

INSPECTION REPORT

LOXLEY HALL SCHOOL

Uttoxeter

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124509

Headteacher: Mr Martyn Pearce

Reporting inspector: Mrs Jayne Clemence
22629

Dates of inspection: 4 – 8 December 2000

Inspection number: 223633

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Day and Residential Special School for Pupils with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 – 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Boys
School address:	Stafford Road Uttoxeter Staffordshire
Postcode:	ST14 8RS
Telephone number:	01889 256390
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Glandfield
Date of previous inspection:	March 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Jayne Clemence (Ofsted No. 22629)	Registered inspector	English	The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Geography	How well pupils are taught?
		History	How well is the school led and managed?
		French	Residential provision
		Music	
		Religious education	
		Personal, social and health education	
David Ashby (Ofsted No. 9868)	Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Robert Franks (Ofsted No. 25340)	Team Inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Information and communication technology	
		Physical education	
		Special educational needs	
		Equal opportunities	
Anthony Hills (Ofsted No. 18261)	Team Inspector	Mathematics	How well does the school care for its pupils?
		Art	
		Design and technology	

The inspection contractor was:

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
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London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Loxley Hall is a residential special school for up to 60 boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties between the ages of 11 and 16. Currently there are 60 boys, and fifty per cent attend as day pupils, and fifty per cent live residentially, for some or all of the week. The school is situated on the outskirts of Uttoxeter in a large, listed house, surrounded by extensive grounds. The vast majority of pupils are from a white ethnic background, and a very small proportion of a black ethnicity. Forty-three per cent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals- a figure that is much higher when compared with similar schools nationally. All pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs, and 17 are looked after by the local authority. One pupil has additional special needs with visual impairment. No pupils have English as an additional language. Approximately 66 per cent of the pupils move from the junior school for pupils with similar special educational needs, whilst the remainder have disrupted education, often having been excluded from mainstream schools. Many pupils have disrupted family life and some have experienced traumatic events in their lives. Their attainment on entry is often below and sometimes well below national expectations. The characteristics of pupils for whom the school caters makes it inappropriate to judge their attainment against age related national expectations or averages.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Loxley Hall is an effective school that is continuing to improve standards. By the time they leave, pupils gain nationally recognised awards and have become increasingly independent. The headteacher provides good leadership that has enabled the school to move forward in many areas that were previously judged to be significant weaknesses. In more than fifty per cent of the lessons, teaching is good or very good, resulting in pupils making good progress overall, and occasionally very good progress; for example, in mathematics and design and technology for older pupils. The rise in standards, and the number of pupils gaining nationally recognised awards, is directly attributed to the teachers' determination, patience and commitment to helping pupils achieve success, and the pupils' growing understanding of how their own efforts affect their learning. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive, leading many pupils to build respect and trust for adults. The school provides good value for money, using the modest budget efficiently, with many additional activities and opportunities beyond the formal curriculum that enrich the pupils' education.

What the school does well

- Provides high quality teaching which helps pupils make good progress overall, including very good progress in mathematics and design and technology for older pupils;
- Is effectively led and managed, and is bringing about significant improvements in all areas of school life;
- Has a good quality curriculum and very good activities outside lessons; extending the pupils' educational opportunities and learning;
- Has very good links with other schools, helping towards integration and inclusion of the pupils into mainstream placements wherever possible;
- Has a strong and effective emphasis upon developing the pupils' personal and social skills; which improves their behaviour and attitudes;
- Has good quality residential provision; effectively supporting the pupils' academic and social development;
- Has very good careers education and work experience arrangements; preparing pupils well for the world of work.

What could be improved

- The quality of teaching and leadership of English is unsatisfactory, which slows pupils' progress in this subject;
- There is a lack of consistency in assessing pupils' progress and keeping track of their achievements;
- Procedures for formally monitoring teaching are not in place, leading to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching;
- Evaluation procedures are not in place to assess how well the school is performing;
- The unsatisfactory accommodation for art, food technology and music limits opportunities and lowers standards achieved.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made significant improvements since it was last inspected in March 1998, when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. Key issues have been addressed systematically and many areas of weakness have been eradicated. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were low in many areas and pupils' progress was limited, due to the significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. There were many shortcomings in the planning and teaching of the curriculum and the pupils' individual education plans lacked specific targets. The residential provision did not make a strong impact on the pupils' academic life, and activities after school lacked structure to make an effective contribution to the curriculum as a whole. The governing body were not fully involved and lacked a strategic contribution to the direction of the school.

Standards have risen considerably since that time and the quality of teaching is also improved. The curriculum is now suitably broad, and the management of pupils' behaviour is effective in most areas of the school. Targets for the pupils are now more focused, and staff in the residential provision ensure pupils are well supported in their academic work; for example, when completing homework, and ensuring they arrive ready to make the most of the lessons during the day. Although there has been considerable support from the leadership and management, English teaching has not improved to a consistently satisfactory level, and remains an issue for this inspection. The governing body take an active part and make an effective contribution overall. The school has maintained the strengths from the previous inspection, for example, the good quality care for pupils, and the leadership has also developed in quality. The teachers' knowledge in their specialist subjects has developed. The school is in a very good position to improve further.

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	D	satisfactory	C
Mathematics	A	unsatisfactory	D
Personal, social and health education	B	poor	E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B		

Standards are improving, and overall the pupils' achievements and progress are good. Pupils make good progress in their speaking and listening skills. Many pupils develop the basic skills and interest in

reading. Older pupils read with confidence for different purposes. Standards in writing are unsatisfactory because teaching lacks the necessary rigour and consistency in English. In other subjects, the pupils' writing and handwriting skills do not have a sufficiently high profile. Pupils use their knowledge of mathematics and number with increasing confidence, and by the time they leave, use those skills in a variety of practical circumstances. The strong emphasis on pupils' personal and social skills means their progress is good throughout the school. Individual education plans are increasingly specific and measurable. Pupils are set realistic and challenging targets that are reviewed and revised regularly. Overall, they make good progress towards achieving their targets. Older pupils make very good progress in mathematics and design and technology as they become increasingly confident and expert in using tools and machinery, resulting in impressive standards. The school overall is successful in helping pupils to achieve, and test results show standards are rising.

2000 achievements include GCSEs in English, mathematics and science.

In English, 7 pupils entered and they achieved one grade E, four grade Fs and two grade Gs.

In mathematics, 8 pupils entered and they achieved one grade D, one grade E, four grade Fs and one grade G.

In science, 3 pupils entered and they achieved one grade E and two grade Fs.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good; pupils show interest and involvement in their work, often with a good level of co-operation and enthusiasm.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall; pupils are polite and courteous to visitors and many learn to respect each other's values. Sometimes, pupils' behaviour has a negative impact on their learning, but most respond quickly to staff's expectations.
Personal development and relationships	Good; there are many positive relationships between pupils and with adults, built on trust, consideration and respect.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory overall, but close to figures found in similar schools.

Pupils are developing a good sense of responsibility for their behaviour and understand the effects of their own actions upon others. They realise the importance of effort and hard work in order to achieve and improve themselves. The good relationships between pupils and many of the staff are bringing a sense of security and well-being to their lives.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 11-14	Aged 14-16
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good overall for pupils throughout the school, which helps pupils to learn effectively and make good progress. In 91 per cent of lessons, teaching was satisfactory or better, in 34 per cent it was good and in 25 per cent, very good. A small, but significant amount of teaching was unsatisfactory and occasionally very poor. The weak teaching is almost entirely in English, where strategies for managing the pupils' behaviour are ineffective. Much valuable teaching and learning time is wasted in this subject, in attempts to gain and maintain order and discipline. The pupils' reading, speaking and listening skills are being taught effectively, but teaching strategies for developing their writing lack consistency and are

not being taught systematically. Pupils achieve high standards in mathematics and design and technology by the time they leave because of the highly effective teaching strategies. The teaching of numeracy skills is satisfactory overall. The school is effective in meeting the needs of its pupils, including those with additional special educational needs. Pupils make good gains in their learning overall and respond well to the expectations and routines set by teachers.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good; the curriculum is broad and enriched by high quality extra-curricular activities; food technology is not taught due to a lack of specialist teaching facilities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall; satisfactory provision for spiritual and cultural development; good provision for moral development and very good provision for social development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The care for pupils is good; the pupils' welfare, academic opportunities, and social well-being is given a high priority; however, procedures for monitoring progress and methods for assessment are not always consistent.

The school has a good partnership with parents. Many parents express a high degree of satisfaction about Loxley Hall and have confidence in the school to do the best for their children. The curriculum has many positive features. The strategy for numeracy is satisfactory and has brought about continued improvements in standards. The strategy for literacy, although satisfactory overall, has weaknesses due to unsatisfactory aspects in the quality of teaching. The curriculum for older pupils is relevant and enhanced by careers education, work experience and college placements. Many of the courses followed by pupils offer national awards. The high quality activities outside lessons is having a very positive impact on the pupils' personal and social development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good, the headteacher provides clear direction centred on raising standards and improving the quality of provision in every area. Staff with management responsibilities are effective and the senior managers are a strong team. However, formal procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching need to be developed further.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory; the governors are well organised and active in their roles and responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory; although evaluation procedures are informal and not yet formalised into the school development plan.

The strategic use of resources	Good, resources, including finances, staff and materials, are efficiently and effectively used to improve the pupils' learning and progress.
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Overall, accommodation is satisfactory, but there are limitations. The facilities for art, music and food technology are unsatisfactory and limit what can be taught. As a consequence, standards in these subjects are hindered. Learning resources and staffing are adequate. The school applies the principles of best value for money to its decisions, and provides good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like coming to school; • The school expects their children to work hard; • They feel able to approach the school about anything; • The school is well led and managed; • The teaching is good; • The school has close links with parents and helps their children to become more mature and responsible; • Provides an interesting range of extra-curricular activities outside lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like their children to have more homework, whilst others do not know the amount and frequency of homework; • Some parents feel behaviour is not good.

