

INSPECTION REPORT

RATCLIFFE SCHOOL

Dawlish

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113656

Headteacher: Mr Charles Hackett

Reporting inspector: Mrs Jayne Clemence
22629

Dates of inspection: 20 – 24 November 2000

Inspection number: 223667

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Residential Special School for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 8 - 17

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: John Nash Drive

Dawlish
Devon

Postcode: EX7 9RZ

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Patrick Martin

Date of previous inspection: October 1996

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|-------------------------------|----------------------|---|---|
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| | | Personal, social and health education | Teaching and learning |
| | | | Leadership and management |
| | | | Residential provision |
| Gill Anderson 19639 | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development |
| | | | The school's work in partnership with parents |
| Christine Humphreys 15606 | Team inspector | Art | |
| | | Design and technology | |
| | | Equal opportunities | |
| Alan Jones 16747 | Team inspector | Mathematics | |
| | | Information and communications technology | |
| | | Physical education and outdoor education | |
| Elizabeth Mildner 18206 | Team Inspector | Science | The quality of curricular and other opportunities for pupils. |
| | | Geography | |
| | | History | |
| Christine Richardson 22058 | Team Inspector | English | How well the school cares for its pupils. |
| | | French | |
| | | Religious education | |

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ratcliffe is a residential special school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties between the ages of eight and seventeen. There were no pupils beyond the age of sixteen at the time of the inspection. There are currently 62 pupils attending the school; 11 girls and 51 boys, and all are residential during the week. The vast majority of pupils are from a white ethnic background, and a very small minority from Black Caribbean heritage. Pupils come from a wide catchment area across Devon, and all have Statements for Special Educational Needs. Many pupils have had serious disruption to their lives, including significant periods where education has been missed. As a result, they arrive having experienced trauma and turbulence in many areas. A high proportion of pupils, approximately one quarter, are in local authority care arrangements, and many have fragmented or extreme family circumstances. All pupils are eligible for free school meals, because of the residential nature of the provision. This is a very high proportion by national comparison. The majority of pupils enter the school with attainment that is usually below, or well below that expected for their age. A very small minority are in line with national expectations in a few areas of school life. 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

Ratcliffe is an outstanding example of provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, with many excellent features. The school enables pupils to achieve high standards in relation to the degree of special educational needs. The leadership and management is excellent, providing educational direction that has vision and clarity. A very high proportion of the teaching is good and very good, with a significant minority excellent, leading the pupils to make very good progress overall. There is an excellent ethos, and the school is highly effective in providing boundaries, structures and strategies that begin to build the pupils' lives, establish respect for one another, and help start to recognise authority. This is firmly rooted in setting high, yet realistic expectations. The excellent care and residential provision works in harmony with education. It is seamless, coherent and cohesive. The school provides excellent value for money, using its modest budget efficiently, as pupils learn a sense of order and dignity, taking pride in themselves and their achievements. The many additional activities enhance the quality of pupils' education overall. Ratcliffe has the capacity for sustaining excellence, and is striving for continued improvement.

What the school does well

- The headteacher's leadership is excellent, providing clear educational direction and vision. The senior management is strong and highly effective; monitoring and evaluation is rigorous, and the quality of education is continually improving;
- The very high proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching ensures that pupils achieve high standards for their degree of special educational needs;
- The excellent residential provision; strong links between care and educational staff ensure exemplary support for the pupils' academic and social progress;
- The highly effective strategies for managing behaviour that are clear, fair and consistent; bringing about positive improvements in the pupils' attitudes and conduct;
- The excellent procedures for recording, assessing and monitoring, ensuring that pupils' progress is tracked meticulously;
- The outdoor education is excellent; providing outstanding opportunities that challenge the pupils physically and mentally;
- The excellent provision for personal, social and moral development enabling pupils to become increasingly mature;
- The strong and dynamic team, including teachers, care staff, support staff and

administration, working to provide excellence for pupils.

What could be improved

- Standards in art, and aspects of design and technology are not up to those achieved in other subjects;
- The cramped accommodation for physical education limits what can be achieved and offered.

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 very good improvements since the last inspection. Issues identified at the time of the previous inspection have been addressed systematically and methodically. Arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the teaching and delivery of the curriculum are now carefully structured. The individual education plans, that had room for improvement, are now specific, quantified and measurable. Information about the pupils' progress, including assessment, is used strategically to plan for future developments. The curriculum is considerably broader than lessons during the school day, and is enhanced significantly by high quality extra curricular opportunities and residential activities. There have been considerable improvements in the provision for information technology, previously judged unsatisfactory. In addition, the many strengths identified at that time have been sustained and further improved, including leadership and management, teaching and the pupils' personal and social development.

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 11 | by age 16 | Key | |
|--|--------------|--------------|----------------|---|
| speaking and listening | A | A | Very good | A |
| Reading | A | A | Good | B |
| Writing | B | B | Satisfactory | C |
| Mathematics | A | A | Unsatisfactory | D |
| personal, social and health education | A | A | Poor | E |
| other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs* | A | A | | |

Most pupils enter the school with attainment that is below or well below average for their age. The year 2000 National Curriculum test results show pupils make very good progress over their time in school. GCSE results for pupils in Year 11 were very significantly better than results for special schools of a similar type nationally. Pupils in Year 11 were also successful in attaining pass, merit and distinction grades in Certificate of Educational Achievement courses. This transformation through the school by pupils, from their very low attainment on entry, to considerable success by the age of sixteen, represents very good achievement. The school has set appropriate targets for 2001 for the number of GCSE entries, and is expected to achieve them.

Pupils make very good progress in their speaking and listening skills. They learn to express their views and opinions in an appropriate manner, for example in the school council. Many pupils develop the basic skills for reading, show a genuine interest in books, and have a growing appreciation of literature as they move through the school. Younger pupils understand the importance of print, and use illustrations accurately for clues about the text. Older pupils read with increasing fluency, and by the time they leave, use those skills for a variety of purposes. Pupils make good progress in their writing skills, although compared to reading, their rate of progress is slightly slower. This is because of the challenge pupils have in recording their work clearly, and at a suitable pace. Pupils use their knowledge of mathematics and number with increasing confidence, and by the time they leave school, use these skills in a variety of circumstances. Standards in art, and aspects of design and technology are not as high as those seen in other subjects, as the teacher's expectations are insufficiently ambitious for pupils. The high quality provision for the pupils' personal and social development is a strong foundation for the entire curriculum. Pupils develop a sense of respect for themselves and others as a result. Individual education plans are specific and measurable. Pupils are set suitably challenging, yet realistic targets, that are reviewed and revised regularly. The school is successful in helping pupils to achieve very well, and test results show that standards are rising.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Very good attitudes; pupils enjoy school. They are keen and enthusiastic in their work as a result. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good; many pupils have patterns of behaviour that improve significantly over time. |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good; pupils understand increasingly how they can approach life more constructively. There are many very good relationships between pupils and with adults. |
| Attendance | Very good by comparison with similar schools |

Pupils develop a sense of order and purpose to their lives, and begin to understand the meaning of good citizenship. They realise the importance of effort and hard work, in order to achieve their own personal best. The high quality relationships between pupils and adults are based on trust and mutual respect. This results in pupils who have considerable security and confidence in themselves within the structure of school life, and by the time they leave, many pupils successfully transfer those skills to work and college life.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | Aged 8-11 | aged 11-16 |
|----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Lessons seen overall | 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 high proportion of good, very good and occasionally excellent teaching is having a very positive impact upon the pupils' learning and rate of progress. Ninety nine per cent of the teaching was

satisfactory or better; twenty nine per cent was good. Thirty three per cent of the teaching was very good and twelve per cent was excellent. Only one per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory. Teaching overall is very good throughout the school. There is a significant amount of good and very good teaching in English and mathematics that is having a very positive effect on the pupils' reading, writing and number skills. Teachers are at the final stages of planning opportunities more systematically to develop the pupils' literacy skills across other areas of the curriculum. Although the teaching in art and aspects of design and technology were satisfactory overall, the teacher's expectations, standards and classroom organisation has room for considerable improvement. In the isolated example of unsatisfactory teaching in science, the purpose of the lesson was not made sufficiently clear, and strategies for managing the pupils' behaviour were not rigorous enough to ensure satisfactory learning. The high proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching is having a direct and positive impact on the pupils' learning and rate of progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Very good; providing breadth and balance. Extra- curricular activities are high quality. |
| Provision for pupils' personal development including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Very good overall; spiritual and cultural development are good; social and moral development are outstanding. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The care for pupils is exemplary; procedures for monitoring progress and methods for assessment are thorough, systematic and rigorous; |

The school has a very strong partnership with parents. Many parents express a high degree of satisfaction about Ratcliffe School, the quality of leadership, the teaching, and progress made by their children. They have a high level of confidence in the school to do the very best for their children. These views are supported strongly by the inspection team.

The curriculum has many very positive features. The strategies for literacy and numeracy are effective, and have brought about continued improvements in standards. The outstanding opportunities for pupils in outdoor education is having an excellent impact on their personal and social skills, that in turn affects their overall attitude towards academic challenges. The school has developed excellent procedures for assessing pupils, and their academic and social progress, alongside behaviour, is tracked meticulously. Pupils have a clear understanding of their targets and how to go about improving themselves further.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher provides excellent leadership and the senior management are strong and effective. There is a clear vision for improving the school and raising standards. |
| How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities | The governing body is led ably by skilled and knowledgeable people with relevant expertise. They have a clear strategic overview of the school, and fulfil their responsibilities efficiently. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | There are rigorous methods for monitoring and evaluating the school's progress towards its targets. Self- evaluation and continuous improvement is central to the school's work. |
| The strategic use of resources | Resources are allocated efficiently and used effectively at every level, including people, materials and finances. Resources are used to make a strong impact on the pupils' learning and progress. |

Overall, accommodation is satisfactory, but there are limitations. The hall is small and cramped. It is located centrally, and is therefore a thoroughfare for the whole school. Physical education is restricted because of the hall's small size and low ceiling. Lessons are also regularly interrupted, as the hall is the only means of access to other parts of the school. Specialist rooms for science, and aspects of design and technology are also small. The school applies the principles of best value to its decisions, and provides excellent 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"> • There are many interesting activities outside lessons. • The school is well led and managed. • Parents would feel happy to approach the school. • The teaching is good. • The school expects children to work hard. • Parents are kept well informed. • The school works closely with parents and they are kept well informed. • Their children like school and make good progress. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents would like their children to have more homework, whilst others do not know what level of homework their children receive. |

