

# INSPECTION REPORT

## SHERIDAN HOUSE SCHOOL

Southburgh, Thetford

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121246

Principal: Mrs S J Sayer

Reporting inspector: Mr M G Whitehead

21061

Dates of inspection: 2<sup>nd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> October 2000

Inspection number: 223607

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special School
School category:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	10 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Boys
School address:	Southburgh Thetford Norfolk
Postcode:	IP25 7TJ
Telephone number:	01953 850494
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Appropriate authority:	Priory Services for Young People
Date of previous inspection:	November 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
M Whitehead 21061	Registered inspector	Mathematics; science; information technology; physical education; religious education;	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well is the school led and managed? Psychotherapy.
P Willman 14178	Lay inspector	Equal opportunities	How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
A Hill 18261	Team inspector	English; art; design and technology; geography; history; music; PSHE; Special Educational Needs	How well are the pupils taught? How good are curricular and other opportunities? How well does the school care for its pupils? Residential.

The inspection contractor was:

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Sheridan House School offers an integrated residential programme of education, care and psychotherapy. The school has 6 pupils on roll, one of whom is of Moroccan parentage. The ages of the present pupils range from 12 to 16 years, though the school takes boys as young as 10 years of age. The school is situated in a rural part of Norfolk and comprises a classroom block and a separate country house that forms the residential accommodation. The school is for pupils who have special educational needs that are of an emotional and behavioural nature. The attainment levels of all pupils, when they enter the school, are well below the national average. There is no pupil for whom English is an additional language.

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

Sheridan House School is a very good school that provides all pupils with good quality teaching across all subjects ensuring that they make good progress. The very strong leadership of the Principal and the management ensure that the school is developing well and the quality of education is improving. Taking into account the good quality of teaching, the good progress that pupils make and the very high quality of psychotherapy those pupils receive, the school provides good value for money.

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

- The principal and key staff provide very strong leadership for the school and the management is very effective in shaping the future of the school.
- The psychotherapeutic input available to pupils and families is extremely effective and enables the school to work very well with all pupils, their parents and families.
- The consistently good quality of teaching is a strength of the school.
- The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is a strength of the school. The residential provision offers excellent support for the pupils' moral and social development.
- The personal development of pupils and the relationships of pupils with staff and with each other are very good throughout the school. The school's group meetings enable each pupil to reflect upon the work of the school and the part he plays in it.
- The school curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of the pupils, it is enriched by the very strong careers education and guidance, the personal social and health education and the wide range of extra curricular activities.

#### **What could be improved**

- The quality of educational assessment and the procedures for monitoring academic progress.
- The monitoring of teaching throughout the school lacks structure and formality.
- Insufficient use is made of new technology, including computers throughout the school.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory for the teaching of design and technology, food studies, science and art. Books, equipment and other materials are also inadequate for the teaching of practical subjects.
- The school is aware of these shortcomings and plans to address them are already being implemented.

*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 last inspected in November 1995 and since then improvements have been good overall. The quality of teaching has improved greatly and is now a strength of the school. The quality of information for parents is very good and the annual reports that are sent to parents are excellent. The arrangements that the school makes for work experience and careers education and guidance are very good. Whilst there has been some improvement in assessment procedures, particularly in care planning and therapy, there has been insufficient improvement in assessment procedures concerning pupils' academic attainment and progress.

## STANDARDS

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

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

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

The school aims to establish meaningful, trustworthy and caring relationships in order to enable pupils to develop self-esteem and help them to realise their academic potential. The school is very successful in meeting these aims; each pupil is treated as an individual and is valued as such.

Although the standards of work seen are generally below the national average, it is clear that all pupils make good progress in all subjects. The one Year 11 pupil who left school last year was awarded GCSE certificates in English (Grade E), mathematics (Grade E), a Certificate of Achievement in Information and Communication Technology (Gold Award), a Merit in Basic Communication Skills and a Pass in Numeracy. He also gained a Bronze Award in the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN).

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to the school are good, they are very positive about the work they do and are keen to succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good throughout the school. Each pupil works hard to meet his targets that are agreed and displayed in the classroom
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good throughout the school. All pupils relate well with the staff and with their peers. Personal development plays a very important part in the life of the school and pupils benefit from the clear guidance and help that they receive.
Attendance	Attendance is good, there are good systems in place to ensure that the staff are aware of pupils whereabouts at all times and there is very little unauthorised absence. Lessons start on time. This shows good improvement since the last inspection.

The very good relationships that are built between staff and pupils are a major strength of the school and are reinforced by the commitment of the staff to meeting the needs of the pupils through respect and dignity.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged 10-16</b>
24 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.*

The quality of teaching in English is generally good. Lessons are well planned, start on time and generally progress at a brisk pace. Teachers make good use of the blackboard to reinforce the contribution that pupils make. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils ensure that all pupils make good progress. Teaching of mathematics is good in both classes, lessons are well prepared and the work that is set is carefully matched to the different levels of competence shown by pupils. This ensures that all pupils succeed and consequently their interest in the subject is maintained. Teaching in science is very good, many of the lessons are practical in nature and this is very effective in motivating the pupils. In these lessons, pupils make very good progress as they understand new concepts and gain in confidence as they work through experiments.

All lessons are characterised by good relationships between staff and pupils and these ensure an effective support for pupils' speaking and listening skills. Wherever possible, teachers also reinforce pupils' skills in using numbers. During the inspection, 96% of the teaching that was observed was satisfactory or better and 38% was very good or better. Only one lesson was less than satisfactory and there was no poor teaching.

Pupils learn well in all lessons, they show improvement in reading and in their ability to talk about their work. Pupils gain in confidence with their increased knowledge and understanding; this improves their self-image and helps them towards maturity and independence. The school's programme of personal social and health education permeates the whole school curriculum. Care staff also play a major role in the personal, social and health education of pupils. The pupils' key workers are very effective in delivering the wider curriculum. This includes learning to build relationships, learning to work and play together, learning to take turns and tolerate each other. Pupils learn well as they develop the skills that will be required of them when they leave school as young adults.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school offers a very good curriculum that is broad, balanced, relevant and based on the National Curriculum. This is underpinned by a very effective psychotherapeutic input that is available to all pupils and staff.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is a strength of the school. The psychotherapeutic input, the morning meetings, and the very good relationships in the school all help to provide very good opportunities for spiritual development and moral and social understanding. Provision for cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's procedures for caring for pupils are good. Procedures for checking behaviour are very good, however, procedures for assessing pupils' attainment in lessons are inconsistent and thus unsatisfactory.

