

INSPECTION REPORT

EXHALL GRANGE SCHOOL

Ash Green, Coventry

LEA area: Warwickshire

Unique reference number: 125794

Headteacher: Mr R Bignell

Reporting inspector: Ms M Landy
1927

Dates of inspection: 20th – 22nd November, 2000

Inspection number: 223651

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special – Visually and/or physically impaired, medical and/or learning difficulties and complex special educational needs - Community day and residential

School category: County

Age range of pupils: 2 to 19 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Wheelwright Lane
Ash Green
Coventry

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Telephone number: 0247 6364 200

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Appropriate authority: Exhall Grange Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J. Dunne

Date of previous inspection: 22nd -26th April, 1996

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Exhall Grange is a co-educational special school for 199 pupils between the ages of two and nineteen years. Of the 199 pupils, 187 are full-time, twelve are part-time, fourteen have English as an additional language and thirty nine are entitled to free school meals. There are twenty one pupils attending as weekly boarders for four nights each week. There is a wide range of ability from pupils with severe and moderate learning difficulties to those who take five or more GCSEs and those who study for A-level GCE. About forty per cent of the pupils have a visual impairment and a similar proportion have physical disabilities. Of the remaining twenty per cent several pupils have Autism Syndrome Disorders or moderate or severe learning difficulties. Many pupils have additional medical conditions and a combination of difficulties. All pupils have Statements of Special Educational Needs or are in the process of being formally assessed. Most of the pupils come from Warwickshire and neighbouring local education authorities.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Exhall Grange is a very good school that has some excellent features particularly the excellent behaviour of the pupils and the high proportion of excellent teaching and learning. Leadership and management are very good. Staff are clear about their responsibilities, work very well together and share a common purpose, striving to provide the best possible education. The governing body is exceptionally well-informed about educational matters, and its members bring considerable knowledge and skills to their role. Standards achieved by pupils across the school are very good. Pupils benefit significantly from the stimulating learning environment and the specialist facilities and resources provided which are very good. The school is very effective in most areas; as a result Exhall Grange provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Promotes excellent behaviour, very good relationships and mature attitudes, pupils are encouraged to think and act for themselves.
- Provides very effective support, advice and guidance for all pupils.
- Leadership and management are major strengths, they are very good at all levels across the school.
- The school provides a rich, relevant and appropriate curriculum for pupils of all ages.
- Parents are highly appreciative of the high standards of education and care provided for their children.
- Teaching and learning are consistently very good for all ages across the school.

What could be improved

- The use of and the specific nature of the targets in Individual Education Plans for pupils over eleven years of age.
- Using information and communication technology to enhance the quality of learning in subjects across the school.
- The training, knowledge and skills of some staff working with pupils who have autistic

spectrum disorders.

- Legal requirements with regard to the curriculum details in the prospectus and the annual report to parents by the governing body and also the completion of registers.
- Health and safety issues reported to the chair of governors during the inspection.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1996. All the key issues identified then have been addressed. The school continues to provide high quality education and to plan for the future in the light of the changing population. It has further developed individual education plans, although more work is still needed, and further regular monitoring is required to achieve consistency. Steps have been taken to ensure more effective leadership of the residential provision which continues to be good. The school has improved the professional development of residential care staff, although further training is still required to meet the demands of the different and changing needs of the pupils, particularly those with autistic spectrum disorders and/or behavioural difficulties. It has also fully rectified the health and safety issues identified last time; however, this inspection has highlighted other areas to address. Since the last inspection the school has successfully implemented the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. The staff are very ingenious in the ways they include pupils who use braille. The school has also implemented National Curriculum 2000 and the recent changes to the Foundation Curriculum. The range of accreditation has improved significantly at Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form, this has greatly improved standards and progress. Overall, teaching and learning have improved and are now consistently very good across the school.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 11	by age 16	by age 19	Key very good A Good B Satisfactory C Unsatisfactory D Poor E
Speaking and listening	B	B	A	A	
Reading	B	A	A	A	
Writing	B	B	B	B	
Mathematics	B	B	B	A	
personal, social and health education	B	B	B	C	
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	B	B	

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

Standards achieved are good in all subjects. Children in the Foundation Stage, that is those under five years of age, achieve good standards in regard to the targets in their individual education plans, as do primary aged pupils. Some secondary phase individual education plan targets are too broad; this inconsistency does not assist in tracking the progress or gauging standards achieved. The range of accredited courses followed has increased considerably

since the last inspection and standards achieved have improved significantly, particularly in reading. The school is on line to meet its whole-school targets at each key stage. Analysis shows that results are gradually improving.