The inspection team agreed with all the positive comments identified by the parents. There was a very high degree of satisfaction expressed by the parents. The amount of homework is carefully considered by the school, although a few parents may not be fully aware of what their children do in addition to lessons. The inspection team agrees with parents that there should be further clarity provided about the amount and frequency of homework.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards since the last inspection have continued to rise. The school is successful in enabling pupils to achieve levels that are higher than those usually achieved in similar schools for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, and data from examination and test results show a significant improvement over time. In 2000, one hundred per cent of pupils by the age of sixteen gained 1 or more GCSE passes grades A-G, and fifty per cent of them gained 5 GCSE passes grades A-G. This compares very favourably with the national picture of standards in similar schools where forty six per cent of pupils on average gain 1 GCSE pass grade A-G, and eight per cent gain 5 GCSE passes grades A-G. The average number of passes has more than doubled between 1998 and 2000. This represents a considerable rise in trends and standards over time, particularly as pupils start from a relatively low baseline of knowledge and skills, with many gaps in their learning. There is a similar trend in standards achieved by pupils at the ages of eleven and fourteen. More pupils are gaining higher Levels in English, mathematics and science.
2. By the age of eleven, more pupils are achieving higher levels than at the time of the previous inspection. By the age of fourteen, pupils achieve standards in English and mathematics that are improving. By the age of sixteen, the pupils' results are improving steadily as more gain nationally recognised awards. The results are significantly higher than the average achieved in similar schools for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school sets high standards and targets, often challenging pupils to surpass their goals, and aspire towards higher grades.
3. By the age of eleven, the majority of pupils are working at Levels 2 and 3 of the National Curriculum. Their achievements are good in writing, science, history, geography, French, music, physical education and religious education. They are very good in reading, mathematics and information technology. Pupils make very good progress in their speaking and listening skills as they learn to take turns and listen to one another and adults more carefully. Pupils achieve well in mathematics, and use increasingly effective strategies for developing numeracy skills. In science, pupils make sound gains in their use of vocabulary in order to explain scientific investigations.
4. By the age of fourteen, the pupils' achievements are satisfactory in science. They are good in history and geography, French, music and religious education, and very good in English, mathematics, information technology, food technology and physical education. Pupils achieve outstanding results in outdoor education and make very good gains in their personal, social and moral development. This is often from a very low baseline on entering the school. Standards achieved in art and aspects of design and technology are not as high as those seen elsewhere in the school.
5. By the age of sixteen, the pupils' achievements are satisfactory in science. Standards fell slightly during a period of transition before a new coordinator was appointed. They are now beginning to improve to previous levels. Standards are good in history, geography, French and religious education, and very good in English, mathematics, information technology, food technology and physical education. Pupils' achievements in personal and social education, and outdoor education are outstanding. Standards in lessons in art and aspects of design and technology are not as high as those achieved elsewhere in other subjects in the school.
6. Pupils overall make very good progress in their personal development as they move through the school. A significant proportion of the pupils enter Ratcliffe with low self esteem, and a

lack of confidence in themselves and their abilities. The school is highly effective in developing the pupils' self confidence, and enabling them to realise what they can achieve, and how to go about improving themselves academically and socially.

7. Standards and trends continue to improve. This is confirmed by the growing number of pupils gaining nationally recognised awards and examinations. There are numerous examples where pupils have been successful in gaining passes, merits or distinctions in Certificates of Educational Achievement for courses including geography, history, art, Childcare, motor vehicle skills and food studies.
8. In English, the National Literacy Strategy is being implemented effectively. It has been adapted appropriately, and modified for the pupils' specific needs. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed very effectively. They have genuine opportunities to express their views, and influence decisions that directly impact upon the quality of their life in the residential setting, and the choices offered to them. Principles of the National Numeracy Strategy are being implemented effectively, resulting in high standards being achieved in the subject. Pupils use their numeracy skills appropriately in other subjects, for example in food technology, weighing ingredients, counting rhythm and beat in music, and drawing graphs to represent data using information technology skills. In science, pupils achieve satisfactory standards and make satisfactory progress in relation to their previous knowledge and learning. After a transition between permanent and temporary staffing, the newly appointed science teacher is beginning to see an upward trend in standards to those achieved previously.
9. Standards achieved in outdoor education are excellent with pupils gaining skills including orienteering, caving, sailing, canoeing and climbing.
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. The school is highly effective in promoting the pupils' academic, social and personal skills and as a result standards continue to rise. Since the previous inspection, there has been very good improvement in raising standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. There is a positive improvement in the attitudes, values and personal development of the pupils since the last inspection. This is because pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them, and how to modify their behaviour through very effective behaviour management strategies. This is underpinned by the "traffic light system", which pupils understand, and it gives them a clear, objective picture of the trends in their behaviour. This system observes and records the pupils' behaviour. The red, amber and green levels indicate the pupils' success, or otherwise, in maintaining positive behaviour. If sufficient merits have been gained, the green level enables a wider choice of activities and opportunities, whereas pupils on red one level have to earn a specified number of points before such privileges are restored.
12. Pupils are keen and eager to come to school because they like its regime, and this contributes to their very good attendance. The attendance figures are well above the national figures when compared with similar schools, and unauthorised absence at 0.5 per cent, is well below the national figure.
13. Pupils' attitudes are very good, and can be outstanding in outdoor education. In lessons, attitudes and behaviour are rarely less than satisfactory, in more than forty per cent of lessons they are good, and in over twenty per cent of lessons they are very good. On isolated

occasions in food technology, modern foreign languages and outdoor education, they can be excellent. In a significant minority, a few pupils' attitudes have yet to be modified.

14. The level of interest and involvement in activities is very good, particularly in those organised in the houses and in outdoor education where pupils' interest and involvement is very high.
15. The pupils' behaviour overall is good, and the school achieves its aim for most pupils to improve their behaviour to a socially acceptable level. Most pupils behave well in lessons. Occasionally pupils do not behave well, but the high quality of managing their behaviour enables learning to continue. They behave well around the school and most pupils can be very courteous, initiating offers of help. In their houses, pupils can be very hospitable and welcoming, inviting inspectors and new staff, for example, to a candle lit supper. Property is respected and there is little evidence of vandalism. This is supported efficiently by the school's quick response to repairing damage and keeping the environment well maintained and attractive.
16. The level of exclusions is falling, with eight fixed term and one permanent exclusion in the relevant period. This puts the school in the top ten per cent of schools for low permanent exclusion. Exclusion happens on the rarest occasion when all other strategies have failed, and when it is in the interests of the safety and well being of pupils. Every effort is made to reintegrate the pupil if at all possible in such circumstances.
17. The relative absence of oppressive behaviour, including bullying, sexism and racism is good. Pupils say issues of bullying are handled well. This is helped by their active involvement in its reduction through an anti bullying committee, which many pupils are keen to be involved with.
18. The personal development and relationships of pupils are very good. Many parents report that family life has improved significantly due to the work of the school. Staff are excellent role models, with many examples shown of mutual respect. Outdoor educational activities provide excellent opportunities to develop these skills. There are highly constructive relationships that emerge in orienteering, where there is respect for the trust given, and pupils meet all the challenges exceptionally well. Pupils show enjoyment in their achievement, and a growth in their confidence and self-esteem. Caving produces a considerable acquisition of new skills, high levels of sustained concentration and a great sense of achievement. Outdoor education makes an exceptionally strong contribution to the pupils' personal development through trust, positive collaboration, cooperation, taking responsibility, sheer achievement and a sense of wonder, for example at the discovery of an underground lake.
19. Pupils' understanding of the impact of their actions upon others is very good. It is at the root of their excellent moral development. Through the "traffic light system", they understand their behaviour and the impact it has, both on themselves and on others. The pupils show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of other people. At lunchtime, the prayer of thanksgiving and grace before the meal, settles pupils effectively. They are able to listen to and value each other's contribution towards discussions, as they enjoy their meal. Pupils respect the care workers who they regard with affection.
20. The pupils' initiative and personal responsibility is very good. This was very evident at the candle-lit supper, the attractive and welcoming Christmas buffet and the school council. Pupils are proud of their involvement and achievements. They have genuine opportunities to express their opinions and make suggestions. Because staff listen carefully, and act positively to the pupils, for example in the school council, pupils' feel rewarded and encouraged for their responsibilities and initiatives.

21. Relationships are very good because the school achieves its aims to respect all pupils, to develop their confidence and self esteem, and to express their needs and desires.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

22. There are many strengths in the quality of teaching. The high proportion of good, very good and occasionally excellent teaching is having a very positive impact upon standards, the pupils' learning and rate of progress. Ninety nine per cent of teaching was satisfactory or better and twenty nine per cent was good. Thirty three per cent was very good and twelve per cent was excellent. Only one per cent of the teaching was unsatisfactory. Overall, teaching is very good throughout the school. The proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching has improved since the previous inspection.
23. At the time of the inspection, due to staff illness, there were two teachers working in a temporary capacity with pupils between the ages of eight and eleven years. Despite this, the teaching overall was very good. Teachers used effective strategies, followed well established routines, and the school's own framework of support and expectations ensured pupils were well managed. The work was suitably matched to the pupils' needs and teachers were sensitive to the pupils' moods and emotions in changing activities and moving on to new work. As a result, pupils made very good gains in their learning in religious education as they learned about ceremonies and artefacts that are special to certain religions.
24. In literacy, pupils developed an increasing range of vocabulary as they described events and characters within a story, listening intently as the story progressed. In science, pupils were intrigued to investigate soil and made useful observations in the process. There were examples of excellent teaching in French for example, with high expectations and challenges to stretch the pupils' use of vocabulary, and extend their comprehension skills.
25. Teaching is very good overall for pupils between the ages of eleven and fourteen years. Teaching is satisfactory in science. A very small proportion of teaching in science was unsatisfactory due to a lack of clarity about the purpose of the lesson, and ineffective behaviour management strategies that lacked rigour. The teaching in art and aspects of design and technology is finely balanced between strengths and weaknesses. Overall it is only satisfactory during lessons at the time of the inspection, but its impact on standards over time is unsatisfactory. This is because the teacher's expectations of what could be achieved are not sufficiently ambitious, and consequently, standards achieved by pupils in these areas are not as high as those reached in other subjects.
26. Teaching is good in history and geography and religious education. It is very good in English, mathematics, information technology, food technology, French, music and physical education. Teaching in outdoor education is outstanding. There are examples of excellent teaching in mathematics, information and communication technology, French, food technology, outdoor education and English. The teacher's own subject knowledge and expertise makes a strong contribution to the pupils' learning. The very good quality teaching in English and mathematics for example sets high standards for the pupils, and they achieve results that are high in relation to their degree of special educational needs. Teaching is highly effective in food technology, with exemplary practice as pupils learn to become increasingly independent.
27. Teaching in outdoor education is outstanding, as pupils learn a wide variety of skills caving, orienteering and climbing, to name a few of the activities. Pupils are challenged physically and mentally with skilled teaching that improves their own techniques, under highly expert guidance of the teacher. Pupils come back enthused and exhilarated after the lessons, and conversations during the evening often focus upon their achievements. The high quality

teaching and learning that takes place makes a significant contribution to the pupils' self esteem and personal development. Relationships flourish in different circumstances where team work and cooperation are vital to the challenge.