The inspection team agreed with all the positive comments expressed by the parents. Inspectors considered that the amount of homework set for pupils is appropriate. It would be helpful for the school to clarify with parents what homework is given during the week. The inspection team found, contrary to parents' concerns, that behaviour overall is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. It is inappropriate to judge the standards of the pupils for whom this school caters in relation to the National Curriculum or any other national benchmarks. The report does, however, report on the achievement of the pupils on what they know, understand and can do. Judgements about achievement take into account the information in pupils' statements, annual reviews and individual education plans. References are made in any instances where national standards are reached. Standards since the last inspection have continued to rise. The school sets realistic and challenging targets for the pupils, and many pupils are successful in reaching those targets over time.
2. Overall, pupils' achievements and progress are good which represents a notable improvement since the last inspection, when standards were too low in many areas. Standards have risen steadily. Each year, test results are higher, and external examination results improved. The percentage of pupils aged 14 achieving higher levels in tests has increased from nine per cent to 60 per cent. The school is justifiably proud of the increased percentage of pupils gaining examination passes and higher grades. In 1998, 57 per cent gained at least one General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) grade. This year, 88 per cent achieved at least one pass. This is partly due to the appropriateness of the courses chosen for the pupils, which gives them success, raises their self-esteem and widens their opportunities when they leave school. Also the quality of the teaching has improved in almost all subjects, which helps the pupils to learn more effectively. There are no measurable differences between the progress of pupils with additional special needs, or of pupils with different attainment or backgrounds.
3. Pupils do not do as well as they should in English because the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. The National Literacy Strategy has been adapted appropriately, but there are limitations in its effectiveness due to the quality of teaching. By the time they are 16, pupils have made good progress in their speaking and listening, as there are many opportunities for these skills to be developed across the curriculum. In many subjects, including religious education, music and art, to name a few, pupils express their views and preferences clearly, offering opinions with reasons and logic. In a religious education lesson, pupils were able to discuss issues related to human rights with insight and clarity. In art, pupils are encouraged successfully to make comments and review art, making comparisons and comments about their own and others' work. In music, there are many examples where pupils discuss their work, listen carefully and respond with their own reflections. These opportunities add usefully to the pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils make satisfactory progress in reading as their literacy skills are developed further across the curriculum, where there are many requirements for them to read for different reasons. In mathematics and science, for example, pupils are required to read and interpret instructions with increasing accuracy in order to complete investigations and inquiries. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in their writing overall, as there is not a consistent approach to developing writing skills across the curriculum. In addition, the unsatisfactory English teaching hinders the pupils' progress, as considerable time is lost in efforts to manage pupils and their behaviour.
4. Standards in mathematics have improved significantly. Between 1999 and 2000, by the age of 14, results of tests show that pupils have improved their mathematical skills considerably. Pupils aged 11 to 14 years make good progress and achieve well by the end of the key stage, and older pupils make very good progress as they achieve very good work on their examination courses. Pupils make good progress in their use and understanding of number, learning to put this knowledge to good use in a variety of practical circumstances.
5. Pupils' achievements and progress are satisfactory in science due to the considerable emphasis

that is now placed upon investigations, enabling pupils to make sense of scientific principles in a practical and relevant manner. Scientific concepts are built on systematically and methodically, enabling pupils to achieve satisfactory standards by the end of the key stage, and make sound gains in their learning throughout the school.

6. By the age of 14, pupils' achievements are satisfactory in science, art, geography, French, physical education and religious education. Their achievements are good in mathematics, design and technology, history, music and information technology. Their achievements are unsatisfactory in English.
7. By the age of 16, pupils' achievements are satisfactory in science, geography and religious education. They are good in music, physical education and information technology. The pupils' achievements are very good in mathematics and design and technology. Their achievements remain unsatisfactory in English.
8. Pupils make good progress in their personal and social skills by the time they leave, showing maturity and insight into themselves, and the challenges they face. A significant proportion of pupils enter the school with low self-esteem, and a lack of confidence in their abilities. The school is very effective in developing the pupils' self-confidence, and enabling them to realise what they can achieve and how to go about improving themselves.
9. Pupils make good progress in other personal targets set at annual reviews, including those identified in their plans to improve behaviour.
10. The school places considerable emphasis upon the pupils' achievements and learning. As a result, pupils aspire to achieve awards, certificates and merits for their efforts. Overall, the school is effective in promoting the pupils' academic, social and personal skills, and as a result, pupils' achievements continue to improve.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Since the last inspection pupils have maintained their positive response to the school's high expectations and this has significantly helped to develop overall good attitudes and behaviour further. Most pupils have good attitudes to school. They like to come to school, and participate with a good level of interest and concentration. They respond well to adults and to each other and usually have positive attitudes to learning.
12. There are many examples of the pupils' positive attitudes in design and technology and mathematics, where the tasks are challenging and expectations for them to achieve are suitably high. When pupils are interested and have work set that is appropriately hard, they work well. They are often good at co-operating with each other in small groups. The majority of pupils maintain good levels of concentration and can work well individually when focused upon the lesson. In a small minority of lessons, some pupils find it hard to concentrate and do not achieve sufficient completed work. In these situations, some pupils are not good in taking turns or listening to others. Pupils have good attitudes in the residential provision, as there are many examples where they co-operate and volunteer willingly to help with domestic jobs. They take care and pride in their surroundings and join in with teamwork regularly.
13. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. In the residential provision, when they are relaxing, it is often very good, leading to very positive relationships. There are many examples where pupils show mature and improved behaviour when outside school, such as attending college courses and clubs. This is a credit to the pupils. In lessons, pupils respond positively to the expectations and demands of teachers and staff. Sometimes, in a small minority of lessons when pupils are not given sufficiently hard work, some pupils behave unsatisfactorily. School rules and conventions are clearly understood by pupils. The result is a positive atmosphere for learning and relaxing. There is little evidence of sustained aggressive or racist behaviour, because of the

effective manner in which it is approached. Pupils show a good level of respect for one another and a degree of sensitivity to others' feelings and beliefs. They demonstrate an increasing awareness of how their actions affect other people with growing insight. Permanent exclusions are very infrequent, and only occur when there are very unacceptable circumstances. There is a small number of fixed-term exclusions.

14. From the time they join the school, pupils learn to establish good relationships with staff, and with each other. This is particularly evident when pupils are seen in their residential accommodation relaxing, or when they are visiting their local college of education. All pupils are included as part of a very well cared for community, as they learn to cope confidently with their daily work and leisure. Pupils have some very good opportunities for personal development such as when they are voted to be on the school council, and when undertaking the national award projects. They plan, obtain resources and have responsibility to travel from school to local amenities and get back to school responsibly. They are very good at taking responsibility in their residential areas in a whole range of jobs, looking after themselves and each other. They take these responsibilities very seriously and are very conscientious in carrying them out. Pupils participate well in a very good range of extra-curricular activities. These include sports activities and dramatic productions. All pupils visit outdoor activity centres and other places of interest. They respond very positively to the opportunities to re-integrate into their local secondary school or into their local college of education, making new friends and behaving responsibly.
15. Attendance is less than satisfactory overall, although compares closely to figures found in similar schools. There are a few pupils with more persistent absences that affect the overall attendance figures unfavourably. Most pupils clearly like coming to school as this provides them with opportunities for achieving success. There are times when a small number of pupils are not punctual to school. This is due to the delays in the very long journeys the day pupils have to make. Incidents of unauthorised absence are consistently lower than similar schools. This is because parents respond very positively to the school's active efforts to encourage pupils to attend. Parents provide acceptable reasons for absence, or a follow up visit by the local education welfare officer is organised.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall for pupils throughout the school. This is a major factor in the pupils' positive attitudes towards work, their good and progress. In 91 per cent of the lessons, teaching is at least satisfactory. In 34 per cent, teaching is good, and teaching is very good in 25 per cent of the lessons. A small, but significant minority, nine per cent of the teaching, is unsatisfactory and occasionally very poor. Almost all the weak teaching is in English.
17. There have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection and many areas of weakness have been eradicated effectively. There is now a higher proportion of good and very good teaching than seen previously, when more than twenty-five per cent of the teaching was judged unsatisfactory. There remains however, a small, but significant, minority of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, and occasionally very poor.
18. Teaching for pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 is satisfactory in science, religious education, geography, French and physical education. It is good in mathematics, information and communication technology, design and technology, art, history and music. Teaching is unsatisfactory and occasionally very poor in English.
19. Teaching for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 is satisfactory in science, religious education, and geography. It is good in information technology, history, music and physical education. Teaching is very good in mathematics, design and technology and careers. Teaching is unsatisfactory in English. Teaching in personal and social education is good overall throughout the school and has a positive effect on the pupils' attitudes and behaviour, as well as developing appropriate social skills

20. Many teachers manage the pupils' behaviour in a systematic and effective manner, leading to a gradual modification and improvement over time. This is important in allowing pupils to concentrate on their work and learn effectively. This is a particularly strong feature in art and history, where the teacher creates a calm and relaxed atmosphere, alongside high expectations for behaviour that leads to a considerable amount of learning taking place during the course of a lesson. A high proportion of teaching in mathematics is good or very good. This teaching is characterised by a brisk pace, high expectations and very effective management of the pupils' behaviour, leading to well disciplined classes, where the pupils' interest, concentration and sustained effort are strong features. In design and technology, the teacher's highly effective strategies for managing the pupils ensure potentially dangerous equipment is used sensibly and safely, resulting in pupils showing considerable respect for the teacher at all times. In many aspects, the teaching in design and technology is very effective, particularly the management and organisation of pupils and use of resources.
21. Other examples of effective teaching were seen in history, where the teacher's own interest and enthusiasm for the subject brought facts about the local area alive, creating a strong sense of interest and enthusiasm from the pupils to learn more themselves. The quality of teaching careers education is often good, and occasionally very good, with well planned activities, materials and resources, including suitable work experience and college placements, ensuring pupils are thoroughly well prepared for the world of work when they leave Loxley Hall. Pupils take an increasing sense of responsibility as they learn to research aspects and information in preparation for their futures. Teaching in music has many good features, as pupils are encouraged to want to take part in the activities, and take a pride in their achievements. The good musical skills demonstrated by the teacher helps pupils to develop their own techniques. As a result of the good teaching, many pupils are developing a genuine love and appreciation of music, and a desire to become more accomplished players themselves.
22. In the unsatisfactory teaching, mostly in English, strategies for managing the pupils' behaviour are mostly ineffective, leading to unsettled and fractious exchanges and responses from the pupils. Although the teacher's subject knowledge is good, and resources well chosen, the basic skills of managing the group are ineffective, leading to much time spent attempting to gain order. Pupils' attitudes and responses are unsatisfactory as a result of the weaknesses in teaching, and valuable teaching and learning time lost as a consequence.
23. Teachers work hard to maximise the pupils' opportunities and learning. They are dedicated, and display patience, commitment and good humour in the process. As a result, there are many examples where pupils show interest in their work and understand the links between their own effort, progress and achievement. Homework is set regularly and there is an appropriate amount for the differing needs of pupils. This further adds to the pupils' learning and progress made over time.

