection. She states that as a parent she has been treated exceptionally well, and kept exceptionally well informed about her child's progress, both academic and social. Throughout her five-year association, the school always responded supportively whenever she needed help.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. *The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge their attainment against age-related national expectations or averages. The report does, however give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do in each key stage. Judgements about progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews. References to more and less able pupils and those with additional needs are made within the context of the school's population.*

2. There were no Year 11 classes running during the inspection week as they were out on work experience and so the only evidence that could be used to assess progress is derived from an analysis of the written work in folders and other pupils' records.

3. Based on prior attainment achievements in art, design and technology and physical education and at Key Stage 4 are good and in personal, health and social education overall are very good. This represents at least good progress for all pupils. In comparison with similar schools nationally, the proportion of pupils gaining at least one grade in GCSE in English and science is above average. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is unsatisfactory. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved by pupils of different ethnic backgrounds.

4. The school has set very challenging targets for pupils' attainment at the end of Year 11. The school is maintaining high standards overall and progress since the last inspection is good and the school's overall ability to develop further is very good.

5. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' progress is satisfactory or better in speaking and listening. In Year 8 pupils ask questions which advance their knowledge of the myths and legends associated with King Arthur. Year 9 pupils readily listen with interest to good, relevant subject matter expressively communicated as in their study of Buddy. Key Stage 3 pupils make at least satisfactory progress in reading. Those pupils who receive one to one teaching for literacy make good progress in these sessions. They make good gains in acquiring strategies to grasp the meaning of words. They learn to split words down to sounds and then to build them up again and to attempt possible solutions until they recognise one that fills the context. Pupils show enthusiasm for reading aloud in assemblies and they do so with confidence and enthusiasm. A good number of pupils make good use of the library which is a stimulating and attractive environment that makes a valuable contribution to the promotion of reading in the school.

6. Pupils in Key Stage 4 make satisfactory progress in writing. Some pupils become frustrated when their first attempts do not live up to their own expectations and respond by discarding them and starting again. There is little evidence of drafting and redrafting. Year 10 pupils make good progress in speaking and listening. Their teacher offers very stimulating input into a debate about animal testing of drugs. Writing is varied and sometimes features interesting and descriptive language particularly when the subject matter is as interesting to pupils as the animal rights debate is. During Year 11 they write legibly and pay good attention to the way their work looks. Pupils' extended writing is not well developed and the vocabulary most pupils use is limited but they do progress well in their writing in their study of Macbeth. They are able to make good use of a storyboard

approach to improve the structure of their writing. When they construct fictional police statements they begin to make good progress in logical ordering of the information they wish to convey.

7. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are satisfactory overall in lessons at the time of the inspection, but are unsatisfactory over time at both key stages. By the age of sixteen attainments in GCSE and Certificate of Achievement in mathematics are well below those gained in other subjects. Pupils are now beginning to make good progress in Years 9 and 10 since the recent arrival of the co-ordinator for mathematics who is raising standards. Pupils use their knowledge of measurement and money well in design and technology, and some good gains are made in the use of data handling in science.

8. Pupils with specific additional needs which includes literacy are beginning to be assessed to find out what gaps they have in knowledge and understanding through the "Success Maker" program, but these assessments are not used well enough to inform teachers across the curriculum planning. Not all pupils who require them have specific, measurable, attainable and relevant academic targets within their individual education plans and this is a weakness.

9. Pupils' progress in science is good across both key stages, as pupils increase their knowledge, understanding and skills from a low level of prior attainment on entry to the school. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils consider how things adapt to their environment. The teacher gains full attention as he dresses in special clothing used for climbing mountains or caving. There is friendly laughter as he obviously gets hotter and hotter, but pupils learn much from this exemplification of adaption to the environment. Key Stage 4 pupils observe the teachers' careful experiments to help pupils understand the magnesium, acid and sodium cause different reactions. At the end of the experiments pupils carry out their own experiments to see how the surface area affects the speed of reaction. Analysis of work in Key Stage 4 shows that pupils use the correct vocabulary and draw clear, well-labelled diagrams and graphs. They present tables of results well, write about their observations, and higher attaining pupils evaluate their work and predictions.

10. Pupils' achievement and progress are directly linked to the quality of teaching, which is consistently good, and on occasion very good.

11. Information technology has not developed at the same pace as stronger areas of the curriculum such as science and design and technology but satisfactory standards are nevertheless being achieved by all pupils. Strengths of the subject are the way that it is becoming an integral part of the whole school, with computers being used in many curriculum areas and with particular success in English, science and design and technology. They are also used effectively in the residential units for homework and for recreation. A strength of the school's approach to information technology is the way that it is aiding personal development by preparing pupils for life in a society where computers are becoming an part of everyday life.

12. Pupils' achievements in art are satisfactory in Key Stage 3, and good in Key Stage 4. By the age of sixteen attainments in GCSE art are above that which is found in other special schools of this type. The best progress is made in observational drawing. The school has maintained its high standards of attainment in GCSE art at Key Stage 4.

13. Pupils' achievements in design and technology are good at both key stages. By the age of sixteen attainments in GCSE design and technology are above that which is found in other special schools of this type.

14. Achievement in French across the key stages is at least satisfactory and in Key Stage 4 it is good in lessons. Pupils in this school are well disposed towards listening to and speaking French.

15. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' standards of attainment in music are in line with those expected for their age and progress overall is satisfactory. Pupils in Key Stage 4 do not have timetabled music lessons.

16. During the inspection, because of timetabling arrangements, it was possible to see only three religious education lessons, all in Key Stage 3, but scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion with the co-ordinator indicate that pupils' progress is at least satisfactory.

17. Achievements in all other subjects are satisfactory. All pupils benefit from the developing range of external accreditation at Key Stage 4 and many pupils continue their studies after school age in further education colleges. In some aspects of art, music and physical education pupils' attainment is in line and, on occasion, above those expected nationally.

18. Pupils' progress in personal development, confidence and self esteem during their time at school is very good. The residential provision contributes very well to the quality of learning throughout the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

19. Most pupils' attitudes to school and learning are very good. Many expressed their pleasure with the school, and demonstrated how highly they value and respect it and its staff. Pupils show considerable enthusiasm towards many areas of school life and towards the activities provided for them.

20. Pupils' behaviour overall is good. There are many examples of very good behaviour in the classroom and around the school. However, the unsatisfactory behaviour of a minority of pupils in lessons sometimes detracts from the learning of others. Unsatisfactory behaviour sometimes occurs because of boredom or lack of challenge when teaching is unsatisfactory; for example, in mathematics lessons in Key Stage 3, teachers' over-reliance on teaching directly from textbooks fails to enthuse pupils and unsatisfactory behaviour ensues. In one observed mathematics lesson behaviour during the first half of the lesson was unsatisfactory, while the teacher laboriously worked through two pages of a text book. When the teacher abandoned the text book and started to deal with the same mathematical problems through a free flowing dialogue about Euro 2000 and the probability of Manchester United winning the Premiership, there was an immediate and sustained improvement in pupils' concentration and behaviour.

21. Unsatisfactory behaviour is also sometimes associated with pupils' distress with factors that affect them outside the school. The close relationship between home and school facilitates teachers and care staff dealing quickly with the effect of such problems and bringing pupils back on task. Some pupils have short attention spans and lack concentration. Although they may start a task well, they quickly drift off and become noisy and disruptive to others who are working. Pupils are sometimes unco-operative and do not listen to their teacher. However, this is characteristic of only a minority of pupils on a minority of occasions, and is almost always rapidly dealt with through the school's very effective behaviour management procedures, which are consistently implemented by all staff.

22. Since the last inspection, there has been a significant improvement in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance. Parents who completed questionnaires and attended the meeting before the inspection said that behaviour is a mixture of good and bad and there is some bullying. Parents confirm that their children like school and there are individual comments from parents about the very considerable improvement in their children's behaviour. One parent compared the improvement in his son's behaviour to having traded in an "old banger" and left the showroom with a brand new car. He went on to explain that his son has been a pupil in the school for less than six months. Pupils' improving behaviour throughout their time in the school is a major contributory factor in their progress. Parents commented that the schools' excellent record in improving pupils' behaviour leaves them and the school free to concentrate on pupils' academic development. Another parent reported that her son overcame his behavioural problems to the point of being able to take a full time job after five years in the school. Her son now accepts himself for whom he is, including his problems, and is able to talk about his behaviour and manage himself.

23. Attendance levels have improved markedly since the last inspection and are now very good. They are well above the average for similar schools, and reflect both the effort that staff have made to improve attendance rates and also pupils' enthusiasm for school. Incidence of pupils absenting themselves from lessons are very rare and are promptly dealt with. Both day and residential pupils arrive on time at the start of school and punctuality during the school day is very good. Both attendance rates and punctuality contribute significantly to pupils' learning.

24. Pupils demonstrate particularly good attitudes towards the wide range of after school activities provided for them. They are eager to participate and recognise that doing so is a privilege that can be lost through inappropriate behaviour. The attitude of pupils towards all aspects of residential life at the school is also very good. Day pupils also demonstrate very good attitudes during communal times of the school day; for example, there is a very pleasant social atmosphere at lunchtimes.

25. Although a minority of pupils sometimes display unsatisfactory attitudes in lessons, there are many lessons where pupils have very good attitudes. Where teachers motivate their pupils, manage behaviour well and have good relationships with the class, pupils listen well, behave properly and are very involved in their work. Pupils are eager to respond to questions and work hard to improve themselves. Many pupils demonstrate considerable maturity in their conversations and presentations in lessons. This was observed; for example, among pupils in a Year 10 English lesson, who were adopting and defending positions in a debate on the pros and cons of medical research using animals.