28. Teaching is very good overall for pupils between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, with a small, but significant amount of excellent teaching in food technology and outdoor education. Teaching is satisfactory in science. Teaching in art and aspects of design and technology is finely balanced with strengths and weaknesses. It is only satisfactory for the vast majority of the time. Teaching is good in history, geography and religious education. Teaching is very good in English, mathematics, information technology, food technology, French and physical education. Teaching is outstanding in outdoor education.
29. Teachers are skilful in helping pupils to understand clearly what is expected of them, and provide realistic and helpful feedback. In mathematics, for example after an assessment, the teacher enabled pupils to recognise for themselves what level they should be aspiring for and was sensitive to the wide ranging needs and emotions as they received their results. All pupils as a consequence left with a positive view of their next step and challenge in mathematics. Plenary sessions are often used very effectively to emphasise the main learning points, as well as to evaluate the pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Support staff are very effective and highly efficient in their work. They know the pupils well and have a clear understanding of the individual needs, intervening appropriately to assist the teacher and pupils in further learning. They show considerable initiative and common sense throughout the day, and have very positive relationships established with the pupils.
30. Teachers are dedicated and committed to the pupils' success and achievements. There are many examples where teachers spend additional time beyond the school day talking to pupils, helping them with work, or discussing particular problems that have arisen. In some instances for example, lessons will not automatically finish at the end of the day if pupils are engrossed in the activity. Teachers and support staff make a strong and effective team. Since the previous inspection there has been very good improvements in teaching, with the vast majority of weaknesses eradicated, due to the systematic monitoring of lessons and support for teachers to improve their practice further. As a result, there is now a higher proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching than before.

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

31. The school has been very successful in improving the quality and range of the curriculum since the previous inspection. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are now firmly established, and newly re-organised plans for the subjects ensure that pupils' learning progresses consistently as they move through the school.
32. The curriculum for the younger pupils, between the ages of eight and eleven, gives suitable priority to literacy and numeracy, whilst maintaining coverage of all other National Curriculum subjects, religious education and personal, social and health education (PSHE) over their two week timetable. Pupils between the ages of eleven and fourteen have a similar experience with the addition of food technology, and in Year 9, they start the Youth Award Scheme (YAS) which includes careers education and guidance.
33. Older pupils, between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, study a core curriculum of English, mathematics, information technology, physical education, PSHE, YAS (to Bronze and Silver level) and careers. In addition, through an option system, they can choose from a wide range of subjects including science, history, geography, French, design and technology, food technology, art, motor mechanics and child care. A range of examinations, including GCSE,

Certificate of Achievement and the Certificate of Educational Achievement, are linked effectively to the majority of these courses, so that all pupils have the opportunity to leave school with a good range of nationally recognised awards and qualifications.

34. The school has been increasingly successful in supporting pupils to achieve these qualifications. The leavers in 2000 were successful, and half of the pupils gained eight or more certificates. The excellent course in outdoor education is offered to all pupils in the school and the amalgamation of many activities including art, music, information technology and physical education during after school sessions gives pupils a curricular experience of real breadth and relevance to their academic and personal needs.
35. The school has been very successful in establishing strategies for the teaching of numeracy and has good strategies for teaching literacy. Elements of both the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies are used appropriately for pupils between the ages of eight and fourteen. The newly appointed teacher, responsible for developing English, is introducing suitable initiatives to ensure that pupils' literacy skills of reading and writing are also being developed within other subjects of the curriculum.
36. The organisation of the curriculum to ensure equality of access and opportunity is good. Class groups are organised to meet the needs of all pupils and teachers use a range of approaches to ensure that all pupils can participate fully in the learning. The specific needs of individual pupils in each subject are met very effectively through focused targets in their individual education plans. Boys and girls can participate on equal terms in all activities.
37. The school regards the PSHE programme as a vital element in nurturing the pupils' social and personal development and is exceptionally successful in meeting this aim. The provision in this area, both in the school and in the residential houses, is excellent, well planned, and taught across a range of activities, which help pupils grow in maturity, independence and responsibility. Pupils are aware both of the importance of health issues as well as relationships and citizenship. Sex education and drugs awareness is appropriately taught as part of PSHE and also during science and child care lessons. These elements are straightforward and direct, providing pupils with a clear understanding of issues in the context of emotions and relationships.
38. Careers education is well established in the school and is of good quality. Pupils in Year 9 begin to consider the world of work through modules within the YAS scheme. Pupils continue with careers lessons in Years 10 and 11 when they also receive support from the careers service. In Year 11, pupils take part in a range of suitable work experiences as well as a college link course so that they have sufficient knowledge upon which to base their final career choice. The majority continue their studies at colleges of further education. All students complete a detailed National Record of Achievement by the age of sixteen.
39. Provision for extra curricular activities is very good. After school activities include a very wide range of experiences including art, craft, music, games and information and communications technology. Individual pupils are members of the guides, girls brigade, scouts and army cadets and they attend local youth clubs. Pupils can also join in social visits to the theatre, cinema, sports events and places of interest. Residential visits take place regularly to France and other parts of England. The school organises frequent inter school sporting events. There are also regular trips to London and camping in Wales, alongside activity weeks for younger pupils.
40. The school has good links with the local community and this enhances both the academic and social experiences available to pupils. There is a Christmas play each year, rehearsals of The Hobbit are already taking place, to which local schools and residents are invited. The

carol service takes place in the local church. Local employers enable Year 11 pupils to get valuable work experience. Pupils between the ages of fourteen and sixteen complete community service, for example helping in another local special school as part of their accreditation for their YAS awards.

41. The school has very good relationships with other institutions. When pupils first enter the school, links are established with previous teachers to support the transition of that pupil. Two senior pupils are presently studying GCSE subjects in a local secondary school. Teachers from Ratcliffe have established useful professional links with teachers in other schools including the local academic council, and have led workshops at the regional conference for emotional and behavioural difficulties provision. The school welcomes students and care staff on placements. There are well established links with the local Further Education Colleges in the area, and this supports pupils transition effectively to further education when they leave school. The school also has international links with visitors and students from places including Australia, Greece and Holland.
42. The overall provision for spiritual , moral, social and cultural development is very good and this makes a very positive contribution to the pupils' personal development. The provision for moral and social development is excellent. The ethos of the school and the successfully implemented behaviour strategies are foundational to the high quality provision for moral and social development. High expectations of behaviour are stated explicitly, with a meticulous emphasis on choosing right from wrong. This permeates all lessons and activities throughout the school. There are daily opportunities created in a supportive and encouraging learning environment to overcome difficulties. When significant disruption emerges, very effective use of agreed procedures restores calm and cooperation. The pupils gradually learn to take responsibility, develop trust and confidence, collaborate, become courteous and helpful and they gain in self esteem.
43. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. There is enjoyment in music appreciation and in singing together while practising for Christmas. Pupils show a sense of curiosity and wonder in certain activities such as in science investigations, and real awe when discovering an underground lake whilst caving in an outdoor education session. A great interest has developed in bird watching linked to a nature trail, including nest boxes created by the care staff and pupils show sensitivity and care for the birds and the environment around them. Pupils are developing insights into the values and beliefs of others, and are able to make use of the quiet times, including meditation, in assemblies and religious education lessons to experience a sense of reflection. The local church is used regularly, for Christmas celebrations and carols, This is a special event for the school when pupils, parents and representatives from the local community join together.
44. The provision for cultural development is good. Cultural development is promoted effectively through visits such as to the Eden Project, theatres and residential opportunities locally, in London and in France. Cultural activities and events are provided through art clubs, drama production and using the internet. Pupils are made aware of the beliefs and customs of those of other faiths in religious education lessons. In general, the provision for enhancing pupils' multi cultural knowledge is underdeveloped, and potential opportunities for enhancing cultural development are missed in art, history and geography.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The quality of care for pupils is exemplary. The school provides a very high quality working and living environment for its pupils, and is a model of good practice. High standards from the previous inspection have been maintained and the quality of some aspects, for example, individual education plans, has been improved. Teachers, learning support and care staff work

very well as a team, to make it a secure and safe place. This provides a good foundation for learning and ensures pupils make very good progress in dealing with some of the issues that have brought them to the school. Parents report a high level of satisfaction with the care provided for their children and themselves.

46. There are very good relationships in the school which are based on mutual respect. These are developed through patient and sensitive dealings with pupils by all staff. Adults know pupils very well, and the school has very good procedures that ensure that incidents and other matters that need to be widely known are communicated to all staff.
47. The school has excellent procedures to monitor the academic performance and personal development of pupils. A particular strength of the school's systems is that there are numerous opportunities provided for self-assessment. This helps to give pupils pride in their achievement, and to focus their learning. Comprehensive, detailed records of academic and personal development are maintained on each pupil on the computer, under "Assessment Manager". These are of very high quality and demonstrate clearly what pupils can do in most subjects, what they should do next to improve, and how much progress has been made over time. There is a clear link between the targets set and what teachers plan to include in lessons. Pupils' individual needs are very carefully identified, because staff know them very well, and are fully aware of their physical, emotional and intellectual needs. The individual education, behaviour and social skills plans are of a very high standard. Appropriate targets are set for each individual and these are regularly reviewed and amended. Excellent use is being made of the school's own computer program to record, report and assess the pupils' progress.
48. Parents receive very detailed and thorough annual reports at annual reviews, so they are aware of what their children can do, and what they should learn next. Very good use is made of assessment information for teachers to plan future lessons in subjects such as English, mathematics, and information technology. The use of assessment information to help teachers with their planning is not yet developed as fully in all subjects, for example in science and art.
49. The school's procedures for child protection, and for ensuring pupils' welfare are exemplary. The designated child protection officer is experienced and extremely effective, and ensures that the school follows the appropriate procedures meticulously. All staff receive appropriate training annually. Records demonstrate that concerns of individual children are dealt with quickly and proficiently. In addition, there is an independent person who visits the school regularly in order to listen and talk to any pupils where requested.
50. All care arrangements for pupils are in line with the Children Act. A strong feature of the care provided is the very useful hand-over of responsibility between day and night staff, each morning and evening. These meetings demonstrate the very good communication and relationships between staff. In its last report by the Social Services Inspectorate the school was commended for its approach to the training and support of staff who have an in depth knowledge of the pupils and are committed to their welfare. This remains a strong and positive feature.
51. The personal safety of everyone in the school is very carefully safeguarded by staff who have responsibility for health and safety procedures in the school. The comprehensive health and safety policy is linked to regular, thorough risk assessment and secure inspection procedures.
52. The "traffic light" system is very well respected and understood by pupils who value greatly the privileges, especially "green trips" that can be earned. The procedures for monitoring and

promoting good behaviour have a very positive impact on behaviour around the school, and on the progress made in lessons. Pupils value the school council and consider that staff listen to the points they raise. They are keen to join the anti-bullying committee, because they feel they have a contribution to make to discussions.