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

24. There have been significant improvements in the curriculum since the previous inspection. It includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The quality and range of learning opportunities the pupils now receive is good. Overall, these are well planned, and ensure that what pupils learn builds on previous work. The statutory curriculum requirements are met in all subjects. There are weaknesses, however, in design and technology where food technology is not taught due to the lack of specialist teaching facilities. In art, there is too much emphasis on two-dimensional work. Control technology for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 in information and communication technology lacks detailed planning. The curriculum planning in mathematics is good. The curriculum is suitably broad and the right amount of time is spent on each subject, apart from food technology.

25. The curriculum is very relevant to the pupils, and current nationally recognised awards are well matched to their different levels of ability. Pupils' progress is recognised in a national Youth Award scheme, Certificates of Achievement, and in the GCSE examinations. The school places great emphasis on improving pupils' social and moral development, with particular regard to motivating them to work co-operatively with others and behave well. In addition to this, subjects are now taught by specialist teachers in a similar way to mainstream schools. This helps pupils towards successfully transferring to mainstream schools wherever possible and realistic. This is a strong and positive feature for the school. The school day is impressively longer than current guidance recommends and this gives more time for teaching. Time is used well for extending the pupils' learning. The day has been divided up into 45 minute teaching blocks, with the intention of providing a curriculum that has pace and variety to sustain the pupils' interest and motivation. This organisation works well. The curriculum pupils follow enables their progress to be recognised and accredited in a variety of ways.
26. The extra-curricular provision the school offers its pupils is very good. The school curriculum is developed very well by the staff in the residential provision. Pupils are involved in a variety of activities after school. They actively participate in a large number of clubs that focus on developing skills and knowledge in several curriculum areas; for example, art, computers and physical education. A growing number of day pupils are requesting to stay after school in order to take advantage of the enjoyable and educational activities on offer. There are good facilities to support the programmes offered, including a well used floodlit five-a-side pitch, a weight training facility and an outside heated swimming pool which is also used to teach canoeing skills in the summer. Several teaching staff regularly support the residential activities and use their own interests and skills to provide pupils with many choices. Older pupils are taken into Uttoxeter and regularly take advantage of community facilities. They go on shopping trips, to the fitness centre, youth club and the Army Cadets. Each year, older pupils and staff go to North Wales for a one week residential camp. This helps to develop their team skills effectively, for example, by building rafts, and also increase their self-confidence and trust in others through rock climbing activities.
27. The use of the methods and strategies recommended by the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies is satisfactory overall, although in literacy it is not yet planned for systematically across the curriculum. The school is involved in a pilot scheme for developing aspects of the National Literacy for pupils between the ages of eleven and fourteen. The English department uses word game techniques to increase pupils' spelling and to recognise new and unfamiliar words. The school has placed an emphasis on developing pupils' reading and writing skills and there has been a significant improvement in reading. Writing is a relative weakness in English, and is not yet planned for consistently across all subjects of the curriculum. Both English and mathematics departments are now using individual educational plans to increase pupils' basic skills, and these involve them usefully in setting targets.
28. The school's provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is good. The procedures for re-integrating pupils into mainstream schools are very good and this is a strength of the school. Last year, 30 per cent of the pupils in Year 9 were taking part in these programmes in mainstream schools. This year a similar number of pupils are involved in schemes in local mainstream secondary schools. Pupils make good progress with their work, fit in socially and are accepted well by other pupils. Parents are very supportive and are pleased with the results. There are good activities between local high schools and Loxley Hall that have resulted in mainstream schools having confidence that the pupils chosen to participate in integration schemes will have a high chance of succeeding. This is a credit to the school's hard work and good selection procedures.
29. Pupils' personal development is promoted very well throughout the school and is implicit in all its work. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for their next stage of education, including those who integrate into mainstream schools. The development of the pupils' personal and social education is a strong feature across the school and is very good overall in improving the pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development. There are formal lessons, where specific topics and aspects are covered suitably. The school routines are highly supportive in this area. In assemblies, for example, pupils are expected to conduct themselves in an orderly manner and

display a sense of reverence and respect. Lunchtimes are civilised and sociable for the most part, as pupils learn the social skills of mealtimes, saying grace before and after meals. This is a very valuable learning opportunity, as well as providing a calm atmosphere before pupils choose their lunchtime activities. These day-to-day routines bring a sense of structure for the pupils, bringing further order into their lives.

30. There is a whole school planned programme for teaching personal, social and health education and this is supported effectively by outside agencies. For example, the school nurse teaches health and hygiene lesson to pupils in Year 8. Sex education and education in drugs misuse is taught appropriately.
31. Links with the community contribute well to pupils' learning and personal development. Visits are made out of school to supplement classroom lessons. Pupils learn about aspects of history, geography and art in visits to museums and art galleries. The school fought to keep its dovecot and it is now a listed building that is open to the public one day a year. These opportunities and experiences play a significant role in the pupils' understanding of the importance of local places of interest and what the term cultural heritage means. Pupils spend a week at a residential centre for outdoor activities and take part in activities like rock climbing. All this is much valued and well supported by pupils and makes a very good contribution to their personal development. The outside swimming pool is used in the summer for outdoor pursuit activities. Representatives from health and safety agencies help build pupils' awareness of safe and healthy living.
32. The school has developed highly effective links with its partner institutions. There are regular meetings between Loxley staff and teachers from similar schools to share experiences and develop policy and planning documents, including combined governor training. Very good links have been established with the home liaison co-ordinator from the main feeder primary school, who is involved in ensuring that transfer arrangements are effective. One outcome of involving career staff in the annual review procedures for older pupils has been the development of secure links with many local industries and colleges. For example, some Year 11 pupils are completing a six-week course in Horticulture at Stoke-on-Trent College of Education. One local heavy plant company allows pupils as part of their Youth Award Schemes to go fishing on their local waterways. Pupils regularly attend suitable work placements and college courses in the area.
33. Careers education is very well organised and the co-ordination is highly effective. Pupils are well prepared for their futures with carefully considered opportunities for work experience. These have developed significantly over time, and there are very positive links with the local employers. College links are successful and productive. Many pupils gain considerably from their time at college, attending on a regular basis, and they develop maturely and responsibly in the process. The courses are appropriate and enhance what the school provides. Pupils return to school with a sense of pride and achievement having attended college and the experience provides them with insight as to what they might pursue in the future.
34. The school cultivates pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. This represents satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, notably in the promotion of pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The promotion of appropriate social values continues to be a strength and is very good. The school's mission statement that focuses on 'promoting change to foster success' is based on the belief that pupils are responsible for their own futures, and with a commitment to the process of change they can move on from the past and become responsible and caring adults. This belief is practised and clearly evident in the work of the school.
35. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies successfully promote broadly Christian values and give opportunities to pupils to pray and sing hymns. They develop a sense of reverence for spiritual matters, for example, by saying the Lord's Prayer daily, with a sense of meaning as well as ritual. At lunchtimes, pupils offer willingly to say grace before and after mealtimes, and they treat these opportunities as special and important. These routines are a credit to themselves and the staff. Opportunities are missed to promote aspects of spirituality in subjects across the curriculum. Most pupils are proud of their school, and are

enabled to celebrate their own and others' achievements within it. In an assembly, one pupil played a piano duet with a member of the music support service and other children played the ocarina. Everyone listened attentively and clapped spontaneously when the pupils had finished their accomplished performances. Pupils show their spiritual 'side' in their close concentration; for example, when listening to music. Merit certificates are given out in assemblies, which are awarded for good and effort. This builds feelings of self-worth and self-confidence in the pupils, and adds to a sense of their importance and uniqueness as individuals.

