

INSPECTION REPORT

AYNSLEY SCHOOL

Blythe Bridge

LEA area: Stoke-on-Trent

Unique reference number: 124498

Headteacher: Mrs Angela Hardstaff

Reporting inspector: Rosemary Eaton
15173

Dates of inspection: 29th October – 2nd November 2001

Inspection number: 239526

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	4 – 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Aynsleys Drive Blythe Bridge Stoke-on-Trent
Postcode:	ST11 9HJ
Telephone number:	01782 392071
Fax number:	01782 388911
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Ann Prophett
Date of previous inspection:	21.10.96

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15173	Rosemary Eaton	Registered inspector	English Foundation Stage	School's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
13462	Roberta Mothersdale	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
14891	Jenny Hall	Team inspector	Equal opportunities English as an additional language Science Physical education Personal, social and health education	How good are the curricular or other opportunities offered to pupils?
10781	Bob Thompson	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology French	
7327	Tony Dunsbee	Team inspector	Design and technology Music Religious education	
18932	Helen Jones	Team inspector	Art Geography History	

The inspection contractor was:

QICS
Ibsley
4 West Cliff Road
Dawlish
Devon
EX7 9EB

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved?	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	24
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Aynsley is a school for pupils aged 4 to 16 with moderate learning difficulties. Currently, 109 pupils attend. There are four children in the Reception year and one pupil in Year 1 is also taught in this class. There are no pupils in Year 2. Two-thirds of the pupils are boys. When they start school, the attainment of most pupils is well below average. They all have statements for moderate learning difficulties. Additionally, 14 pupils have behavioural difficulties mentioned in their statements, and the school has identified a further 14 who also present challenging behaviour. About one-third of the pupils have speech and language difficulties and six have varying degrees of hearing loss. Pupils' homes are throughout a very wide area to the east of Stoke, with many from the inner city. There are only six pupils from minority ethnic groups. Five of these have English as an additional language, but are not in the early stages of learning the language. At the time of the previous inspection, the school also catered for post-16 students, and there were no children aged four on its roll.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Aynsley is a good school. Pupils make good progress and achieve well, because the quality of teaching is good. The school is well led and managed and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good. Learning support assistants make very good contributions.
- Pupils' personal development is very good, because the school encourages them to be independent and responsible.
- Relationships between pupils and with staff are very good.
- There are excellent links with the local community.
- The headteacher, senior staff and governors lead and manage the school well.
- The school makes efficient use of its funds in order to support pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- The current procedures for dealing with the challenging behaviour of a minority of pupils result in too many exclusions.
- Attendance rates are unsatisfactory.
- The procedures for reviewing pupils' statements and informing parents about their children's progress are unsatisfactory.
- Insufficient time is allowed for pupils aged 11 to 16 to be able to make enough progress in French.
- The accommodation has a number of weaknesses, especially in the outdoor play facilities for children in the Reception year.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in October 1996, when it was described as an 'improving school'. Since then it has gone through a turbulent period in its leadership. Despite this, it has made good progress, chiefly because of the strong leadership of the deputy headteacher, who led the school for a period of two years. In nearly all subjects, pupils now make much better progress, and the quality of teaching has also shown a good improvement. After a slow start, the school tackled systematically the issues raised by the previous report. Progress has been good in all of the areas over which the school has control.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 6	by Year 11	Key
speaking and listening	A	A	A	very good A
reading	A	B	B	good B
writing	B	B	B	satisfactory C
mathematics	B	A	A	unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education	A	B	B	poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	C	C	

The school sets suitable targets for groups of pupils to achieve in literacy and numeracy. In 2001, most of these were met. Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well in art, mathematics, and speaking and listening. Pupils achieve well in science and are currently making very good progress in lessons, because the quality of teaching is now very good. Progress and achievement are good in reading, writing, history, information and communication technology, physical education, and personal, social and health education. In other subjects, progress and achievement are satisfactory, except for French, where they are unsatisfactory. Year 10 and 11 pupils have many aspects of their work accredited – for example, through Certificates of Achievement. In some subjects – for example, art – the accreditation could be more challenging because pupils are making such good progress. Children in the Reception year are making good or very good progress in all their areas of learning, apart from physical development where progress is satisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils are enthusiastic about lessons and activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils behave well. However, on occasions, a minority display aggressive and disruptive behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are very keen to take on responsibilities – for example, looking after younger ones. The oldest pupils often work together very well.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. A significant number of pupils are poor attenders. The others are usually punctual to school and lessons.

Occasionally, a minority of pupils come into lessons determined not to work. This interrupts their own learning and that of others. There are more exclusions than would be expected for a school of this type. The oldest pupils accept a range of responsibilities – for example, during work experience placements, serving in the tuck shop, or helping staff on duty at breaks. Children in the Reception year are making very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. They are becoming more independent and willing and able to play with others.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Reception	Years 1 – 6	Years 7 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good in English and personal, social and health education. In mathematics and science, teaching is very good. The skills of communication, including literacy are taught well. Numeracy is taught very well. In many lessons, teachers plan interesting tasks for pupils and use time well, changing activities regularly so pupils remain interested and try hard. When, occasionally, their planning is less effective, pupils become bored and restless. Teachers are skilled at involving pupils in discussions, which help them to understand and so make progress. However, occasionally, the more confident pupils are allowed to dominate lessons. Staff know their pupils well and meet their individual needs effectively. Learning support assistants make very good contributions to pupils' progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The strong emphasis on English, mathematics and personal, social and health education is highly relevant to pupils' needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The small number of pupils with English as an additional language do not require support to enable them take part in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Pupils' moral and social development is catered for particularly well, through a broad range of lessons and activities. The provision for cultural development is good and it is satisfactory for spiritual development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school works hard to make sure pupils are safe. Its health and safety procedures are very well organised. However, the agreed procedures for dealing with disruptive pupils can lead quickly to them being excluded from school.

The school works well in partnership with parents. However, the procedures for annual review meetings and the reports themselves, do not allow parents to gain a clear enough picture of their children's progress. The reviews for pupils aged 14 and above do not always include formal plans for the provision they will need when they leave school. The amount of time available for teaching and learning is good. However, not enough time is allowed for French. Careers education and guidance are good. Pupils are encouraged to think very carefully about important issues in society – for example, prejudice. There are excellent links with the local community. Outside lessons, a good range of activities is available to pupils. They are encouraged to be proud of their local culture and to respect the faiths of others. Child protection arrangements are good. The school keeps very good records of pupils' attendance and tries very hard to encourage them to attend regularly. However, these arrangements are not effective for a number of pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The acting headteacher led the school well for the past two years. The new headteacher has made a good start in establishing the school's strengths and areas for development.