53. In all aspects of its work the school emphasises individual choices, the making of decisions, and the consideration of the consequences of these choices. Staff are particularly effective in encouraging pupils to reflect upon the impact of the choices they have made on others, and in emphasising the benefits of positive and responsible actions. This supports the monitoring of pupils' personal and social development and the promotion of responsible citizenship very effectively. Equally valuable in the monitoring process in the residential setting, is the role of each pupil's key worker and the care staff. The school has very effective procedures for the monitoring and improving of attendance and these have resulted in very good attendance figures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and achieves its aim to seek effective links with pupils' families. Parents' views of the school are that it is excellent and they have a high level of confidence in it. Parents feel close to, and part of, their children's education in spite of the considerable distance between the home and school. Many parents report that family life has improved significantly because of the school. They report that there is a great consistency between the school day and the residential provision. Some parents feel that their children have a future now because of the school.
55. The school's links with parents are very effective. Individual target setting is made very clear to parents because the school involves them as much as possible, and the annual reviews are a key part of this. Information to parents through written reports and annual reviews are of high quality, making clear what pupils need to do to improve. The annual review is very comprehensive, includes National Curriculum Levels when possible, and shows progress. Targets are usually set for every subject where possible. Parents are very well informed and the graphs used to monitor pupils are discussed with them regularly. If they are unable to attend the review, then the school social worker visits the home.
56. The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about pupils' progress is excellent. The school places great importance on having a positive link with all parents. They are actively involved right from the initial stages when pupils are referred to the school. The school social worker's visit to the home helps to provide this bond between home and school. The school aims to maintain this throughout the time the pupils are at Ratcliffe. This may take the form of regular weekly telephone calls between home and care staff, sometimes the use of home/school link books, school visits to care staff and teachers. Documentation about the school is comprehensive, and written and presented in an accessible way. The quality of information is of a high order and parents are kept very well informed.
57. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good although the distance of their homes can restrict it. They ensure that pupils attend school, and their own attendance at annual reviews and school productions is good. The school encourages parents to apply to be parent governors and has a full complement on the governing body. Parents support the school at its major fundraising event, the summer fete. A number of parents take part in the preparation and management of stalls on the day, and many other parents attend. The school actively welcomes ideas and suggestions from parents for improving its provision. Some parents consider their children should have more homework, whilst a few do not know what homework their children are expected to complete during the week. Inspectors agree this should be clarified.

58. The contribution of parents and carers to children's learning at school and at home is good. There are a small number of parents who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to make a strong contribution but most make every effort and attend annual reviews and other occasions to support the learning of their children. The staff who care for the children in the residential provision are an integral part of the school and make a large and valuable contribution to the personal development of pupils. Every opportunity is used to develop the pupils' social skills in a way that enables them to take personal responsibility for their own lives and to build their self-esteem.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management, that provides clear direction, sets high standards, and continually seeks ways for further improvement. This ensures high quality provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There is a strong emphasis upon academic achievement, alongside high, yet realistic expectations for pupils to mature socially, and develop positive attitudes towards themselves and others. Strengths in the leadership from the previous inspection have been built upon even further.
60. The senior management, including deputy assistant principals for education and care, have strong and complimentary skills, that enhance the overall leadership further. The senior management team is cohesive and consistent in its approach, setting excellent examples for others to follow in their work. The leadership and management are appropriately ambitious for the pupils, and strive successfully to achieve excellence.
61. The school aims are reflected systematically, with a strong commitment to developing positive relationships and self esteem, based on consideration, personal responsibility, and respect for authority.
62. There are well developed systems for monitoring the quality of teaching that are both rigorous and systematic. Areas for improvement are suitably identified, and this has resulted in continued improvements in the quality of teaching. There is now a higher proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching than judged previously. The school has a useful cycle of evaluation built into its work. This ensures that actions are reviewed regularly, and suitable consideration is given to their impact upon standards, the quality of teaching and the rate of pupils' progress. Although the school has been identified with many strengths from the previous inspection, and Her Majesty's Inspectorate subsequently, there is no complacency, as the headteacher, senior management and staff set themselves high standards to achieve and surpass.
63. The school development plan is an efficient and effective tool, with appropriate priorities to bring about further improvement. The senior management is in a strong position to develop a performance management strategy because of the high quality data, detailed and readily available, to demonstrate the quality of teaching and its impact on the rate of pupils' progress both academically and socially.
64. The governing body is active and ably led by the chair of governors. It is suitably organised and there is a broad range of expertise and experience brought to the group. There is a clear understanding of the issues and priorities for the school, and the role of governors in strategic matters. Governors are involved regularly in school life, and have appropriate opportunities to monitor the quality of education, and review standards and trends over time.
65. Financial planning is highly efficient. The school bursar has relevant expertise in finances. Records, procedures and financial organisation are kept in meticulous order. Priorities for

spending are given careful consideration, and the principles of best value for money applied rigorously. Specific grants are used prudently, and have a central theme of improving standards and widening the pupils' opportunities. The day to day administration is highly efficient and discrete. The administration staff ensure a calm and thoroughly welcoming approach to pupils, parents, staff and visitors alike, and make a valuable contribution to the ethos, in setting a positive atmosphere, and adding a strong sense of well being in the school.

66. Senior managers and teachers with responsibilities for developing subjects, have clearly delegated responsibilities, with the necessary authority to go about their work efficiently. There are strong lines of accountability with the necessary flexibility to use initiative in the process.
67. The school makes excellent use of new technology for the purposes of tracking pupils' progress, recording their achievements and maintaining records at all levels. This results in trends for pupils' academic performance being monitored closely, alongside a sophisticated, yet straightforward programme to analyse and track pupils' social development. Much of this excellent work has been developed by the assistant head of care, and offers a model of excellence that is recognised and used by other schools nationally.
68. There is an appropriate number of well qualified staff with expertise in subjects, and the sphere of emotional and behavioural difficulties, with the exception of art where skills and subject knowledge are more limited. Staff new to the school have a carefully structured programme to introduce them to school life. Pupils are included in the process of making them feel welcome, for example by inviting them for supper in their residences. The site manager ensures the school and residential facilities are kept in good order, taking care to ensure the surroundings are clean and carefully maintained. The catering staff take equal care and consideration in providing high quality food, that is carefully presented, with the pupils' health and preferences taken into account. The catering staff successfully achieved the "Healthy Eating Award" recently and help to heighten the pupils' awareness of healthy and less healthy foods by attaching stickers to the menu daily.
69. The accommodation is adequate overall, but there are limitations, especially in the size and location of the hall. It is cramped, sited centrally and a thoroughfare for the whole school. This hinders the pupils' opportunities for certain physical education activities and means a continued interruption of lessons, however much consideration is shown by others. The school makes best use of its accommodation, whilst recognising the restrictions in size of the hall and the cramped nature of many specialist rooms, including those for art, science and aspects of design and technology.
70. The grounds make a significant contribution to the pupils' education and staff, including members of the care team, have gone out of their way to enhance the surroundings further. The woodlands have bird boxes and other resources to attract wildlife, and pupils show genuine enjoyment and sensitivity to their environment as a result. Learning resources are satisfactory overall in all subjects, and good in information technology.
71. The senior management leads in an exemplary manner, ensuring a strong and dynamic team of staff, having a high impact upon the quality of provision, both in the education and care of the pupils.

Residential provision

72. The excellent high quality care and residential provision works in harmony with education. It is seamless, coherent and cohesive for the pupils, providing them with a high degree of safety,

security and well being throughout the week. Strategies for managing the pupils' behaviour, and systems for rewards and sanctions are followed consistently between care and education staff, and pupils quickly realise that expectations are similar in either context. This approach enables pupils to gain maximum benefit from their time in the residential setting, and experience adults who maintain stability in their lives. Communication between care and education staff is excellent, ensuring information is handed over efficiently and effectively at the beginning and end of the day.

73. Care staff provide high quality support for the pupils, with good humour, patience and kindness. Whilst recognising the considerable emotional and social needs of the pupils, they offer dignity and respect. There are many very positive relationships established between pupils and adults alike.
74. The leadership and management provided by the assistant principal (care) and the assistant head of care is excellent. They provide excellent role models in their own practice and take a lead in monitoring progress, tracking pupils' development and maintaining meticulous records of the pupils' achievements. Senior care staff are highly effective in managing their teams in the residential settings and achieve high standards in their practice. Senior staff and others are noting variations, patterns and trends in the pupils' behaviour in order to take active measures to bring about positive change. Pupils themselves are included in the process and have a clear understanding of their own goals, challenges and targets.
75. The residential provision is homely and inviting. There is a relaxed, yet orderly atmosphere, with well established routines that are known by everyone. Pupils are encouraged to become as independent as possible, and staff allow considerable freedom, if pupils can prove themselves able to handle such choices. The residential provision offers wide ranging and interesting activities after school and in the evenings. The houses and grounds are often buzzing with appropriate activities, alongside an atmosphere of homeliness. The school achieves an excellent balance between care for the pupils, whilst providing an appropriate education for their wide ranging needs. Access to telephones is made straight forward and ensures pupils, parents and carers alike can maintain close and regular contact through the week. Pupils show warmth for staff, who in turn respond with an appropriate degree of affection. There is a high degree of harmony achieved for pupils with long histories of disturbance and distress.
76. The care staff make a significant contribution in providing boundaries, structures and strategies for pupils that begin to build order, establish respect for themselves and others and take responsibility for their actions. This is firmly rooted in setting high, yet realistic targets for pupils' educational and personal development along the way. The excellent residential provision helps pupils to gain a sense of dignity and pride, as they begin to recognise the possibilities for themselves both now and for the future.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors, headteacher and staff should continue to improve the school further by:

Improving standards in art and aspects of design technology, specifically electronics, systems and control, by:

- raising the teacher's expectations of what can be achieved;
- improving the organisation, resources and environment for the subjects;
- ensuring there are clear and appropriately ambitious learning intentions for the lessons;
- increasing expertise and knowledge in teaching art.

As referred to in paragraphs 4,5,25,28,99,101-103,105-107, 108, 116-119.

Continue to pursue ways of improving the accommodation, specifically the hall for physical education

As referred to in paragraphs 69,146

The school may also wish to address the following aspects for further development:

- clarify with parents the amount and frequency of homework;
- ensuring pupils are equipped for the challenges of life in a multicultural society, by further emphasis upon multi cultural provision;
- implementing plans to develop literacy further across the curriculum.