36. The opportunities for pupils' moral development have improved from satisfactory to good. The school emphasises clear moral principles, building a good sense of what is right and wrong and consistently promotes moral values such as honesty, fairness and respect for truth in its daily practices. There is a sound behaviour policy and staff act as very good role models. A clear system for rewards and sanctions operates well for the majority of pupils. However, there are occasions when a small number of pupils appear not to value the merit system. Pupils are encouraged by staff to reflect on the consequences of their actions at appropriate times during lessons and assemblies.
37. Social development is very well promoted and has improved from good to very good since the previous inspection. The school's commitment to reintegration and its successful practices show in the improvement in pupils' self-esteem and increasing ability to 'get on and mix with others'. Much of the very good provision of personal and social education is successfully focussed upon teaching pupils to work co-operatively together and develop their initiative and independence skills, for example in team games as part of physical education. Pupils regularly go out of school on trips with both care and teaching staff. One pupil, now in Year 11, has used his skills and confidence to design a web site that contains information about alarms. This resulted from a successful work experience placement in a small electronics firm in the local community.
38. The quality of relationships within the school is good and gives pupils a yardstick against which to judge acceptable behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to discuss social conventions like courtesy and good manners. It is evident that as the pupils go through the school they mature and act as good role models for other pupils as a result of the emphasis on social skills.
39. There are now satisfactory opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions and the richness of other cultures. Pupils study Shakespeare plays in their English lessons and watch productions; for example, by a local youth company of Macbeth. There are introduced to, and participate in a range of music from different cultures in their lessons. They play ocarinas in assemblies and know that these originated from the Aztec culture. Pupils are helped to read some simplified classic novels and experience a range of English poetry. In their study of different cultures, pupils examine a wide range of artists. Lessons in religious education continue to introduce pupils to major world religions. This area is underdeveloped and there needs to be more opportunities planned to promote and develop pupils' multi-cultural awareness.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school has maintained the good quality care for its pupils, including residential care. Staff in the school, including those in residential provision, are vigilant, sensitive and supportive of the pupils in their care over the 24 hour period.
41. Procedures for child protection are very good. Staff are aware of the need to keep the co-ordinator informed of any concerns. Formal training for all staff has been provided and they have appropriate guidelines. Agencies, based in each of the pupils' local areas, are effectively consulted when there are needs; for example, education welfare officers, social services and doctors.
42. Staff understand the health and safety practices and there are clear guidelines and procedures established. These are reviewed regularly. Checks are made to the buildings and grounds to

ensure the learning environment is safe. Staff are aware of the need to raise issues and these are recorded and are dealt with through the school's arrangements. There are good regular arrangements for safety checking school, fire, and physical education equipment. The standard of care of the premises and grounds is very good. A team of cleaning staff work very hard to maintain a very clean and attractive environment across site. This adds very positively to the atmosphere of the whole school.

43. There are very thorough arrangements for providing any medical care for pupils and staff, which are very well documented. Medical needs for pupils are clearly identified and very effectively managed for day and residential pupils. Provision for dealing with accidents for both staff and pupils is very good, with a very good number of the staff trained for first aid and swimming pool safety. Very effective records are kept. Resources, including first aid equipment, are well placed and scrutinised and replenished regularly.
44. The promotion of good behaviour and monitoring has improved since the last inspection, and is now good. Staff and pupils are clear about the school's expectations. The implementation of the policy and strategies is mostly consistent throughout the school, although in some lessons the practice is not so effective. Appropriate merit awards are given, usually for achievement in meeting high expectations of staff for good work, good behaviour and attitudes. The school has a caring atmosphere, and staff are sensitive and responsive to pupils' needs. There are good procedures for dealing with racial or aggressive outbursts if they should occur.
45. Promotion and monitoring of attendance are very good because there are effective school systems to follow up absence. The school ensures pupils and parents are equally clear about what is expected for attendance, punctuality and authorisation of absence. Despite the school's best efforts, a few pupils do not attend persistently, causing the attendance figures to be lower than desirable. Very effective monitoring arrangements ensure the school can take immediate steps to deal with any attendance problems. There are very good links with all the educational welfare officers located in the home locality of the pupils. This can be on a daily basis, or as required if there are any more urgent issues.
46. The monitoring of pupils' academic progress and personal development are satisfactory. Procedures for assessing pupils' achievements and progress have improved in a number of key areas since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. There remain some aspects for further development, as currently there are inadequate guidelines on assessing pupils' work, recording their progress and reporting how they have done, and no school marking policy. This leads to considerable inconsistencies in how teachers assess pupils, and track the standards and progress. There are good examples where these aspects have been developed. For example in mathematics and English, pupils have clear targets in their individual education plans that provide effective means of recording progress and establishing what to do next. . A very good system has been developed in these departments which is planned to be available to other departments, once further information technology software is in place to enable the progress of individual pupils to be tracked. It is also planned to use the information to select appropriate examination courses when pupils reach the age of 14.
47. Subjects such as English and mathematics have information about the pupils' achievements when they first arrive, using information effectively from feeder schools, supplemented by testing when pupils join the school. The Youth Award Scheme for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 ensures progress is recorded systematically, using the set guidelines for the scheme. The design and technology department has developed an effective system for recording pupils' progress, and is already able to direct pupils towards appropriate accreditation when they are 14. Other departments have not developed fully effective systems. The art department does not enter pupils for public examination and uses its own system of awards to record achievements. This is not linked to the National Curriculum and does not enable the pupils' progress to be monitored closely as they move through the school. The school is committed to introducing information and communication technology procedures to improve this area of work further.
48. There has been an improvement in the procedures for annual reviews of pupils' Statements since

the last inspection. The quality of reporting for annual reviews is now good. The quality of reporting on academic attainment and progress in the annual report to parents is too variable. Whilst information on progress in the pupils' behaviour is clear, subject comments from most departments are over generalised and offer too limited a picture of what the pupils know, understand and can do. The procedures for keeping records for pupils in the residential provision are appropriate, the system whereby each pupil has a member of staff as their key worker ensures details about their progress, and targets for the future are reviewed and updated regularly. Plans for the pupils' care in the residential provision are given careful thought and consideration, ensuring the provision outlined in their Statements of Special Educational Needs are met appropriately.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. The school has good arrangements for linking with parents and carers all of whom reside at long distances from the school. There is very good information communicated to them regularly through letters and termly newsletters. They are able to have close links with staff and can approach them at any time. There are good levels of parents', foster parents' and carers' interest and they are very satisfied with most aspects of their children's education.
50. Parents have very positive views of the school. Most feel they are welcome to visit the school at any time if they want to. They are able to have close links with staff and can approach them at any time. They are very supportive to the school when there is a need. These links have a positive impact on pupils' personal development. They have a good commitment to the school through the support they provide. For example, virtually all parents attend and support the annual reviews of their children's Statements of Special Educational Needs held in the local careers offices and visit school when there is a school production. They do not, however, regularly attend open evenings with a specific focus on their children.
51. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is good. Staff work very hard to establish good communications with parents. The good links with the school pupils transfer from and the effective home school links are particularly valuable, and very supportive during the transfer from primary education. The links with parents for re-integrating pupils into their local secondary education or into their local college of further education are a particular strength of the school. This helps pupils to make changes successfully. The impact of parents' support is satisfactory. Parents and pupils complete the home school agreement at their induction meeting. This occurs during their personal interviews for transfer to the school. Respective responsibilities of the school, the family and the pupils are clearly set out and agreed
52. The quality of information provided by the school on a regular basis is overall satisfactory. Parents indicate they are well informed in plenty of time about what activities the school is planning. The prospectus and the annual governor's report to parents' are informative and helpful. The information for parents, and for pupils, about all aspects of the school's work and the achievements of the pupils is very good for the annual reviews; these are held in the pupils' home locality careers offices. Information in the pupils' annual reports discussed at parent evenings in school lacks sufficient detail about their progress. Overall, parents expressed a high degree of satisfaction about many aspects of the school. Some parents are not entirely clear about the arrangements for homework, whilst others would like more work set outside of lessons. Although the inspection team considered homework to be set at a suitable level, parents require clarification concerning the amount and frequency of homework. Staff in the residential provision maintain close and regular contact with parents on matters relating to the pupils' education and social development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The headteacher provides good leadership and management, and gives a very clear educational direction to the school. This has ensured that weaknesses identified in the previous inspection

report have been addressed and largely eradicated, and further improvement is continually sought. The senior management team, including the deputy headteacher, senior teachers and head of care, are strong and effective, with complementary skills. They provide very good role models for pupils and staff, and set high standards in their own teaching, leadership and conduct. They ensure that the school's aims are reflected very well in many areas.

54. The governing body are active and suitably organised. They have sound links to different aspects of school life and make regular visits. The chair of governors has a clear understanding of the school's relative strengths and weaknesses, and areas for further development. The governing body fulfil their statutory responsibilities satisfactorily and make a sound contribution towards shaping its direction.
55. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching informally but this is not yet sufficiently systematic or rigorously documented. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection, indicating the success of this practice, particularly in eradicating much of the unsatisfactory teaching. There is a minority of teaching that has persistent weaknesses, despite the best efforts of the headteacher and senior management team to support and improve it.
56. The school development plan identifies good priorities that place an appropriate emphasis upon raising standards. The senior management team and other staff have a comprehensive and realistic understanding of the school and its performance. Those teachers with responsibilities for developing subjects do so effectively, with the exception of English, where the teacher's own quality of teaching is not sufficiently secure or robust to provide adequate leadership. Although there is considerable discussion informally for reflection and evaluation, formal procedures for reflecting on how well the school is doing are underdeveloped. The senior management do not yet have a systematic approach to evaluating the impact of actions upon standards, the quality of teaching and the rate of pupils' progress. The school has sound systems for teacher appraisal. There are suitable arrangements for ensuring staff are kept up to date with training, that is linked closely to the priorities in the school development plan.
57. Financial planning is efficient, and linked closely to the school's current development priorities. Staff with management responsibilities have clearly delegated responsibilities with the necessary authority to go about their work effectively. Grants are used efficiently; for example, to improve the individual support for pupils. Induction for new staff is well planned and specifically designed for the individual teacher's needs. When a new member of staff starts at the school, there is a separate schedule for their introduction to the systems and procedures that enable them to settle as quickly as possible. There is a good level of staffing for the needs of the pupils. Support staff are effective and managed efficiently.
58. Accommodation is adequate, but there are limitations, for example in art where the room is used for other subjects. This results in art work having to be stored in cramped conditions, and surfaces prepared between lessons in preparation for other subjects. The hall used for physical education is a suitable size, but its decoration is poor and drab and does not set a positive atmosphere for pupils to do their best. There are no facilities for food technology, and the music facility is poorly designed for its current purpose. Many parts of the residential accommodation have been upgraded and improved, making for bright and comfortable areas. A few rooms could be made more homely by additional items and furnishings. The newly refurbished library is gradually increasing its stock and forms the basis of good quality provision for pupils to learn independently. Learning resources are adequate overall, with the exception of software for pupils with additional special needs. The current financial carry forward is appropriately designated for some of the vital refurbishment and building developments. The use of new technology is a priority, but currently unsatisfactory, as there are missed opportunities across the school.
59. Best value principles are applied and reflected fully in practice. The administration staff are efficient, ensuring day-to-day routines are smooth running. They set a calm and welcoming atmosphere for pupils and adults alike.
60. The strong leadership has brought about significant change and improvements since the previous

inspection and continues to provide a secure and consistent approach to raising standards further. This has brought about a very high level of support and shared commitment to further improvements from all staff. The school has a very good capacity for further improvements.