How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. Governors are clear about their responsibilities, are committed to the school. They ensure that they are kept well informed about developments.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school is developing and improving its methods of judging how effective it is – for example, ways of checking how well groups of pupils are making progress.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Spending is clearly linked to the school's priorities. The money from grants is carefully directed to the required areas – for example, improving computer facilities.

Teachers and support staff are well qualified, but their numbers are below those of similar special schools. The accommodation is broadly satisfactory but has some weaknesses, including the play area for the youngest children and the library. Learning resources are good. A particular strength of the leadership and management is the very effective way in which responsibilities are delegated to the staff. The school plans its spending very efficiently and tries hard to apply the principles of best value. There is a clear and comprehensive plan that sets out its priorities for development and how they are to be achieved.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • They are taught well. • The school has high expectations for children to achieve. • It is well led and managed. • The school helps children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Several parents do not feel well informed about their children's progress. In particular, a few raised concerns about the annual reviews of their children's statements. • A number are not happy about the provision of homework. • A minority are worried about behaviour in the school. • A similar number think there are not enough activities outside lessons.

The inspectors agree with the parents' largely positive views. Annual review procedures and reports need to be improved. During the inspection, the amount and type of homework were good. Pupils are not always given reading or writing tasks, but may be asked to find information or bring something in to school. A minority of pupils behave badly on occasions. The school needs to develop better ways of dealing with them. There is a good range of lunchtime clubs, sporting events and visits out of school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection, when standards were satisfactory overall. A particular improvement has been in the way the achievements of the oldest pupils are recognised through external accreditation. In 1996, the only accreditation offered was in speaking and listening. Today, almost all the work of Year 10 and 11 pupils is accredited in some form – for example, Certificate of Achievement in English and science, and a Youth Award Scheme. These courses are mostly appropriate for the current Year 11 pupils, but the school needs to keep checking to make sure that all pupils are stretched sufficiently.
2. A key issue that emerged from the previous inspection was the need to raise standards in writing and mathematics. The school has done well in this respect – particularly in mathematics. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in all aspects of English, especially speaking and listening. Here, pupils in Year 10 and 11 make particularly rapid progress, because these skills are targeted through specific lessons, leading to certificates from an external body. In mathematics, progress and achievement are very good, as a result of very good teaching. In English and mathematics, the effective way in which the school has implemented the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy has been very significant in raising standards. Teachers' knowledge and skills have improved considerably as a result of the support they have received. Because most teachers lead literacy and numeracy groups, those who are non-specialists have appreciated the clear structure of the Frameworks and lessons. Literacy and numeracy make good contributions to pupils' progress in other subjects. The contribution of information and communication technology is variable but is broadly satisfactory.
3. The school sets suitable targets for pupils to achieve in literacy and numeracy. These are linked to National Curriculum levels or to another national scale for measuring the attainment of pupils not working within National Curriculum levels. Most pupils achieved these targets in 2001. Whole school targets are not set for Year 11 pupils to achieve in their courses, and this is a weakness.
4. When they start school, the attainment of most pupils is well below average. This applies to those now in Years 3 to 11 and the children in the Reception year. Progress is equally good for the highest and lowest attainers. This is partly owing to the effective arrangements for grouping pupils into classes for literacy and numeracy according to their ability in these subjects. As a result, the work set can be targeted more closely to their particular needs. This leads through into Years 10 and 11, where the courses pupils follow are varied, according to pupils' strengths and weaker areas. For example, over half of last year's Year 11 pupils achieved a silver award in the Youth Award Scheme, whilst others gained bronze. The progress of a minority of pupils is disrupted by periods of exclusion from school. This is also the case for the pupils who are poor attenders. During the inspection, teachers had to spend time helping pupils who had been away to catch up. The school is not yet checking whether groups of pupils – such as those with challenging behaviour – are making the progress expected of them.
5. About one-third of the pupils have difficulties with speech and language. They make good progress as a result of the school's strong emphasis on encouraging pupils to

communicate. Discussions feature prominently in many lessons. Sessions with their class teacher, where each pupil speaks in turn, help them to become confident. Speech and language provision is good and provides valuable support to the pupils with particular problems.

6. Similarly, only one-third of pupils are girls. They achieve equally as well as the boys, because the school is very sensitive to their social needs. For example, suitable steps are taken to make sure that they are never isolated in a class of boys. Lessons, books and activities meet their needs and appeal to their interests, so they are motivated to learn.
7. Although a small number of pupils have English as an additional language, none are in the early stages of learning the language and do not need additional support. The school is alert to this possibility and can contact local education authority advisory staff if necessary. A similar number of pupils have some degree of hearing loss. Where appropriate, they are helped to make good progress by the staff's use of signing. One learning support assistant is especially useful in this respect. She ensures that one pupil, whose needs are particularly great, is able to play a full part in lessons.
8. Throughout the school, pupils make very good progress and achieve very well in art. Achievement is good in science, although pupils are making very good progress in lessons. This difference is because the very skilled teacher has not been in post long enough to affect pupils' long-term progress. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in history, information and communication technology, physical education, and personal, social and health education. In other subjects, progress and achievement are satisfactory, except in the case of French. Here, not enough time is allowed for the subject, and progress and achievement are unsatisfactory.
9. At the time of the inspection, the children in the Reception class had only been in school for a short time. They are making good or very good progress in all their areas of learning, other than in physical development. This is no better than satisfactory, because they do not have suitable outdoor play facilities.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Overall, pupils' attitudes to school are good, as they were at the time of the previous inspection. Most are enthusiastic about lessons and activities. For example, in a road safety lesson, pupils got ready quickly and followed instructions very carefully. In a swimming lesson, pupils wasted no time in getting changed and into the water at the start of the lesson and took part enthusiastically in every exercise they were asked to do. When pupils are excited about learning, they do not appear to want the lesson to end. For example, after an English lesson, pupils in Years 7 to 9 were still singing a song about adjectives as they left the classroom. Where pupils have a good attitude to their work – for example, during a Year 10 mathematics lesson, about designing a pattern on a tile – they are willing to be persistent in their attention to detail, and patient when it is necessary to work out what has gone wrong. However, occasionally, particular pupils come into lessons determined to not to work. When this happens, their poor attitude to learning can affect the progress of the whole class.
11. Overall, the behaviour of pupils across the school is satisfactory. There are occasions when a minority display aggressive and disruptive behaviour. This was also the case at the time of the previous inspection. There are many more examples of good behaviour, sometimes involving pupils who had earlier been unruly and badly behaved. There was a total of 62 fixed term exclusions in the last school year,