26. Overall, pupils' relationships and personal development are good. Most pupils relate very well to each other, and take care to look after each other; for example, in a Year 7 science lesson, one pupil offered another pupil his help in ordering his work as the teacher required. Generally pupils are well able to take turns in activities without becoming frustrated or disruptive, for example, taking turns in speaking and listening in a discussion on the holocaust in a Year 9 history lesson. Some pupils have more abrasive relationships than others, which result in oppressive behaviour and bullying. This is dealt with well by the staff. Characteristically, when not involved in a flare up of unsatisfactory behaviour, pupils are polite, sociable and mature in their approach to others. This extends beyond classrooms to pupils' interaction with the wider community; for example, while on a school visit, boys acted responsibly and, of their own volition, put empty crisp packets into waste paper bins.

27. Pupils are presented with many opportunities to take responsibility, for example as helpers in classrooms and in assemblies. They readily show initiative around the school and take responsibility for their own learning; for example, representatives of all year groups participate in the Junior and Senior Councils, and debate issues that concern them about the school. Pupils are eager to participate by reading to the class or the school, and there is a waiting list of those wanting to read passages in assemblies. Pupils work well independently but some find it more difficult to work in groups. However, some good examples of group work were seen, as in physical education lessons where pupils formed teams for indoor cricket. Pupils value class systems for merits and enjoy seeing their work on achievement boards. Most have a good awareness of their own learning and standards of behaviour and understand how they need to improve.

28. In the last school year, ten pupils were excluded for a total of 17 fixed periods and one pupil was permanently excluded. This is well below the average for similar schools.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

29. Teaching overall in the lessons observed is good. In six lessons out of ten, teaching is good or better and just under one in four is very good or excellent. In the very few lessons observed where teaching was unsatisfactory, it was due in part to a lack of specialist subject knowledge, weak lesson planning and the match of work set and delivered did not capture pupils' interest; for example, in information technology where the unsatisfactory teaching was the result of weak planning in which practical activities were not sufficiently used to interest and motivate pupils. As pupils' interest waned they became increasingly unco-operative and the teacher's limited behaviour management skills were exposed. Strengths of teaching as observed during the inspection are high expectation of pupils' behaviour and a clear focus on learning and good use of humour which enables pupils to finish the task set and make progress.

30. Teaching is never less than satisfactory in English overall, however at Key Stage 3 teaching is mostly satisfactory but in Key Stage 4 teaching is good or very good. This is as a result of good subject knowledge. The teachers good use of material; for example, in a debate in Year 10 about animal testing of drugs, the content immediately gains pupils' interest, which is maintained by very good questioning and answering and valuing the contributions pupils make. Pupils learn well and respond to the challenge of the teachers' well prepared material and are able to detect bias in the promotional literature of interested parties involved in the general debate. Pupils sustain their concentration and learn independently about the arguments for and against pig heart transplants. For those teachers less secure in their subject knowledge, the quality of lesson planning is a weakness. The use of individual education plans in teaching throughout the school is a weakness as they do not inform the planning or delivery of teaching.

31. The teaching of mathematics at Key Stage 3 varies from unsatisfactory to good; this is as a direct result of insufficient subject knowledge, weak lesson planning and a lack of spark in teaching. At Key Stage 4 and some Key Stage 3 lessons where taught by subject specialists, teaching is more effective and pupils learn more. The use of information and communication technology software to support numeracy development in the residential provision contributes to the progress they make. In the good lessons, rapid question and answer sessions started the lessons and set a good pace. The teachers used practical examples of using ratio and the equivalence between decimal, fractions and percentages. Pupils learn effectively because they are motivated and focused on the task. In these good lessons the high expectations of pupils' learning by the teachers is matched by pupils'

response. Individual education plan targets are generic and do not contribute to teaching or pupils' learning effectively.

32. In science, the teachers' subject knowledge and their knowledge of the pupils' individual learning needs is clear. As the lesson proceeds the teachers assess the pupils' understanding of the work through good questioning and answer. The teachers' careful attention to health and safety within the laboratory is exemplary so that a Year 7 pupil is able to tell an inspector "We don't mess in here". As a result of subject knowledge the planned work is matched well to the range of abilities within the group. Pupils learn that they are being trusted to handle expensive and delicate equipment and develop self-control and awareness of others over time. Pupils' achievement and progress are directly linked to the quality of teaching which is consistently good and on occasions very good.

33. Pupils for the most part are managed very well by teachers, support staff and resident social workers. Dry humour often helps to diffuse potentially difficult situations. Resident social workers and other support staff ensure that all pupils have opportunities to participate in lessons and make gains in their learning. Many teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and most teaching is conducted in a climate of mutual respect and most pupils respond very well to this.

34. Teaching is good in design and technology, geography, history and religious education and in physical education it is good and often very good. In all other subjects it is satisfactory overall with some good features.

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

35. The schools' curriculum is good overall and provides a broad range of highly relevant and interesting opportunities for learning. The curriculum is taught in a way that is clearly relevant to pupils' needs and the emphasis on consistent behaviour management strategies makes a significant contribution to the curriculum through the very effective support and guidance provided by all staff.

36. Statutory requirements, including the provision of religious education, are met and the timetable is now balanced, in that all subjects of the National Curriculum are included on the timetable. This is an improvement since the previous inspection as music and a modern foreign language, French, are now taught in Key Stage 3. An appropriate amount of time is devoted to physical education lessons and lessons are now of a suitable length, which is another improvement. The school is aware that the curriculum for mathematics needs further development to make effective use of the numeracy strategy. The National Literacy Strategy has been introduced effectively in that there is planned use of literacy across the curriculum, for example in science and religious education.

37. There are good opportunities for pupils to study for accredited qualifications at Key Stage 4. These include Certificate of Achievement and GCSE courses. Two pupils have attended a local high school this year for a GNVQ course in Leisure and Tourism. This is an area the two schools are developing further for more pupils next year. Careers education is very effectively planned from Year 9 and provides pupils with a range of valuable opportunities to explore the world of work. Career plans are of a very high standard and pupils and their families are involved well in preparation for leaving school. The school has regular placements for work experience and arrangements for attendance on college courses are good. The independence unit provides valuable support in preparing pupils for life after school.

38. The school recognises that there are issues of equality of opportunity raised by the present withdrawal system for pupils who receive one to one tutoring in basic literacy skills. Nearly a third of the school's pupils are involved in the system and some, particularly those who are day boys, have little opportunity to make up the time lost. The school is actively considering ways in which this disruption in their learning in a number of subjects can be minimised. The quality of pupils' academic targets in their individual education plans is a weakness.

39. The school has improved equality of opportunity for Key Stage 4 pupils in broadening the range of examination courses offered. Pupils can now follow courses leading to GCSE and GNVQ qualifications in most subjects.

40. The gender profile of staff has improved since the last inspection in both care and teaching staff.

41. A strong emphasis is placed on pupils' personal, social and health education through the daily life of the school and in subject lessons. This is entirely appropriate. It has a positive impact on the standards pupils achieve and endorses the aims of the school well. There are good schemes of work for sex, drugs and health education and the curriculum is sufficiently flexible to enable issues raised by pupils to be included.

42. Provision for extra-curricular activities, ranging from canoeing, fishing, running, cycling to computer games, bingo and painting on silk ties, is excellent. A selection of these activities is available on a regular basis and the skills of staff are used very well to ensure that activities can be pursued to a high level. Day pupils join with residential pupils on many evenings and Wednesday activities provide an opportunity for team-building skills to be developed within each house. Pupils visit Manchester to attend concerts or the theatre and there is time each day for pupils to complete some homework. Camping and residential visits, including a trip to France, are arranged and pupils compete with other schools in sporting competitions. The impact of the provision on learning is particularly evident when the addition of a design and technology after-school activity for a few months enabled one pupil to attain Grade A in his GCSE examination.

43. Links and communication with local schools are good and there is a strong link with the high school for arrangements for GNVQ coursework. The school has been involved in drugs and health education programmes with other schools. College links are strong and there are several pupils who have benefited from sessions at the agricultural college.

44. The school's curriculum is greatly enhanced by the school's extensive links with the community. There is reciprocal use of the school by members of the community who come to use the sports facilities for football and basketball. Some pupils work on a community project to keep the church graveyard tidy and good links have been developed with the local church. Pupils make visits to local businesses in connection with their careers programme and a number of visits to develop industrial awareness occur during the year. Education for citizenship is enhanced by visits to the fire station and Crown Court. On one memorable occasion, pupils participated in a video-conferencing link with students at a French university whilst visiting the university in Lancaster.

45. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is now good and cultural development is satisfactory. All areas have improved since the last inspection. Well-planned assemblies are broadly Christian in character and celebrate academic, social

and cultural achievements, big and small, of individual pupils, classes and the whole school. Certificates are earned both in the residential provision and in the school for improved attitudes to work, effort and achievement and are highly valued by pupils. Religious education makes a good contribution to all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn about different religious values and practices, and pupils are given good opportunities to reflect on them. Assemblies make a good contribution to this area of pupils' development as they provide good opportunities for pupils to perform individually and make them memorable occasions that build up self-esteem. Teachers and care staff alike show they value pupils' contributions and provide good role models by the way they respect and value the pupils in their care. Teachers help pupils to value themselves, and their relationships, by celebrating their achievements and by teaching them to value those of others. The spiritual and cultural dimension is not specifically highlighted in other subject areas, but is strong in physical education, science and design and technology where pupils are continually evaluating their own performance and work. Science and design and technology also provide good opportunities to reflect on the wonder of the natural and technical world through visits to exhibitions and to the local areas of beauty and interest, both in and out of school time. The school's environment is good and is well looked after by the school community and pupils are given opportunities to reflect on it and improve it. Opportunities to reflect on the futility of war and unemployment, and to consider the moral and social implications of it in subjects, such as, art, history and personal and social education, make a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Teachers use the period at the end of lessons well to allow pupils to reflect on their personal gains in social and moral development.

46. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is strongly supported by the good relationships, good counselling and positive management of pupils, which characterises the school. Pupils are encouraged to understand what is right and what is wrong, and what is socially acceptable. In this way, key workers and teaching staff deal with questions of deeper concerns about pupils' behaviour and attitudes, when they occur, practically and sensitively in consultation with parents. Pupils are very well supported to enable them to behave in a morally and socially acceptable manner and to be sensitive to others in the school's daily routines. The members of staff are quick to acknowledge good behaviour and attitudes and do so consistently. Team building exercises take place during outdoor pursuits activities after school. Pupils are taught to understand the consequences of actions and are encouraged to value each other and respect property. Good manners, politeness, and helpfulness, are well taught during meal times both in the school and in the residential provision. The Boys' Council also provides good opportunities for pupils to shape the school policies and to take additional responsibility. Cultural provision is satisfactory and improved since the last inspection. Pupils learn about Judaism, Buddhism and Islamic cultures and ceremonies in religious education. The provision for learning French is extending pupils' social and cultural education. There is some evidence of the use of artists to stimulate their work in art, and music now makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' cultural development.

Personal, social and health education

47. There is good provision for personal, social and health education. It is firmly embodied within the whole school curriculum. The policy and scheme of work are both in place and are of good quality, the co-ordinator has plans to further improve the subject by reviewing the work on citizenship and improving pupils' speaking and listening skills through the teaching of personal, social and health education. The programme covers sex education and drug awareness as well as valuing self and others, water safety, and the physical and emotional changes during adolescence. Pupils in Year 11 get the opportunity in pairs, to spend time in the independent living area. They are totally responsible for their

own cleaning, planning and cooking and liaise directly with the relevant maintenance staff for laundry and repairs. This self contained two bedroom flat makes a very important contribution to pupils' ability to look after themselves properly once they have left school.

48. The teaching of personal, social and health education is shared by three teachers, is always satisfactory and mostly good. A consistent strength in the lessons is the way that all the adults in the room work together to ensure pupils understand their work and are able to concentrate and enjoy their lessons. The very good relationships between the adults and the pupils mean that pupils become confident in their own abilities and feel secure when discussing personal issues. Where teaching is good, pupils are encouraged to give their thoughts about; for example, personal hygiene, and heroes and stereotypes. The adults value the views of all pupils and by example, encourage pupils to value each other's points of view. As a result of a good plenary session at the end of the lesson, pupils in Year 9 consolidate their understanding of assertive, aggressive and passive behaviour, and pupils in Year 7 understand the importance of regular visits to the dentist and are encouraged to take pride in their appearance. In the lessons observed, teachers had good subject knowledge and work was well matched to pupils' needs. The satisfactory teaching could be further improved by less reliance on work sheets, and more rigorous planning which will ensure that pupils maintain their interest and focus all their attention on the activity or discussion. Pupils enjoy the personal, social and health education lessons, they see the relevance of the work to their own lives and respond well to the regular opportunities to discuss issues such as personal cleanliness, resisting peer pressure and the importance of negotiation skills. Pupils are encouraged to make co-operative decisions as in the Year 7 Youth Club project. Lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to develop listening and speaking skills.

49. The effect of the provision for personal and social development is apparent throughout the school. Pupils are courteous to visitors, offering to find chairs for them, giving directions and engaging in polite conversation at lunchtime and after lessons. The positive relationships with the house staff and the variety of extra-curricular activities along with the personal, social and health education programme makes a valuable contribution to helping the pupils become mature and sociable members of the community.

50. The co-ordinator provides good leadership in the subject and has a clear vision of how to further develop the subject. There are already plans to examine the assessment of pupils' skills and to look at formal accreditation of pupils' achievements. There is a growing bank of resources for teachers to use and very good use is made of outside agencies such as the police, fire service and local health authority. Pupils take part in a variety of visits that are based on the curriculum but also extend their personal and social skills, for example local parks, museums and small businesses and the camping trips to Scotland, Wales and The Isle of Man.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

51. The school provides a very good quality working and living environment for its pupils. Teachers, care and other staff work very well as a team to make it safe and secure. This provides a solid base for learning and for making very good progress in dealing with the issues that have brought the pupils here. Parents report a high level of satisfaction with the care provided for their children and for themselves.

52. There are very good relationships in the school which are based on mutual respect. These are won through patient and sensitive dealings with pupils by all staff. The adults who deal with the pupils know them very well. They know their names and they know how things are going with them. The school has built up very good procedures which ensure that incidents and other matters which need to be widely known are communicated to all staff.

53. Pupils' individual needs are carefully identified. The individual care and behaviour plans are very good. Appropriate targets are set for each individual and these are regularly reviewed and altered as and when conditions change. However, the academic targets set for the boys are not of this quality and are a weakness. Teaching, care and other staff work together very well to ensure a common, coherent approach to the management of behaviour is maintained. In the classroom context care workers and classroom assistants quietly and effectively work with individuals to ensure that the teacher is able to teach with the minimum of disruption. Individual education plans are not as well established and the school identifies this area for further development. Many targets are common to whole groups of pupils and do not adequately inform teachers of individual difficulties or areas for development.

54. All care arrangements for pupils are in line with the Children Act. The school received a highly commendatory report from the Social Services Inspectorate in its last report. The school cares equally well for its day and residential pupils. To make sure all feel similarly valued the school offers early evening activities for day pupils who also have the opportunity of staying over on occasion.

55. The personal safety of the school community is zealously safeguarded by the senior care worker responsible for health and safety procedures in the school. The comprehensive health and safety policy is linked to regular, thorough risk assessment procedures. The local education authority's officer with responsibility for this area visits the school at appropriate intervals to perform inspections and to report potential risks. The school responds appropriately to his recommendations. Fire drills are performed at appropriate intervals and electrical equipment has to be tested and approved before it can be used in the school.

56. The designated child protection officer and all staff have received appropriate training that is regularly updated. The child protection officer is experienced and effective and ensures that the school follows appropriate procedures meticulously. Records demonstrate that concerns with individual children are quickly and proficiently dealt with. All care staff and teachers have received first aid training. The Educational Psychologist has insufficient time to support the needs of very challenging pupils throughout the school.

57. Procedures for the monitoring and improvement of attendance are very effective and have resulted in the recent good improvement in attendance figures.

58. The school in all aspects of its work emphasises individual choices and the consequences of those choices. Pupils' key workers are particularly effective in encouraging pupils to think about the impact their choices have on others and in emphasising the benefits of positive and inclusive actions.

59. The system of points, merits and other rewards is valued by pupils. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour have a very positive impact on behaviour around the school and on the progress made in lessons.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

60. Since the last inspection, there has been very significant improvement made in the partnership between the school and pupils' parents and the links are now judged to be excellent. The school views its partnership with parents as critical for the successful educational and personal development of pupils, and has invested and continues to invest considerable energy and resources to this end. Parents value the closeness of the relationship very highly and recognise its significant contribution to their children's progress.

61. The level and nature of communications between school and home are excellent; for example, despite the considerable distances between some pupils' homes and the school, staff respond immediately if parents are experiencing problems with their children at home during weekends, and if necessary, visit their homes. The residential social workers collect pupils from their homes each Monday morning, in order to create opportunities for staff and parents to meet and discuss issues of concern. Key workers telephone parents every week to ensure that, even if there are no particular problems to deal with, ongoing constructive dialogues are maintained. Parents are very supportive of pupils' education, whether academic or personal. Some visit the school when in the area, and all always receive a warm welcome. Others, parents of day pupils, enable their children to participate in the full range of extracurricular activities by offering to collect their children in the evening from school. The level of support to pupils and parents by the school is exemplified by the arrangements for day pupils to benefit from a period of residency if it is felt necessary, particularly to overcome a deterioration in behaviour or to help them over a period of difficult personal circumstances.

62. Parents are afforded a range of structured opportunities to visit the school. Many attend annual events, such as the carol service and sports day, as well as the school's open day. As appropriate, parents are invited to visit and discuss problems, but equally to celebrate successes. On such structured occasions, parents have an opportunity to meet each other – something that is otherwise not usually possible because of the large catchment area served by the school. Overall, parents feel that they are as much members of the team educating their children as the teachers and care workers.

63. Younger pupils all use home-school books, referred to as "Chat Books", as an additional means for staff and parents to keep in touch, while older pupils are appropriately expected to shoulder the responsibility of communicating messages. A new homework procedure has been developed for introduction in September 2000, following consultation with parents. All the preparatory work for the introduction of homework for all pupils is now complete, including the printing of homework diaries. This will alleviate one of only two criticisms of the school expressed by parents at the pre-inspection meeting and through the parents' questionnaire.

64. Parents who returned the questionnaire or attended the pre-inspection parents' meeting demonstrated almost unanimous satisfaction with almost every aspect of the

school. These views were from a minority of the parent body and cannot therefore be regarded as wholly representative of the parental opinion of the school. However, the unanimity of support is impressive. One hundred per cent of respondents feel positive or very positive about the reception they receive if contacting the school with problems, the schools' expectations of their children, the closeness with which the school works with parents and the manner in which the school helps pupils become mature and responsible individuals. They feel equally positive about the good quality of teaching, the school's leadership and management and the extensive range of extra curricular activities offered to pupils. Eighty-six per cent of respondents feel positive or very positive about pupils' progress and the quality of the information they receive about it, and a similar percentage state that their children like coming to school.

65. The school provides parents with termly academic reports. Parents are made fully aware of their children's strengths and weaknesses, as well as the curriculum that they will be studying. The prospectus, reports and the governors' annual report to parents all meet statutory requirements. The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about their children's progress, is very good.

66. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is excellent. A small group of interested local citizens runs the 'Friends of the School' and act as entirely independent advocates on behalf of pupils. Parents are very willing to help, and some, for example, have helped the school to set up its information technology facilities. The contribution of parents to their children's learning at school and at home is very good.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

67. The leadership by the Headteacher is very good and the management of the school by the key staff is good. The Headteacher has a clear vision shared by staff on focusing on the quality of teaching and learning. A good number of staff appointed to the school have good knowledge of the National Curriculum and have high expectations for pupils' learning. All these characteristics have a positive outcome for pupils' achievements and progress over time and the school has made good progress since the last inspection.

68. The school has explicit aims and values which are shared by a very committed staff team who are mutually supportive, especially when the behaviour of some pupils challenges the agreed school procedures and policies. These values are reflected in the classroom and around the school where pupils are treated with respect and, for the most part, pupils consider the effect of their actions on others and the possible consequences.

69. Staff are clear about their roles of responsibility and the headteacher, senior staff and residential social workers provide effective pastoral support when required. The capacity for the school to improve with its current staffing compliment is very good. In the distant past, there have been problems with the financial management of the school but the Governing Body and headteacher have taken every issue on board and are now providing good financial planning and taking action to ensure that all funds are carefully and correctly managed.

70. The very strong governing body, who meet all statutory requirements, nearly all of whom have a keen awareness of financial matters, has shrewdly directed funds towards areas of need since the last inspection; for example, in science and design and technology accommodation and resources. This has resulted in high educational standards being achieved in these two areas in particular and there is every reason to expect the same results for their current investment in information technology. All spending is carefully

managed, with administrative support keeping good records many of which are aided by good use of computers to help produce good quality information for the headteacher and governing body to monitor. All staff and pupils are involved in development planning to ensure that everyone's needs are taken into account. There are regular audits by the local education authority and when any weaknesses are identified they are immediately acted upon. The management chase up all possible sources of grant funding, ensure that when grants are awarded they are spent wisely and account for the expenditure well. Competitive quotes are sought for all major expenditure to ensure that good deals can be struck. Financial management does take up a lot of the headteacher's time but not at the expense of his other duties. The main weakness in systems is that when teachers make bids for resources they do not clearly state what educational benefit they hope will result and this means that, whilst the results of expenditure are carefully monitored, it is after the expenditure rather than at the decision stage.

71. Issues identified in the previous inspection have been addressed and development planning has now moved forward from the single year then to a three year plan now and whereas at the time of the last inspection the school gave good value for money, it now gives very good value.

72. The school's system for the induction of new staff is very good. Teachers are supported very well by the headteacher and other staff. Learning support staff and residential social workers receive very good support during their induction period.

73. There are sufficient staff to meet the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils. This includes an appropriate number of staff to serve the residential provision of the school. Teachers are well qualified to provide specialist teaching in most lessons and the school is aware of the need to develop further staff confidence, skills and knowledge in the teaching of information technology throughout the school. Most staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and contribute to highly effective teamwork in the school.

74. The accommodation is of a high standard and the improvements to the science, design and technology and religious education rooms have had a significant positive impact on learning. The school is aware that there is a need to bring the art room up the same high standard of provision. Areas around the school have been refurbished and redecorated and the high standard of decoration and maintenance is much appreciated by pupils and staff. The school is maintained well on a daily basis by cleaning staff who take pride in their work and make a valuable contribution to the life of the school. The small dining room, with its attractive hanging baskets, is an attractive area for pupils to eat enjoyable meals. The ambience there, and in the houses with the gaily-covered tables, has a clear impact on pupils' social development at meal times. The grounds are a rich resource for learning, social and personal development, as well as extensive physical activities.

75. Resources are good overall, with particular strengths in science, design and technology, information technology, music, physical education and religious education. The sports hall is a very good resource for the subject. In other subjects resources are satisfactory. The recently appointed mathematics co-ordinator is planning to extend the resources in mathematics as he develops the schemes of work. The provision of a minibus for each house ensures that all pupils have access to a wide range of local resources on a regular basis.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

76. The Headteacher and governing body should

- (1) Improve standards in mathematics.
(Paragraphs: 86-89)
- (2) Ensure pupils' individual education plans are specific and outcomes are measurable.
(Paragraphs: 8, 30, 31, 38, 53, 99)
- (3) Improve the quality of teaching further by:
 - greater detail in lesson planning.
 - improving the breadth of work set to match pupils' abilities.(Paragraphs: 29, 30, 31)

Other weaknesses the school should consider:

- Improve the provision for art
(Paragraphs: 105)

The school has already identified all of these areas for action in the school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	70
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	20	37	33	7	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	66
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	20

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	5.19	School data	2.69

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

GCSE Results Table

	PANDA	School		
		1998	1999	2000
Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A-C grades	0.3	0	0	0
Percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A-G grades	8.1	0	20	96
Percentage of pupils achieving 1+ A-G grades	45.8	57	70	100
GCSE Average points score – all	3.87	3.4	7.1	8.3
GCSE Average points score – boys	4.05	3.4	7.1	8.3

Examination Results 1999

GCSE	
Year 11 pupils	Grades attained
Eight pupils passed art and design	C, D, E, F, F, F, F, G
Seven pupils passed design and technology	C, D, E, E, F, F, G
Seven pupils passed English	D, D, D, E, E, F, F
Two pupils passed mathematics	E, G
Seven pupils passed science	C, E, E, E, F, F, G

GCSE Equivalencies and Points

Subject	Number of points
art	21
design and technology	20
English	24
mathematics	4
science	22
Total	91
<i>91 divided by 10 (pupils in Year 11 = 9.1 the average point score per pupil)</i>	

Certificate of Achievement

Seven pupils achieved the Certificate of Achievement in French

AEB Basic Tests – Year 11 pupils achieving AEB Certificates		
Number of pupils	Subject	Mark ranges (percentages)
6	Communication Skills	20 – 75 (2 gained merits – 75%)
8	Basic Applications of Science	40 – 75 (2 gained merits – 75%)
7	Numerical Skills	25 – 60
6	Life Skills	55 – 80
4	Geography	50 - 65

Vocational Qualifications
ICT: CLAIT (computer studies) Part 1, one student gained a Pass
ICT: CLAIT Part 2, one student gained a Pass
Sport and Leisure: NVQ Level 1, one unit was taken by three students

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	65
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	1	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	16	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.5
Average class size	8

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	25
Total aggregate hours worked per week	895

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	1 249 515
Total expenditure	1 245 535
Expenditure per pupil	19 162
Balance brought forward from previous year	74 467
Balance carried forward to next year	78 447

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Seven questionnaires were returned. The responses showed overwhelming support for the school except for the amount of work that children have at home where more than half of the responses strongly disagreed or disagreed.

Written responses

Two written responses were received which were very positive. One states that the school has a positive understanding of her child's needs and finds the school easy to approach with any problems. Another has a child who has only been at the school a short time and, due to the dedication of the staff, his behaviour has improved impressively and he can now express himself.

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

ENGLISH

77. Pupils' attainment on entry to school is below national expectations and often as a result of fragmented curriculum experience. The achievement of pupils by the end of Key Stage 3 is overall satisfactory. The progress pupils make in speaking and listening and in reading is stronger than that in writing. This is largely due to a lack of appropriate written guidance for the teaching of writing for staff who are non-specialists and who are required to teach the subject. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils' achievement is good in writing. Due to the absence of Year 11 pupils during the inspection it was not possible to make judgements about their achievement in speaking and listening. Year 10 pupils make good progress especially in speaking and listening.

78. Pupils' progress is satisfactory or better in Key Stage 3 in speaking and listening. Year 8 pupils listen well to the teacher as he describes the persuasive power of the language of advertisements. They listen with good concentration as he explains the effects of carefully chosen words on consumers. They ask a range of questions keeping well to the subject matter. They show good levels of curiosity and interest. When they occasionally move away from the subject the teacher quietly and firmly guides them back. They respond well to his firmness and sense of purpose. The teacher values their contributions and over the lesson their input becomes more confident. In another lesson Year 8 pupils ask questions which advance their knowledge of the myths and legends associated with King Arthur. Their obvious interest in the subject is largely motivated by the good variety of source material they are supplied with by the teacher. They can choose their own material and work with it and this helps to stimulate their interest and to promote good progress. Year 9 pupils readily listen with interest to good, relevant subject matter expressively communicated as in their study of *Buddy*, a novel concerning a young boy living alone with his rock and roll obsessed father after his mother leaves them both to regain her identity.

79. Key Stage 3 pupils make at least satisfactory progress in reading. Those pupils who receive one to one teaching for literacy make good progress in these sessions in reading skills. They make good gains in acquiring strategies to grasp the meaning of words. They learn to split words down into sounds and then to build them up again and to attempt possible solutions until they recognise one that fits the context. In the one to one sessions teachers use computer programs well to motivate and to reinforce learning. These programs provide a good range of interactive learning and this promotes progress and interest. To maintain interest teachers make sure that gains made are recognised and that pupils are praised for the advances they have made. Good attention is paid to recurrent patterns in words and pupils successfully acquire skills to apply in their reading. One important feature of the use of computer programs is the level of control pupils are given over their learning. They are able to work at their own speed and they are, in addition, encouraged to continue their work in after school sessions in their houses. This is well taken up by pupils. Pupils also show enthusiasm for reading aloud in assemblies and they do so with confidence and enthusiasm. When they read familiar texts, Year 9 pupils develop expression in their delivery particularly when they read dialogue. They also show a ready knowledge of the main events of the books they are reading and an understanding of the themes they feature. They make sound progress in their ability to ascribe attributes to the characters they read about. They are good at inferring the thoughts and feelings of the main figures in their texts. A good number of pupils make good use of the library. This is well stocked with fiction books and is a stimulating and attractive environment that makes a valuable contribution to the promotion of reading in the school. Pupils are able to influence

the choice of magazines and other reading matter. They also make good use of the book boxes that are provided in the Houses. These are small collections of popular, appropriate and challenging books supplied by the local education authority's library service. Year 9 pupils have developed the skills to locate information in non-fiction books. They are aware of the separate functions of the contents and index sections and use their knowledge of alphabetical order to find entries quickly.