As referred to in paragraphs 44,57 and 84

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2000 | 5 | 0 | 5 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Below Level 3 | Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Percentage of pupils at each NC level | English | 83% | | 17% | |
| 17% absent 17% absent | Mathematics | 33% | 17% | 33% | |
| | Science | | 33% | 50% | 33% |

| Teachers' Assessments | | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Percentage of pupils at each NC level | English | 50% | 33% | 17% | | |
| | Mathematics | | | 50% | 17% | |
| | Science | | | 33% | 50% | 17% |

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2000 | 11 | 2 | 13 |

| Teachers' Assessments | | Below Level 3 | Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 | Level 6 | Level 7 |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Percentage of pupils at each NC level | English | 49% | 35% | 7% | 7% | | |
| | Mathematics | 7% | 56% | 35% | | | |
| | Science | | 77% | 21% | | | |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Below Level 3 | Level 3 | Level 4 | Level 5 | Level 6 | Level 7 |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Percentage of pupils at each NC level | English | 84% | | | 7% | 7% | |
| | Mathematics | 14%* | 28% | 21% | | | |
| | Science | 28% | 42% | 7% | 7% | | |

(* 28% void in mathematics)

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year | 2000 | 4 | 3 | 7 |

| 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 | 0 | | |
| Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified | School | 0 | 50% | 100% |
| | National | 0 | 8 | 46 |

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

Other external examination results 2000

| General Certificate in Secondary Education | | | | |
|--|------------------------|------------|------------|---------------------------|
| Subject | No of students entered | Grade | Grade | Grade |
| English | 4 | 3 grade F | 1 grade G | |
| Mathematics | 7 | 2 grade E | 3 grade G | |
| Science(double award) | 4 | 1 grade DD | 1 grade EE | 1 grade FF; 1 grade GG |
| Information technology | 2 | 1 grade C | 1 grade F | |
| Information technology (short course) | 6 | 1 grade D | 3 grade F | 2 grade G |
| | | | | |

| Design and technology | 2 | 2 grade C | | |
|--|------------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Food Studies | 3 | 3 grade D | | |
| French(GCSE short course) | 3 | 1 grade D | 2 grade E | |
| Certificate of Educational Achievement | | | | |
| Subject | No of students entered | Pass | Merit | Distinction |
| English | 8 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Design and technology | 5 | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Art | 1 | | | 1 |
| History | 2 | | | 2 |
| Numeracy | | | | 2 |
| Child Care | 4 | 1 | 3 | |
| Motor Vehicles | 4 | 4 | | |

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

| |
|----|
| 82 |
|----|

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 |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 12 | 33 | 29 | 25 | 1 | 0 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll | 62 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | 62 |

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

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 3 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 6 |

Attendance

| Authorised absence | % |
|---------------------------|---|
| School data | 7 |

| Unauthorised absence | % |
|-----------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.5 |

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 | 1 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 |
| Indian | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 61 |
| 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 | 8 | 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: Y5– Y11**

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 12.6 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 5 |
| Average class size | 7 |

Education support staff: Y5– Y11

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 29 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 932 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|-------|
| Financial year | 99/00 |
|----------------|-------|

| | £ |
|--|---------|
| Total income | 1150337 |
| Total expenditure | 1141072 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 17289 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 8355 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 17620 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 62 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 24 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 54 | 42 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 62 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 21 | 58 | 12 | 0 | 8 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 12 | 17 | 25 | 8 | 38 |
| The teaching is good. | 75 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 58 | 33 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 79 | 21 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 71 | 25 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 67 | 33 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 83 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 67 | 29 | 0 | 4 | 0 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 92 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

The boxes may not add up to 100per cent, as some parents did not complete all questions

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The parents' views of the school are a good representation. The additional comments made on the reverse of the questionnaire forms are reflected in the responses above.

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

ENGLISH

77. Pupils' progress throughout the school is good overall, and sometimes very good. This is an improvement on the previous inspection, when it was considered to be satisfactory. The progress is much influenced by the very good teaching of the subject and the flexible introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils' progress is built on well so that pupils between the ages of fourteen and sixteen work towards the GCSE and Certificate of Achievement, where they have been very successful in previous years. In the most recent test results in 2000, 4 pupils passed their GCSEs; 3 achieving grade F, and 1 grade G. Seven pupils achieved Certificates of Achievement; 5 with passes; 2 achieving grade E and 3 pupils achieving grade G. The additional literacy support for some pupils with specific difficulties in reading and writing, is also making a significant contribution to the higher levels of achievement.
78. Pupils aged between eight and eleven make overall good, and sometimes very good progress, through the effective use and application of an adapted literacy hour in well-structured lessons. Pupils have learned the routines of the lessons well and demonstrate a good range of language skills. They use a widening vocabulary, learn new key words quickly, for example words connected with the lay-out of a newspaper, and are able to explain the meaning of these words. Pupils work out the meaning of the word "obituary" with a minimum of clues from the teacher and using the information available in the texts in front of them. They are provided with a range of challenging activities that match their individual requirements well and link the development of reading and writing skills very effectively. Pupils demonstrate good progress in the acquisition of reading skills and use a range of strategies to tackle unknown words, using their knowledge of initial sounds well.
79. By the age of eleven, pupils sit and read a novel quietly for the first ten minutes of the lesson. This prepares them well for the focus on shared reading of a newspaper. Most pupils read clearly and fluently, demonstrating afterwards that they have understood most of the content. They explain the reasons for their opinions by referring to the text. The reading activity is extended when they take a cut up version of the newspaper and reassemble it correctly before they write their own article for a newspaper. Pupils make their own attempts to spell words or use the computer to practise their spelling and support their individual learning. A few pupils write under a model of the teacher's handwriting but most are starting to write in a legible joined script. Pupils are improving the quality of their handwriting and presentation through the opportunities for regular practice and the good guidance they are given. Pupils make good progress in their writing, although relative to reading, the rate of progress is slower. Pupils throughout the school find the process of recording their work hard and challenging. Nevertheless, they make good efforts to improve the speed of writing and presentation of their handwriting.
80. By the age of fourteen, pupils sustain good, and sometimes very good, learning. Their reading, writing, speaking and listening are often combined in an enjoyable manner to promote good English skills. This is observed in a lesson where pupils examine the history contained within a face, discussing the fact that every face tells a story. As each feature is introduced with key words, pupils engage in sensible discussion and complete sentences about the features, building up their own map of a face. Pupils enjoy listening to the stimulating reading of the teacher, enjoying the introduction of accents and dialects into the stories, and the skilled use of questions after this gives pupils opportunities to extend their own language and vocabulary.

81. Discussions are interesting, relevant and demonstrate that pupils are benefiting from the reading of quality literature, and the knowledge that their opinions are valued. They know the purpose of posters, and that the blurb on the back of reading books is to create further interest in the literature, and that there is a persuasive language used in advertising. Pupils create their own leaflets to advertise the facilities of a tourist attraction. They show an awareness of what appeals to different age groups and perseverance in adding more to their leaflet when the teacher makes suggestions about other information that is needed. Writing is frequently a less popular activity but most pupils are able to write in a legible script and know regular spelling patterns, although they sometimes lack the confidence to use them without checking first. Some pupils enjoy reading and read well. Pupils between the ages of eleven and sixteen, who require additional support, receive skilled help before school and during lessons. This is helping to raise standards in reading and writing and giving these pupils additional confidence in reading.
82. Older pupils demonstrate overall good, and sometimes very good learning and a high level of discussion skills when responding to the teacher's good use of open-ended questions. These help pupils to extend their skills in finding information in texts, which in turn promotes good understanding of what they are reading. Pupils show that they are able to respond thoughtfully to other's points of view. This effective way of working enables pupils to take part in a range of learning experiences within a single lesson. It is used well by the teacher to enable pupils to take part in brainstorming sessions and plan their response to a broad range of literature and plays. Pupils show clear recall of events in "Of Mice and Men" and a good understanding of the characters, making some perceptive and mature assessments of them. They read extracts from the story and select words to match their image of one character. Pupils consider the importance of language in creating atmosphere and list words from their copy of the text to use in their own writing. Some pupils write at greater length and produce interesting and imaginative stories. Planning and drafting helps them to sequence these stories appropriately.
83. The teaching of English is very good overall. Very good relationships with pupils and the imaginative use of a variety of resources are major factors in the responsive attitudes of pupils to the subject. Teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants provides high quality support to pupils. Rules for good listening are made clear, and there is a strong emphasis on listening to instructions, kindness, taking care of the equipment, and recognising the importance of rules, boundaries and order. Pupils respond well to this and to the challenge in the activities that are provided. Some pupils learn to use trial and error methods well and feel a sense of achievement when they complete a task. Teachers manage pupils expertly, and enable them to learn and achieve well in all lessons, when some pupils do not feel able to continue with, or contribute to, the lesson. Expectations are clearly defined and pupils respond positively to this because they know what is required of them. Teachers work hard to get pupils to put their hands up to answer questions. This helps to improve the quality of discussions and encourage all those who are keen to contribute to take turns in speaking. Staff support and guide pupils well when they are working on a task, and these adult interventions help pupils to become more settled and willing to complete a task, which in turn enables them to produce work of a higher standard. Praise and encouragement are given freely and pupils value the positive recognition of their work.
84. The newly appointed teacher with responsibility for developing the subject has clear and suitable aims to raise standards in English. She has already put in place several exciting initiatives to stimulate interest in reading and literature, and to improve spelling. There are suitable plans to improve the use of literacy in all other subjects to ensure that pupils use their writing and spelling skills more consistently, so that they produce good quality written work across the curriculum. There is a good balance between the different elements of the subject, and the excellent arrangements for assessment ensure that work is always matched

very well to pupils' abilities and offers a suitable challenge. Meticulous testing has enabled the school to identify those pupils who require additional support in reading and writing. The support given is of very high quality. There have been many improvements since the previous inspection. Very good use is made of information technology and there is a wider range of written work throughout the school. The library has been reorganised, and is an inviting place where pupils enjoy reading their books.

MATHEMATICS

85. Pupils achieve well in mathematics during their time at school, with many pupils gaining very good achievement as they work through the school. In the most recent national test results in 2000, seven pupils entered for GCSE's in mathematics; 5 achieved passes; 2 pupils achieved grade E, and 3 achieved grade G. Two pupils achieved distinction in the Certificate of Achievement examination. Pupils' attainment varies widely, for example some pupils by the age of eleven struggle with basic number work, whilst others are calculating and understanding numeracy at a level appropriate for their age. Those pupils between the ages of eight and eleven, with a significant delay in mathematical knowledge and understanding, have begun to use more accurately a 100 number square, and use counting sticks in their attempts to combine numbers to 10. Other pupils are mentally confident with calculation to 20, and use pencil and paper methods of addition and subtraction to 100 accurately. Pupils are measuring length in centimetres and beginning to understand the measurement of area in square centimetres. They are grasping the skills involved in understanding simple fractions, know how to create bar graphs and can count by rote in steps.
86. By the age of fourteen, pupils gain an understanding of halves and doubles, odd and even numbers and can match percentages to fractions. They are able to accurately use a calculator, measure and draw angles, and measure area, time and temperature. A range of graphs are drawn and interpreted, rotational symmetry is well presented, and an understanding of ratio is accomplished. Pupils in Key Stage 4 read, write and order number to 10,000 and beyond. They can count money reliably, and calculate change. Their knowledge and understanding of probability and prediction is emerging, and pupils present their work in a clear and organised manner. The majority pupils achieve passes in GCSE mathematics.
87. Substantial improvements in mathematics have been made since the previous inspection. Teaching and the progress of pupils have increased from sound to very good, with some excellent teaching. Previously limited teaching approaches, activities and resources have increased to include a good variety of activities and a sufficient level of equipment. The range of inconcise and inaccessible assessment procedures, reported at the time of the last inspection, have been replaced with clear, specific, readily accessible assessment information, which is well used to establish targets and inform planning. During the previous inspection not all staff who taught mathematics were secure in the subject. This has been overcome through training and monitoring. The insufficient use of ICT has been replaced by the regular use of computers in mathematics.
88. Teaching in mathematics is very good overall. Positive use is made of the good knowledge and understanding of numeracy teaching strategies. Pupils respond well to teacher led numeracy activities and make suitable progress in understanding number work. Teachers manage the pupils' behaviour very effectively and set high expectations for academic and social standards. Support staff are efficiently deployed to assist pupils' progress further and teachers make helpful and informative comments in pupils' books. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils promote a willingness to offer answers, explain calculations and to learn from mistakes. Excellent use is made of resources and visual displays. There is a persistent concern to stimulate mathematical thinking and learning, to promote collaboration

in practical activities, and to pursue targets linked carefully to assessment. The high quality teaching enthralled pupils, improves their ability to work independently and develop their strategies to solve problems. The pupils take increasing pride in their work and disruption in mathematics lessons becomes minimal amongst the older pupils.