involving almost a fifth of the pupils in the school. There were also two permanent exclusions. These are very high figures for a school of this type and size. Despite the school's lack of toleration for poor behaviour, some pupils continue to challenge its accepted codes of behaviour and defy school rules. This challenging behaviour is generally linked to pupils' special educational needs. The majority of pupils behave well. In lessons, they wait to be asked to answer questions. They play together co-operatively in the playground and expect other pupils to observe the school rules. During a visit to a theatre, pupils were shocked at the poor behaviour of pupils from another school, sitting behind them. They themselves were very well behaved on this occasion and their teacher, and others, praised them for the good example they set. On another occasion, pupils playing in an inter-school football match displayed excellent examples of behaviour and teamwork during the match. However, a few needed to be disciplined by their teacher for a deterioration in their behaviour towards each other after the game.

12. Pupils are generally very keen to take on responsibilities and their personal development is very good. In the morning, at the start of school, the younger children are looked after by older pupils, acting as prefects. Others take the morning milk to classrooms, arrange for registers to be in classes and make themselves available for any other jobs that need doing. Most pupils enjoy helping. During a trip to the library, a pupil who is a very able reader helped less able pupils to select books, explaining what they were about. Work experience for older pupils means them being responsible for keeping to real-life time schedules and for meeting the requirements of the workplace. School council members accept the responsibility of speaking for their classmates and then reporting back to them on council discussions. This is one of the ways in which pupils learn about citizenship. Members share the responsibility of committee roles and accept that not all of their classmates' suggestions can be acted on – for example, providing a swimming pool on site. Older pupils are especially thoughtful about younger pupils. For example, they made sure that all pupils and staff waited for one of the youngest children to walk down the stairs, to make sure that he was not pushed or jostled, or distracted from his task. Recently, older pupils suggested the need for a booklet about the school, for new pupils, and produced one, on their own initiative. Overall, relationships in the school are very good. Serving pupils in a rush in the school tuck shop relies on the Year 11 pupils being able to work together to prepare food and manage the customers. In the Reception class, the youngest pupils trusted their teacher enough to try the taste of a honey sandwich they had made. In a lesson where pupils had to make a list of their leisure activities for their Record of Achievement, the very good relationships in the class prompted them to talk freely about interests such as babysitting, watching television or collecting magazines.
13. Attendance is unsatisfactory when compared to other schools of the same type, and there are a high number of unauthorised absences. This reflects particularly the attendance record of a significant number of pupils who are poor attenders. It is of concern, as their haphazard attendance affects their learning. Pupils' absence from the school as a result of exclusions is also reflected in the attendance figures. Other pupils are usually punctual to school and lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching is good. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection, when there was a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. A key issue for the school was to develop teachers' subject knowledge, especially in English and mathematics. This has been achieved very successfully, largely by the effective way in which the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have been

introduced. Additionally, the headteacher, acting headteacher, local education authority advisers and some subject leaders have visited lessons and observed teaching and learning. They have provided constructive feedback for teachers, helping them to develop their skills. The arrangements for grouping pupils for English and mathematics – in classes, according to their ability – is helpful to teachers, because it means that they have to plan to meet the needs of a more narrow range of pupils. In English lessons, teaching is more variable than in mathematics, but is good overall. Fewer very good lessons were seen than in mathematics and the pace of learning tended to be slower. A number of classes are large, when the pupils' special educational needs are considered, and occasionally there are not enough adults to give each pupil the amount of individual support they require. During the inspection, three temporary teachers were working in the school. Other than in one lesson, which was unsatisfactory, this did not affect the overall quality of teaching.

15. Teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall. In the class for children in the Reception year, their behaviour is dealt with very well – having said that, the children are all very well behaved and co-operate happily with staff. In other parts of the school, where there are significant minorities of pupils with challenging behaviour, the picture is more variable. In the vast majority of lessons, teachers have very good relationships with pupils and their regular use of praise and encouragement is effective in prompting pupils to behave well. However, some lessons are much more effective than others in this respect. Pupils who were awkward in certain situations behaved impeccably in others. Their response tends to be linked to the teacher's choice of activity and use of time, and their own understanding of their tasks. The most successful lessons are characterised by the word 'fun'. In these lessons, pupils are expected to work hard, but they are actively involved in learning, finding things out for themselves. This happens consistently in science lessons, where the teacher is very skilled at planning exciting activities that cannot fail to motivate pupils. Even whilst watching a video about planets, pupils were challenged to think hard in order to answer the teacher's questions. They respond enthusiastically to these very high expectations and are making very good progress.
16. In a small number of lessons, pupils have limited opportunities to be involved, because adults make decisions for them. For example, in design and technology lessons, they do not always have chances to experiment and find out the best tool, material or ingredient for the task in hand.
17. Teachers usually make sure that pupils understand what they have to do and why they are doing it. In a personal, social and health education lesson, Year 9 pupils were variously bored and silly. They wanted to work – 'aren't we supposed to be...?' – but were not given enough direction and challenge. Problems sometimes arise because, although teachers have some good ideas, they have not thought carefully enough about how the lesson is to be structured. For example, in a Year 6 geography lesson, pupils lost interest and made excuses to be out of their seats, because their task – illustrating features of Blackpool – went on for too long. Lessons are much more successful when teachers incorporate regular changes of activity, so pupils are kept interested and working hard. For example, an English lesson for Year 10 pupils was planned very carefully to lead them towards writing poems for a competition, on the theme of the Zodiac. They investigated horoscopes from a number of sources – such as a teenage magazine and local newspapers – before reading examples of poems on this theme, projected onto a screen. Pupils then worked independently on their own poems before the class came together again, to share what they had achieved. Significantly, the quality of teaching in mathematics is very good. Following the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy, lessons usually move on at a cracking pace. Activities are well timed and the work is matched carefully to pupils' needs, so

that they can get on without needing too much support. Pupils have very good opportunities to practise skills they already have and to build on these and make progress.