Of the nineteen pupils who took a range of GCSE subjects, five pupils (26%) achieved five or more A* to C grade passes; twelve pupils (63%) achieved five or more A* to G grade passes and seventeen pupils (89%) gained at least one pass grade. Other accredited courses were awarded; eight pupils received ASDAN Bronze Award and six pupils achieved the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award. five candidates were entered for at least one A level equivalent (A/AS/GNVQ) with an average point score per entry of 3.5. The total entry for Skillpower units in 2000 was sixty six, forty five were boys and twenty one were girls. At 98.5% pass rate, these vocational results are better than the national average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are successfully encouraged to develop mature attitudes. They are open, friendly and courteous.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	There is excellent behaviour throughout the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Personal and social skills are being very well developed. Relationships are a strength.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Pupils show a keenness to come to school.

Pupils enjoy lessons and show an enthusiasm for learning. The quality of relationships between all members of the school community contributes significantly to the happy and warm social atmosphere. Registers are marked twice daily but the appropriate codes are not always used and their completion is not monitored well enough.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. Almost all of the lessons seen were good, very good or excellent. Two-thirds were very good or better. No lesson was unsatisfactory. Teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour are very high. Teachers and support staff are well qualified, skilled practitioners with very good subject knowledge. They have a very good understanding of the learning and care needs of their pupils. A very good range of specialist therapists significantly enhances pupils' learning. Teaching is not always effectively informed by specific and measurable termly targets in individual education plans. Whilst this is good from two to eleven years, it is inconsistent in the secondary department. The use of information and communication technology to enhance teaching in subjects across the school is inconsistent. Whilst the teaching of ICT is good, and often very good in ICT lessons, its use in other subjects is an area for further improvement.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good for all ages and stages.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The school is very skilled at giving individual attention to those pupils who need it.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good for all ages. Staff work hard to develop their pupils' understanding of right and wrong. All are encouraged to become responsible, independent members of the school community. Some sixth-formers do not have access to a personal, social and health programme.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides very effective support, advice and guidance for all its pupils. Awareness of health and safety issues is high.

The school provides a very good curriculum for all ages, with very good quality planning across the school, which is outstanding in English for the oldest students. There are very good opportunities to study for a wide range of nationally accredited courses, both at sixteen and in the sixth form. The curriculum meets legal requirements in full, except for religious education in the sixth form. Opportunities to promote personal development and spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning are very good. All pupils are fully included. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented. They have been adapted ingeniously to meet pupils' needs, particularly those who require braille to read. The school's particular emphasis on reading across the school is effective in developing this key skill. There is a very high standard of care; therapists work very well with other staff and residential provision remains good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are very good, they continue to be a major strength. The talented headteacher is ably supported by a very experienced senior management team.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body, using its wide range of knowledge and expertise, strongly supports the school's commitment to achieving high standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good, clear targets for improvement are set, reviewed, monitored and evaluated.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The management team and the governors strive to ensure the best value for money is achieved in relation to in any spending decisions.