The school works very well with parents and carers to ensure that they are closely involved in reviewing the progress of their children. The psychotherapist plays a vital role in this co-operative working relationship and is very successful in helping pupils to overcome their difficulties.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the principal and other key staff	The principal provides very strong leadership for the school and with her senior staff is very effective in ensuring clear educational direction.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The excellent management of the school ensures that priorities for development are appropriate and that financial planning is very secure.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Whilst the school's evaluation of its performance is satisfactory, there is need for a more formal approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Resources that are available to the school are used well. These help to enrich the opportunities for pupils particularly in careers education and guidance and work experience.

There are sufficient staff to meet the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils. Accommodation, however, is unsatisfactory for the teaching of practical subjects. Resources throughout the school are limited, and in some cases, unsatisfactory particularly for practical subjects. The school is aware of the shortcomings and has comprehensive plans to address all of these issues. The leadership of the school is very strong and has ensured that the school has made good progress since the last inspection. However, there is not yet a whole-school approach to the assessment of pupils' work and recording those results. The school is very effective in applying principles of best value.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Unfortunately, no parents were able to attend the meeting that had been arranged. However, a parent of one pupil spoke with the registered inspector by telephone and said how positively she felt about the school. She had a great deal of praise for the staff and told how they had helped her son to 'read out aloud and to write properly'. She also spoke very highly of the care staff and praised the work they do in looking after the pupils. She has a great deal of respect for the principal and all the staff.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The overall levels of attainment by pupils in the school are generally below the national average. However, all pupils make good progress as they work towards their individual targets. Pupils also make very good progress in making and securing good relationships. This is true of relationships made between pupils and their peers, and also relationships between pupils and adults. They learn to acknowledge their difficulties and work hard to eliminate them. It is through the very successful psychotherapy and the commitment of the staff, that pupils are able to succeed.
2. Pupils whose ages range between 15 and 16 years follow accredited courses leading to national examinations. These include the General Certificate of Secondary Education, Associated Examining Board's Basic Examinations, Certificate of Achievement Awards and ASDAN Awards.
3. Last year one pupil was successful in gaining a Grade E in English and mathematics GCSE, a Gold Award in the Certificate of Achievement for Information and Communication Technology, a Merit in the Associated Examining Board's Basic Communication, a Pass in Basic Numeracy and an ASDAN Bronze Award. This was a great achievement for this pupil as he overcame many of his emotional and behavioural difficulties and applied himself successfully to courses of study.

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

4. The behaviour of pupils throughout the school is good. Each pupil has clearly defined targets on his individual education, care and therapy plan (IECTP). The incidence of exclusions is low as pupils and staff work closely together in order to help pupils to change their behaviour in positive ways.
5. The meetings that are held each morning allow pupils the time and space in which they are encouraged to reflect upon incidents that have happened. This is the time when pupils learn more about the effect that their behaviour has on other people and whether or not that effect is desirable. These sessions are used very effectively and help pupils to develop an understanding and respect for the feelings and beliefs of others. It is during this time that pupils knowledge and understanding of other cultures is developed. Pupils are able to talk about their own religion and the effect that it has upon their behaviour.
6. During lesson times, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own work, materials and equipment. This allows pupils to take initiative and increase in maturity. Through the consistency of approach that is applied by teachers and care staff, pupils gain a clear understanding of their responsibilities and very good relationships thrive.
7. The school has maintained a good level of attendance at lessons since the last inspection. There are good systems in place to ensure that the staff are aware of pupils' whereabouts at all times and there is very little unauthorised absence. Pupils are usually punctual to school and lessons start on time. This shows good improvement since the last inspection.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

8. The quality of teaching has significantly improved since the last inspection. There have also been improvements in the curriculum. Teaching is now good overall with some very good teaching and very little evidence of unsatisfactory teaching.
9. Teachers have good knowledge of the several subject areas in which they work. Knowledge is more secure where they have had specialist training or extensive experience. Teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy has improved since the last inspection. There is, however, the need to develop a whole school strategy, to ensure that all subjects make an effective contribution to the teaching of basic skills in a planned way. Teachers' planning is detailed, informative and very effective. All teachers use a very good format for planning that ensures that they are well prepared for lessons and can maintain pupils' good progress.
10. All teachers use very good classroom management strategies that are based on their knowledge of the pupils' individual needs and an understanding of their potential weaknesses in the classroom setting. This helps to secure the pupils' interest and enables them to settle to work and make good progress. Teachers' expectations of the pupils are variable. In the best lessons, teachers expect high standards of work and behaviour. This leads to a raising of the pupils' expectations and ultimately raises their self-esteem as they appreciate the good results of their efforts. In some lessons, where expectations of practical work, spelling or handwriting are not so high, pupils do not make such good progress.
11. The learning support assistant is not always fully deployed in the classroom. In some lessons, the support is unplanned and the assistant is unclear about his role. In such lessons, pupils do not learn as effectively. However, in practical lessons, such as resistant materials lessons of design and technology, or some lessons of science and art, the support is more clear and effective, and pupils learn well.
12. An area for development in teaching is in the ongoing assessment of pupils' attainment and progress and, in particular, the use made of assessment in planning for lessons. Although there is a good baseline of information provided for Individual Education, Care and Therapy Plans (IECTPs), the monitoring of progress against educational targets is under-developed. There is a need for a whole-school assessment and recording system that can track pupils' progress effectively through each subject.

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

13. The school curriculum is organised as a 24-hour input that covers both the main school and the residential area. As such it is very broad and well balanced, taking in the subjects of the National Curriculum and supporting them through the care curriculum and the overall psychotherapeutic underpinning of the school. Care staff help pupils with their reading and writing and they support any area of learning that pupils wish to explore. Each pupil has a computer in his bedroom and this extends the opportunities for pupils to learn. Pupils personal, social, emotional and health education is particularly well delivered through the extended curriculum.
14. Teachers have worked hard to plan and deliver the full National Curriculum, although the school is not legally obliged to provide it. The main school curriculum offers a very good breadth and balance of subjects. The provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is also very good. Psychotherapy inputs are the strength of this provision. Extra curricular provision is very good and includes many of the leisure activities, including residential activity holidays, that are organised by the care staff. Careers and vocational

education is very good. Careers guidance staff attend the annual reviews when pupils reach the age of 14. The school accesses GNVQ courses and offers the Certificate of Achievement, along with GCSE. Many of the courses aim to improve pupils' communication skills and prepare them for the world of work. Pupils are able to gain work experience through contact with local businesses.