18. Teachers refer regularly to pupils' behaviour targets and they apply the sanctions that have been agreed. For example, a few pupils are required to stand outside the classroom for a very short time if they have shouted out too often. However, this tends to disturb the flow of the lesson – other pupils and the teachers lose concentration during this to-ing and fro-ing – and it appears to make little difference to how pupils behave. The reward stamps that are given out at the end of lessons have a motivating effect. They are especially useful when teachers allow time for discussion with pupils and involve them in reviewing their own behaviour and its impact.
19. Learning support assistants make very good contributions to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. In most lessons, they provide valuable support to teachers and pupils. For example, in a Year 10 English lesson, the support assistant worked in partnership with the teacher, moving amongst pupils and talking to them about their writing task. When pupils asked to be given spellings, dictionaries were offered to the higher attaining pupils, encouraging them to be independent and helping them to make very good progress. In a small number of lessons, support assistants take responsibility for the whole class – for instance, during spelling lessons. They follow a commercial programme, interpreting it well to meet the needs of the pupils in their group. They are able to do this effectively, because they know the pupils so well. In a few areas – such as road safety and cycling proficiency – support assistants take full responsibility for planning and teaching, including setting homework. These lessons are taught well and pupils make good progress. In the class for children in the Reception year, the partnership between the teacher and nursery nurse is particularly effective. Both have similarly high expectations for the children's work and behaviour. They set very good examples of co-operation and consideration, which contribute to children's very good progress in personal, social and emotional development.
20. Throughout the school, teachers make very good use of questioning techniques – for example, to check pupils' understanding or to make them think hard. For instance, in a tutorial session with Year 8 pupils, they made very good progress in their understanding of achievement and success. This was largely because the teacher asked plenty of questions, prompting many contributions by pupils. She respected all their answers, which gave them the confidence to speak out. The girls, who were in the minority, and the quiet pupils, were all involved and happy to put forward their ideas. The teacher handled topics such as examination results sensitively, stressing that success means more than achieving high grades, and this effectively boosted pupils' self-esteem. In a few lessons, teachers allow the more confident, vocal pupils to dominate. They do not target sufficient questions directly at the quiet ones, who consequently have less opportunity to make progress.
21. Parents have high opinions of the quality of teaching. However, four out of ten of those who completed the questionnaire have concerns about the provision of homework. The inspectors were impressed with the amount and type of homework set for pupils. Tasks were often linked closely to what pupils were working on in class, so their learning was reinforced. However, on a number of occasions, teachers were disappointed because pupils had not completed or brought back homework. Some of the activities they are set are not 'traditional' homework – pupils might be asked to find out information or bring in an object to use in a lesson. Tasks like this can be just as relevant and useful as reading or writing, but they may be valued less by parents.

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

22. The quality of the curriculum is good from Year 3 to Year 11, especially in its relevance for each age group, and is generally equally effective for all groups of pupils. Throughout the school, English, mathematics and personal and social education have an important emphasis and provision for these subjects is good. A broad range of timetabled lessons and activities contributes well to pupils' personal and social development. The use of lessons spent in discussion with class teachers – tutorials and 'circle time' – adds to the overall effectiveness of the personal, social and health education programme. Most other subjects of the curriculum are adequately represented on the timetable, but there are some weaknesses. The time for French from Year 7 is too low to cover the National Curriculum programmes of study in any depth. The time for science in Years 10 and 11 is barely adequate to cover a GCSE single science syllabus. The range of materials used in design and technology in the primary years is still too narrow, as reported previously. The main focus is on resistant materials, with no opportunities to learn food technology in the primary years. Primary pupils do, however, receive good quality and very relevant guidance on road safety. The curriculum is successful in promoting teamwork and discussion. Pupils are given opportunities to make choices and distinguish fact from opinion. They are taught to challenge stereotypes. A male nurse visits for careers education, food technology is taught by a man, and visitors, such as artists, provide good role models.
23. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 now receive a broader and more relevant curriculum than was in place at the time of the previous inspection. The focus on literacy, numeracy and personal and social development is still an important feature of the curriculum for these older pupils. They now read a broader and more appropriate range of books than was reported last time. There is also a well-developed Youth Award Scheme. The careers education and guidance curriculum is of good quality, with greater opportunity for all in Years 10 and 11 to participate in work experience. The importance of personal health and fitness features in their physical education programme. Pupils have access to a satisfactory range of external accreditation in Year 11. In a few instances, the choice of external accreditation in Years 10 and 11 is not demanding enough to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils – in art and design and technology, for example.
24. The curriculum for the children in the foundation stage is satisfactory. The school has had only a very short space of time in which to prepare for their arrival, and has made a good start in setting up the provision for them. The work and activities planned for the present term are suitable and take proper account of the latest guidance and advice. However, there has not been time to set out a longer-term plan that will ensure that children's learning continues to build systematically on what they have already achieved. A weakness in the curriculum is the shortage of opportunities for children to develop physically. This is owing to the lack of suitable outdoor play facilities.
25. Curriculum development since the last inspection has been good. The school week has been extended, and the amount of teaching time is now good. There is good provision for the development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. The promotion of speaking and listening is particularly effective, because teaching methods in many subjects frequently require pupils to discuss issues. Science, personal and social education, careers education and the Youth Award Scheme are especially useful in promoting pupils' speaking and listening skills. The grouping of pupils for literacy, spelling and mathematics lessons is well matched to their learning needs and an improvement on the former arrangements. The provision for developing pupils' information and communication technology skills is good in the time-tabled

lessons for this subject, but planning for the use of computers in other subjects is less well developed.