A very strong team leads and manages the school. Managers fulfil their responsibilities very effectively. There is a clear vision of the future educational direction of the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several parents are more than happy and pleased with the tremendous improvement made of their children since attending this excellent school, after experiencing difficulties in mainstream schools. • Parents comment on friendly, helpful and responsive staff who are wonderful. They described the school as 'one in a million' or 'excellent', or that they would have no hesitation in recommending it to other parents. They report progress in all areas as remarkable. • Several thrilled at the very good progress made, especially with regard to giving their children back confidence and self-respect. • The residential provision, which helps boarders to become independent due to the expertise and commitment of staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perception of a parent that some activities are only available after school and transport is a problem. • One parent does not feel well informed. • One parent stresses school needs enough funding for the special equipment for child. • Some parents would like more homework set for their children.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' views in terms of what pleases them. The school does its best to address the issues that could be improved. Homework is set, but not as consistently as it might be, especially for pupils over eleven years. Overall, parents are well informed in terms of the progress their child makes and the curriculum on offer. Communication systems are well established

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Exhall Grange promotes excellent behaviour, very good relationships and mature attitudes. Pupils are encouraged to think and act for themselves.

1. Pupils display very positive attitudes to learning; their response to lessons is very good at all ages. They listen well, and concentrate well over long periods of time. Pupils often show great pleasure in their achievements and the successes of others.
2. Behaviour is excellent throughout the school. Pupils show consideration and respect for each other. Relationships between pupils and adults are very good. Pupils are open, friendly and courteous. They enjoy lessons and show an enthusiasm for learning. The quality of relationships between all members of the school community contributes significantly to the happy and warm social atmosphere within the school. All pupils, despite their difficulties, are fully included, as are those for whom English is an additional language.
3. Pupils are successfully encouraged to develop mature attitudes and to think and act for themselves. They are helped to develop increasingly independent living skills, including independence of movement within the school and in the wider community.
4. The School Council provides a very effective forum for pupils to contribute their views, and to see their views taken into account and acted upon.

The school provides very effective support, advice and guidance for all pupils.

5. Relationships with pupils are of high quality; they have a very positive impact on pupils' progress. Teachers and carers are accessible and responsive to pupils' needs. They give very effective support to enable pupils to make the greatest progress of which they are capable. A very good range of therapists and support staff very ably supports pupils.
6. Awareness of health and safety issues is high, and the school has prepared a relevant action plan to address the concerns identified in a recent inspection report. Some health and safety issues were discussed with the senior staff and the Chair of the Governing Body during the inspection.

Leadership and management continue to be major strengths, they are very good at all levels across the school.

7. Leadership and management, judged to be a strength at the last inspection, continue to be so. The talented headteacher, strongly supported by a very experienced senior management team, provides a clear vision of the future educational direction of the school. High priority is given to the raising of standards and the continued improvement of the achievements of pupils. These priorities are addressed well in the school's development plan (SDP) for the current year, although this does not plan for the longer-term needs of the school. All staff fulfil their responsibilities very effectively and are highly committed to providing high quality education and care for all pupils. The school has been awarded Beacon status since the last inspection; this means it is assisting and advising other schools.
8. The headteacher and senior management team are very well supported by a very experienced body of governors who make a significant contribution to the school from their wide range of expertise and knowledge. The governing body is meeting its

statutory responsibilities in almost all respects. However, the requirements to report to parents on its special educational needs policy annually, to include details of the policy in the prospectus, and to provide religious education in the sixth form, are not met.

9. The governors have established a very effective committee structure and each committee meets at least once each term. These committees receive regular reports from the school on the relevant aspects of the SDP. For example, on the curriculum, thus enabling the governors to monitor that targets are being met. The governing body strongly supports the school's commitment to achieving high standards for its pupils, and takes care to ensure that best value for money is achieved. This is illustrated by recorded concerns, expressed by governors, about the longer term viability of advanced level courses offered for very small groups which may not be financially viable and are not efficient in terms of group size and staffing. Senior management is well aware of these issues and the need to address the demands of small group teaching for the most able, as well as the needs of pupils with severe and specific special needs requiring high level, individual support.
10. Resources are generally used well. Although the majority of classes are greater than six pupils, there are issues to be addressed regarding staffing for a few small groups of only one or two pupils in the sixth form; the school is quite rightly looking at this. Similarly, at Key Stage 4, although there are some large option groups a few have only two or three pupils; the viability of these is under review. The school's budget is being reviewed, particularly the residential component. A major cost factor is the age of the staff, with most at the top of the pay scale. Unit costs are reasonable when the cost of residential places is taken into account.
11. Day-to-day financial control is good, although a recent financial audit identified a small number of issues that must be addressed. Of these, the most urgent are the need to establish a register of pecuniary interests of governors and all staff, and to ensure that the school fund is audited annually, since this was last done in 1996. These two recommendations require urgent attention and are actively being addressed by the school management team.
12. Resources for learning are used very well, but information and communication technology (ICT) is not used consistently to enhance the quality of pupils' learning across all areas of the curriculum. A constraint on the use of ICT in subject teaching is often the outdated hardware, much of which can only be used for word processing. The library resource areas and the ICT equipment within them are very good and are being used well to promote pupils' and students' independent learning skills.
13. The school has much very good, high quality accommodation which provides an attractive and stimulating learning environment. Exceptions are the gymnasium, which is designated for replacement when funds allow, the sixth form common room area, which is also earmarked for replacement in the school's plans, and the bathroom facilities for more dependent boys in the residence.
14. Given the high standards of teaching and learning, pupils' good achievements, the high quality of care and education, plus the reasonable unit cost, the school gives very good value for money.