89. The strong but consultative leadership and development of the subject is a key contributory factor to the improvements since the previous inspection. Regular departmental meetings, the introduction of systematic monitoring of teaching, debate on good practice and a clear vision for pupil improvement are valued assets in mathematics. The successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and associated training have added considerable quality to the curriculum. Numeracy is being well established in other subjects through the use of a grid linked to other subjects, and cross referred to detailed planning within mathematics.

SCIENCE

90. Past achievements in science have been very good, with four pupils passing double science at GCSE in 2000. Results in national tests taken by pupils at the age of eleven and fourteen years, were above the national average for similar schools. From current work seen, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. The temporary arrangements, due to the illness and retirement of the previous teacher responsible for science, have until very recently affected standards overall in the subject. There are now more permanent arrangements established, and standards are steadily improving.
91. Pupils between the ages of eight and eleven have covered a wide range of scientific topics. They know about healthy eating and the digestive system. They have completed some investigations to see how their pulse rate changes with exercise. The youngest pupils who have not been long in the school are able to look at two contrasting specimens of soil, and are beginning learn how to observe and describe them accurately. By the age of eleven, pupils can set up simple circuits and investigate what happens to the brightness of the bulb if they add more batteries.
92. Pupils between the ages of eleven and fourteen are able to describe growing plants, using correct vocabulary and they are testing out the effect of growing seeds in different conditions. They know the difference between acids and alkalis and their effects. In an investigation using an oscilloscope linked to the computer, pupils have extracted a print out of wave length and could discriminate the pitch of a guitar note from that print out. Between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, pupils are building upon previous knowledge of elements and compounds to do investigations to see what happens when metals are burnt. They are then able to describe what they have done and some pupils are beginning to draw conclusions from their observations.
93. All pupils are beginning to use a format to record the context, predictions and results of investigations but notebooks are not detailed to give an ongoing record of facts, investigations and conclusions that form a coherent account of pupils' learning which they could use as a basis of information as they develop their work. Many pupils experience weakness in literacy especially writing and need more support with constructing written accounts and conclusions so that their learning through investigations is consolidated through accurate recording.
94. Pupils' learning is satisfactory. They are confident to discuss the setting up of investigations and very keen to participate. They are beginning to use past knowledge to bear upon new tasks in a logical way hence they are aware of the reason for the investigation and the need to make it a fair test.

95. Pupils' attitudes to their science lessons are overall satisfactory. They are very keen to try investigations, sometimes that keenness overrides concentration and attention to detail, and they need a good deal of support to find the discipline and consistency to get accurate results. There were incidents of silly and distracting behaviour in the laboratory, but overall pupils are inquisitive, interested and they enjoy their science.
96. The quality of teaching is overall satisfactory with a single example of unsatisfactory teaching, when lack of clear behaviour management meant that little learning was achieved in the lesson. The teaching has also some important good elements, in particular the teacher's secure subject knowledge. This is combined with planning strongly based on learning through investigation. These give pupils the opportunity to find out for themselves, and teachers are then able to use their knowledge to extend that new discovery by discussion of its implications. However learning outcomes for individual pupils are not always clear, and safe and desirable working practices in the laboratory are not made sufficiently explicit to pupils. Hence whilst some pupils get absorbed in investigation, others get muddled and discouraged. Teachers have good relationships, particularly with senior pupils, and their encouraging and enabling attitude in for instance an environmental education lesson produced a good session where pupils become motivated to improve their school environment. Teachers use good questioning to help pupils but there is insufficient time given in the second part of the lesson to check out, consolidate and reinforce the learning of the lesson for the whole group.
97. The coordinator is new to the school and has worked very hard to cover the transition from a previous teacher, and has established the laboratory as a place of interesting science, firmly based on experimentation and discovery. A scheme of work covering National Curriculum requirements is now established and the coordinator is aware of the need to ensure that short term planning from the scheme identifies pupils' learning outcomes for the wide ranging needs and potential in each class. There are suitable plans to develop a consistent assessment system integrated into the scheme of work. There is good liaison as pupils move through the school, to ensure they have scientific experience that builds on from their previous learning.
98. There has been a good level of improvement since the last inspection. Pupils have gained nationally recognised awards that have been consistently high. Health and safety issues identified in the previous report have been addressed effectively, and plans for the subject are suitably detailed, with information technology securely integrated within the subject.

ART

99. Standards achieved in art are not as high as they could be by the time the pupils reach the age of sixteen. This is because the targets set for the pupils to achieve over time are not sufficiently ambitious. In the most recent national test results, 1 pupil achieved a Certificate of Educational Achievement with distinction.
100. By the age of eleven, from the small sample of work seen, pupils use colour successfully to evoke the feeling of light in their landscapes and shape in the painting of pyramids, Egyptian dress and their Gods. They investigate different materials carefully, and colour them accurately using tie and dye techniques. However, there is insufficient evidence to judge the progress made or the standards achieved at this stage.
101. By the age of fourteen, pupils' progress in learning and the standards achieved are well below what could be achieved. Pupils develop and use colour in their packaging designs. They learn about patterns and the use of colour in their designs. However, pupils' drawing skills and the skills of applying colour are underdeveloped. There is very little evidence of pupils building on their earlier experiences to make progress in their learning about patterns and the use of different colours. Pupils know the primary colours but their knowledge of how they can

be combined to produce other colours is very limited. They use the work of Chagall when studying the 'Impressionists and Imagination.'

102. By the age of sixteen, the standards pupils achieve are well below what could be realistically expected. Pupils are able to model in three dimensions using clay and card. Colour work improves and some pupils show satisfactory levels of drawing skills. They use the work of other artists to inform their drawings and some pupils are stimulated by illustrations in books on 'Enchantica'. Pupils are not given enough opportunities that build on their earlier experiences and their progress is limited. Skills of refining are not developed to enable pupils to improve their own work. Their knowledge of other materials and processes to improve their own control of both tools and techniques is limited. While there is some evidence of evaluation of their own work and that of other artists, there is very little evidence of it being used in their finished work. Sketchbooks have been introduced, but pupils do not know how to use them to record their observations and ideas.
103. There are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to research art, craft and design in their own locality and from a variety of historical, social and cultural contexts. While there are planned opportunities for pupils to use information communication technology in their design work, the lack of preparation by the teacher prevents it taking place. For example, when a pupil attempts to scan in his design, the system is not set up to enable this to happen, time is wasted and the pupil becomes frustrated. The access to data based information to support pupils' researching in art is limited. Pupils generally enjoy art, but too often time is lost waiting to be taught basic skills and learning loses its momentum.
104. Teaching is by class teachers for pupils between the ages of eight and eleven, and by a subject teacher, in the secondary department, who is not an art specialist. No teaching was seen with younger pupils, and so the quality could not be judged, but the planning, both long and medium term, is secure.
105. The quality of teaching for pupils between the ages of eleven and sixteen is satisfactory in lessons observed during the inspection, but over time, there are weaknesses, as expectations are not high enough to ensure pupils achieve standards that match those seen in other subjects. The teacher encourages pupils to concentrate and try harder but expectations could realistically be higher. The procedures for assessment and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are very good but their use to monitor progress and inform planning are only satisfactory. There are some strengths in the long, medium term and lesson planning but the teaching does not consistently emphasise the focus for work and the standards to be achieved. This means pupils' work can lack direction and they become frustrated. Planning does not build on pupils' previous skills and experiences in art. The management of some behaviour is not secure and can be distracting for other pupils.
106. There is some comparing of ideas and methods but not sufficient referencing to skills and techniques to show how they can be achieved and improved. Skills are shown to individual pupils but the opportunities to review previous skills and demonstrate new ones are infrequent. There is an adequate range of learning resources. The quality of many of them is unsatisfactory, they are poorly presented and not easy to access to encourage pupils to make independent, informed choices. Pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to be discriminate when choosing materials. The teacher allocates learning support to maximise opportunities for pupils' learning. Questions are used to encourage recall but they are not used to motivate and extend the learning. The teacher and support staff go some way to guide and encourage pupils towards making appropriate choices.
107. While there is some evidence of the use of art in other subjects it is not well developed across the school to meet the needs of all pupils. A few pupils by the age of sixteen, achieve well in

accredited course work. While there are some good displays of artwork around the school, art and the celebration of pupils' work is not a strong feature. In the art room, the learning environment is disorganised and does not reflect the quality required to raise standards. The subject is not well managed or coordinated and the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching in the subject is under developed. The standards seen at the last inspection have not improved significantly, and the quality of teaching has declined.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

108. The subject, design and technology, is taught separately, as food technology and resistant materials, by different teachers. Textiles is included for pupils between the ages of eight and eleven. While the standards pupils achieve overall are good, there is a marked difference in the high standards achieved in food technology compared to those in resistant materials and textiles.

Food technology

109. Pupils achieve very high standards and make very good progress in food technology. In the most recent national test results, 3 pupils passed GCSE food technology achieving grade D and 5 pupils gained Certificates of Educational Achievement; 3 with distinctions; 1 merit and 1 pass. All pupils are entered successfully for the Certificate of Achievement award. An increasing number of those pupils are also entered successfully for the GCSE examination with improving results since the first entries in 1998. This progress is due to the very high teacher expectation, very good and frequently, excellent teaching, clearly focused on developing knowledge and skills, and the high quality learning environment. In design and technology, 2 pupils gained GCSE's, achieving grade C.
110. Progress in pupils' learning in lessons is due in no small part to the excellent support assistant working in close harmony with the teacher and pupils. There are good links with the local college, where three pupils attending a link course are complimented on their behaviour and application being better than that of some of the full-time students. Pupils' work at the college is very worthwhile because it builds on and extends the learning and experiences established at the school. The pupils apply themselves industriously and work efficiently on their own, and frequently without supervision.
111. In food technology, by the age of fourteen, the pupils achieve very good standards in their learning and make very good progress. They analyse commercial products, by identifying key ingredients in order to extend their understanding of how these are used in different ways. Their observation and group discussion skills are excellent. This is clearly evident in the quality discussion about how products are developed. Using a basic recipe, they can make informed choices to design their own food product. They know the basic rules and methods for combining ingredients, and have a very high working knowledge of health and safety. By the age of fourteen, pupils make very good progress building on knowledge, skills and understanding of how to design and make, using food for domestic and commercial production. The levels achieved by the majority of pupils are very high in relation to the degree of special educational needs and close to national expectations.
112. In food technology, by the time they leave school, pupils have a very good grasp of the design process. Projects are very well planned and designed for pupils to develop a broad range of knowledge and skills across a very good range of contexts and experiences that frequently extend into the pupils' moral and social development. For example the project focused on planning and preparing a buffet builds on previous work, focuses on pupils proficiency preparing and producing foods to a high standard, with best regard for associated health and safety issues. Pupils work well together, take responsibility with confidence, make

decisions, manage and organise tasks, sequence activities, work to deadlines and to an established high standard. They really enjoy taking part especially when entertaining their guests. They are rightly proud of their achievements, talk freely about how the foods were prepared and conduct themselves in a well-mannered and courteous way. They are very well placed to achieve high standards in their Certificate of Achievement Award. The knowledge and skills learned are frequently put to very good use by the senior girls in Exe house when entertaining guests, something they do very well.