26. The school makes great efforts to provide equality of opportunity in all its curricular planning. Materials used in lessons and in displays round the school effectively challenge racism, discrimination and prejudice. Sensitive consideration is given to the social well being of girls when allocating them to classes. There is no intended discrimination in the provision for girls and boys, minority ethnic pupils, pupils whose home language is not English, pupils with speech and language difficulties, hearing impaired pupils, and pupils who have behavioural and emotional difficulties. Effective signing gives hearing impaired pupils good access to the curriculum; and provision for pupils with speech and language difficulty is also good.
27. The school provides an interesting range of lunchtime clubs, including visits to a local library, a sewing club and an environment club. There are plenty of opportunities for girls and boys to participate in sporting events, and inter-school matches are very well organised – for football and hockey, for example. Links with other schools and colleges are generally satisfactory but the school is committed to strengthening and extending these links. Broader community links are, however, excellent in the support they provide for pupils' learning. Teachers actively seek out visits that can broaden their pupils' understanding of subjects. For example, during the inspection a class of pupils visited the theatre to see a performance about scientific inventors. This had been written to meet the requirements of part of the science curriculum. There are excellent initiatives to harness community resources to benefit pupils. For example, bicycles are provided by the police and a young offenders' unit, and a local business makes sure that the cycles are maintained safely. The school takes every opportunity to celebrate the work of pupils – for instance, in local newspapers and radio, art galleries, museums and competitions. Artists, musicians and chefs visit the school, and pupils sometimes join with neighbouring schools when they have visitors. The school has close links to churches and a mosque in the area.
28. Considered as a whole, the provision for pupils' personal development is good. This is broadly the same as at the time of the previous inspection. Opportunities for spiritual development are satisfactory. Time for reflection is considered as an important part of religious education and personal, social and health education lessons, but is not tackled consistently in other areas of learning. School and class assemblies offer pupils the chance to think about their own contribution to the world, and an assembly on teamwork – together everyone achieves more – made good use of pupils' contributions to underline the message. On another occasion, new prefects, who were finding it hard to carry out their responsibilities, used an assembly to ask pupils to help them and to consider the difficulties they were going through.
29. The provision for moral and social development is very good. The school makes very good use of current affairs and events in history to challenge pupils' belief in rights and wrongs. For example, they have considered the September 11th attack in New York, the Holocaust, and the implications of slavery. Pupils have contributed to the school rules and, through the school council, they are given the opportunity to affect the priorities for school development or decide who should chair the council. In the past, there have been many residential visits, to improve pupils' social skills. There have been none recently, but one is planned for next year. Pupils are encouraged to help others and have raised money for local and national charities through fund raising events – for example, knitting squares to make blankets for homeless people.
30. Pupils are given good opportunities for their cultural development. Art lessons make a very good contribution. Displays reflect the contribution of artists, history, science and

literature to our culture. The faiths of ethnic minorities in the community are celebrated and respected during assemblies, in the curriculum and through visits out of school. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection. A strength of the school is the promotion of pride in the local culture of the Potteries. This is highlighted by a large mural in the school's entrance, created by pupils with the help of another school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. There are good procedures for making sure that pupils are well cared for and safe. The school has very good health and safety procedures, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. There are very good arrangements to check that they are carried out – both around the school and when pupils are out of the school on visits or activities. The school nurse is a regular visitor and pupils have the opportunity to speak to her if they have any personal concerns. The school is pursuing a Healthy School award, and there is a strong emphasis on healthy eating. There are two trained first aiders and very well organised accident and emergency procedures. Staff pay careful attention to pupils' safety at all times. When pupils arrive in the morning and leave in the afternoon, there are always staff on duty to watch the transport arrangements and make sure they are safe. There are regular fire drills and fire fighting equipment, electrical appliances and physical education resources are all checked annually. The school is especially attentive to pupils' safety on the roads and offers road safety training to those pupils who are ready. Staff make sure that pupils learn about drugs and sex education, are taught to manage their personal hygiene, build up their confidence and self-esteem, and are able to make choices about their lives. The school has good procedures for ensuring that their child protection arrangements meet the requirements of the local area child protection committee. All the senior management team of the school, which includes the designated person, are trained in child protection procedures, and staff are brought up to date with any child protection issues on a daily basis.
32. The school has very good procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance and seeking ways to improve this. As a result, attendance rates have risen by six per cent over the past three years. Each day, the families or carers of pupils who are not in school are contacted and asked to explain the reason for the absences. This is followed up on a daily basis until the pupil returns to school. Registers, which are transferred onto a computerised recording system each day, are also checked regularly to ascertain the reason for absence. The school works very closely with the education welfare service to refer pupils and their families where there are causes for concern. The service is vigilant in following up these referrals. The school has recently appointed an 'Attendance Governor', who has initiated an Attendance Cup, and there are regular award ceremonies for improved attendance on an individual and class basis. Despite this, there are still absences that have to be unauthorised, as some families are unable to provide an acceptable reason for their children's absence.
33. The school's strategies for keeping track of pupils' behaviour are good. The policy for encouraging them to behave well meets the needs of the majority of pupils. However, there is a need for improved agreed strategies and whole school training in the management of pupils with particularly challenging behaviour. The school has identified, through risk assessments, the need for specialised training in handling and restraining pupils, but the course arranged was cancelled at the last moment. Withdrawing disruptive pupils from one lesson and placing them in another disrupts the learning of all concerned. Additionally, the strategy of leaving the Headteacher to manage the behaviour of disaffected pupils takes up a disproportionate amount of her time. The number of exclusions for disruptive behaviour is very high because the

school's procedures can lead pupils swiftly towards exclusion. The school ensures that all behavioural incidents are recorded in detail, so that it can analyse the reasons, reactions and outcomes of any trouble in or out of school. The school has recently collected the results of a questionnaire sent out to parents, staff and pupils, and is planning to use the findings from the analysis in its next review of the behaviour policy.