Residential provision

61. There is good quality residential provision for pupils that works closely with their education. The communications between staff providing care and education are effective and systematic, ensuring relevant matters are known by both teachers and care workers. This brings about a common approach between day and after school provision for the pupils. The head of care provides good leadership and management, of experienced and skilled staff. There are many positive relationships between pupils and adults that help create a relaxed and sociable atmosphere after school. Staff provide very good role models for the pupils. There is an appropriate change in tone and atmosphere between school routines and those in the residential area. Activities after school and in the evenings are broad, interesting and well structured, with pupils involved in a wide range of purposeful leisure pursuits. The staff are suitably qualified for their work, although it would benefit them further to have more formalised and individual supervision in order to develop their own professional skills further.
62. The residential rooms and bedrooms have had considerable improvements, including redecoration and refurbishment, that make them bright and welcoming. Shower and washing facilities have been upgraded to a suitably high standard. A few areas could benefit further from some additional features in order to make the accommodation more like home, for example kitchen areas with some items such as fridge magnets and pictures.
63. The residential aspect of the school makes a strategic contribution to the pupils' education. Staff support the pupils in completing homework, and ensure they are ready and prepared for making the most out of the academic opportunities provided during the day.
64. There are appropriate procedures for recording and monitoring the pupils' behaviour and targets, which are complementary to those found elsewhere in their individual education plans. The school works hard to minimise the effects of pupils being away from home, and, wherever possible, enables them to return home once a week to stay overnight. There are well considered plans for pupils to help them, their families and carers to have as positive a family life as possible.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

*Raise standards in English by:

- eradicating the weaknesses in teaching;
- improving the effectiveness in co-ordinating the subject;
- improving the quality of pupils' writing, handwriting and presentation;
- identifying plans to develop literacy in all subjects systematically.

(paragraphs 3,6,7,13,16-19,22,27,55,56,65-68,70-71)

*Further develop procedures for assessment by:

- implementing consistent procedures for tracking standards and pupils' learning;
- establishing a consistent strategy for marking pupils' work.

(paragraphs 46,47,83)

*Improving strategies for monitoring and evaluation by:

- establishing a systematic schedule for monitoring the quality of teaching;

- identifying methods for evaluation that will assess the impact of actions upon standards, the quality of teaching and the rate of pupils' progress.
(paragraphs 55,56,109,114,123,128)

*The school in conjunction with the local education authority should improve the accommodation by:

- providing suitable facilities for art, food technology and music;
(paragraph 24,58,118,119,124)

The school may also wish to address the following less important weaknesses:

- Further improve the pupils' rate of attendance
(paragraph 15,45)
- Broaden the curriculum for art, including opportunities for national awards
(paragraphs 47,85,87,88.)
- Provide more detail in reports to parents about the pupils' progress and achievements
(paragraph 48)
- Develop opportunities for pupils' understanding of multi-cultural issues
(paragraph 39)
- Clarify amount and frequency of homework for parents
(paragraph 52)
- Develop a formalised system of supervision for care staff.
(paragraph 61)

*indicates that this issue is part of the current school development plan's priorities.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	61
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	25	34	32	7	0	2

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	60
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	26

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	17	School data	1

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	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	58
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	4	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)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6
Average class size	5

Education support staff: Y7– Y11

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	101

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	99/00
	£
Total income	910,336
Total expenditure	903,713
Expenditure per pupil	15,318
Balance brought forward from previous year	83,830
Balance carried forward to next year	90,453

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	57
Number of questionnaires returned	12

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	9	9	9	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	33	17	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	45	27	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	0	33	11	11	44
The teaching is good.	50	42	0	0	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	50	8	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	27	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	17	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	50	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	73	27	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	42	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	58	42	0	0	0

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

ENGLISH

65. Overall, as at the last inspection, pupils' achievements and progress are unsatisfactory. This is largely due to the weaknesses in the quality of teaching. However, some improvements have been made, and the achievements of those pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 who are studying for nationally recognised awards are satisfactory. The teacher responsible for English has worked hard to develop a suitable curriculum, and enhance the resources, to include a wide range of literature, videos and other materials, that match the pupils' understanding. The library has been refurbished to a high standard and stocked appropriately, although it is yet to be fully operational.
66. By the age of 14, pupils are gaining increasing fluency and confidence in reading and understanding patterns in spelling. They read, for example, Roald Dahl's *"Matilda"*, short stories, poetry and personal reading books with interest. There are suitable links with other subjects, and non-fiction is used carefully; for example, when reading and researching England in Medieval times, and the background of Shakespeare's Henry V. Pupils study drama, including fun plays and problem plays. They learn to develop their speaking and listening skills by presenting a factual talk about a hobby or interest, and sometimes reciting speeches from well known plays. They further study the film and text of Henry V, including the characters and plot. Younger pupils study short plays, including Spider Boy and *"The Footprints Mystery"*.
67. By the age of 16, pupils follow an appropriate syllabus including GCSE and the Certificate of Achievement in Literacy. Pupils read the *'Rhyme of the Ancient Mariner'*, and learn verse from *'War Poems'*. They write on a range of issues, for example, the arguments for and against mercy killing based on *'Mice and Men'*. In addition, pupils write letters to college, and learn how to formulate an application form. There remain weaknesses in the quality of writing as pupils continue to struggle producing work to a sufficiently high standard. In addition, the quality of their handwriting and presentation is often weak. Strategies for developing these areas of weakness are not sufficiently effective. There is good use of information and communication technology for them to draft and re-draft their work, including opportunities to use the Internet. Pupils have examples of written work, including topics such as friendship, violence and euthanasia. The oldest pupils have worked on narrative, including the media and newspaper articles as a basis for expressing their own views and opinions.
68. Pupils overall make good progress in their speaking and listening as there are many additional opportunities for these skills to be developed in other subjects, such as art, music and religious education. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their reading as they move through the school, as they are required to read in many situations that ensure they practise these skills regularly. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in their writing overall because of the lack of a consistent approach or strategy in developing writing skills in subjects across the curriculum.
69. In a few lessons, taught by staff other than the co-ordinator, pupils are interested and enthusiastic in reading, writing, speaking and listening. They develop positive attitudes towards the subject and work hard to achieve and make progress. This is evident in subjects such as careers education, science, history and religious education, where information has to be read as part of the activities.
70. The quality of teaching in English has many weaknesses. In over fifty per cent of the lessons, teaching is unsatisfactory, and at times, very poor. In approximately thirty-three per cent of lessons, teaching is satisfactory, and a significant minority of it is good, when taught by staff other than the teacher responsible for English. The main factor for unsatisfactory teaching is ineffective strategies for managing the pupils' behaviour, leading to significant parts of the lesson being wasted. Inconsistencies in the use of sanctions only serve to add to the pupils' frustrations.

Relationships are not firmly established on a positive foundation, leading to tense and uneasy responses from the pupils. Rewards and sanctions are not used in the same way as elsewhere in the school, leading to further unnecessary frustration and outbursts from the pupils. The pupils' learning is severely hindered by poor patterns of behaviour and responses to English. The teacher's subject knowledge is detailed and thorough, and the planning seeks to offer a wide range of interesting and appropriate activities to further the pupils' skills and knowledge of language and literature. These positive qualities are not effective because pupils' poor behaviour prevents them from learning.

71. Although the co-ordinator has sought to develop many areas of the subject, overall, the co-ordination is unsatisfactory. This is because the central issues of teaching and its impact upon pupils' learning and progress is insecure. The co-ordinator has sought to monitor the pupils' standards and evaluate the relative strengths and weaknesses, but attempts to monitor the pupils' achievements are largely ineffective. Despite the best efforts of the headteacher and senior management, including considerable support and guidance, this situation has not improved sufficiently.

MATHEMATICS

72. Pupils are mostly achieving well as they move up through the school. Overall, their progress is generally very good. As they become motivated by the desire to do well in their GCSE or Certificate of Achievement examinations at age 16, their progress accelerates and they raise the standard of their achievements further. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has improved the pupils' capacity to calculate in their heads. The very good targets set on individual education programmes ensure that all pupils, including those with additional special needs, make progress.
73. Pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 achieve well and make good progress. They learn different ways of recording data and are able to construct a line graph accurately, counting in fives, tens and thirties, as appropriate. They count their pulse rates in fluent ascending order and can multiply the results by two or four to place them in a 60-second time frame. Pupils use bar graphs and pie charts to display data and can interpret the information displayed in them. They are able to use money in a practical situation such as attending after school clubs and travel to college, and learn the importance of budgeting through careful calculation of costs. By age 14, pupils have made good progress since they joined the school. They complete a tally chart correctly and translate this into a bar graph. Lower attaining pupils need additional support in doing this work. Higher attaining pupils are able to mentally multiply two digit numbers by two or four. They learn to see patterns in the data they collect and begin to read the information displayed in the pattern. Older pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 make very good progress as they compare the exchange rates of the dollar, the pound and the franc, and understand that rates fluctuate over time and that such fluctuations can be measured and recorded in graphical form.
74. By age 16, pupils read off data from charts, such as football league table results, and plot scatter graphs that yield interesting and useful information. The practical everyday application of handling information makes them think about simple correlations, such as that between hand span and height. They are able to distinguish between negative, positive and random correlations and place a 'line of best fit' accurately on their scatter graphs. They are keen to work hard on their examinations courses.
75. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection and is now good for pupils between the ages of 11 and 14, and very good for pupils aged 14 to 16. Teachers have a sound understanding of the subject and plan simple, clear and sequential topics that enable pupils to build steadily on their learning over time. They plan effectively for pupils with different needs and levels of attainment. They ensure, for example, that the pupil with visual impairment uses large texts and has support for reading. Outdoor mathematics activities are planned carefully to ensure that pupils are well prepared, aware of the need to behave sensibly, and able to get

down to work quickly, once on site. Pupils are managed well through firm and confident teaching and appropriately high expectations of behaviour and achievement. The mental calculation skills of pupils are stretched, for example, in numeracy sessions and at opportune moments during and after lessons. As pupils prepare for public examination, they respond positively to the high expectations that teachers have, of their mathematics and the presentation of their work.