The school provides a rich, relevant and age appropriate curriculum for all pupils.

15. Curriculum planning in the Early Years Assessment Centre, in the primary and secondary departments and in the sixth form, is very good, and ensures that all

pupils, whatever their ability, have access to the complete range of subjects, and that they cover all aspects of study within each subject. There is a wide range of national accreditation for pupils of all abilities reaching Year 11. This is extended well in the sixth form. The sports provision is a strength in the school, and is reflected in its Sportsmark Gold Award status. The key strengths of planning are the clarity of learning objectives and of the learning outcomes which are matched to individual needs. This is particularly reflected in the outstanding planning of English at secondary level and in the sixth form, and the very good planning for mathematics and discrete information and communication technology in the secondary department.

16. Sixth-form students have access to a wide range of subjects at all levels; GCSE, GNVQ, ASDAN, A/S and A-level. Key skills have been introduced to the sixth form programme appropriately. However, the viability of some of the smaller examination groups over time is questionable. With the introduction of the new A/S requirements for sixth forms, the school rightly has this under review.
17. The school has addressed recent national curricular initiatives very well. Planning for the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy within the primary department is very good, as is the planning for the implementation of the Foundation Curriculum within the Early Years Assessment Centre and in Class One. The school has also addressed the requirements of the new National Curriculum 2000 very well. Numeracy across the curriculum within the secondary department has been tracked very well; students have a variety of mathematical experiences across the range of subjects. Aspects of literacy across the curriculum in the secondary department have been addressed well through the school focus on reading, which has had a demonstrably good impact upon the students' reading ages. However, the promotion of writing skills is not addressed consistently across all secondary subjects.
18. The provision for personal, social, and health education is good in the nursery, primary and secondary departments. However, some sixth-formers do not have access to a personal, social and health programme. All secondary school pupils participate in work experience, and careers education is included within the programme.
19. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, with many taking place at lunch time or during activity weekends. The school places very strong emphasis on ensuring that opportunities for learning, leisure and achievement are equal for all pupils, and the provision for the special needs of most of the pupils ensures that they are able to access the curriculum very well. For example, pupils who read through the medium of braille are included very well in literacy lessons, so that visually impaired pupils of all ages are able to participate in discussions about texts, and write confidently. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is very good. All pupils are fully included; the school is very skilled at giving individual attention to those pupils who need it. However, as the school accepts, the planning and provision for pupils with more complex severe learning and behavioural difficulties, particularly those on the autistic spectrum disorder, is an area to develop.
20. Opportunities to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning are very good for pupils of all ages. The school works hard to develop pupils' understanding of right and wrong, and it encourages all pupils to become responsible, independent members of the school community. For example, the school council provides a forum for pupils to make meaningful contributions to the school environment. Pupils, from the youngest upwards, are given responsibilities within their class, and are encouraged to reflect, through class discussions, upon appropriate behaviours and attitudes. By the time they reach the sixth form, students are able to debate philosophical issues of right

and wrong with maturity, based upon logic and reason. Whilst some assemblies offered moments of reflection and spiritual awareness, for example when infant pupils considered the effect of talking kindly to each other, the promotion of spirituality throughout the school is inconsistent. The thought for the week is not followed through in all areas of the school.