34. Procedures for assessing pupils' achievements, progress and personal development are good overall. This is an improvement from the previous inspection, when the school had no formal system of assessing, recording and reporting pupils' progress. There are now clear guidelines for all staff to follow, which help to inform teaching and planning throughout the school. The information collected about pupils' achievements is used effectively in English and mathematics, to group them according to their ability and adapt the curriculum to meet their needs. The results of National Curriculum tests are occasionally used to identify pupils who would benefit from being taught in mainstream schools. For pupils under five, teachers carry out detailed baseline assessments of their levels of knowledge, skills and understanding on entry. These help teachers to set appropriate targets in the first instance and these are reviewed termly as a check on progress. Co-ordinators have well documented systems operating for each subject. The quality of these is at least satisfactory and in some cases good, when there is an appropriate balance between assessing and recording pupils' progress. The assessment of pupils' progress in Years 10 and 11 is extended by opportunities for them to work towards Certificates of Achievement and the Youth Award Scheme in several subjects.
35. However, information gathered about individual pupils' achievements in subjects other than English and mathematics is not yet summarised and reported to parents in a consistent way at the end of the year. Judgements in annual subject reports do not give a clear picture of whether pupils' progress is as good as expected in comparison with the previous year. Teachers give too much information about what has been taught and not enough about what each pupil has learned.
36. When pupils enter the school, teachers use the information in their statements to help them draw up individual education plans. For most pupils who have been at the school for several years, the learning and behavioural targets in these plans are set from teachers' own records and observations. The clear link to pupils' statements is lost. This leads to a lack of precise information for parents about how well pupils' needs are being met, when their statements are reviewed. The school needs to make more effective arrangements for carrying out annual reviews of statements, so that all parents are offered individual meetings and given more opportunity to take part in discussions of pupils' progress in line with statutory requirements. Record-keeping needs to be improved, so that recommendations from annual reviews are set out in detail and communicated formally to parents and all other relevant parties. This is particularly important for pupils aged 14 and above, when the school must ensure that all annual reviews include formal planning of the provision pupils will need after they leave school. These issues were highlighted in the previous inspection and now need the school's urgent attention. Where pupils have additional needs, such as hearing impairment or speech and language difficulties, teachers and support staff are aware of these and meet them well in practice.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. Parents' views of the school are positive and most are pleased with the progress that their children are making. Many are especially happy about the improvement that they

have seen in their children's behaviour and the fact that their children like coming to school.

38. The school works hard to keep up a close contact with parents. Staff frequently ring parents and carers, not only if they have concerns, but also to tell of pupils' successes. Homework bags have been provided for pupils and these are encouraging parents and pupils to value the learning that takes place at home. A home/school book for the youngest children enables the school to maintain a successful dialogue between parents and staff. Few parents come into school to help on a regular basis. The school does not have any formal friends or parent/teacher association, but parents support fund raising events organised by the school – for example, the Chinese Auction evenings. A new type of meeting for parents – 'Come and Meet Us' – was started this year, and the school is hoping to build on the informality and success of this event. Transport by school mini-bus is offered to parents who have difficulty coming into school for any school function. The school is actively seeking out translators for its communications with ethnic minority families, and is pleased that it can now offer the home/school contract in an Urdu translation.
39. Information offered to parents, particularly about their child's progress, is satisfactory. Termly newsletters are sent out and parents find these helpful and interesting. The information offered to parents about the annual reviews of pupils' statements does not clearly offer an individual meeting. Some parents have been unhappy about the way that some annual review meetings have been conducted, in that they have taken place with little privacy and with no professional agencies present at the meetings. Subject reports in the annual reviews are often not personal to the pupil being reported on. Often the language used to report on different subjects in the annual review report is very technical and not easily understood, and many only refer to the progress of the individual pupil in an extra line after a report of the work covered by the whole class. Parents do find most staff very easy to talk to. Pupils regularly turn up to school with, for example, containers for food technology, sports equipment for physical education, books to be returned for the library club, and the results of research they have carried out. In these ways, parents make a satisfactory contribution to their children's learning at school and at home. The school has experienced difficulties in involving some parents in resolving incidents of challenging behaviour. It has recently adopted a range of symbols on some of the behaviour report cards that go home, so that parents can quickly identify the successful, or not so successful events, in their child's day.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

40. The school is well led and managed. It has gone through a turbulent period since the previous inspection, involving a long time without a permanent headteacher. During that time, the deputy headteacher took on the role of acting headteacher and worked very hard and effectively to establish a number of important improvements. In this work, the staff, some of who took on significant management responsibilities, supported her very well. Prior to this, the school had only made very slow progress towards attending to the key issues arising from the previous inspection. Additionally, the school's finances were in disarray, there was no school development plan, and the morale of staff and governors was low.
41. Led strongly by the acting headteacher, developments took place systematically, because of the measured way in which she – now the deputy headteacher – identified priorities. Key factors in moving the school forward were the measures to develop the awareness and involvement of the governing body, the effective way in which

management tasks were delegated, and the administration systems and staff which were put in place to improve the smooth running of the school. As a result of this firm action and the commitment of all staff and governors, the school had made good progress by the time the new headteacher was appointed.

42. The current school development plan, which follows the local education authority's model, is comprehensive and takes good account of issues that are important for the school – such as improving pupils' behaviour – and local and national priorities and initiatives. There is a clear and useful distinction between tasks that can be achieved relatively quickly and key areas that require more detailed plans and longer timescales. Additionally, all staff with management responsibilities – for example, the co-ordinators of subjects – have plans for their areas. These also reflect the school's priorities and, like the overall plan, are closely tied to the school's budget. Staff are therefore able to see the part they play in achieving the school's goals.
43. The new headteacher has made a good start in her leadership role. Whilst coping well with the day-to-day management tasks, she is finding out about the school, staff and pupils, analysing what works well and what needs to be improved. For example, at her request, local education authority advisory staff have provided support in introducing the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. The headteacher is very keen to ensure that all pupils are able to benefit as fully as possible from their time in school. To this end, she is exploring ways of reducing the number of exclusions, involving parents more in their children's education, and developing further links with mainstream schools. There is also a need to develop procedures to check whether, over time, individuals and groups of pupils, for example, boys, girls, higher and lower attaining pupils, pupils with difficult behaviours, and pupils from minority ethnic groups, are progressing as well as expected.
44. The governing body is now almost at full strength, after a period of change. The chair and vice chair are very appreciative of the way in which the acting headteacher helped them to develop their roles and kept them very well informed about the school's performance. As a result, governors are now much better informed about their responsibilities. Because they have been encouraged to question and debate, they are more involved in making decisions about future developments. Their involvement in checking how well the school is doing has improved particularly well. For example, some governors have visited classrooms to observe teaching and learning, and teachers talk about school policies during governors' meetings.
45. At the time of the last report financial planning and monitoring was not well developed. This has been rectified and financial planning is now very good. For example, funds have been accumulated to improve the accommodation. Over the last twelve months, the school has been well supported by the local education authority finance officer – for example, in setting and checking the progress of the budget.
46. The school has a clear view of the need to judge the effectiveness of its spending, linked to the school improvement plan and raising standards of teaching and learning. The budget is subject to regular and effective checks by the headteacher and the finance committee of the governing body. Financial information prepared by the school secretary and the headteacher is presented to the governing body through the finance committee. This information is clear, concise and understandable and is much appreciated by the governors. This is very good practice. Financial controls are very good, and were verified by a recent audit. Minor recommendations were made, and these have been fully implemented. The office staff manage the financial and administrative day-to-day running of the school efficiently. This enables teachers to concentrate on promoting pupils' learning and personal development.