113. Teaching is by class teachers for pupils between the ages of eight and eleven, and by subject specialists in the secondary department. No teaching was seen with the younger pupils, and so the quality could not be judged but the planning, both long and medium term, is secure. Teaching is good overall for all secondary pupils with very good and excellent teaching in food technology.
114. In food technology the teacher and the support assistant work as a seamless team. They know the pupils, and planning is meticulous and very effective. Introductions focus on key points and set high expectations. Resourcing in all respects is exemplary and makes a tremendous contribution to sustaining and informing pupils' learning. The learning environment celebrates pupils' work and achievements and is respected and appreciated by the pupils especially the security and comfort it offers. The staff exercise a high degree of sensitivity when offering help and support to pupils so as not to lower their self esteem. Pupils find the work demanding, but because of the age appropriateness of the activities and the excellent pupil management by both staff, pupils concentrate, persevere and enjoy their work. The procedures and practice for assessing pupils' work and progress are a strength in food technology.
115. There are many strong features in food technology. Clear and appropriate targets for improvement are in place, pupils' achievements, especially through the individual education plans, are monitored and the data analysed and used to inform planning. There have been very good improvements since the last inspection in food technology.

Resistant materials

116. There is insufficient evidence to judge the progress made overall, or the standards achieved in designing and making by the time the pupils are eleven. In 2000, two pupils gained grade C in design and technology GCSE, representing very good achievements given their overall level of ability. Elsewhere, for pupils between the ages of eleven and sixteen, in resistant materials, the standards achieved could realistically be higher, and overall progress is limited. This is because the teacher's expectations are not sufficiently high, and the organisation of lessons and resources hinder the amount of progress pupils achieve over time. From the small sample of work seen, pupils by the age of eleven can work with felt to design and make slippers. They make patterns and use them to measure, mark and cut the fabric with a fair degree of accuracy. They join the pieces together by temporary means for machining.
117. By the age of fourteen, when using resistant materials, the standards achieved by pupils are not as high as could be realistically expected. Pupils can construct boxes using comb joints with varying degrees of success but they are very dependent upon the teacher, and lack the basic knowledge and skills to measure, mark and cut with increased accuracy.
118. Pupils between the ages of fourteen and sixteen can choose to follow a Certificate of Achievement award in motor vehicle and road user studies. In the most recent national test results in 2000, 4 pupils passed Certificates of Achievement in the Motor Vehicles examination. This is a new course and still developing. Other opportunities include a two day

driving course. When using resistant materials, pupils' attitudes to their work have improved. Pupils are more competent using basic skills and tools with some accuracy. Basic construction skills have improved but the overall standards achieved are unsatisfactory. Designing skills are under developed and pupils' working knowledge of materials is limited. Their progress through tasks is still very dependent upon the teacher, especially when making decisions about the order in which to assemble and finish the different components.

119. In resistant materials the teaching is satisfactory overall, with some unsatisfactory aspects in the planning and pace of lessons and the low level of the teacher's expectation of the pupils. The standards of teaching have fallen to satisfactory, and there are still limited opportunities to work with electronics and pneumatics in both the primary and secondary phase. Resources in the workshop are adequate, but the storage and presentation is disorganised, and does not reflect the high quality learning environment required for raising standards. This aspect of design and technology is not well led or managed due to the lack of momentum displayed by the subject leader, in order to bring about the necessary improvements. Progress in this aspect of the subject has been limited since the previous inspection.

HISTORY and GEOGRAPHY

120. The level of achievement of pupils throughout the school, and in both subjects is good. The department has offered a national accreditation in both history and geography for the past two years, and in 2000, two pupils gained distinction in the Certificate of Education in history.
121. The youngest pupils at the age of eight are developing a good range of knowledge and skills in both subjects. In history they are learning about the Romans and can use contemporary accounts to give them an accurate knowledge of life in Roman Britain. They are able to compare the likely views of the Romans and the Celts. Another group, thinking about the leisure industry in Devon, are able to identify leisure attractions whilst on a visit to Dawlish.
122. Pupils by the age of fourteen have progressed to using their knowledge of the events leading to the execution of Mary Queen of Scots to consider whether Elizabeth the First made the correct decision. Pupils are learning about the factors which influence the location of industry in the United Kingdom, and from their work about the Industrial Revolution, understand the historical reasons for the present location. They are extending this understanding through research on the Internet.
123. Pupils between the ages of fourteen and sixteen are well advanced in completing course work for their Certificate of Achievement in both subjects, and show through discussion an insightful knowledge of the events which preceded the second world war. The geography group, whilst looking at the incidence of river flooding, are able to use knowledge gained in previous years to interpret aerial photographs. They can give clear logical consideration to the geographical factors which cause areas to be in danger of flooding.
124. Pupils' learning and progress is good both during lessons and over time. Pupils are developing the skills in both subjects to look for accurate information free from bias. They are able, with support, to write good quality accounts and use time lines, maps and diagrams as well as information technology, to illustrate their work. They understand how they are learning and hence know how to improve their work.
125. The quality of teaching is consistently good overall throughout the school, and frequently very good in both subjects. Lessons are exciting and stimulating because the teachers have secure subject knowledge which is used very effectively to widen pupils perceptions. Teachers are skilled at using the pupils' contributions and adding to them to make a leaning point for the whole class. For instance in a geography lesson about road systems, where

each pupil designed their own motorway map of England and then shared their ideas with each other, and in so doing understood the factors to consider in designing a road system. Teachers have high standards for both behaviour and attitudes, so that pupils give of their best, particularly in completing their written work. Teachers use focused and challenging questions very well, and make pupils really think for themselves. The pupils draw upon previous skills and concepts and apply them, for instance in working out how Newcomen's Atmospheric Engine could be used in the early mining industry.

126. Pupils' attitudes to their lessons are good. They respond well to the clear boundaries of behaviour and are keen, attentive and remain on task for considerable periods of time. Senior pupils are increasingly able to work independently, and in a lesson with very useful specific writing support, were able to research information and complete a good reasoned description of a contemporary second world war cartoon. All pupils take care with their written work and are rightly proud of their neat notebooks.
127. The coordinator has worked very effectively with teachers of pupils in the junior department, to establish plans for both subjects which covers the National Curriculum requirements for pupils of all ages. The previous plans for geography gave pupils a secure basis of knowledge about the United Kingdom, and the coordinator is aware that the new subject plans will need to be enriched with examples from all parts of the world in order to give a fully broad experience to pupils. Field work is not yet securely integrated into the planning scheme. There is a useful and comprehensive assessment system. Resources are adequate but require enhancement to cover the new scheme of work. Information technology is now being used very effectively especially for pupils between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, and this is another area the coordinator intends to develop.
128. The level of improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The quality of teaching has improved, pupils are now being prepared for more challenging examinations and information technology is securely integrated into both subjects.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

129. Pupils throughout the school are achieving a very good foundation of knowledge and understanding of the terminology, devices and tools used in information and communications technology (ICT). In the most recent national test results in 2000, in the short course for information and communications technology, 6 pupils passed GCSE; 2 pupils achieved passes; 1 pupil achieved grade D, 3 pupils achieved grade F and 2 achieved grade E. Two pupils passed full GCSE at grades C and F.
130. Throughout the school, pupils combine graphics and text with increasing accuracy. They include pictures in their work from a variety of sources including the Internet, digital camera and scanner. The Internet is regularly used to find, save and store information, following straightforward lines of enquiry. It is also used for wide ranging communication purposes, including pupils' work on the school website and establishing local and international contacts. Pupils generate very good quality presentations based on work in other subjects. They produce data in graph form, and enter information into databases. As pupils move up the school they become increasingly competent in using art packages, computer aided design and spreadsheets. Data of more complexity is handled effectively, work such as producing newsletters is enhanced through careful editing. Pupils come to generate, develop, organise and present ICT work with increasing quality.
131. Improvements in ICT since the previous inspection are significant and impressive. ICT was judged to be an under developed subject and poorly used in other subjects at the time of the last inspection. It is now substantially developed as a subject, and is well embedded across

the whole school curriculum. A good range of resources have replaced the old computers. They are now used more frequently. The improvement in the progress and achievement of the pupils is outstanding. Previous unsatisfactory progress is now at least good and often very good, and pupils are now able to successfully tackle complex higher functions of ICT.

132. Teaching overall is very good across the school for pupils of all ages. ICT is taught well, and in some lessons teaching is excellent. The high level of knowledge and understanding is demonstrated in the expert demonstration of software new to pupils, and in the very good ability of presenting the use of computer tools and ideas for development. The pupils' attentiveness and interest in gaining further information is promoted by the enthusiastic and encouraging approach in the teaching. Clear objectives and structure to lessons support the application of mental and creative effort and the gaining of new skills amongst pupils. Good relationships and clear instructions whilst supporting individual pupils, leads to independent learning and high levels of sustained concentration. The overriding concern for improvement, through the strong reinforcement of applying technology to raise standards results in pupils being very productive, evaluating their work, exploring the facilities available and producing complex and enhanced work.
133. The ambitious and successful implementation of the ICT development plan, under the strong leadership of the co-ordinator has considerably raised the profile of ICT in the school. Teachers of other subjects have benefited from training based in school, and they value the support available. The use of ICT across the curriculum is well established and continuing to develop, and adds positively to learning in all subjects. The good range of resources and activities, regular Internet access and the strong link between consistent assessment, individual targets and planning have contributed to the good quality curriculum in ICT.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

134. Achievement across the school is very good and pupils make very good progress in learning French. Pupils between the ages of fourteen and sixteen work towards the GCSE Foundation Level certificate in French and have achieved well in this with 3 passes; 1 pupil achieved grade D, and 2 achieved grade E. Pupils are well disposed towards listening to and speaking French. They try hard to copy the intonation and speech of the teacher and the voice on the tape. By the time they leave the school, a number of pupils speak words, phrases and short sentences competently. Most pupils understand the gist of what their teacher is saying to them in the language. They understand simple sentences, and ask or answer questions in French on a wide range of topics. Many pupils use a limited vocabulary and phrases for basic communication and are willing to attempt to recall the names of for example, animals or classroom equipment. Some lack confidence to speak spontaneously, but respond well to the gentle encouragement of the teacher.
135. Teaching overall is very good. It is never less than good, and sometimes it is very good or excellent. The teacher, who is a fluent speaker of the language, has high expectations of responses in French, and works very hard to make lessons fun. The atmosphere is calm so that it promotes good, and sometimes very good learning. Pupils between the ages of eight and eleven learn about French customs and culture whilst they learn the names for certain animals and creatures. They are enthralled by the teacher's description of the cooking and eating of snails and frogs' legs, and are still anxious to try them! Pupils relish the pronunciation of certain words, repeating them over and over again, with or without the tape.
136. There is a clear emphasis on listening and looking carefully during lessons and this helps pupils to learn and recall vocabulary. The teacher is very skilled at directing pupils' attention

and in using the school's strategies for managing behaviour. She helps pupils to grow in confidence as she patiently waits for them to volunteer a new idea, such as "I have a little sister", when giving personal information in answer to specific questions. The teacher has established routines well so that pupils know the format of lessons. This enables them to respond spontaneously to the voice on the tape or answer simple questions from the teacher, building steadily on previous learning. The teacher plans course work for the older pupils very carefully and explains to a pupil how he may earn extra marks in the examination. The pupil reflects on this and then works well in a partnership with the teacher, building on their good relationship. There is prompt praise for correct answers and additional information given to enable the pupil to work out what the answer should be when he has not made the correct decision in his first answer.