80. Pupils in Key Stage 3 make less good progress in writing. Some pupils become frustrated when their first attempts do not live up to their own expectations and respond by discarding them and starting again. They do enjoy creative writing as is evident in the work in Year 8 describing what the events of a weekend. They do not draw on a wide vocabulary and punctuation is variable, though some use is made of speech marks when they relate the dialogue of their characters. Their work is helped by the encouraging and helpful comments that teachers make when they mark work. The best of teachers' comments offer ways in which pupils can improve their work as well as encouragement and praise. There is little evidence of drafting and redrafting. Some pupils are unwilling to revisit their work to improve it. In Year 9 pupils do attempt a satisfactory range and variety of writing. Many are able to write and punctuate speech in narrative work. They write instructions for simple actions and can simply retell the story of Romeo and Juliet. The presentation of some work is enhanced by the use of information and communication technology. Year 9 pupils respond well to the sustained exploration of aspects of the novel 'Buddy' and produce work that successfully describes various attributes of the main characters. They also address audiences when they write letters on a variety of subjects. Progress in writing is inhibited by teachers' limited knowledge of ways in which writing at length can be encouraged and extended. The school needs to develop a more rigorous scheme of work for this subject that provides non-specialists with the level of support they need.

81. There were no Year 11 classes running during the inspection week as they were out on Work Experience and so the only evidence that could be used to assess progress is derived from an analysis of the written work in folders. Though progress for the present Year 11 during Year 10 was variable, during Year 11 it is good for most pupils. Pupils' presentation of work is generally at least sound. They write legibly and pay good attention to the way their work looks. Pupils' extended writing is not well developed and the vocabulary most pupils use is limited but they do progress well in their writing in their study of Macbeth and in their responses to a good range of poetry. They are able to make good use of a storyboard approach to improve the structure of their writing. When they construct fictional police statements they begin to make good progress in logical ordering of the information they wish to convey. They also produce thoughtful and mature responses to poetry that deals with loss and grief.

82. Year 10 pupils make good progress in speaking and listening. Their teacher offers very stimulating input into a debate about animal testing of drugs. This effectively excites and stimulates interest. He values their contributions well and this fuels the debate. They listen and talk well to each other and offer a good range of comment. When they read out contributions from the research that has been carried out into the subject, they do so confidently and with understanding. They are able to detect bias in the promotional literature of interested parties involved in the general debate. They do identify the main points in arguments made by others. Writing is varied and sometimes features interesting and descriptive language particularly when the subject matter is as interesting to pupils as the animal rights debate is. The teacher prepares pupils well for the arguments they engage in by helping them to identify opinion from fact in a series of well-directed exercises. This also informs their work on persuasive writing when they produce some

interesting work that attempts to convey a similar message to that purveyed by advertising agencies.

83. Teaching is never less than satisfactory in English. It is sound in Key Stage 3 and it is very good in Key Stage 4. There are deficiencies in the subject knowledge of some Key Stage 3 teachers and this does have an adverse effect on the progress of pupils. There is a need for a more prescriptive scheme of work to inform the planning of teachers. The English co-ordinator has good knowledge and expertise and is planning to introduce a more comprehensive scheme of work that will give non-specialist teachers the support they need to promote better progress. Teachers generally have adequate plans for their lessons although there is no effective use of pupils' individual education plans which is a weakness. They work hard to develop good, productive relationships with pupils. The best teaching features a confident approach which values pupils' individual contributions while focusing on to the main objectives of lessons. They make sure that pupils are made quietly aware of what helps to progress the lesson and what does not. Teachers generally manage pupils well. They work very well with care staff to promote the importance of discussion at both an individual and group level. Talking and listening is a pivotal feature of the work of teachers and care workers is very well handled and makes a positive impact on the learning pupils make.

84. The English curriculum is narrow at Key Stage 3 but the introduction of a scheme of work which is more responsive to the wider needs of the pupils is planned and will be introduced in the near future. At Key Stage 4 the development of the GCSE course has led to an improvement in standards and to a broader and more challenging range of work. As an example of this pupils are now responding well to issues of animal rights and to the appreciation of poetry dealing with issues such as loss and reflection. The teaching of literacy across the curriculum is developing.

85. The co-ordinator who has been recently appointed has been active in introducing and teaching the GCSE course in Key Stage 4. He is now working on improving the schemes of work in Key Stage 3. The co-ordinator has been very effective in supporting non-specialist teachers who are new to the subject. This has a positive effect on the content of their lessons. The library is an attractive and exciting environment that is well attended by pupils. Though there is a good number of books the balance of fiction and non-fiction needs to be addressed. The person in charge of the library has identified this and has made plans to redress the imbalance. The library is also used for one-to-one withdrawal and is well stocked with challenging CD-ROMs that are used to teach basic literacy skills. The librarian has developed some very good systems to track the use of the library by each pupil.

MATHEMATICS

86. Pupils' achievements in mathematics were satisfactory overall in lessons at the time of the inspection, but are unsatisfactory over time at both key stages. By the age of sixteen attainments in GCSE and Certificate of Achievement in mathematics are well below those gained in other subjects. Pupils of all ages have not covered enough work over the last year, even though sufficient time is given to the subject. Pupils are very recently beginning to make good progress in Years 9 and 10 since the arrival of the new coordinator for mathematics who is raising standards by his good teaching and ongoing assessment.

87. The teaching of younger pupils is unsatisfactory overall, and consequently pupils are not making the progress they should. Pupils have not been assessed well enough to ensure they are learning the right things in lessons at the beginning of Key Stage 3 and, as

a result, some pupils are working at a level that is too low or too high for them. There is an over reliance on text books in lessons rather than whole class teaching. The limited work sample showed answers to textbook questions but did not show clearly what pupils had learnt over the year. Little effective whole class teaching was observed during the time of the inspection in the early years of Key Stage 3 and there were very few opportunities for pupils to improve their mental strategies, or to work on real life practical tasks. Pupils as a result see mathematics learning as a chore they have to work through in order to obtain their points at the end of the lesson. Few show a real interest in the subject, even though some know they are reasonably competent considering their previously disrupted education. Some pupils learn to express fractions of 100 as percentages, but many pupils have difficulties with fractions and decimals in general.

88. Teachers do not always have enough behaviour management strategies for pupils with more challenging behaviour. Time is often wasted in lessons in Key Stage 3 when pupils refuse to comply. This is limiting the amount of work covered during lessons. In lessons at the end of Key Stage 3, and at the beginning of Key Stage 4, behaviour is better managed because lessons are more interesting, related to real life experiences, and new learning is well explained. Teaching in Years 9 and 10 is always satisfactory and sometimes good. The teacher has clear learning objectives for lessons based on ongoing assessment of pupils' needs. Marking of work is good and moves pupils on. In Year 9 more effective whole class teaching is seen and the teacher explains new concepts well. Pupils are beginning to show a capacity to listen in lessons and to talk sensibly about their work. The teacher is encouraging pupils to work harder, and is informing them of what should learn next. Consequently these pupils show an understanding of co-ordinates, estimation of measures, averages and the multiplication and division of 2 two-digit numbers. They have a secure knowledge of how to tally and construct bar charts. They highest attaining pupils are beginning to use simple formulas to solve equations. Support assistants work well together with the teacher to give encouragement and support, and as a result Year 9 pupils in the two lessons seen listened well to the teacher and learnt to use the vocabulary of probability. Higher attaining pupils were challenged by extension work to come to a good understanding of how to use a probability line with numerical expression. Pupils in Year 10 learnt well how to express the size of two quantities using ratios.

89. Pupils with additional needs are beginning to be assessed to find out what gaps they have in knowledge and understanding through the use of information technology programs and work set in withdrawal lessons generally meets their specific needs. However, this information is not always used in class lessons to support their learning; for example, not all pupils who need them have specific, measurable, attainable, and relevant targets within their individual educational plans for numeracy. This makes it difficult for teachers and support assistants to set work to meet individual needs in class lessons and to monitor and evaluate progress over time. Pupils as a result do not always know what they have achieved in class lessons or what they are to learn next. Pupils are supported satisfactorily in lessons by support staff and make some good gains in learning to use a calculator to divide larger numbers in Year 8 and to read textbooks in Year 7, for example.

90. Planned opportunities for the use and application of mathematics in mathematics lessons, and in other subjects, are limited. Pupils use their knowledge of measurement and money well in design and technology, and some good gains are made in the use of data handling in science. The use of information technology to support the subject is poorly planned in lessons at both key stages, although some good use is made of computer resources for homework activities in the residential provision where pupils work at their own pace.

91. Leadership is satisfactory overall at the present time, but has been unsatisfactory since the last inspection. This has resulted in a decline in the progress made by pupils. The new coordinator, who has only been in school for six weeks, has a clear vision for improvement of the subject, which includes training in the implementation of the national numeracy strategy in Key Stage 3, and support for teachers who teach younger pupils and are not specialists. He has also recognised that resources will need improving in order to fulfil the needs of the new scheme. However, the good ideas he has to improve the subject in the future need to be formalised into a clear costed action plan with success criterion related to improving achievements. The coordinator has already provided additional textbooks to guide teachers, but these as yet do not meet the needs of higher attaining pupils.