47. The school makes good use of promoting new technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of administration, record keeping and data analysis. At present the school is in the early stages of developing a data recording system for English, mathematics, science and pupils' behaviour. A recent survey of parent and staff perceptions of pupils' behaviour forms part of an attractive display in one of the school corridors. This allows the pupils, staff, parents and visitors to study the display and interpret the results displayed in graphic form.
48. There are good arrangements to ensure the best value in purchasing. For example, when improving the computer facilities, visits were made to other schools, the local education authority adviser was consulted, and a range of quotations was invited. As a result, governors made an informed decision to refurbish the whole computer room from floor to ceiling, in addition to installing up-to-date equipment, matched to the needs of the pupils.
49. There has been no improvement in the number of teachers and support staff since the previous inspection, when staffing levels were judged to be inadequate. In recent years, there has been a high turnover of staff, and some difficulty with appointing permanent, well-qualified teachers. However, the school has worked hard to maintain staffing levels and reduce the number of temporary teachers. At present the number of teachers and support staff remains both below the levels recommended in Circular 11/90 and the average for similar schools.
50. New staff receive a good introduction to the school. They are given a 'school pack' and staff handbook in order to familiarise them with procedures. However, there is no formal induction or mentoring, which would benefit new staff. The arrangements for the continuing professional development of staff are well linked to the development plan. The learning support staff are well-qualified – they are all trained nursery nurses. They plan together with teachers and know the pupils very well. Pupils benefit greatly from this additional support.
51. The accommodation is satisfactory overall and has improved since the previous inspection, although some problems remain. There are now good teaching areas for subjects such as design and technology, science and information and communication technology. Each of these has a positive effect on pupils' learning. There are also greatly improved changing facilities and more carpeted areas. However, there is no changing area to meet the personal hygiene needs of the youngest children. They have to be changed in their cloakroom area, reducing their privacy and dignity. The classroom in the house previously occupied by the caretaker is too small to allow pupils to move around or work in groups. The library remains small and poorly lit, with insufficient books. The exterior of the building, despite the large field and trees, provides only limited stimulation for pupils, despite attempts by the school to improve this. This is a particular issue for the youngest children, whose physical development is restricted by the lack of outdoor play facilities. There is no disabled access for visitors or future pupils.
52. Resources are good in most subjects, and in physical education and information and communication technology they are very good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. In order to raise standards further, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

1. Reduce the number of exclusions, by reviewing and improving the procedures for managing pupils with particularly challenging behaviour. (Paragraph 11)
2. Continue to work to improve pupils' attendance. (Paragraph 33)
3.
 - i. Improve the procedures for reviewing pupils' statements. In particular, make sure that parents are offered individual meetings, so that they can discuss their children's progress in privacy. Invite the appropriate professional agencies to attend the meetings and make sure that the agreed recommendations are recorded and communicated to parents and other agencies. Ensure that the reviews of pupils aged 14 and above include formal planning of the provision they will need after they leave school. (Paragraphs 36,39)
 - ii. Improve the quality of the annual subject reports, so parents are quite clear about the progress made by their children. (Paragraphs 32, 39)
4. Improve pupils' progress and achievement in French, by allocating sufficient time for them to learn the subject in enough depth. (Paragraphs 8, 22, 107)
5. Continue to work with the Local Education Authority to improve the accommodation. In particular, consider ways of developing:
 - The outdoor play facilities for the Reception age children.
 - Suitable changing facilities for these children.
 - The library.
 - Provide a larger and more suitable classroom for the pupils taught in the house originally occupied by the caretaker.
(Paragraphs 51, 60)

In addition, the following minor issues should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- Continue to work with the local education authority to increase the number of teachers and support assistants. (Paragraph 23)
- Ensure that the range and scope of tests and accreditation offered to pupils is consistently challenging and enables them to demonstrate their best achievements and have these recognised. (Paragraph 62)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	81
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	43

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	24	39	16	1	0	0
Percentage	1.2	30	48.1	20	1.2	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	106
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	51

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	12.05

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.88

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	1
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	100
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	3	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	57	2
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	9.8
Average class size	11.7

Education support staff: YR – Y11

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	292.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	689984
Total expenditure	686401
Expenditure per pupil	6414.96
Balance brought forward from previous year	33382
Balance carried forward to next year	36965

This balance includes funds that had been set aside for improvements to the accommodation.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5.3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1.2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.8
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	106
Number of questionnaires returned	31

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	45	3	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	42	10	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	32	6	3	16
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	19	29	10	3
The teaching is good.	45	42	0	0	13
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	23	19	10	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	29	6	3	6
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	42	0	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	39	42	6	10	3
The school is well led and managed.	45	39	0	0	16
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	35	10	0	13
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	19	13	3	13

Other issues raised by parents

A few parents raised concerns about the annual reviews of their children's statements.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

54. The school began to admit children in the Reception year in the month before the inspection. When they entered the class, children had poorly developed skills in language and literacy, mathematics, personal independence and in their use of tools such as crayons and scissors. Through good teaching, by the teacher and nursery nurse, children are making good progress and achieving well in mathematical and creative development. Teaching is very good in language and literacy; personal, social and emotional development; and knowledge and understanding of the world. Children's progress and achievements are also very good in these areas. Progress and achievement in physical development are only satisfactory, because there are very limited opportunities for children to play outdoors.