15. The teachers of subjects such as humanities, organise field trips', including a coastal walk to study the effects of erosion on the east coast and trips to museums. Overall, the curriculum does not make sufficient use of the local area and community links need strengthening to support that use. The use of a tutor workshop for woodwork lessons involves a lot of travelling time for a limited return. However, the school is planning to bring design and technology into the curriculum of the main school. A purpose built classroom is planned that will enable control systems and information communications technology to be available on site. The present limitations on art, science, design and technology, including food studies, and information communication technology, will be greatly eased by the new buildings planned for later in the year.
16. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. The provision is made across the school and residential areas and permeates the whole 24 hour curriculum. The school meetings and shared mealtimes provide a good platform on which to test the effectiveness of pupils' personal and social understanding.
17. Good links with the community have been maintained well since the last inspection. The pupils make good use of local recreational facilities, for example, swimming and kayaking. The school works closely with the careers' office and this has resulted in very successful work experience placements. Pupils undertaking these placements have received very good reports which reflects the care taken in the selection of suitable opportunities. The local City College offers pupils the opportunity to attend training workshops and study for GNVQs.
18. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. The provision for cultural development is good, opportunities to provide an understanding of our multi-cultural society are not so readily available and are in need of further development.
19. The very good provision for spiritual development is enriched through lessons of religious education, in which, for example, pupils learn about the Muslim religion, studying the awesome beauty of the Sulaimanye Mosque. One pupil was able to read from the Holy Qu'ran, in translation, during a lesson. He read it with respect and handled the Qu'ran and the lectern with similar respect. The Moslem 'call to prayer' was transmitted to the class through a CD ROM and provided a spiritual background to the lesson. Through psychotherapy sessions and the school meetings, pupils are able to confront their problems and gain valuable insights into their own behaviour and its impact on others, in a safe, understanding environment.
20. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. There is an expectation of honesty in social interactions and school meetings are often planned to enable pupils to confront issues of right and wrong that have affected, and still affect their lives. All staff provide good role models and pupils learn that an understanding of right and wrong is important to their personal sense of self worth and the well being of the school community. Moral issues are dealt with positively and supportively, wherever they may arise.
21. The school functions as a therapeutic community and it is for this reason that the provision for pupils' social development is very good. Group work is encouraged in all lessons and in the residential area. Inter-relationships are characterised by the need to get on together as the basis for the school community. When relationships break down, at school, in the residential area or at home, they become an immediate focus of concern for the rest of the staff and

pupils. Staff are patient and sympathetic in dealing with difficulties in social relationships. During the inspection, difficulties that arose were dealt with sensitively and resulted in apologies being made by pupils who then worked hard to put things right.

22. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good and includes some interesting studies of other cultures in lessons of religious education and humanities. Examples would be the study of life in Victorian England, early Egypt, American Indians and of the world's major faiths. In art lessons, the pupils learn about the art and design work in European, American and African cultures. The school does not exploit fully the cultural and multi-cultural influences over time.
23. The school ensures pupils' access to the National Curriculum and makes it relevant to the pupils. The policy statement, whilst satisfactory overall, does not reflect gender or racial issues at present. The school is aware of this and has plans to review the content of the policy. Staff promote equality of opportunity consistently and the school community is firmly based on respect for the rights of others.

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

24. The school is committed to providing pupils with a secure, stable and caring environment in which each of them is valued. Because all staff share in this commitment, the school is very successful in achieving a high standard of pastoral care for each individual and this has a very positive impact on the progress they make and the standards they attain. This aspect of the school's provision has been maintained well since the last inspection and remains a strength of the school. The very good relationships between staff and pupils, based on mutual respect, ensure the welfare of the pupils and the excellent communication both formal and informal at all levels between staff contributes to a continuity of care throughout the day and night. The excellent work of the psychotherapist is an important feature in the care provided for the pupils.
25. On a day-to-day basis, staff awareness of health and safety is good. There is a satisfactory policy, however, the school does not yet have formal procedures for risk assessment. Fire drill is carried out regularly and appropriate records are kept. Three members of staff are shortly due to undertake training in health and safety procedures which will raise the profile of this issue in the house and school. Provision for first aid is, however, unsatisfactory. There is currently only one member of staff who has received an appropriate level of training and, in her absence, there is no first aid cover. There is constant and consistent emphasis both in lessons and in the daily life in the house on personal safety, for example, pupils are given very good information about the harmful effects of drugs and the benefits of good hygiene.
26. The school is rigorous in its approach to child protection issues. The child care manager is the designated member of staff for child protection and she, together with several other members of staff, are fully trained in this aspect of care. There is a comprehensive policy document, closely based on local recommended guidelines and the school is generally well supported by external agencies. Staff are vigilant and consistent in their approach to child protection issues, giving pupils good guidance on what is and what is not acceptable within a relationship.
27. The school's provision for the monitoring and personal and academic performance is satisfactory overall. The personal development of all pupils is very carefully recorded and individual targets are set. Each pupil has an education tutor who will liaise with the pupil's key worker who is a member of the care staff in order to support the pupil. Each key worker ensures that they have quality time with pupils at least monthly, this can be more frequent if necessary.

28. Pupils also have access to an independent listener who visits the school at least monthly and whenever there is a new admission. Each Wednesday evening, the school holds a therapeutic meeting to which all pupils are invited, though their attendance is not compulsory. The daily morning meetings held in school offer support to pupils and can, if necessary, run for longer than is timetabled.
29. All pupils benefit greatly from the support that is offered to them. They value highly the work of the teachers and care staff. Following the very rigorous admission procedure, pupils are given very high quality support. The support is not limited to the pupils, but may also extend to other members of their families.
30. The monitoring of academic performance however, is unsatisfactory overall as there is a wide variety of methods being used which vary in quality from very good to unsatisfactory. There is good quality assessment taking place in mathematics whilst in the physical education and music assessment procedures are unsatisfactory.
31. The school does not have a standard way of assessing pupils and recording the results. It is extremely important for the school that they agree on the best method. Not only do they need uniform assessment procedures, but also easy access to the results in order to make judgements and form hypotheses concerning the attainment and progress of individual pupils or groups within the school. This is an area that has not improved since the last inspection.
32. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour within the school are very good. Each pupil has clear behaviour targets that are known and understood. Teachers work with the pupils helping them to meet their goals. The success of pupils is rewarded at the end of each lesson using a star system. The rewards that pupils achieve during the week are converted into cash that the pupil is allowed to spend, under the direction of a member of staff. Any pupil who causes damage to property is expected to contribute towards its repair. The system works very well indeed helping those pupils to realise the consequences of their actions and the implications that these have on the life of the school.
33. Members of the care staff play a vital role in the personal development of pupils. The availability of a key worker for every pupil is a strength of the school, they work closely with individuals and have a very clear understanding of the difficulties and the triumphs experience by the pupils. Care and management of pupils is in line with the requirements of the Children Act and the school ensures that each pupil is treated with respect and dignity. Pupils also have private space and access to telephones when needed.
34. The personal, social and health education of pupils permeates the whole-school curriculum, both in care and education settings. It gains particular support from curriculum subjects such as science, English and religious education, where pupils discuss and write about important personal, social and moral issues. They are also taught about drug awareness, sex education and ethics. Personal health and hygiene are taught effectively in both the residential setting and the school. At the heart of the provision is the psychotherapeutic input that serves both staff and pupils as they interact in the therapeutic setting. This therapeutic philosophy emphasises the worth and value of the individual and ensures fully effective support for the pupils' personal and social development. The very good relationships that all staff throughout the school have with the pupils, enable that support to be delivered very well. Relationships are strong and characterised by positive expectations, rather than rigid rules and structures.
35. IECTPs set individual targets and record the personal and social progress of pupils through the school. Regular meetings between members of staff who represent all sections of the school's provision, ensure that pupils' personal and social development is sensitively monitored. These include twice yearly reviews by social services and annual reviews of the pupils' Statements of Special Educational Needs.