SCIENCE

92. Achievement in science is good across both key stages, as pupils increase their knowledge, understanding and skills from a low level of prior attainment on entry to the school. Prior to entry to the school pupils have little experience of lessons in a science laboratory or have had the opportunity to carry out practical activities inside or outside in a school garden or pond previously.

93. At the end of Key Stage 3 pupils consider how things adapt to their environment. The teacher gains full attention as he dresses in special clothing used for climbing mountains or caving. There is friendly laughter as he obviously gets hotter and hotter, but pupils learn much from this exemplification of adaption to the environment. They are able to transfer this learning to their study of how birds and plants adapt. Scrutiny of their work show that pupils have considered friction as a force and they give examples of smooth or rough surfaces that give more or least friction in well presented work. Pupils can carry out tests to see if food is a good fuel, burning peanuts and explain how they measure the temperature change in their experiment.

94. Pupils in Year 7, dressed smartly and correctly in coats and goggles, carry out experiments to extract starch from a leaf after sequencing the activities they will do. They enjoy being “young scientists.” In a follow-up lesson they record their findings well, some completing their work on the computer. They produced a range of good work for an attractive display on the structure of a flower.

95. Year 8 pupils classify living things. They put animals into sets of animals with or without backbones. They explore natural habitats and enjoy pond dipping, identifying and measuring any creatures they catch. They learn how to examine droplets of pond water under a microscope and are delighted when they find something there. They have clear ideas of consumers, producers, prey and predators. These ideas were extended during their work at the pond.

96. Key Stage 4 pupils observe the teacher’s careful experiments to help pupils understand that magnesium, acid and sodium cause different reactions. At the end of the experiment pupils carry out their own experiments to see how the surface area affects the speed of reaction. Pupils comment that they must have a fair test, but accept that their results may not be completely accurate because the amounts of acid used may have varied slightly. They respond to the teacher’s questions on what they have learned with observations such as, “We’ve learned that concentration may change the speed of reaction” and another pupil asserted that, “Change of temperature makes molecules speed up.” Pupils in all year groups learn key words and main ideas of lessons well.

97. Analysis of work in Key Stage 4 shows that pupils use the correct vocabulary, draw clear, well-labelled diagrams and graphs. They present tables of results using appropriate software well and can write about their observations. Higher attaining pupils can evaluate their work and predictions. Pupils' investigations include experiments to learn about food energy, where they present coherent accounts of experiments. They write about their work on animal, plant and living cells and illustrate this well. One pupil writes at the start of his work, "I am going to set everything up and make sure every single bit of detail is in place." Pupils learn about the solar system and examine statistics about planets, making gains in their knowledge and understanding of the sun and moon's orbit of the earth.

98. Pupils' achievement and progress are directly linked to the quality of teaching, which is consistently good, and on occasions, very good. The management of pupils by teachers and support staff in lessons is very good and ensures that all pupils have opportunities to participate in lessons and make gains in their learning. They help pupils to maintain their concentration and interest in investigative and experimental work. The consistent use of various forms of assessment ensures that pupils are able to build on their learning systematically and make progress in all areas of the subject.

99. Teachers' subject knowledge and their knowledge of the pupils' needs are very good and, because of this, they plan work that is matched well to the range of abilities within the groups. Dry humour often helps to diffuse potentially difficult situations. As lessons progress, the teachers assess the pupils' understanding of the work through good questioning techniques and intervene at appropriate times to give specific teaching points in order to increase pupils' skills and understanding. The teachers' careful attention to health and safety within the laboratory is exemplary, so that from Year 7 pupils understand, "We don't mess about in here." Pupils with no previous experience at other schools of working safely with Bunsen burners and boiling water are given the opportunity to learn how to conduct themselves properly in the science room. Pupils learn that they are being trusted to handle expensive and delicate equipment and develop self-control and awareness of others over time. This increases pupils' respect for property and their own interest and excitement in science. The science co-ordinator makes good use of his learning about the use of literacy in science and there is planned use of literacy in every lesson. Pupils are keen to read extracts from worksheets. They use planning sheets and sequence instructions which have a dual function of helping pupils to practise their reading skills and organise their own work. Pupils do not know what their targets are for science and individual education plans do not make a contribution to teaching and learning; this is a weakness.

100. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has worked hard to develop the curriculum and resources for science. Staff work very well together in teams. Since the previous inspection the new science room has been brought into use and the pond and wildlife area are used well to support the subject. These resources and the quality of teaching and support have a significant impact on the high standards of work and enjoyment attained in science and the school has made good progress since the last inspection. The oldest, higher attaining pupils successfully complete GCSE coursework, with the majority of pupils attaining grades D to G, but in 1999 one pupil attained at pass at level C. The lower attaining pupils study for a Certificate of Achievement, where some obtain a merit. In Key Stage 3 the majority of pupils achieve Level 3 or 4 in statutory assessment tests, although in some years, a few pupils achieve Level 5.

ART

101. Pupils' achievements in art are satisfactory in Key Stage 3, and good in Key Stage 4. By the age of sixteen attainments in GCSE art are above that which is found in other special schools of this type. The best progress is made in observational drawing. The school has maintained its high standards of attainment in GCSE art at Key Stage 4, but standards in art in Key Stage 3 are not as high as at the last inspection. This is because non-specialists in Key Stage 3 are at present responsible for art and teaching and planning has not been monitored as effectively as it should. In addition the scheme of work is not providing enough support and guidance for teachers to enable them to plan their work as well as it was previously. Assessment of art is good at Key Stage 4, but is less effective in informing planning of the teaching of skills and techniques at Key Stage 3.

102. Teaching and learning in art is satisfactory overall and good in Key Stage 4. A strength of the teaching in Key Stage 4 is in the way the teacher uses artefacts and the work of artists to stimulate ideas; for example, Picasso's 'Guernica', and a range of weapons were used in one lesson and consequently pupils began to generate ideas and careful sketches of weapons in pencil in preparation for a middle and end piece on the topic of war and conflict. Lessons give a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in this way, and in the way the teacher encouraged discussion and reflection about the futility of war and the pain and deprivation it causes. Behaviour is managed well in Key Stage 4. Teachers show they value pupils' contributions, treat them as young adults and provide work that is interesting and absorbing. Pupils respond by working steadily and responsibly in lessons, and over a long period of time, in order to provide a good portfolio for examination purposes.

103. Teaching and learning in Key Stage 3, although satisfactory overall, has some weaknesses. Teachers do not give consistent opportunities to use sketchbooks to collect information and to develop ideas, skills and techniques in art. Teachers give a broad enough range of experiences and consequently there are individual examples of end pieces of work of satisfactory and sometimes good quality in painting, clay work, printing and collage and textiles. Work shows that pupils' attitudes to art improve as they get older.

104. Work presented sometimes lacks a stimulating focus because of the shortage of resources and the poor accommodation. Planning for lessons is often too brief and shows an insecure knowledge of the essence of art teaching, and work produced, although illustrative, sometimes lacks expression and interpretation.

105. The accommodation for art is poor for larger groups of pupils in Key Stage 3. It is narrow and cramped and has poor light and washing facilities. There is not enough storage space to enable teachers to store materials and resources so that pupils can select them for themselves. Resources are adequate to teach the subject to the present scheme, but there are shortfalls in artefacts and reproductions of famous artists that are needed to make lessons more stimulating in Key Stage 3. There are no facilities in the art room for research using information technology. These factors restrict pupils' personal and social development, and have a negative impact on the way pupils behave, and their attitudes to the subject, in Key Stage 3. Some resources had to be borrowed from the design and technology room during the time of the inspection. Leadership is satisfactory overall. The coordinator has already placed a large bid to further develop accommodation and resources, including those for information technology. The school is also in the process of adopting the Qualifications and Assessment Authority guidance to support non-specialist teachers in their planning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

106. Pupils' achievements in design and technology are good at both key stages. By the age of sixteen attainments in GCSE design and technology are above that which is found in other special schools of this type. The best progress is made in working with resistant materials. The school has made good improvements in standards since the last inspection when achievements were found to be satisfactory. This is because the school has improved accommodation and resources, which are now good, and now provides a broader range of opportunities. However, achievements in food technology could be higher. The programme planned for this area is more limited and not enough time is spent on it.

107. Assessment of design and technology is good at both key stages and is used effectively to inform reports to parents and to change planning to meet individual needs. Leadership is good overall. However, the good ideas to improve the subject in the future need to be formalised into a clear costed action plan with success criterion related to improving standards. The coordinator has begun to evaluate the present scheme and is moving the subject forward by ensuring the scheme has more challenging elements for higher attaining pupils. He is in the process of adding detail to the scheme in order to support non-specialists who teach the subject. The provision of a night school class, which is taught by the coordinator, has made a significant positive impact on the quality of course work for GCSE pupils who have chosen to attend.

108. Teaching and learning in design and technology are good. Although no teaching was seen at Key Stage 4, as pupils went out to a design exhibition, standards of work achieved and evaluation of course work for GCSE shows that pupils are learning well. A significant strength of the teaching in Key Stage 3 is in the way teachers and care workers combine their knowledge and skills to provide good support for pupils through clear demonstrations, instructions and explanations during focussed tasks. As a result, pupils at the beginning of Key Stage 3 learn how to use a range of tools safely and with increased accuracy for measuring and marking out, cutting, shaping and finishing wood in preparation for making containers, for example. Teachers give good opportunities to work as a team, although pupils do not always manage to do this effectively without considerable support; for example, pupils in Year 9 set up a business, researching their products in order to produce a catalogue of products and the highest attaining pupils produce step-by-step plans of the main stages with accurate measurements. Plans are reviewed with support, and pupils make alterations in order for them to be clear for the makers. Individuals learn to compare prices of the materials they need and find the best value for their money. However, they do not yet realise the constraints of time, and only intervention by the teacher allows the group to move on at the pace they need to work to produce viable products for selling.