76. The very good mathematics curriculum is well resourced and its teaching in sequential topics enables all pupils to improve their skills systematically, and gain public accreditation by age 16. Assessment is built into the lesson planning and the department is expecting to work with an accredited profile of mathematical achievement by autumn 2001. The co-ordinator for mathematics has a clear sense of direction for the subject and there is a shared commitment to raise standards in the department. There are suitable arrangements for monitoring standards, evaluating performance and identifying strategies for further improvements. The very good teaching and management of the subject, and the good improvement made since the last inspection, are planned to be further improved in the future.

SCIENCE

77. The pupils' progress and their standards of achievement have improved since the last inspection, when science was unsatisfactory in many areas. It is now satisfactory overall throughout the school. The progress of higher attaining pupils is occasionally good. There is a very good emphasis on carefully planned investigative work, which improves pupils' understanding of scientific processes and motivates them to want to learn. Overall there has been good improvement since the last inspection, and the co-ordinator has worked hard with senior management to address all of the key issues.
78. Overall, pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 make satisfactory progress. They learn about a range of topics in detail, including work on acids and alkalis, solids, liquids and gases, and the reactions of metals and metal compounds. During Year 7, pupils work on acids, discovering they are substances which turn indicator solution red and alkalis turn it blue. Pupils experiment with different chemicals such as baking soda and vinegar to find their pH values and record their results on a simple chart. They discuss their findings in connection with real life applications with growing scientific understanding. They know, for example, that an upset stomach is caused by the production of too much acid, which can be neutralised by an alkaline such as an indigestion tablet that makes people feel better. Throughout Year 8, pupils develop their knowledge of solids and know that a solid is made up of particles. They learn that liquids are a jumble of particles, and gases will spread to fill any space they are in. By the time they are 14, pupils have developed their basic knowledge of different materials by taking part in class experiments that focus on what happens when combinations of solids, gases and liquids react together to form different chemical reactions. They take part in tests for hydrogen, oxygen and carbon dioxide. Higher attaining pupils complete word equations such as magnesium and oxygen, reacting together to form a substance called magnesium oxide. The majority of the pupils are eager to take part in experiments and answer questions with reasonable accuracy based on their previous knowledge. However, a small number of pupils shout out and don't listen carefully to either the teacher's or other pupils' explanations. Pupils are helped when they write about their experiments by using appropriate books for reference and completing tasks. Worksheets are also appropriately used to test out pupils' understanding and reinforce the learning. Several pupils need prompts from the teacher to complete written tasks as writing and handwriting are sometimes poorly presented.
79. Between the ages of 14 and 16, pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Some higher attaining pupils make good progress. Pupils study a range of topics as part of the Certificate of Achievement or a GCSE courses. During Year 10, pupils look at the properties of different metals. They learn that when metals get hot they expand and when they get cold they contract. Pupils take part in group experiments, for example, they use a conductivity kit which has different metals on it. They watch the teacher set up an experiment to see which metal conducts heat the fastest, by observing bolts fall off strips of aluminium, copper, brass, and steel. They explore in group

discussion if the experiment followed fair test procedures. They demonstrate good knowledge of how to conduct a fair test procedure, and make appropriate suggestions of how these should be modified, such as repeating an exercise several times to get accurate results. One pupil said the flame which was the heat source was not hitting all the metals in the same place. He decided it was being affected by the wind, which meant that the results would be inaccurate.

80. By the time pupils are 16, they know that forces can be measured. Some pupils make reasonable guesses about how many gram weights will be needed to move a Newton meter a given distance. Pupils develop their understanding of topics by designing their own simple experiments. For example, they decide the parcel tape, in an experiment attaching a Newton meter, will have to be the same width as the sticky tape to ensure that fair test conditions are met. Pupils record accurately their results in table or chart forms. A minority of older pupils are disruptive in lessons for short periods. For instance, they call the other pupils' names. This stops the flow of the lesson and slows their rate of progress and that of the other pupils. The majority of pupils are keen to take part in investigative work, and use the equipment sensibly and safely.
81. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Where teaching and learning are good, the lessons are well planned, clearly noting what pupils will learn and using methods so that the need of all the pupils in the class are met. Scientific facts and concepts are taught using a good investigative approach, which stimulates discussion and sustains pupils' interest. Good questioning techniques enable pupils to participate confidently in experimental work. The teacher's good subject knowledge leads to clear explanations of what is happening. This enables the majority of pupils to understand the main teaching points. Praise is used effectively to celebrate individual achievement, which increases pupils' self-esteem and improves their concentration.
82. Weaker aspects of teaching include inadequate lesson introductions and conclusions. What is to be learnt is not fully explored with the class, which leads to some pupils not grasping what they are expected to learn. At the end of lessons there are missed opportunities to identify what pupils have learnt, and to make links with what will be taught next. Occasionally, during experimental work there is a lack of attention by the teacher to ensure the health and safety rules are observed. For example, some Year 7 pupils were not wearing their goggles properly during an experiment that involved mixing volatile substances.
83. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator has worked hard to improve provision for the subject and has addressed many of the issues raised in the last inspection. However, the subject policy is brief and requires updating to include appropriate references to National Curriculum 2000. It does not state clearly how the subject and teaching will be formally monitored and evaluated, in order to improve the accuracy of long-term planning. Although overall assessment procedures have improved, there are inconsistencies in the marking and presentation of pupils' work. Teacher's marking is mainly providing encouragement, and does not show the pupil what to do to improve. Some of the pupils' work is poorly presented without a date or title, which does not help the pupils to use their work for reference purposes or foster pride in their written achievements. The development of the subject remains restricted by the absence of a technician to repair equipment and support the specialist teacher in the preparation of experimental work. This means that the teacher has to spend too much time doing preparation work. Science continues to make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and social development. The classroom for teaching science has been refurbished to meet the specialist needs of the subject, and appropriate books and practical equipment are used well to help pupils learn. Planning for the subject has been refined, and assessment procedures have improved, including useful basic tests, which are carried out regularly. The certification scheme used for the oldest pupils has appropriate assessment procedures included.
84. Resources are good overall. The co-ordinator has identified the need for more computer software to support learning and there are science books available for reference in the classroom when needed. Reference sources to help pupils increase their basic literacy skills are more limited.

ART

85. Insufficient lessons were seen at Key Stage 4 to enable a secure judgement to be made on teaching, attainment and progress at that stage. Very little Key Stage 4 work was available to support any judgement. Some pupils achieve well in lessons of painting and drawing and make good progress in lessons at Key Stage 3. Overall, however, the progress of pupils is satisfactory. The very good relationships that are developed carefully by the teacher enable very good progress to be made in tackling the pupils' behaviour targets. However, the narrowness of the curriculum limits their creativity.
86. Between the ages of 11 and 14, pupils make a good choice of portrait to copy from the large selection of important works of art they are offered. Some set their work up on easels and this allows them to work freely and confidently on their portraits. Most need some help to outline their work and they build on this effectively to complete their studies in detail. Higher attaining pupils are able to select appropriate colours for their compositions and record their observations clearly. Lower attaining pupils lack an awareness of colour and form and tend to work without appropriate reference to the subject they are copying. Their observational skills are not effectively developed through basic skills exercises, although the teacher's good demonstration of his skill does improve their drawing skills. Pupils with additional special needs, such as visual impairment, are supported appropriately in lessons, and make satisfactory progress with their work. Pupils' skills in the critical evaluation of art and the annotation of their work are not developed with sufficient rigour. There was little evidence of those skills during the last inspection and, as a consequence, the knowledge and understanding they have of art is weakened.
87. The quality of teaching and learning in art is satisfactory, but lacks the depth and development that would explore the pupils' creative imagination more effectively. The teacher's very good knowledge and understanding of art is not fully used in teaching, although pupils do view a wide range of important works of art. Pupils are very effectively managed, and the atmosphere for learning is very positive, enabling lessons to be taught in a calm, relaxed and pleasant atmosphere, where pupils learn to respect and support each other. On occasions, the relationship between pupils and the teacher is excellent, with mutual respect being shown and a very good pace of work being maintained. The introduction to lessons, however, is often rushed and takes in too broad a sweep of artistic reference to enable pupils to learn effectively. Although the expectations of behaviour are appropriately high, pupils are not always expected to improve their work and widen their artistic horizons sufficiently.
88. The curriculum for art is unsatisfactory because it is too narrow, although there are a good range of museum visits included that make a useful contribution to the provision for pupils' cultural and social development. Recent efforts to broaden the curriculum by using a visiting potter have been disappointing, because work was left incomplete, although pupils did produce some very good masks from the project. Extra-curricular art clubs and an 'open door' policy in the art room offer pupils more time to spend on their art work. The accommodation is unsatisfactory, being a standard mobile classroom and lacking proper facilities for storing work and cleaning up after lessons. Its use for other subjects detracts further from its use as an art room. Over time, the teacher has introduced a wide range of activities and built up sufficient resources to enable a GCSE in painting, printing and drawing to be studied. Currently, however, the curriculum is inadequate for GCSE work. There is insufficient basic skills teaching and a narrow range of opportunities for creative work. Computer aided work is not included or sketch books used. The subject is led and managed effectively, although monitoring standards and evaluation procedures are underdeveloped.
89. The provision of a room for art and more planned visits to museums and galleries represent improvements since the last inspection. The improvement has been limited overall.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