36. This comprehensive provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is a strength of the school's work. The recent improvements in the organisation and delivery of the curriculum, linked effectively to the National Curriculum, have built a sound foundation on which the school is developing well. The educational targets in the pupils' IECTPs need modification so that they can be measured easily and show clear indication of progress.
37. The provision for personal, social and health education was seen as a strength at the last inspection. Since then, it has improved further through the planning and monitoring of outcomes and the strengthening of links between the different parts of the provision.

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

38. Most parents and carers have positive views of the work of the school. They value the care given to their children and are appreciative and mostly supportive of the efforts the school makes to maintain contact and involve them in the progress their children are making. The school places a high priority on regular communication with parents and carers and recognises the importance this contact has for the pupils. The very good quality of these links has been maintained well since the last inspection. Pupils are encouraged to write to and telephone their parents and many regularly visit home for weekends. A care worker always accompanies the pupil to and from home and this provides an excellent opportunity to talk to parents or carers about the progress the child is making. The regular visits of the psychotherapist to those parents provide an excellent and constructive channel of communication. These very good opportunities which the school provides for parents to become involved in the work of the school has a positive impact on the progress their children make at the school.
39. The quality of information provided for parents is very good. The annual reports on pupils' progress are excellent and this represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. They cover all subjects studied, identifying clear levels of attainment, strengths, weaknesses and targets achieved. They provide parents and carers with a detailed record of their child's progress. Parents and carers are fully involved in the review process, all attend review meetings and are involved in the decision making process concerning their child's future development. The school facilitates this involvement by meeting parents at Norwich station and transporting them to and from the school. The therapeutic work undertaken by the psychotherapist with some parents supports the constructive therapy provided for the pupil in the school. In this way, these parents are helping the personal development of their children.

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

40. The leadership and management of the school have improved greatly since the last inspection. The school is under new management by Priory Services for Young People and the head of education now has the added responsibility as principal. The school, under the guidance of the management, has produced an excellent school development plan. This plan addresses the weaknesses within the school and contains detailed strategies for the development and extension of the school buildings, increased resources for teaching and improved facilities using computer technology as an educational resource and a management tool.
41. The day-to-day finances of the school are extremely well managed by the administration and resources manager. The school uses proper procedures for the ordering, receiving and payment concerning goods. There is clear separation of duties and careful accounts are kept. The management receives an up-to-date financial statement each month and the school has a clear picture of its financial position. The school secretary works very effectively and

supports the principal, senior management, all staff and pupils. She ensures that all reports concerning pupils are word processed and distributed appropriately. The work of the administration and resources manager and the secretary is highly valued throughout the school.

42. The new management structure is having a very positive impact on the quality of education that pupils receive. The management and staff work very closely together and are very effective in meeting the school's aims. One of the major strengths of management of the school is the detailed consideration given to each individual child prior to his admission to the school. The school has very clear criteria for admission which are instrumental to the considerable success that the school enjoys.
43. There is clear delegation of responsibilities within the school; staff work well together and support each other. However, with such a small number of teachers, it is necessary for individual teachers to take responsibility for several different subjects. The responsibility for co-ordination of both mathematics and English in the school is a shared responsibility between two teachers. There is need for further rationalisation of responsibilities amongst the teachers.
44. The school is moving forward rapidly and during the inspection the school received approval of its development planning which involves considerable extension and modification to the buildings, and the improvement of facilities and resources. This work will be well underway by the time this report is published and the school will be addressing some of the issues that are being raised.
45. There are some areas of management where there is room for development. One of these is the role of the headteacher and management in monitoring the quality of teaching throughout the school. At present, this is done by the principal on an informal and irregular basis. This is one of the difficulties of a small school which needs to be overcome. The principal and management should introduce a formal system for monitoring teaching within the school. Similarly, there is another area in need of development, namely the assessment of and recording of pupils' work, their attainment and progress. The small number of pupils on roll, the even smaller class groups and the commitment of the teachers mean that there is clear understanding of the capabilities and successes of individual pupils. However, there is no whole-school approach to marking and overall assessment of pupils' work. There is some good practice by teachers, yet there are areas where assessment is weak. There is an urgent need to redress this situation to enable staff, not only to record consistently, but also to scrutinise the results and make informed judgements about the quality of their teaching and the curriculum that they have planned.
46. The school uses new technology in a variety of ways to support the work of the school. At the moment, there is insufficient use of computers and software to support the subjects of the curriculum. There is a wide variety of machines in use, some are old and out of date, whilst others are relatively modern and efficient. The school is aware of these shortcomings and plans to upgrade the facilities in the school office immediately following the inspection. The school development plan includes the upgrading of facilities for the teaching of information and communication technology and the use of computers to support other subjects.
47. There is total commitment within the school to improvement and success. This comes from all staff who work at the school. Thanks to the hard work and dedication of the staff the school has a very great capacity for success.
48. Most teachers work part-time at the school. This ensures that an appropriately wide range of experience and subject expertise is available to deliver the school's broad curriculum. All teachers are experienced in teaching pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties,



although none have additional special educational needs qualifications. They work well as a part of the whole-school therapeutic team. The one part-time unqualified teacher has a good knowledge and understanding of her subject, food studies, and is a valued member of the teaching team. The learning support assistant is experienced and his support is valued highly.

49. The classroom accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. The lack of specialist accommodation for design and technology, art, science and physical education, restricts the scope for development in those subjects. The school uses a tutorial workshop for woodwork lessons, but this is almost an hour's drive away and is restricted in its scope for teaching design and technology. The two small areas used for computer studies make the teaching of information communication technology very difficult. The school grounds offer some scope for physical education, but the school makes very good use of local leisure and sports facilities in order to deliver an appropriate physical education curriculum. The caravan used for food studies is entirely unsatisfactory, although it is used effectively for one-to-one teaching. The food prepared by pupils is often taken to the school dining area for a shared social occasion. There is no discrete library and study area, although each classroom has a collection of reference and reading books covering all subjects taught. The very good plans to alter and extend both teaching and residential areas will, when implemented, resolve the overall accommodation problems.
50. The range and quality of teaching resources are unsatisfactory overall. The book collection is currently being audited and is unsuitable. Out-of-date books are being replaced. The resources for practical subjects such as design and technology, including food studies, art and design, science and physical education are unsatisfactory and limit the teaching and learning activities in those subject areas. The plans to improve accommodation are linked to plans for the upgrading of resources. When these plans are implemented later in the year, the resource problem will be greatly resolved.