109. Opportunities to develop reading skills are good in lessons. Pupils are given texts at an appropriate level in order to find out about the different types of motion in Year 7, for example. However, opportunities to develop writing skills in some lessons using information technology consists of only copying out texts they have read, rather than pupils composing in their own words. This method also limits the teachers' ability to check what pupils have learnt in lessons. However, good opportunities are presented to learn word processing skills, such as boldening text, using a spell checker and previewing their work before printing. As the quality of pupils' individual education plans are a weakness, not all staff across the curriculum are aware of pupils' individual numeracy and literacy targets as part of the individual education plans.

110. Behaviour is managed well on the whole. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to take part practical work, visit exhibitions, and to work on the computer. When the pupils evaluate their own work they show a capacity to review it sensibly, and make pertinent comments on how they can improve. Occasionally younger pupils find constructive criticism difficult to take but, as they get older, they recognise the value of this and work hard to improve. The oldest pupils show a capacity to work in a sustained manner on a design project and produce work of a very high quality; for example, one pupil spent many hours researching, designing making and finishing a high quality chess set in aluminium for his GCSE project and achieved an A grade for course work.

GEOGRAPHY

111. Due to the absence of Year 11 during the week of the inspection judgements about the progress made during this key stage are based on the documentation supplied by the school, discussions with teachers and pupils and an analysis of the work kept in pupils' folders. Pupils in Key Stage 3 make good progress in geography. In Year 7 they are able to employ simple geographic skills to select information from data about distance and time. By the end of the key stage they work appropriately with globes, atlases and maps. They know about scale and the measurement of distance on maps. They extend their knowledge of locations such as the mountain regions of Italy by close study of atlases. They begin to consider the impact of tourism on areas of Italy. Year 11 pupils do not yet have the benefit of an examination at the end of their course to focus their efforts. By the end of the key stage they make some gains in their knowledge and understanding of volcanoes and earthquakes. They make sound gains in their coverage of aspects of the weather such as weather recording methods. They interpret figures that tell them about employment trends in the regions of Britain. They gain an understanding from their study of this and other areas of some of shopping patterns in this country. They make a good study of housing in economically depressed areas of the world and gain an understanding of the role of government in tackling problems relating to housing. Their work in geography makes a useful contribution to numeracy in the school particularly in relation to the use of measurement and scale.

112. Teaching in geography is good in both key stages. The teacher puts a lot of energy into his preparation for lessons and his approach in the classroom. This purposeful approach involves a clarity of aims shared with pupils, good humour and persistence. He knows his pupils well and employs a practical approach to the work. He uses question and answer well to explore points and to involve all pupils in the lesson. Pace is also a good feature of the teaching. There is good use of support staff to support individual learning. All staff use encouragement well to interest and motivate pupils. Information and communication technology is underused in this subject.

113. The leadership and management of the subject are effective. The co-ordinator has only recently taken on the role and plans to extend the teaching of the subject to include more practical approaches to study including the use of information and communication technology for the study of satellite imagery and other aspects of weather and also field work to gain understanding through direct experience and observation. Resources are generally sufficient. Display is lively and enhances the profile of the subject in the school.

HISTORY

114. History is presently taught only in Key Stage 3. By the end of this key stage pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of historical figures and events. In Year 9 they learn about the holocaust and draw on their own knowledge of contemporary films dealing with this issue to gain deeper understanding. In the sensitive discussion of the subject lead by the teacher they make good progress in learning about individual rights and responsibilities. They gain an understanding of concepts such as anti-Semitism. The teacher extends their thinking by continually contrasting the events of the past with the pupils' own experiences; for example their thoughts about the inhuman treatment of the inmates of the camps are skilfully contrasted with their own claims to a right to a future. Anti-Semitism is contrasted with homophobia. They learn to empathise with persecuted people and those subjected to forms of discrimination. These discussions make a valuable contribution to the development of communication skills in the school. Year 8 pupils make satisfactory progress in their knowledge of aspects of Moslem culture when they listen to the words of the storyteller Usamah. Their learning is enhanced by the involvement in lessons of care workers who will, for instance, read out passages to motivate reluctant pupils by their example. Pupils learn to use historical sources to build up a picture of the past. This begins in Year 7 when pupils make good gains in their understanding of native Americans using a good variety of resources including video and books. They can discuss the social aspects of their subjects' lives, their hunting patterns and the dependence of the Plains Indians on the buffalo. They show excitement and a deep interest in this work.

115. The quality of their learning and the progress they make is good and is directly related to the generally good quality of teaching. Teachers manage pupils very well, engaging them in lively discussion. Their contributions are praised when they are relevant and skilfully handled when they are not. Teachers remain calm and purposeful with pupils and maintain high expectations of both behaviour and performance. They make sure that all pupils are involved in tasks and, with care workers, deploy a variety of techniques to ensure that learning and development are the focal point of lessons. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are at their best when they employ a story telling approach to convey information. This engages the interest of pupils and effectively gets messages over. The pace of lessons and the variety of activities are also generally good in lessons and help to keep pupils well on task. Pupils are well involved in the lessons and on occasion are very eager to read passages aloud. This has a positive impact on their levels of literacy by widening opportunities to read, but it is not sufficiently linked to their literacy individual education plan targets.

116. The co-ordination of the subject is effective and resources are good. The lack of a Key Stage 4 course is unfortunate, particularly as pupils make good progress in the subject and are unable to build on the success they gain in the subject in Key Stage 3. Teachers make good use of a range of resources in historical study including visits to local places of interest such as Skipton Castle and Lancaster Museum.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

117. Information technology has not developed at the same pace as stronger areas of the curriculum such as science and design and technology but satisfactory standards are nevertheless being achieved by all pupils. Strengths of the subject are the way that it is becoming an integral part of the whole school with computers being used in many curriculum areas and with particular success in science, English and design and technology. They are also used effectively in the residential units for homework and for

recreation. In discrete lessons, at Key Stage 3, pupils are building up particularly good word processing skills. They are good at typing in text then using the power of the computers to change its appearance by changing typefaces and size and moving text around a document to make it visually satisfying. Pupils also add illustrations to text by using images created by a digital camera, taken from image banks or created by themselves using "Paintbox" software. Good examples are evident in the production of personalised business cards and cinema tariff posters. Less progress is seen with regards to pupils' ability to use computers for data processing but they can enter data, such as personal details, into a table before printing it out. Throughout Key Stage 4 pupils continue to improve their word processing skills and produce good examples of work that has been carefully corrected and redrafted.

118. A strength of the school's approach to information technology is the way that it is aiding personal development by preparing pupils well for life in a society where computers are becoming an everyday part of life. Their good attitudes to study are evident in the way they take care with expensive equipment and particularly in the responsible way they share laptop computer. In the one lesson that was observed, however, pupils' behaviour fell to an unacceptable standard before they got involved in practical work.

119. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Despite the unsatisfactory nature of both in the one discrete lesson that could be observed it is clear from scrutiny of work, from discussion with pupils and from observation of teaching in other lessons which involved the use of computers, that teaching is often of a higher standard. In many science lessons; for example, the use of computers and the teaching of information technology skills is carefully planned into lessons and results in pupils using computers well to help them with the presentation of their work. The unsatisfactory teaching in discrete information technology was the result of weak planning in which practical activities were not sufficiently used to interest and motivate pupils. As pupils' interest waned they became increasingly unco-operative and the teacher's limited behaviour management skills were exposed. This meant that an exercise to produce a front page of a newspaper did not achieve its stated aims.

120. The co-ordinator has a clear view of where weaknesses in the subject are affecting pupils' learning. The need for more staff training has been identified and satisfactory progress is being made in enrolling all staff on appropriate courses. A problem is caused by the co-ordinator not being responsible for the teaching of this subject. He is informally monitoring other teachers' use of computers in their lessons but is not sufficiently informed by the results of assessment, which is unsatisfactory because no-one is keeping a comprehensive record of the skills that pupils are acquiring. This means, for instance, that whilst teachers can describe what a pupil can produce, they are not identifying the skills which are being used to produce it. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection but the focus upon word processing and resultant weaknesses in data processing remains a weakness. The school has developed a very good computer suite which is very well resourced.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

121. Achievement across the key stages is at least satisfactory and in Key Stage 4 it is good in lessons. Pupils in this school are well disposed towards listening to and speaking French. They do try hard and succeed in improving their accents through the constructive mimicry of what they hear from their teacher. In both key stages they benefit from the frequent use of French in lessons. Most pupils understand the gist of what their teacher is

saying to them in the language and they can understand simple sentences that concern everyday matters. Many pupils can use limited vocabulary and phrases for basic communication but many have difficulty in retaining knowledge and some lack the confidence to speak spontaneously from memory. Progress is best when words and phrases are related to specific situations. When they are not and are a collection of unrelated or loosely related phrases pupils can lose interest and behaviour can deteriorate. There is a need to develop role play and simple language games to more fully and consistently engage pupils' interest. Progress is promoted when care and support staff themselves attempt the language. Pupils thoroughly enjoy these efforts and they have a beneficial impact on learning. Key Stage 3 pupils use dictionaries collaboratively to help them understand the language they are studying. They make sound progress in developing their vocabulary when they learn French expressions relating to weather. Though they, on occasion, find difficulty in maintaining concentration, they do generally maintain interest in the language. Key Stage 4 pupils make good progress in recalling and using a range of words and phrases that help them to find their way about a town. As in Key Stage 3, there is little use of role play and character to enliven dialogue.