90. Pupils achieve well in lessons and make good progress over the time they are at school. Achievement and progress are very good between the ages of 14 and 16, when pupils' technical skills are improved by the high standards demanded in the investigation and design improvement of familiar products. Pupils work hard to build a portfolio of work for submission in the GCSE examination.
91. Pupils quickly learn about workshop practice and the health and safety rules. They become familiar with both hand tools and machine tools, such as the power hacksaw and scroll saw, the pillar drill and power sander. Their eagerness in Year 7 to obtain practical results leads them to occasionally forget safety rules such as wearing goggles and tying aprons securely. Pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 use saws, chisels, routers, planes, hand drills and marking tools and can name many of them. The design of the course ensures that they learn to measure accurately and build card models of their design, before working on resistant materials such as wood or plastic. They learn how to mark carefully, and cut plastic sheet economically, allowing for a decorative margin around their novelty boxes.
92. By age 14, pupils use a wide range of hand and power tools safely and effectively. Most concentrate well, and their interest and enthusiasm ensure that they make good progress during the lessons. They choose materials and colours that are appropriate for their products and complete them to a good standard, using smoothing and finishing tools and processes. Between the ages of 14 and 16, pupils are able to measure and mark accurately and use a range of joints and bonding processes to assemble their work. They learn about a wide range of processes, such as welding, annealing, soldering, riveting, turning, forming and bonding. By age 16, the higher attaining pupils demonstrate very good technical drawing skills, using conventions such as centre line, break line and arrows accurately and neatly. They are able to disassemble familiar products, taking notes and suggesting design improvements as they go. They design appropriate questionnaires to sample consumer views on products and thoroughly research the product before re-designing and assembling it. The unsatisfactory development of their literacy skills weakens the presentation of their work, although some are able to word process written parts of their projects, such as questionnaires. Overall, their achievements are constrained by the narrow curriculum they are taught.
93. The quality of teaching and learning is good. It is mostly very good for the oldest pupils, where they are interested, and work confidently on the design process. Lessons are well planned to ensure that the full design and making process is covered. High standards of work are expected and pupils respond to this challenge as they see the well-finished results of their work. There are occasional lapses in safety awareness when the workshop is busy and the younger pupils are engaged in a number of different activities. Tools are maintained to a high standard with weekly technician support, which helps pupils to produce work to a good standard. The atmosphere for learning is productive and enjoyable. Pupils are taught well and are trusted to use the tools and machinery with the minimal supervision required. They respect the trust invested in them and behave responsibly in the workshop. The very good knowledge and understanding that the teacher has of workshop and design room practice ensure that the pupils build up a good range of useful skills that will serve them well in adult life.
94. The subject is led very well and managed effectively. The improvements in resources for design have led to the dropping of textile technology and a further narrowing of a curriculum that does not yet offer food technology or 'computer control' technology. The single lessons of design and technology are too short to enable lessons to be introduced, developed and concluded satisfactorily. The department now has the money to invest in developing the curriculum and has begun to buy in systems and control resources along with supporting workbooks and reference manuals. Consideration is being given to the introduction of food technology, but there is no specialist accommodation for this subject. There is a good system for monitoring and evaluating the progress of pupils through the school; this will be further developed as the individual education plans being piloted in other departments move into design and technology.

95. Despite the continuing restrictions of the curriculum, satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection, but there are areas still to be developed. There have been improvements in teaching and learning and the attitudes and behaviour of pupils have improved. With the additional funding available and the enthusiastic support of the senior management team, the department has a good capacity to improve.

GEOGRAPHY

96. The pupils' standards in geography are in line with those in similar schools. Pupils' achievements and progress are good. Standards have risen since the previous inspection, and the school has made satisfactory improvements in geography overall. Evidence is taken from pupils between the ages of 11 and 14, as no geography was observed for the oldest pupils.
97. By the age of 14, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of weather and its effects on the environment. They measure temperature accurately, including wind speed, and make links to weather forecasts. Pupils study places across the world, including Europe, using the atlas with increasing confidence to locate cities and regions. They begin to make links with physical features and regions, including the interpretation of photographs. Pupils develop this knowledge further by producing posters and brochures on a given area, listing for example the possible means of transport, routes, times and costs to different parts of the world. They study aspects of Industry and its relationship to geographical features, identifying factors, for example, that have brought about change to the iron and steel industry over time. Pupils understand issues around the population, what determines where people live, and what is meant by density. There was no evidence of work for pupils by the age of 16 as the timetable does not cover geography during this period of the school year.
98. Teaching is consistently satisfactory. There is a sound knowledge of the subject, enabling facts to be taught systematically, and the pupils to gain a broadening understanding of the world around them. Planning is sound and builds suitably upon what the pupils have learned previously. The lesson content often creates an interesting and lively debate, for example, about countries that are more or less economically developed than others, stretching the pupils' understanding of developing countries and the related issues. As a result, some pupils make good links between aid and sustainable international support. Pupils are becoming increasingly aware of global issues.
99. The curriculum is suitably broad, reflecting appropriate plans and national guidelines for the subject. The quality of assessment is sound, with a thorough knowledge of the pupil's individual achievements. Formal procedures for monitoring standards and evaluation are underdeveloped. The subject is managed satisfactorily and there are plans to develop aspects of the subject further.

HISTORY

100. Pupils' achievements and progress are good. History is only taught to pupils between the ages of 11 and 14. Since the last inspection, there have been continued and good improvements, including sustaining previous strengths.
101. By the age of 14, pupils sequence events of the past with increasing accuracy, recognising differences between real and fictional characters in history. They compare similarities and differences between the past and present, noting changes over time and between the centuries. Pupils have a notable understanding and awareness of local history, and in particular the school's own rich historical developments as a listed building of long standing. They have taken part in archaeological enquiries and research into their immediate surroundings, which has added

interest and relevance to the subject.

102. Teaching is good overall and the teacher's own enthusiasm, skills and interest in the subject add considerably to the pupils' local knowledge. The teaching is highly effective in managing the pupils' behaviour and setting appropriately high expectations for them academically and socially. As a result, pupils arrive expecting to work hard, and settle quickly to their work. The teacher makes good use of the locality, giving pupils good quality experiences to further their understanding of chronology and conditions that existed at different times. Pupils develop positive attitudes towards learning because of the good quality teaching. They work well together and often demonstrate a high degree of co-operation, showing good levels of concentration in their studies. There are often good links made between art and history, using a variety of books for research purposes. The teacher has a thorough knowledge of the pupils' levels of understanding in the subject, ensuring the work is well matched to their range of needs.
103. The curriculum is good, and enriched by visits to places of interest. Pupils enjoy these opportunities, and clearly gain from the experiences. They are able to reflect on their own progress in history, and sometimes complete questionnaires about their learning. This adds further information to the assessment procedures. Formal procedures for monitoring standards and evaluation are yet to be fully developed. The subject is managed effectively and there are suitable plans to develop history in the future.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

104. Since the last inspection there have been inconsistencies in the teaching of the subject because of staff absences. There is insufficient evidence from the work scrutiny, and discussions with staff and pupils, to make a judgement on progress across all aspects. Evidence from the four lessons observed during the inspection shows that pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 are continuing to make good progress with their word processing, Internet, and desk top publishing skills. Although no lessons were seen with pupils between the ages of 14 and 16, discussions with individual pupils and teachers' planning indicates that progress is at least good in those areas and very good for a small number of pupils.
105. Year 7 pupils design award certificates by selecting appropriate templates using desktop publishing software. They insert words and sentences into a text frame and change font style and letter size by using the mouse and menu items correctly. Pupils select their own clip art to add illustrations to their work. In Year 8, pupils extend their knowledge of using different templates from the same design package but this time to suit a different purpose. They choose card and invitation templates and make Christmas cards for family and friends. Higher attaining pupils use the Internet to search for clip art, copy the image and paste into their design. Pupils create and re-size picture frames and print their work out. By the time they are 14, pupils are given a Christmas shopping problem to solve, which develops their knowledge of using the Internet as a research tool. They choose a search engine to locate an item they want to purchase and view pages on several web sites before selecting the present they want. They use calculators to find out how much money they have left to spend. Pupils record their findings on a spreadsheet. The majority of pupils are interested and enthusiastic learners. Several pupils in all lessons needed support from adults to spell words and phrases correctly. The good progress pupils make during lessons is well developed and supported by staff in the after school computer activities in the residential accommodation.
106. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The teacher clearly states what is to be learnt at the beginning of the lesson and has high and realistic expectations of the pupils' wide-ranging needs. At the start of the lesson, pupils knew what they were expected to achieve by the end of the lesson. Lesson plans are well structured and clear and suitably difficult worksheets are chosen. The learning support assistant is used effectively. She is well briefed and knowledgeable about her role and the pupils she is to support.
107. The teacher's good subject knowledge allows them to be flexible in their approach towards

meeting the individual needs of all pupils. For example, one pupil, who was upset, was designing his own word search using a different program than the other children. He later joined in with what the rest of his class were doing. The weaker aspects of lessons include a lack of sufficient time at the end of lessons to check out what all the pupils have learnt. At times, the content of the lesson assumed a higher level of skills and knowledge than some pupils actually had. For example, pupils in Year 9 were writing their answers on a spreadsheet without really understanding its purpose. Additionally, computer equipment does not match the needs of all of the pupils. One visually impaired pupil was limited in his pace of working because he was finding it difficult reading the keys as he was trying to type in his words.