137. The teacher, who is a very able and experienced co-ordinator of the subject, maintains good records of pupils' progress, and ensures that pupils consolidate their learning before they move on to the next stage. The annual visit to France, and increasing communication with French speaking schools around the world, enhance pupils' learning further. Resources for the teaching and learning of French are good and information technology is used well with all year groups. There have been good improvements since the previous inspection, including the raising of attainment through good progress, more resources and the introduction of accreditation for pupils between the ages of fourteen and sixteen.

MUSIC

138. Music has been recently established with the appointment of a specialist music teacher. Pupils are beginning to achieve well in relation to their special educational needs. They are making good progress, developing a growing appreciation of music and the opportunities offered. Many pupils have had limited experience of music until very recently, and some find the instruments overwhelming at times. The recently appointed teacher with responsibility for developing the subject has already made a significant contribution to the quality of music and its profile across the school. There is a well organised and attractive music room and good quality resources are being added regularly. Currently pupils are taught music between the ages of eight and fourteen.
139. Teaching is very good overall, due to the knowledge and skill of an experienced musician, who brings expertise and enthusiasm for the subject. The music planning is carefully structured, and realistic to match the needs of pupils and their current levels. Pupils are encouraged to express their preferences and some show sensitivity and appreciation for rhythm.
140. The music room is carefully organised, attractive and interesting. Younger pupils between the ages of eight and eleven are learning how to use instruments and make the best of their time in a specialist room. For some, this is a new experience, and their responses are being modified effectively. The teacher uses a wide range of materials, videos and visual images to enhance the lessons. There is already good use of information technology and programmes to support musical appreciation and musicianship skills. Older pupils are showing increasing awareness of different styles of music, expressing preferences and giving reasons for their choices.
141. There are additional activities, including choir and music practice. Younger pupils are beginning to enjoy singing together. The teacher with responsibility for developing the subject has very good plans to extend the subject further. It is set to make an important contribution to the school's ethos. Improvements since the previous inspection have been very good due to the introduction and increased emphasis placed upon the subject, and the enhanced opportunities for pupils to study music as a result.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

142. The achievements made by the pupils in physical education increase from good to excellent as they move through the school. The achievements of the older pupils matches age appropriate expectations. Pupils of all ages understand safety issues and achieve a wide range of physical and competitive skills. Pupils by the age of eleven explore simple skills and develop basic control and coordination. Pupils by the age of fourteen select their skills and actions appropriately, applying them to indoor games with coordination and control. They accomplish a range of gymnastic skills such as performing a variety of vaults. The understanding of tactics and playing as a team emerges well over time. Pupils compare and comment constructively on their own and others' skills. This continues between the ages of fourteen and sixteen, when pupils modify, refine and improve performance. Older pupils demonstrate the physical coordination, gymnastic ability and sports skills that may be expected of them.
143. The introduction of termly individual targets, linked to regular assessment is a significant improvement in physical education since the previous inspection. The need to both renew some equipment and store it safely have been well addressed.
144. During the week of the inspection the physical education lessons for pupils between the ages of eight and eleven were taught by a supply teacher. The teaching demonstrated high expectations of behaviour and clear objectives to improve individual skills within a range of activities. Records indicate that the pupils make good progress over time.
145. The teaching of physical education for secondary aged pupils is very good. The specialist knowledge and understanding, high expectations of performance and behaviour, and enthusiastic approach, ensures high levels of participation from the pupils. The teaching challenges and inspires pupils, resulting in productive lessons carried out at a brisk pace. The very good immediate assessment linked to a very supportive and encouraging approach helps the pupils understand what is required and respond well. They are very interested in their achievements, and their involvement in filling in personal assessment books furthers the mutual respect between the teacher and pupils. Teaching in physical education effectively contributes towards the pupils' personal development. There is a growth in willingness to attempt more challenging tasks, they learn to accept taking turns, and the older pupils are able to amicably negotiate this skill amongst themselves.
146. The coordination of physical education is excellent, extremely well organised and makes the best of the facilities and resources available. The curriculum for the younger pupils is currently being redeveloped, but overall it is good when taking account of the limitations imposed by the small size of classes and more particularly by the restrictive accommodation. The hall is used for many purposes, and is inadequate for physical education through its small size and difficult location. The fluency and nature of lessons are reduced due to the hall being used for other activities and being a main way through to classrooms. The dimensions of the hall prevent a wider option of activities being offered, such as team games, badminton and trampolining. The school is investigating the development of a sports hall and is striving to making further improvements in the accommodation for physical education.
147. Further quality is added to physical education through extra curricular activities and inter school matches. Schemes of work and thorough assessment provide for good continuity and progression. Individual plans and targets are broken down into small steps when necessary to ensure success and good individual progress. This is well assisted by good use of school and national awards in physical education. Strengths from the previous inspection have been sustained effectively and further developed.

OUTDOOR EDUCATION

148. Outdoor and adventurous activities are at the heart of the school ethos and significantly contribute to overcoming barriers to learning. The excellent teaching and planning enable high levels of achievement in a range of high quality pursuits. Additionally the impact on the successful personal development of the pupils is outstanding.
149. The standards achieved in outdoor education match and go beyond expectations seen for similar aged pupils in mainstream schools. The planning and careful development of knowledge, results in the pupils using a range of orienteering skills. They cope with problem solving activities such as taking precise compass bearings and successfully arriving at the correct destination. The pupils meet the challenges presented in outdoor activities such as sailing, windsurfing, canoeing, rock climbing, caving, hill walking and camping expeditions. They participate in conservation activities. They are able to demonstrate coordination and control with confidence and versatility in response to changing conditions and situations. There is an understanding of safety issues, and a willingness to accept roles and responsibilities, for example leading and supporting less capable pupils when caving.
150. The expert teaching, highly effective planning through a modular approach, and strategies that suit the special needs of the pupils, lead to excellent and high levels of progress through the key stages. There were no outdoor education lessons for younger pupils during the week of the inspection, but records indicate a favourable foundation of learning and progress. The excellent teaching makes a strong impact upon the pupils' motivation, concentration and physical effort within challenging learning environments. The closely monitored pace of learning ensures highly effective support, and a sensitive balance of intervention, and encouraging independence leads to the pupils' success.
151. There are very challenging, yet realistic targets set. These are stated explicitly with regard to personal development alongside the activity, helping develop the pupils' confidence and self esteem. The excellent high quality teaching, able support of care staff and organisation of activities demands the full participation of the pupils, and nurtures collaboration, trust, care for each other and constructive relationships exceptionally well. During an orienteering expedition there were no incidents of poor behaviour.
152. Excellent acquisition of physical skills and the development of mutual respect arise from the enriching opportunities provided. The pupils reveal their initial nervousness and how they come to thoroughly enjoy outdoor and adventurous activities. They display a sense of wonder upon reaching an underground lake, sheer excitement and a strong sense of achievement continues into the evening following each activity.
153. Outdoor education stimulates improvement in the pupils' quality of life. They develop and apply remarkably good practical, physical and social skills in unfamiliar settings. This reflects back into the school where it adds considerable value to provision for social development. High standards have been sustained over a considerable period of time.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

154. Progress and achievement are good throughout the school. Through well-planned and appropriate topics, pupils between the ages of eight and eleven learn about stories and people in Christianity and compare the worship and beliefs of major world religions. They have reasoned and sensible discussions about baptism, recalling the words such as font and christening gown. They show respect and reverence towards the symbols they are shown. Pupils by the age of eleven compare and contrast the ways in which families celebrate the birth of a child in other religions. With good direction from the teacher, they look for names

suitable for Jewish babies in the Old Testament. They find this a very interesting activity. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus for the subject.

155. As they move through the school, pupils broaden their knowledge and understanding about other religions, beliefs, teachings and lifestyles in a very systematic and sensitive manner. This encourages them to answer and respond to questions about beliefs, purpose and values. Pupils consolidate and develop their knowledge as they learn about different ways of worship and celebration and know the places where people go to worship. The older pupils discuss a wide range of topics, moral issues about the environment, the family, scruples and dilemmas and decisions in the community, as well as racism and stereotypes.
156. Teaching in religious education is overall good, and sometimes very good. Teachers carefully create a mood for the lessons, either a warm atmosphere to create interest or a feeling of calm before a period of meditation. Pupils in Year 8 come into the lesson asking, "Can we do some meditation, please?" After sharing some reading about Buddha, pupils sit on the floor, relaxed and silent, concentrating on their breathing, valuing the opportunities provided by the teacher for this experience. Following the meditation, pupils listen well to the calm, clear reading by the teacher and make relevant, valuable contributions to a discussion about the teachings of Buddha. In assembly, pupils reflect upon the "thought for the week", that a good teacher is not the one with the most knowledge but the one who gives you help to gain knowledge. The teacher uses this theme well to encourage pupils to work together as a team and help each other.
157. Good use is made of information technology to encourage pupils to extend their interest and knowledge in religious education topics. Pupils take pride in displays of their work. This helps them to see that their efforts are valued and worthy of display. Teachers encourage pupils to use their previous learning to consider traditional Christian attitudes to marriage and weddings alongside the Jewish marriage service and traditions thoughtfully. Support staff make very useful contributions towards pupils' learning by prompting questions and record any significant learning in lessons.
158. The curriculum is well planned and the subject is coordinated well. The subject makes an important contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, raising their awareness of self and the feelings of others. Standards in religious education have been maintained since the previous inspection and the planned inclusion of religious education in the personal and social education programme in Year 11 has been put into effect.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EDUCATION

159. There is a highly organised and systematic approach to developing the pupils' personal and social skills, taught throughout the school. The subject permeates the entire curriculum. It is foundational to the school, its academic work, and the pupils' social and emotional development. Wherever possible, pupils gain recognised awards. In the most recent national test results, 4 pupils gained Certificates of Achievement in Childcare; 3 achieved merits and 1 achieved a pass.
160. The planning is currently being revised, but the content of lessons is high quality and carefully presented. There is very good quality teaching, for example in sex and drugs education, that is clear and uncomplicated. All aspects are covered in a sensitive manner that sets high expectations for pupils in their discussions and use of language, and includes appropriate terminology.
161. There is a powerful and dynamic integration of personal and social education across the provision for care and education of the pupils. This is linked closely to the outstanding provision for outdoor education, where cooperation, interdependency, trust and collaboration are expected as matter of course. These characteristics are largely unfamiliar to many pupils.
162. The coordination of the subject is outstanding, and the teacher sets an excellent role model in his own practice for others to follow. The subject is led with enthusiasm, energy and expertise. Strengths from the previous inspection have been sustained and further developed. The subject continues to make an excellent contribution to school life.