122. The teaching of French is at least satisfactory and is sometimes good. Teachers work hard to make sure that pupils are not inhibited by the language. They use question and answer well to engage pupils and to reinforce learning through repetition of phrases. They use speaking in French well to engage interest and their accents are close enough to native speakers to provide a sound basis for imitation. The support given by care workers and assistants is highly beneficial in keeping pupils on task and involved with lessons. Planning is sound but lacks the level of detail which would provide for a change of activity if one approach founders or extension work that might be required or short games in French to revive flagging interest. The best teaching features good pupil management skills that avoid confrontation and which divert and guide pupils' efforts back to the objects of the lesson when they stray. The pace of lessons is often well maintained though some lessons during the inspection ran out of steam towards the end and would have benefited from a novel activity to leave pupils with a sense of excitement as the lesson winds down.

123. The subject co-ordinator has only recently been appointed and consequently there can be no judgement on his impact on the wider issues associated with the delivery of the subject. However, in his teaching he shows an appropriate knowledge of the subject as well as an infectious enthusiasm for the French language and culture which he effectively communicates to his pupils. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in the learning of pupils and in teaching at Key Stage 4.

MUSIC

124. A range of music lessons was seen during the inspection too few to make a judgement about teaching. However, judgements are based on the lessons, musical contributions to assembly, discussion with the teacher, analysis of planning and pupils' folders of work. Since the last inspection when music was not taught, there has been good improvement in the music provision. Pupils in Key Stage 3 each have two music lessons every week as well as optional musical experiences after lessons have finished. The scheme which is adapted to meet the needs of the pupils is based on the skills of listening, composing, performing and appraising music. Pupils in Key Stage 4 do not have timetabled music lessons.

125. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' standards of attainment are in line with those expected for their age, and progress overall is satisfactory. Progress in some lessons

observed was unsatisfactory due to the immaturity of the pupils and in one lesson this was made worse by the lack of available adults to support the teacher at the start of the lesson.

126. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils of differing attainment make satisfactory gains in their musical skills and knowledge. Good teaching in Year 9 ensures that pupils review their knowledge from the previous lesson and are clear about what they will be expected to do during the lesson. Pupils can discuss and evaluate recorded music such as Mike Oldfield's 'Tubular Bells' and identify the various layers of rhythm and melody. They can then use their own compositions based on three note chords and work together to produce a multi-layered composition which they play on keyboards. Some pupils respond well and are keen to demonstrate their individual keyboard skills; other pupils can be less co-operative, finding difficulty in listening to each other and in working together. When the teacher persists in outlining expectations of behaviour and the pupils finally perform their group work, they feel a sense of achievement which is evident from their pleasure and applause after their own performance. After listening to the Black Note March, pupils in Year 7 have composed their own tune based on the same rhythm and are aware that the same notes can be played to a different rhythm and become a waltz. They use sheet music to help them sing the Oom Pah Pah song from Oliver, and recognise this as a waltz rhythm. Good opportunities are provided at assembly time for pupils to demonstrate their musical skills to the rest of the school. This is a very positive way in which the school boosts the self-esteem and sense of achievement for many pupils.

127. The co-ordinator has a clearly defined responsibility to teach and develop the musical provision in the school. This includes providing musical support to whole school activities such as assemblies and church ceremonies at Christmas, Easter and Remembrance Day. This helps to make music an important part of the school curriculum but there is still scope to make music a key part of the whole school curriculum and extend the way it boosts pupils' confidence in their own abilities. The resources are good, including guitars, keyboards and percussion instruments, and there is a computer specifically for music. Pupils are learning to use computer programs to help compose and record their compositions. This is easier and less time consuming than the existing method of recording work on audio tapes and is an area of development. The co-ordinator plans to extend the external accreditation of music and make music a focus for the after school activities. The lessons are enhanced by regular opportunities for pupils to attend classical concerts as an evening activity.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. Achievements in physical education across the school are good and for some pupils very good. At Key Stage 3, pupils practise the techniques of catching and throwing a softball in small groups. Pupils learn to co-operate and work together in pairs. Pupils also learn how to hit a softball with a bat using a tee. Some higher attaining pupils are able to vary the direction and height of the ball by changing their body position as they address the ball. Other pupils practise their skills during indoor cricket and take turns to bat, bowl and field. In athletics, pupils practise a sprint start, following good teacher demonstration, other pupils are offered good positive re-inforcement by the teachers as they practise throwing the javelin and developing their technique. At all times, very good awareness and monitoring of health and safety of all pupils and staff take place. In these sessions there is good natural co-operation amongst pupils who are trying to better their personal best, a nice example of co-operation is when a higher attaining pupil offers positive advice to another lower attaining pupil.

129. The provision for outdoor education is very good and the breadth of resources and the quality of training undertaken by key staff is of the highest order. The attention to detail paid to health and safety is exemplary. The outcomes for pupils in the school during the residential period is very good in terms of pupils' benefits in personal development, self-esteem and confidence.

130. Teaching varies from satisfactory to excellent. For the most part it is very good or excellent when taught by the main teacher of physical education throughout the school. On these occasions the very high expectation, enthusiasm and subject knowledge all delivered at pace ensures pupils are motivated and acquire new knowledge and skills; for example, during indoor cricket, the teacher constantly checks pupils' subject knowledge "What is the hand sign for a boundary on the ground?" "How many runs is it?" Pupils also learn to tell inspectors "This is a good school. You won't get any children in a better school. We have excellent teachers." Pupils learning as a result of their very good attitudes and respond fully to teachers' requests and take an active part in evaluating their own and others' work. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, it is because of a lack of 'sports' and effective planning to help pupils to learn.

131. The school is very fortunate to have a good number of subject specialists teaching the subject throughout the school which ensures the management and leadership of the subject by them is all good. The curriculum is broad and offers a good range of learning opportunities. The co-ordinator has a basic action plan which includes improving teachers' assessments of pupils' gains in knowledge and skills to build on the recent checklist assessment and to implement external accreditation for pupils at Key Stage 4, some of whom achieve in line with or above national expectations. Many aspects of outdoor education already include external accreditation and this is the responsibility of the outdoor education co-ordinator. The provision of a purpose built sports hall and outdoor playing fields is very good and learning resources are good overall. There is currently no detailed costed subject action plan and the co-ordinator is not yet able to monitor the quality of teaching across the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

132. During the inspection, because of timetabling arrangements, it was possible to see only three religious education lessons, all in Key Stage 3, but scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion with the co-ordinator indicate that pupils' progress is at least satisfactory. Pupils make good progress in the knowledge and understanding of what is special about a range of faiths and religions. They are beginning to associate symbols of religion with calm and reflection. Pupils recall details of Mohammed's Night Journey well and write, "The experience was so fantastic Mohammed found it difficult to describe." Pupils develop a greater awareness of values and respect for themselves and others.

133. Pupils learn about Christianity and other religions, including Buddhism, Islam and Judaism. They celebrate festivals such as Eid and Mohammed's birthday, as well as Christian festivals throughout the year. The whole school was involved in an exciting celebration of the 2000 years since Christ's birth and into the future for the millennium, which culminated in a moving carol service at the local church. At Key Stage 3 pupils write thoughtful arguments for and against Christ's claim to be the Messiah and produce interesting pieces of extended writing about the Crusaders when studying Islam.

134. In Year 7 pupils show a good recall of details of their visit to the local church, relishing the use of “anachronism” in their discussion. They design their own medieval church, understanding the significance of the placing of the font or the altar for those who will worship in the church. They work calmly and purposefully. These young “architects” do not lose their focus on their church as a place of worship. Year 8 pupils learn the Lord’s Prayer and want to write it out well. There is considerable discussion about the fact that the modern version uses “Your” instead of “Thy” and a clear preference for the “older version” is expressed. Pupils at the end of the key stage discuss the need to care and help others, for example by raising funds for children in war-torn countries. They talk of the contribution made by famous people to raising everyone’s awareness of these problems.

135. Pupils in Key Stage 4 consider personal values. This is linked well to a study of Buddhism. They reflect on people’s views on death and select very moving quotations or poems to add to their work. Pupils consider the problems of addiction and how it affects different groups. They show great awareness of the principle that, just as a chariot is made up of different parts which each have an important function, we all need support from others.

136. The quality of learning and teaching across both key stages is good because the teachers know their subject well and offer a range of very appropriate opportunities in the lessons. Support staff give invaluable quality support in lessons. Pupils respond well to the calm atmosphere of the religious education room, which create the mood for the sessions, and the displays of past work are interesting and relevant. Pupils listen to calming music as the teacher evokes a mood of stillness and reflection in relation to the religions under study, as in the excellent lesson which considered the visit to the church. Teachers give opportunities for reflection and there is a good range of practical activities within lessons. The overall planning and preparation for the lessons is thoughtful and imaginative. Teachers use questions well to help pupils to extend their thinking and answers. Pupils are made aware of the expectations of the staff that they should participate in the discussions and listen to others’ contributions and points of view. They do not always find this easy, but some learning takes place in every lesson. Teachers match work and level of support well to meet pupils’ needs and praise pupils for verbal and written contributions to the lessons when marking their work.

137. There is a comprehensive policy and scheme of work for religious education, which is based on the locally agreed syllabus. There are good links with other subjects, for example history and art, and some aspect of literacy is included in every lesson although not linked to the pupils’ individual education plan targets. It has a broadly Christian base but very good account is taken of other world religions. Good use is made of artefacts and books to stimulate interest and discussion and pupils’ understanding benefits greatly from visits to churches and other places of worship. Visitors to the school share their beliefs readily with pupils, who look forward to these visits.

138. The development of this subject since the last inspection has made religious education an exciting and challenging part of the whole curriculum. It contributes substantially to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and also to assemblies. The school is improving resources systematically and plans to develop further the range of experiences and visits offered to pupils. There is now a good emphasis placed on the quality of work produced by pupils and the refurbished room provides a very appropriate setting for the subject.