21. There are many opportunities to develop social skills, for example through the charity fund-raising events staged by the pupils, the activity weekends, and the many school visits offered to pupils. One area to improve is greater opportunity to meet and work with mainstream peers. There is a wealth of cultural events, and very good planning to ensure that pupils experience the arts and ways of living of different groups across the world, including the richness of Great Britain.
22. Systems for assessing pupils' achievements throughout the school are very good. The development of base-line assessment of pupils' achievement is good, and is moving towards the use of national standards for pupils working below age-related expectations of levels of attainment. In the primary department pupils' learning is monitored carefully through the use of small step sheets which are currently being amended to link to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Progress is monitored carefully in secondary subjects, and there is very good practice in English and information and communication technology. Whole-school targets are set for groups of pupils in the primary and secondary departments; the data derived from pupils' attainment in national testing is used very well to identify areas of learning that need to be developed.

Parents are highly appreciative of the high standards of education and care provided for their children.

23. The school aims to actively encourage partnership with parents, and continues to be successful in achieving this aim. Most parents feel welcome in school, and confirm that they are able to approach the school should problems occur. Parents are very supportive of the school, and feel that they are generally very well informed about the progress their child is making. The quality of information available to parents through annual review reports is very good; parents are invited to be fully involved in the review process, and they find it valuable.
24. The prospectus and governors' annual reports to parents, while giving parents a wide range of useful information, do not fully conform to statutory requirements with regard to reporting on the special educational needs policy.
25. The Friends Association regularly raises valuable funds for the school, providing additional equipment and resources. Residential provision continues to be good and is reported separately within this report.

Teaching and learning are consistently very good for all ages across the school.

26. Throughout the school the quality of teaching and learning is very good and often excellent. Of the forty two lessons observed across all ages, involving twenty three of the thirty two teachers plus one instructor, none was unsatisfactory, two were satisfactory, eighteen were good, fifteen very good and seven excellent. Very good teaching was seen at every key stage from the foundation to the sixth form and in a large number of different subjects. Excellent lessons were observed in English, at Key Stage 2 and for the oldest pupils in Key Stage 4 and in the sixth form,

mathematics at Key Stage 2, art with Year 7, and in general studies in the sixth form. Best features of these lessons were splendid specialist knowledge, very effective use of planning and assessment, very good choice of tasks and excellent involvement of all the learners and support staff.

27. Teaching and learning have improved considerably since the last inspection. Then, there was 3.4 per cent of unsatisfactory teaching with only one lesson in five judged very good or better. This contrasts with no teaching judged unsatisfactory and just over half of the lessons seen identified as very good or better.
28. Throughout the school, teachers' planning and organisation are of a high quality; teachers plan tasks for the differing levels of attainment and this enables the pupils to participate more readily, so they learn more. Teachers and skilled support staff know the children under five, the pupils from five to sixteen years and the students in the sixth form very well and are able to match work well to their needs. Staff use praise regularly, and positive relationships encourage pupils to work really hard. They are expected to give of their best and to be as independent as possible. Staff provide interesting lessons and continually reinforce how they want pupils to respond; as a result the pupils' behaviour is excellent. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented; staff have adapted their approaches well to the needs of their pupils. This is having a positive impact on standards, as has the whole school focus on reading.
29. Pupils in the Early Years Assessment Centre and those who work at the foundation stage in Class 1, benefit from enthusiastic teaching which gives them a rich range of learning opportunities, reinforced by regular praise and continual use of assessment to track their progress.
30. Sixth form students benefit greatly from the extended range of external accredited courses they follow, and from the considerable specialist knowledge of their teachers who teach using high quality resources within well-equipped specialist rooms; this has a positive impact on standards.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Improve the use of and the specific nature of the targets in individual education plans for pupils over eleven years of age.