## **RESIDENTIAL**

51. Pupils benefit from good quality well-managed residential provision. The majority of care staff are experienced and know the pupils well. They work hard to provide a comfortable, caring environment that supports the school provision effectively.
52. The school is well maintained by staff who take good care of the buildings, keeping them clean and welcoming. The staff and pupils benefit from the well maintained grounds which provide a very peaceful and attractive setting which they value highly.
53. Although there is no 24-hour curriculum policy to guide planning, the curriculum is implicit in the organisation of both school and residential areas. Change over meetings between teachers and duty care staff occur at the beginning and end of the school day. Information about the pupils' behaviour and progress is exchanged and planning is co-ordinated from that information. Pupils may take work from school to the residence and care staff support the school by helping them with their work. They read to them at night and take an appropriate interest in their progress in the school. Evening and weekend activities, as well as residential visits, serve to extend the learning experiences of the pupils. Although the education and care provisions are managed separately, a member of the education team contributes to the weekly communication meetings. The psychotherapeutic input provides a strong support for both pupils and staff within the two parts of the school provision. Weekday lunch times provide an opportunity for care and teaching staff to come together with pupils in a domestic setting.
54. IECTPs are the key to the linked provisions. The pupils' personal, social and health education is a central concern of all staff. Both care and teaching staff contribute to the information base

on the plans and share the targets that are set for individual pupils on them. They are kept under regular review by all staff.

55. Individual bedrooms, each with study facilities and a computer, ensure privacy and an area to support learning. There is a small collection of reading and reference books in the residence, along with videos, video games, soft toys and construction kits. There are good shared recreational areas where pupils and staff can meet for group discussions or for homely leisure pursuits, such as watching TV, playing board games or table games, eating or just relaxing together. The kitchen serves both school and residence and is used by pupils and care staff to prepare some of the meals they enjoy. Pupils and care staff share the shopping tasks. The grounds extend the leisure provision and the use of local clubs and sports facilities further adds to it. Pupils are able to phone their parents or social workers at any convenient time and are encouraged to visit or write home. Parents and carers are welcome to contact or visit the school and good use is made of these contacts.
56. The plans to alter and extend the school site will improve the residential area and ensure that deficiencies such as inadequate laundry facilities and the lack of an isolation sick room will be overcome. The buildings will be upgraded and extended to provide facilities for up to twelve resident pupils.

## **PSYCHOTHERAPY**

57. Psychotherapy is an integral part of the work at Sheridan House School. The school is very successful in helping pupils to change their behaviour and their way of thinking about themselves and others. The resident psychotherapist works very closely with all pupils and helps them to reflect upon themselves, their values and relationships. This is very successful as pupils learn to take responsibility for themselves and develop very positive relationships.
58. Each pupil has the opportunity to attend individual psychotherapy sessions on a weekly basis. Therapy is also available for the families of pupils attending Sheridan House School. In this case, the psychotherapist meets with families in their own homes. Regular psychotherapeutic support and supervision is also available to care staff and teachers. This has proven to be extremely valuable and enables all staff and pupils to work together with shared knowledge and understanding.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

59. In order to improve the quality of education provided by the school the principal, senior staff and management should:
- (1) introduce a system for the assessment of pupils academic progress to be used consistently by all staff; (Paragraphs 12,30-31,45,60-61,63, 69,81,88)
  - (2) introduce a formal structured system for the monitoring of teaching throughout the school; (Paragraph 45)
  - (3) ensure that appropriate computers and software are available for pupils and staff; (Paragraphs 40, 46,92)
  - (4) ensure that the accommodation is appropriate to meet the needs of the pupils and the demands of the curriculum particularly for the teaching of practical subjects; (Paragraphs 49,56, 76, 82)
  - (5) ensure that resources are at least adequate in all subjects. (Paragraphs 50, 71, 81, 88)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

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

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	37.5	41.7	16.7	4.1	0	0

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

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

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	6
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	N/A
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### *Attendance*

<b>Authorised absence</b>		<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	
	%		%
School data	N/A	School data	0.2

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

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

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	-
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	-
Indian	-
Pakistani	-
Bangladeshi	-
Chinese	-
White	5
Any other minority ethnic group	-

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

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

*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)	3.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	1.7
Average class size	3

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	35

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000
	£
Total income	550,000
Total expenditure	545,500
Expenditure per pupil	77,928
Balance brought forward from previous year	-65,104
Balance carried forward to next year	nil

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

#### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	6
Number of questionnaires returned	0

#### **Summary of parents' and carers' responses**

None of the parents' questionnaires that were sent out were returned. However, a telephone conversation was held with a parent of one pupil, and this was most helpful. Very positive views were expressed concerning the school and the progress her son has made. In this case the pupil has been successful in learning to read confidently and write clearly. A parent was also very positive about the work of the headteacher and her staff in the way in which they took care of her son.

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

### **ENGLISH**

60. Standards in English are good overall. They are particularly good at Key Stage 4. Standards of speaking and listening are high. They are re-inforced through the morning meetings, where pupils listen very attentively to the chosen song and where they have learned to take turns in raising and discussing live issues. They make very effective contributions to these meetings. They are further reinforced through individual and group counselling sessions and through the high expectations of social interactions from all staff. Some younger pupils have not yet settled into the therapeutic culture of the school and have poorly developed listening skills. Standards of reading are generally low. Pupils arrive at the school, having had a seriously disrupted education that has left them with reading ages generally well below their chronological age. A few have additional specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia. All subjects make a planned provision for the development of reading skills, but there is not yet a whole-school strategy that can effectively target and monitor those skills. Care staff read to and with pupils and thereby help them to develop their interest in books. By the age of 16 years, pupils have made satisfactory progress against the reading targets set for them. Standards of handwriting are generally good. Staff have appropriately high expectations of work presentation and most of the pupils are able to write neatly. Their spelling is at least satisfactory and often good. The school's corrective spelling programme is very effective in raising the standard of spelling overall. The pupils are understandably reluctant to settle to the challenge of writing, having failed for so long in previous schools. The school has not yet worked out a strategy for the full curriculum support for writing and there is insufficient challenge to test and improve the pupils' writing skills. Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) challenges are perhaps the most effective means whereby pupils are required to write in different ways, from letter writing and note taking, to poetry and short accounts of their own experiences. The increasing use of computers for research and word processing is having a positive impact on creative writing. One senior pupil word processed an interesting and amusing acrostic poem about the inspection team in an observed lesson.
61. Teaching is generally good. Teachers plan lessons well to ensure a brisk start and a generally well maintained pace. Occasionally, when prolonged video clips do not allow for an effective challenge to the English skills of pupils, teaching is unsatisfactory and pupils show clear signs of boredom. Where a short video clip is used, along with a story synopsis to ensure that pupils understand the framework and sequencing of the story, teaching is good. Pupils enjoy the lesson and make good progress in understanding and commenting on the story. Teachers make good use of the blackboard to record pupils' contributions, sometimes allowing the pupils to record their own and so challenging their writing skills in front of the class. The positive and caring approach to teaching enables most lessons to maintain a relaxed, but purposeful ethos, in which pupils make good progress. This is particularly noticeable in lessons at Key Stage 4 where pupils feel confident in reading to the class. All lessons are characterised by good relationships between staff and pupils and these ensure an effective support for pupils' speaking and listening skills. There is not yet an effective system for the ongoing marking and assessment of pupils' work and progress over time is not well recorded. There is ample evidence of unfinished work in pupils' folders.
62. Pupils know the difference between fiction and non-fiction and can identify them from a random sample of books. They are able to write for an appropriate range of purposes; letters of application and letters to friends and family; poetry and dialogue; descriptive writing and diary entries. There are samples of sensitive personal writing in several folders of work. Higher attaining pupils are able to distinguish verbs from adjectives and are aware of the rule