108. There is insufficient evidence to be able to make a judgement on the co-ordination of the subject due to staff absence, but the headteacher is currently ensuring it is being developed effectively. There have been satisfactory improvements in information and communication technology since the last inspection. The lack of planning in 'control technology' has been partially addressed by the production of new schemes of work that make reference to this area. However, these schemes are still insufficiently detailed and do not clearly outline the different skills and knowledge that Year 10 and 11 pupils are expected to achieve in 'control technology'. Information and communication technology is still used well in other subjects; for example in English to draft and re-draft extended pieces of writing and in science to research topics using the Internet. However, current policies and medium-term planning do not outline what software and aspects of information and communication technology are being taught. This lack of formal planning is limiting the opportunities and effects that the subject could have on pupils' progress in other subjects.
109. The policy is detailed although not yet referenced to National Curriculum 2000. Day-to-day assessment is satisfactory and uses pupils' work achieved during lessons to inform what will be taught next. Monitoring and evaluation procedures stated are unsatisfactory and do not sufficiently inform long-term planning. Current plans refer to developing resources and training but do not state specifically what areas of teaching and pupil attainment require improvement. The school is committed to developing all staff's expertise in information and communication technology, which is reflected in the subject's plans. Some teachers are currently attending nationally recognised training courses. The school development plan identifies the need to give all pupils nationally recognised certificates for their achievements.
110. Overall resources are good. There are computers in classrooms and a very good central suite that enables all pupils to work independently when necessary. The purchase and use of software to support learning across the curriculum is underdeveloped. There is insufficient peripheral hardware to help the minority of pupils with additional special educational needs. For example, pupils with visual impairment would benefit from large keyboards or touch screens to help them type and use menus more quickly.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

111. Pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 study French. Older pupils have their curriculum modified, in line with national guidelines, to place more emphasis on examination work and citizenship. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, when some criticism was made about the overall quality of teaching and knowledge of the subject.
112. Pupils' achievements and progress are satisfactory in French. By the time they are 14, most pupils copy individual words correctly, label pictures, and count to twenty with reasonable accuracy. They use common phrases and words with meaning, and greet one another, asking and replying to simple questions with growing confidence.
113. The quality of teaching and learning in French is satisfactory overall, and occasionally good. Lessons begin briskly with greetings and simple sentences, enabling all pupils to take part at a level appropriate to their understanding. There is great emphasis on the skills of speaking and listening to the French language, and pupils gain a sense of achievement and pride as they use a widening vocabulary. Resources and tapes have been chosen carefully to meet the specific needs

of pupils with special needs. The teacher has a sound subject knowledge and brings enthusiasm, good humour and a sense of enjoyment to the learning. As a result, pupils are prepared to attempt new words and phrases without embarrassment or fear of ridicule. Pupils are well managed and the teacher sets high expectations for their behaviour. In turn, the pupils respond positively to these standards.

114. The subject is led satisfactorily, and effectively managed. Formal methods for monitoring standards and evaluation are underdeveloped. Pupils are proud to follow French on their timetable, and clear progress is being made over time.

MUSIC

115. Pupils are achieving well in music and make good progress overall. There have been good improvements since the previous inspection, when many weaknesses were reported, and progress by the pupils was limited.
116. By the age of 14, some pupils are playing the keyboards with increasing fluency. There are good examples where pupils have recorded and edited their work with sensitivity and empathy for the theme, using four track tape recorders to provide summaries of their completed work. Pupils are justifiably proud of their work and willingly perform compositions to visitors. They use their skills in information and communication technology to good effect, for example using special software, writing a melody line with percussive accompaniment and in some instances for more than two parts. Some pupils are developing the basic skills for playing the guitar, with an awareness of folk music, and many play the ocarina quite fluently to recognisable familiar tunes. The drop-in club for pupils between the ages of 14 and 16 enables those with a particular interest and talent to develop their skills in a more relaxed and social setting, whilst gaining further knowledge and appreciation of the subject.
117. Teaching and learning is consistently good as a result of a skilled and accomplished musician ensuring the pupils' own musical techniques are developed systematically. There are good relationships established, whereby pupils perform musically with the teacher and show pride in their achievements. Pupils are eager and enthusiastic towards the subject, showing disappointment when the lessons finish. There are very good examples of music elsewhere in the school; for example, playing during assemblies. The subject makes a useful contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development as they learn to show sensitivity and awareness musically. Assessment is good and the teacher has a clear understanding of the pupils' own individual levels of skill and understanding. This ensures work is closely matched to their wide-ranging needs. The support staff work very well with the teacher and make a strong and complementary team.
118. The subject is well led and effectively managed by a specialist music teacher who visits the school for one day a week. The teacher monitors standards and the effect of her work on the pupils regularly. Although the accommodation for music has been improved, it is still not ideal as a specialist music area. The room is away from the main school, causing additional problems ensuring pupils arrive and leave appropriately. The facility has small rooms, and whilst these are useful for specialist teaching, the overall lay out makes supervision difficult. The staff make best use of the accommodation available, and learning resources are in generally good condition.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119. Pupils' progress and their standards of achievement have improved since the last inspection. For pupils between the ages of 11 and 14, it is satisfactory overall and for the older pupils, it is never less than satisfactory, and more often good. Indeed by the age of 16, pupils' attainment in physical education is in line with national expectations. The school has increased its provision for outdoor pursuit activities, which was previously commented on as underdeveloped. It has

purchased two canoes that pupils use in the outdoor swimming pool in the summer. The school has had good achievements in competitive football events involving similar schools. In sporting activities older pupils now have a choice of opting for a different games activity. This has helped pupils who want to do well during games lessons and gives them greater involvement in their own learning. However, worn out apparatus in the gymnasium has not been replaced. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

120. Pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 achieve satisfactorily in all areas of the physical education curriculum. They increase their gymnastic skills by travelling in different ways around a circuit made up of benches in a variety of positions and angles. Pupils show good balancing skills, and use different body parts appropriately to move from one area of the circuit to another. They refine their movements in response to individual and class discussion with the teacher. Pupils experience a wide range of games activities, including basketball, football, and indoor hockey. In games activities they practise individual skills before playing a team game. In football activities they develop their passing, control and movement skills by working individually and in pairs. They keep the ball in the air for a reasonable amount of time using a combination of feet, thigh and head parts. Within team games, pupils demonstrate a basic understanding of the rules and show accurate passing and positional skills. The majority of the pupils listen to the teacher's instructions during lessons. However, on a minority of occasions there are some pupils who are reluctant to take an active part and this slows the pace of the lesson, leading to insufficient progress. Pupils in Year 7 regularly go swimming to the local pool and are making satisfactory progress in gaining certificates of achievement.
121. By the age of 16, pupils develop their gymnastic skills by using a springboard to gain height and complete a sequence of movements on the top of a vaulting box. They use the equipment safely and produce good forward rolls that end with a well-executed dismount. Pupils respond positively to the teacher's comments and modify their actions to suit the different levels of difficulty. They participate in various gymnastic and sporting activities, such as using the trampoline and playing tennis. In competitive team games, such as football matches with other schools, they demonstrate a good knowledge of the rules by quickly responding to prompts by the teacher like 'offside.' They listen carefully to the teacher's instructions and show good passing and increased ball control skills. They have a good team spirit and are polite and well mannered to others. In other activities like quick cricket, pupils demonstrate skilful and accurate bowling techniques. They have good catching skills and abide by the rules of the game without arguing. Pupils show an increasing awareness of the needs of others. For example, one pupil in a mixed Year 10 and 11 games lesson tried to explain to another how to improve his bowling skills. The majority of pupils display sensible attitudes and enjoy the lessons they actively participate in. There are good relationships between all the staff and pupils who are involved in games lessons.
122. Overall the quality of teaching and learning for pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 is satisfactory. It is often good for the older pupils between the ages of 14 and 16. In one lesson, where teaching was unsatisfactory, strategies were ineffective in maintaining pace and purpose for all pupils. Where teaching and learning are good, the teacher employs skilful strategies, drawing on good subject knowledge and experience to give each pupil appropriate advice on how to improve aspects of their performance or skills. Expectations are high and well matched to the social and physical abilities of the pupils. Lessons have good pace which sustains pupils' interest and concentration. Carefully structured planning enables all pupils to build on what they have learnt and to attempt new, more difficult activities with confidence. Praise is used well to reinforce good behaviour and celebrate individual success, which develops good relationships between pupils and teacher. At times, however, there is insufficient time at the end of lessons to get the pupils to assess what they have achieved and what they need to improve. Contingency plans were not in place to deal with known factors that could disrupt lessons. For example, a pupil in Year 10 who did not want to take part in a lesson was allowed to watch the activity. The teacher allowed disruptive behaviour to go on for too long which led to the majority of pupils making unsatisfactory progress.
123. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure

that pupils have a wide range of activities and experiences in the subject. The school policy pays due regard to information and communication technology and safety but does not state how the subject will be monitored and evaluated. The co-ordinator recognises the need for formal accreditation systems to celebrate individual achievement. There are 'National Body Skills tests' in basketball and quick cricket and there are formal plans to get other sporting areas accredited. The co-ordinator is exploring the possibility of teaching a GCSE course in physical education to higher attaining pupils. Assessment procedures are generally satisfactory. They have recently been reviewed and there is a new record keeping procedure, which is completed, at the end of each module or unit. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and social development.

124. Resources are satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator and staff have worked hard to establish facilities that are linked to both national expectations and pupil needs. For example, there is a weight training facility, which is well equipped. The gymnasium floor is in poor condition and requires re-varnishing and fresh markings, and the use of appropriate computer software to support pupils' learning is underdeveloped.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

125. Pupils' achievements and progress are satisfactory overall and they make sound progress overall. Since the previous inspection, there has been satisfactory improvement in the quality and delivery of the subject.
126. Pupils by the age of 14 and 16 develop sound skills for debating such issues as human rights. The plans are based appropriately on the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. This allows pupils to follow a systematic curriculum as they move through the school. Pupils understand important figures in Christianity, including the person of Jesus and his teachings. They learn about other religions, special celebrations and important artefacts such as religious books.
127. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. There is sound knowledge of the subject, enabling pupils to distinguish fact from opinion, and understand the importance of respecting one another's beliefs and faiths. Teachers make the subject interesting by using well chosen resources such as books and artefacts. Pupils are effectively managed, enabling time to be used efficiently and productively. They develop good work habits and routines, as a result of the clear and consistent expectations set by the teachers. The teaching ensures pupils are developing a thoughtful and reflective attitude towards matters of life with a growing awareness of spiritual issues beyond the immediate concrete and material world.
128. The subject is effectively led and well managed, and makes an important contribution to the quality of provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are appropriate links to issues of responsibility, rights and wrongs, including personal choices in life. Procedures for monitoring standards and formal evaluation are not yet developed systematically in the subject.