31. The requirements of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice are met very well through annual review arrangements, and parents and pupils are involved appropriately. All pupils know their targets in their individual education plans, and practice is particularly good in the primary department, where individual education plans and targets are prominently displayed and discussed with pupils regularly. This is not always the case in the secondary department where the use of targets is insufficiently prominent and is not consistent.
32. Since the last inspection the school has been working at developing the usefulness of individual education plans. The format is now simple and workable, with the focus on literacy, numeracy and self-help targets, with three small steps to achieve each target. However, whilst some targets are specific, many are still too general in wording to provide sufficient clarity for planning programmes to achieve them. This is particularly evident in the secondary department. There is too little indication of the strategies or arrangements that will be required to achieve the targets, particularly those concerned with developing aspects of behaviour, so that they provide little help to other members of staff working with the pupil in their subject areas.

Using information and communication technology to enhance the quality of learning in subjects across the school is inconsistent.

33. There is too much inconsistency in the degree to which information and communication technology (ICT) is planned into each subject, particularly at secondary level. The evidence of pupils' ICT work across subjects is too limited in all years, and access to regular use in lessons differs too much. In both primary and secondary departments ICT skills are taught as a stand-alone subject, and in the primary department information communication technology is planned into each subject area. The planning and assessment of discrete information communication technology skills, in both primary and secondary departments are very good, as is teaching and learning in these lessons.
34. During the period of the inspection little use of ICT was observed in subjects across the curriculum overall. There were exceptions for example, in primary and secondary English, for the purpose of facilitating communication and writing skills, or developing spelling and note taking in the primary department. There was also some use of spreadsheets in business studies and in science.

The training, knowledge and skills of some staff working with pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders.

35. Strategies employed for working with those pupils with more complex communication and learning difficulties, including those with autistic spectrum disorders, are inadequate to support and meet their special educational needs because of insufficient staff expertise in working with this group of pupils.
36. The number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders has grown steadily since the last inspection and all staff come into contact with them. Whilst a few staff have had in depth training, and most staff have received some awareness training, the school recognises that more is needed in order to fully equip staff with the skills and confidence to teach and support this particular group of pupils, especially the residential pupils.

Meet legal requirements with regard to religious education in the sixth form, curriculum details in the prospectus and the annual report to parents by the governing body and also the completion of registers.

37. Not all legal requirements are fully met with regard to details regarding the special needs policy, which is missing from the prospectus and annual report of the governing body to parents. Not all registers are fully completed as codes are not always used appropriately. There are inconsistencies in the completion of attendance registers; reasons for absence are not always identified. The school is not yet successfully making all parents aware of the importance of their child's regular attendance at school.
38. Statutory requirements for the curriculum are fully met with the exception of provision for discrete religious education teaching in the sixth form. The lack of provision for personal, social and health education teaching for one group of students in the sixth form is also noteworthy. Whilst there is a reduction of time for the teaching of personal, social and health education and religious education in the secondary department, full access to these subjects is achieved nevertheless, and all pupils gain national accreditation in religious education by the end of Year 11.

Health and safety issues discussed with the chair of governors and senior staff during the inspection

39. All the health and safety issues from the last inspection were addressed, however, others noted during this inspection and in a recent audit were discussed with the Senior Management Team and the Chair of Governors during the inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

40. The governing body and the senior management should:
- a) Improve the specific nature of the targets in individual education plans for pupils over eleven years of age.
 - b) Ensure that teaching using information and communication technology to enhance the quality of learning in subjects across the school is consistent.
 - c) Provide more training to develop further the knowledge and skills of staff working with pupils who have autistic spectrum disorders.
 - d) Meet legal requirements with regard to:
 - i) teaching religious education in the sixth form;
 - ii) publishing details of the curriculum in the prospectus, and the annual report to parents by the governing body, concerning the special needs policy;
 - iii) the completion of registers.
 - e) Address the health and safety issues discussed with the chair of governors and senior staff during the inspection.

RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

41. The provision made for the 21 residents, aged between 13 and 19 years is good. It has changed substantially since the last inspection; it is now four nights only and not weekends. Special activity weekends are held half-termly, when residents and day pupils alike enjoy these. There have been two new Heads of Care in post since the last inspection. The latest Head of Care, who is keen to drive provision forward, started two and a half months before this inspection. Already there are good plans being formulated to improve the provision.
42. The residential provision has a number of strengths. These include very good quality relationships both with staff and between residents. There is a very well established care team that promotes independence and mature attitudes. The residents undertake supervised homework nightly and benefit from an excellent range of facilities available to them in the evenings. For example, an experienced specialist visits the school regularly to run an evening canoe club, a very worthwhile activity that builds confidence and is really enjoyed by the participants.
43. Pupils really enjoy being residents : staff give very good attention to their personal care and hygiene needs and residents are successfully encouraged to be as independent, responsible and confident as possible. The living environments are homely and accommodation is good overall. However, the dining arrangements for residents are not homely, as the dining room is too large. The showering and bathing

facilities for more dependent male residents who are in wheelchairs, especially those, who require a hoist, are inadequate.

44. Plans are being formulated to improve a range of aspects of the residential provision. These include health and safety issues discussed with the headteacher and chair of governors during the inspection. Plans to strengthen the link with the personal, social and health education curriculum are in place. Residents are already seeking accredited recognition for work completed in life skills. The new Head of Care is forging closer links with the Social Services departments, especially with regard to children who are looked after by them. As opportunities are too limited at present there are also plans to extend information and communication technology facilities for study in the residential areas,
45. At times staffing levels are too low to meet the demanding combination of needs of the residents. The Head of Care has wisely built up contingency plans to ease this situation. In order to assist care staff, extra help is used from a group of experienced and knowledgeable school staff who already know the residents who help out when needed. Following the last inspection the care team undertook a good range of training in important areas and extended their skills. One area of current need highlighted by this inspection is in depth training in autism spectrum disorders and in managing more challenging behaviours.
46. All care staff receive regular appraisal and personal supervision from the Head of Care. In turn, it is acknowledged that the Head of Care requires close personal supervision and support and formal performance management reviews. As the new school system is established it is important that the Head of Care is fully included in this process. The residential provision remains good and has the potential to be very good.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
17	36	42	5	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	199
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	39

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	14

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	8	School data	0

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

Attainment

Given the special educational needs of the pupils and the small numbers in each cohort taking the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 assessments it is inappropriate to report on attainment measured against national standards at the end of these key stages. Analysis shows that results are gradually improving.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	10	9	19

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified				
	Total	5	12	17
Percentage of pupils achieving The standard specified	School	26	63	89
	National	49.2	88.8	94.9

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	22.5
	National	38.7

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and The percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	21
	National	75.7

Other accredited courses were awarded:

Eight pupils received ASDAN Bronze Award and six pupils achieved the Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award.

Five candidates were entered for at least one A/AS/GNVQ (A level equivalent) with an average point score per entry of 3.5. The total entry for Skillpower units in 2000 was sixty six, forty five were boys and twenty one were girls. There was a 98.5% pass rate in Skillpower Enterprise, Language and Life Skills, Management of Learning, Art & Design, Health and Well Being, Personal Relationships and Social Care and Careers Planning. These vocational results are better than the national averages.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	4
Indian	12
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	180
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	28.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.9
Average class size	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: YR – Y13

Total number of education support staff	29
Total aggregate hours worked per week	110

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	2,268,519
Total expenditure	2,243,816
Expenditure per pupil	11,936
Balance brought forward from previous year	25,151
Balance carried forward to next year	49,854

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	199
Number of questionnaires returned	97

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	36	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	39	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	52	42	2	2	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	48	9	2	6
The teaching is good.	72	24	2	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	67	22	8	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	23	2	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	23	5	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	70	22	6	2	1
The school is well led and managed.	77	19	3	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	26	2	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	58	26	9	1	6

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

Several parents are more than happy and pleased with the tremendous improvement in their children since attending this excellent school, many after experiencing difficulties in mainstream schools. Several commented on the friendly, helpful and responsive staff. Parents were thrilled at the very good progress their children make; in all areas they say progress is remarkable. Parents also praised the residential provision.

Other issues raised by parents

Some would like more homework. One would like more information and another more money for the school to buy special equipment.