governing common and proper nouns. Spelling is improved through the corrective spelling programme, but pupils do not make sufficient use of the dictionaries to support the progress they make.

63. The joint co-ordinators for English have worked hard to improve the curriculum. Book resources are being audited and a number of outdated books have been selected for replacement. Good baselines of information have been set up from nationally approved reading, spelling and general English tests. There is a need to build up a fully effective assessment and monitoring system to ensure that progress from baseline targets can be readily measured. The subject has made a good improvement since the last inspection.

## **MATHEMATICS**

64. All pupils make good progress in mathematics. There is a wide variation in attainment levels between pupils across the school. Pupils follow programmes that are matched carefully to their individual needs. The school uses two separate commercial schemes of work in order to meet the differing needs of pupils. These schemes cover the full range of the National Curriculum requirements.
65. By the age of 14 years, pupils are learning to recognise two and three-dimensional shapes. They name correctly triangles and triangular prisms, circles cylinders and cones. The teacher works carefully with individual pupils to ensure that each one has a clear understanding of the work. Through careful guidance and with lots of encouragement, the teacher makes sure that the pupils succeed and are well motivated. Teachers exercise a great deal of patience and perseverance that help pupils to overcome their frustrations and anxieties concerning mathematics.
66. The teacher speaks clearly and confidently, giving pupils reassurance when they use their knowledge of co-ordinates to plot the position of buildings on a map. The pupils respond well and, despite some initial reluctance, they complete the work carefully. When pupils have difficulty in understanding certain concepts, the teachers explain in very small steps.
67. By the time pupils reach the age of 16 years, they continue to make good progress. Lower attaining pupils work on multiplication skills, how to multiply by 10, 100 and 1000. They discover that multiplying by 10 is the same as adding a zero. As one lesson progresses, one pupil investigates the patterns that are formed by triangular number grids and makes deductions concerning continuing series of numbers. The work is challenging for pupils and consequently they have a sense of achievement of the end of the lesson. The higher attaining pupils have a clear understanding of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They are able to express percentages as fractions, work confidently with money calculations and have a basic understanding of geometry.
68. This scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils have an understanding and experience of data collection. They carry out surveys and produce tally charts and block graphs to represent their findings. This is a main part of their work when studying probability.
69. The co-ordination of mathematics in the school is a responsibility that is shared between two teachers. Although the situation is far from ideal, it is working satisfactorily. Assessment procedures are good and the teachers have a clear understanding of the different levels of attainment of each pupil. However, there is no system for checking and comparing the attainment of the different individuals or groups of pupils in the school. This is an area in need of development.

70. The school works well in developing numeracy across the curriculum. For example, design and technology lessons and science lessons promote the use of number and measuring skills.
71. There are sufficient teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils. The accommodation is appropriate for the teaching of mathematics but resources are rather limited particularly concerning practical mathematics. Nevertheless, pupils follow courses that are accredited, including GCSE and AEB Basic Numeracy, Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) Achievement tests and elements of the ASDAN Youth Award Scheme concerning the application of number.
72. The school has made good progress in mathematics since the last inspection, the quality of teaching is better overall and the arrangements for assessment and recording are very much better. Good use is made of technology to maintain records of pupils progress in mathematics

## **SCIENCE**

73. The teaching of science is very good. Lessons are well prepared, the work is carefully matched to the individual needs of the pupils and is made interesting by the variety of activity ranging from description, discussion, investigation and recording.
74. By the age of 14 years, pupils learn to use correct scientific vocabulary. Pupils discover the intricacies of the microscope as they use hand lenses to examine different objects. The teacher presents a selection of materials and objects including items such as a balloon, a leaf and a key. He then expects each pupil to think carefully and describe each object scientifically taking into account the material from which it is made, its shape, its size and its appearance. This is greatly challenging for pupils, but they are well motivated and enjoying their search for appropriate scientific vocabulary.
75. The change of activity from observation to drawing keeps pupils busy and well motivated. A further experiment enables pupils to determine the magnification factor of a lens and record their findings appropriately. Pupils are pleased with their work and the teacher reinforces this as he awards points at the end of the lesson.
76. There has been good progress in science since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved greatly and the resources have improved slightly. The accommodation is inappropriate for the teaching of science, it is cramped for space and there is no specific area in which science is taught. There is no special storage area for equipment and materials. However, the school is fully aware of these shortcomings. The school development plan contains details of how these problems will be addressed. They include a designated science room as part of the building programme and facilities for computers to be used as part of the science course. The school has also identified in need for specialist training of staff in order to teach science even more effectively.

## **ART**

77. The progress of pupils up to the age of 14 years is good and progress for pupils from the age of 14 to 16 years is very good. Pupils have experienced considerable disruption to their schooling on entry and their art and design skills are under developed. The opportunity to work in both two and three dimensional media ensures that they quickly improve their skills and knowledge of the subject.
78. Pupils up to the age of 14 years, recognise the sculptures of Henry Moore from photographs and know that he used bones and stones as inspiration for many of his studies of the human



form. They know the difference between organic and inorganic materials used in art lessons. They bend wire mesh to the form of an animal skull that they have helped to draw, and mix plaster to soak and bind hessian around the form. For this they need a lot of teacher support, but they learn about the processes required for future work. They make direct prints from leaves and develop these into lino prints. Pupils aged between 14 and 16 years, carve a soft building block to create interesting heads based on Islamic icons. Their work is linked to lessons of religious education. Higher attaining pupils work in the style of Lichtenstein and produce colourful studies using stained glass techniques. From a study of Muslim decorative patterns, pupils are able to prepare and decorate large pieces of rigid board to form a dressing screen. They study some of the paintings of Botticelli and note how he uses symbols and colours for virginity, fertility, innocence and death.

79. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is better for pupils aged between 14 and 16 years, where they have settled to work and respond more positively to the challenge of art and design. Lessons are planned well and good use is made of resources for observational work. The sources for the study of Renaissance art are well chosen and lead to interesting discussions between pupils and the teacher. Such discussions are effective in extending pupils' personal and social development. There are good opportunities to support literacy skills in lessons where pupils research the work of artists such as Picasso. This support does not extend into the annotation of studies for accredited examinations. Open ended questions are used effectively to encourage pupils to think about their studies and to support their independent learning skills.
80. Pupils enjoy lessons and are generally well behaved and talk confidently about their work to visitors. They are able to use their own differing religious backgrounds to interpret religious symbolism in art and reach an understanding about the similarity of many icons and symbols. The subject makes a very good provision for the spiritual development of pupils.
81. There is no specialist accommodation and little display and storage space for pupils' work. This restricts materials and resources. The co-ordinator works hard to utilise his own skills and knowledge of art and design in developing an interesting and varied programme from limited resources. He has a very clear sense of the direction he would wish to take, once the planned accommodation changes are made. The assessment of pupils' work and the monitoring of their progress is not well developed. Computers, although used well for research and investigation, are not used effectively as a creative tool. Although the subject has made a good improvement since the last inspection, there is a need to develop pupils' basic art and design skills in a more carefully planned way. In this way, the pupils will need less support in the more advanced areas of their work.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

82. Standards in design and technology are generally satisfactory. They are weaker in the design aspect of the resistant materials programme of study. This is largely due to the emphasis placed on woodwork as a traditional technical subject. The school has poor accommodation and resources for design and technology and uses a tutorial workshop almost an hour's drive away. Whilst the experience of woodworking is therapeutic and pupils enjoy the practical sessions, the travelling time and the restricted nature of the subject have limited the progress that pupils can make. The school has made some effort to broaden the subject with technical drawing and some work on mechanical constructions. Food studies is a valued addition to the curriculum, but also suffers from poor accommodation. Until specialist accommodation is provided that can deliver the whole subject on site, it will suffer from an unsatisfactorily narrow teaching and learning base.

83. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In food studies, where the existing resources are used effectively for one to one teaching, the quality is higher. Pupils are able to prepare food that is often shared with friends and staff at the end of the lesson. This makes a significant contribution to their personal and social development. Pupils are expected to select a recipe, write it out and follow it in the practical session. They are expected to prepare ingredients and clear the kitchen area when they have finished. In the woodwork lessons, there is often too much direct support from staff. The same few basic products are made and there is no challenge to pupils' design skills. There are no planned exercises in the use of basic tools for making, shaping and finishing their work. Pupils do not know the names of many of the tools they use and they are not taught about the qualities of the resistant materials they use. In lessons seen, the pupils were not expected to clear their work spaces when they had finished the set task. The plans for improving accommodation and resources are very good and, when implemented, will have a positive impact on all aspects of the subject.
84. Within the restricted curriculum, pupils make satisfactory progress. They learn to draw their designs in different projections and they use a small range of resistant materials on which to work. They construct devices from card and wood that demonstrate the transfer of mechanical motion. They use design and technology skills in other subject areas, such as art and religious education. They use the scroll saw safely and learn to follow a drawn line, using tenon and rip saws as well as the scroll saw. They use a glue gun correctly and use rasp and sandpaper to produce a smooth finish to their wood products. When selecting a recipe, they learn about the nutritional qualities of different foods and are able to choose meals that are appropriate for those wishing to lose weight. Records show that they learn about and prepare some ethnic foods in their lessons. They work in a hygienic way, washing their hands and keeping tools and work surfaces clean.
85. The subject has made good improvement since the last inspection. Teaching and learning have improved and there is some improvement in the range of activities covered. Research and design remain weaknesses and there will be limited scope for further improvement until the new building plans come to fruition. The co-ordinator has planned for systems control technology to be brought on stream and is keen to re-design the curriculum around the planned specialist accommodation. The subject has a good capacity to improve in the near future.

## **HUMANITIES**

86. In lessons and work seen, the progress of pupils is at least satisfactory. Good use is made of the local environment to study both the history of the area and its coastal geography. Pupils know that farming has been the key occupation since medieval times. They can recognise the hedge and ditch boundaries of ancient strip farming from aerial photographs and maps. They know that ditches are used for land drainage as well as for boundary marking. They study the climates of different countries and use linear graphs to represent the differences. They learn about the development of the nearby town over time, noting the different architectural styles used in building and changes in the road system. From a coastal walk pupils learn about the effects of sea and wind erosion on the East Coast. They know that the Norfolk Broads were partly formed from the peat digging activities of earlier times. Using road maps they can identify different classes of roads and select appropriate routes between two points.
87. The quality of teaching is generally good and often very good. Lessons are well planned and prepared to ensure that they start in a positive way. Good opportunities are provided to encourage independent learning, with pupils able to organise their work and check their own calculations in map work. The support assistant is not always deployed effectively and is sometimes left with little to do in the lesson. The teaching of history is not effective in developing the pupils' sense of chronology. Topics are distant in time and place and links

between them are not developed. The subject provides a good support for the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Well chosen route planning topics that require the use of charts are used in geography lessons. The study of American Indians is used to encourage narrative and descriptive writing.

88. The co-ordinator is currently reviewing humanities and has drawn up a three-year rolling programme of studies that will lead to the Certificate of Education for pupils by the time they reach the age of 16 years. There are insufficient resources to support the planned programme, but good use is made of the local environment during the course. There is a need to build an appropriate collection of artefacts. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The new curriculum will enable further improvements to be made in the use of computers and in the assessment of work and monitoring of pupils' progress.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

89. During the inspection, it was possible to observe only one lesson of information and communication technology. However, it is clear from the scrutiny of pupils' work and other evidence around the school that the overall progress made by pupils is satisfactory. During the lesson that was observed, pupils made very good progress. The teacher's preparation was extremely thorough, she produced a clear word processed procedure sheets for all pupils. The work was carefully matched to the individual needs of the pupils and this ensured that that all pupils were able to succeed during the lesson.
90. Pupils work well and are highly motivated. There have been skills gained which enable them to access information, open programmes, edit, replace, centre, underline and embolden text. Higher attaining pupils imported clip art images to illustrate and enhance the appearance of their work.
91. The teacher uses her skills in managing pupils extremely well, she has very good knowledge of the subject and with these qualities she is able to motivate pupils and ensure that they succeed. During the session that was observed, some pupils designed and printed their own letterhead, whilst others design and printed a menu. Both pieces of work were equally very successful. It is clear that the quality of learning of the pupils is very good.
92. The accommodation in which information and communication technology is taught is totally unsatisfactory. The school's supply of computers is out-of-date and inappropriate. Fortunately, the school is aware of this major weakness and this is addressed in the school development plan. Already teachers are looking closely at the curriculum that they offer and are making appropriate adjustments to include the use of computers wherever it is possible and practicable.
93. The principal and management committee are very clear about their responsibilities towards the pupils and work has already begun in planning for improved accommodation and a much more up-to-date system that can be used readily by all pupils and which may also be used effectively by administration staff. All teachers are following courses that will give them appropriate qualifications in the use of computers. This is a true reflection of the commitment and dedication of the teachers in the school.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

94. It was not possible to observe any teaching of French during the inspection. The portfolios of pupils' work show that pupils are learning basic vocabulary. This includes French names for different items of food. However, from the scrutiny of the teachers planning it is clear that pupils progress well. Accreditation is offered through the challenges set in Key Steps and other units in the ASDAN award scheme. Prior to leaving school, pupils aged 16 years are given the opportunity to work towards the Certificate of Achievement.
95. The teaching of French in the school helps to broaden the curriculum on offer and shows good improvement since the last inspection.

### **MUSIC**

96. No lessons of music were seen during the inspection and it was not possible to see or hear evidence of work done by pupils in the subject.
97. Tutors from a local community music project visit the school once a week, these arrangements are informal but have clear links with the National Curriculum. An instrumental tutor comes in once a week, but the arrangements for music lack any formalisation which would identify it as a full curriculum subject. Music is, however, an informal feature of the school and is used to good effect in morning meetings. The song 'Sorry Seems To Be The Hardest Word' was played after a live issue of apology and ways of putting things right were discussed at a meeting.
98. The school recognises the importance that music plays in the lives of many people and is beginning to develop music as a subject of its curriculum.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

99. During the inspection, it was possible to observe only one physical education lesson. The quality of teaching and organisation was good, pupils were given responsibility and were trusted when taken to visit a local forest centre dedicated for mountain biking activities. Pupils were set a challenge to find a short route across a section of forest using their orienteering skills, a map and the plantation numbers. This involves crossing a public highway and completing a lap of the second part of the forest.
100. Great care was taken over all health and safety issues, pupils wore protective helmets and were reminded of safety rules when cycling. One pupil, who was recovering from an accident and had his leg in a protective plaster, made a very valuable contribution to the lesson. He, along with the classroom assistant, travelled a part of the course that was allegedly for use by disabled people. The pupil travelled in a wheelchair and had to be pushed, part of the time, by the classroom assistant, whilst at other times, he was able to propel himself. At the end of the lesson, the pupil had decided quite definitely that, as far as disabled people were concerned, this course was user-unfriendly. He then wrote a letter to the manager of the forest centre explaining his views.
101. The one drawback to the lesson was the 25 mile journey that pupils and staff had to make in order to avail themselves of these outdoor facilities. Nevertheless, taking into account the very positive experiences of all the pupils, it was well worth it. The careful preparation of the lesson ensure that pupils had a very clear understanding of their responsibilities and together

they completed a course are approximately 10 miles. The good planning of the lesson ensure that pupils learn well, they work independently when necessary and yet behaved very well as members of a small team.

102. The majority of activities concerning physical education take place off site. There is a wide range of activities included within the PE programme and these include walking, swimming, badminton, squash, football, tennis etc. However, the school has plans to reclaim the land occupied by an old swimming pool and create a hard surface where on site activities will be possible.
103. The development of the PE curriculum, since the last inspection, has been good. Members of care staff play a large part of in the extra curricular provision for the pupils and many of these activities are of a physical nature. Thus, the physical education of pupils is something which takes place throughout the 24-hour curriculum and is very successful.
104. Despite the fact that the school has no indoor facilities for sports, it makes excellent use of local sports facilities and the environment. This goes a long way in compensating for the lack of facilities on site. Teachers and care staff work extremely hard and very effectively to ensure that all pupils take part in a wide variety of physical activities.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

105. During the inspection, it was possible to observe only one lesson of religious education. However, this lesson did involve all pupils in the school. The teacher's good relationships with pupils and careful planning ensure that pupils work well and are not distracted. Good use is made of a computer and using the CD-ROM, a pupil researches information concerning Islam.
106. Pupils are successful as they make a small cardboard model of a Mosque. This is a pre-printed model, but is quite detailed and complicated in its construction. As pupils work on the model, they identify clearly the different parts of the mosque and understand and how they are building in relation to the geographical location of Mecca.
107. Pupils have the opportunity to examine a copy of the Qu'ran and as they do, they treat it with great respect. They wash their hands before handling the book. This prompts discussion about the Islamic religion, two pupils discuss sensibly whilst one is quite dismissive. Through this lesson, pupils develop their understanding of different cultures, customs, and religions and beliefs.
108. Whilst resources for teaching religious education are very limited, they have improved since the last inspection. The school is beginning to build up resources and artefacts which are appropriate when learning about major world faiths. The school is aware of the shortcomings and has very clear plans to address these. The school has made satisfactory improvement, since the last inspection, in the teaching of religious education.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION**

109. The personal, social and health education of pupils permeates the whole school curriculum, both in care and education settings. It gains particular support from curriculum subjects such as science, English and religious education, where pupils discuss and write about important personal, social and moral issues. They are also taught about drug abuse and sexual biology and ethics. Personal health and hygiene are taught effectively in both the residence and the school. However, it is the school's therapeutic philosophy, which emphasises the worth and

value of the individual, that ensures a fully effective support for the pupils' personal and social development. The very good relationships between staff and pupils enables staff to be very effective in supporting pupils. At the heart of the provision is the psychotherapeutic input that serves both staff and pupils as they interact in the therapeutic setting. Relationships are positive and characterised by high expectations, rather than rigid rules and structures.

110. IECTPs set individual targets and record the personal and social progress of pupils throughout the school. Regular meetings between members of staff who represent all sections of the school's provision, ensure that pupils' personal and social development is sensitively monitored. These include twice yearly reviews, in addition to the annual reviews of Statements of Special Educational Needs.
111. This comprehensive provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is a strength of the school's work . However, there is a need to review and strengthen the role that the school curriculum plays in that provision. The recent improvements in the organisation and delivery of the curriculum, linked effectively to the National Curriculum, have built a sound foundation from which to develop. IECTPs are the key to the 24-hour whole-school curriculum. These are difficult to manage and need some simplification, along with a focus on small, achievable targets that can be readily followed by the pupils to chart their own progress.
112. The provision for personal, social and health education was seen as a strength at the last inspection. Since then, it has improved further through the planning and monitoring of outcomes and the strengthening of links between the different parts of the provision.