Personal, social and emotional development

55. When they start in the Reception class, assessments show that the children have few social and independence skills. They are making very good progress, because they are taught very well in a small group and the teacher and nursery nurse are very aware of the abilities and limitations of each child and what they need to learn next. For example, when left to their own devices, the children either play on their own or near to others, but usually without sharing or communicating with them. During one session, the teacher told the children that they were going to pretend to be in a hospital, and gave each one a role to play – doctor, nurse, patients etc. By example and by suggesting what each should do, the teacher very successfully developed the children's ability to play together. For example, one used a toy stethoscope to listen to another's chest. They were not able to sustain these roles for very long, but they were making very good progress.
56. At lunchtime, staff sit with children, helping and encouraging them – for instance, to use a fork to eat their meal. Children are learning to dress and undress themselves, because time is allowed before and after playtimes and because children have individual targets to achieve. So, for example, one child who can take off his coat independently is working towards putting it on. Relationships between the children and the staff are excellent. The children feel very secure and this means that they are becoming keen and confident learners. The staff are endlessly patient and give the children plenty of time to make their responses. During activities, they often refer to children's families, and this contributes further to their feelings of security and happiness.

Communication, language and literacy

57. Most of the children have significant difficulties in communicating with others. Their speech is difficult to understand or hear and they are lacking in confidence. Because the teaching is very good in this area, children are making very good progress. Staff take advantage of all opportunities to promote speaking and listening. For example, during registration, some children are asked to give their first name, while more vocal ones reply to the greeting 'Good afternoon.' Registration is also used very effectively to develop children's reading skills. 'Register Teddy' has buttons with the name of each child. They collect the correct one and stick it in place, becoming quicker at recognising their name. Stories, rhymes and books feature prominently throughout the day and encourage children to develop their vocabulary and their interest in reading.

For example, a CD ROM of 'Arthur's Birthday' had the children transfixed and keen for parts of the story to be repeated. During more formal literacy sessions, children are learning to recognise a few simple words, such as 'I', 'and' and 'like'. This represents very good progress. By combining these, the teacher skilfully enables higher attaining children to read short sentences – 'I like K....' Children have regular opportunities to use crayons and paints. By colouring inside shapes they are developing their control over the materials and getting ready for the early stages of writing. They also tell adults what they want to say about their paintings. Their words are written down, helping children to establish the link between words and their meaning.

Mathematical development

58. The highest attaining children understand ideas such as 'biggest' and 'smallest', and can recite numbers from one to five and beyond. However, the least able child is still learning to raise a finger in response to 'One'. Children are making good progress because they are taught well. They have regular, interesting number activities that encourage them to take part and try hard. Songs and rhymes are used very effectively – for example, 'Five Currant Buns' and 'Two Little Speckled Frogs'. Resources – such as teddies pegged to a washing line, clay buns and toy money – are very good quality, and they too motivate children and help them to understand what numbers represent. The most able children are given more challenging tasks – for example, they are beginning to take one object away and count how many are left, starting to be aware of subtraction. Children are happy and very well behaved, because each pupil is managed so well and has excellent access to every task, at a level that suits them. However, written plans do not always indicate what each child is intended to achieve, making it difficult to measure the progress they make.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

59. Children are making very good progress, because teaching is very good. The staff arrange for them to learn in carefully structured small steps and help them to link together what they know, so that they have a better understanding. For example, in order to appreciate some of the events in stories of Winnie the Pooh, children took part in a game of 'Pooh sticks' and made honey sandwiches. During both of these activities, children were initially apprehensive, but they have such confidence in the staff that they were all prepared to throw their sticks into the stream and taste honey. As a result, they are building up their knowledge and understanding of their environment. Exciting activities are planned, motivating children to take part and try hard. For example, 'Aynsley Teddy' has been roaming round the school, pursued by the children and helping to develop their awareness of what happens in each area. During the inspection week, 'Aynsley' had been photographed at the railway station, leading to a visit by the children. They learned the names of features such as the track and signals, and heard and saw trains passing and stopping. Great care was taken of the children, but they were allowed to walk on their own if they wished to, developing their independence skills. Children reinforced their knowledge that roads, railways and water are all potentially dangerous.

Physical development

60. The quality of teaching is good. However, the area surrounding the children's classroom is unsuitable for them to play in, and the school has no play area with a suitable safe surface. This means that children do not have enough opportunities to investigate their surroundings and learn to control their bodies. There is a weekly session in the school hall and children are to go to a swimming pool later in the year, but these are small compensations. The staff are exploring possible links with other

schools, to give children more opportunities. In the classroom, they learn skills such as painting and using scissors, helping them to gain control of their fine movements. They throw and catch soft toys and improve their co-ordination. Staff teach these skills well, but the lack of outdoor play facilities means that children's progress is merely satisfactory.

Creative development

61. Creative development is taught well. Staff give children plenty of opportunities to express themselves and, as a result of this good teaching, they are making good progress. Children are able to hold brushes appropriately and apply paint to paper, having decided that they are to make a picture of daddy, a caravan or a dog. They choose and put on clothes and accessories from the dressing-up trolley, but need prompting to act out roles. During one lesson, children made shakers to accompany their songs. The teacher led them very skilfully through this process, so that they experimented with rice or pasta before deciding what to put in their containers. They listened to the different sounds made by large and small containers of various types, and then shook their instruments as they sang, developing their ability to make music for pleasure.

ENGLISH

62. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. This is in line with the quality of teaching and represents a good improvement since the previous inspection. English is given a very high priority in the curriculum. This is entirely suitable, because the majority of pupils find reading and writing very difficult and many have problems with speech and language. Pupils make equally good progress regardless of their ability. An important reason for this is the effective way in which they are grouped for lessons, according to their particular needs. This means that teachers need to provide for a more narrow range of ability, making it easier for them to plan work that is pitched at suitable levels. The National Literacy Strategy for primary-aged pupils was introduced effectively throughout the school. This proved very successful in increasing teachers' knowledge and understanding and improving the rate of pupils' progress. In September, the secondary version was brought in for pupils in Years 7 to 9, meaning that their lessons follow a similar structure to those in mainstream schools. This indicates the teachers' awareness of national initiatives and their commitment to improving the quality of education that they provide. Similarly, the oldest pupils now have much better opportunities to have their work accredited. They continue to be successful in a course to promote their speaking skills and now have their ability in literacy recognised through the Certificate of Achievement, which is a suitable course for the present Year 11 pupils. The school has a system for recording how well pupils are achieving in each aspect of English, and this uses a national scale. However, it needs to be extended, because it does not allow pupils to achieve a score that would indicate that they could attempt a GCSE course. Pupils learn to speak, read and write for an increasingly wide range of purposes. The oldest apply their skills to suitable real-life situations, such as writing to request information or to say thank you, reading and completing application forms, and taking and passing on telephone messages.
63. Teachers promote pupils' speaking and listening skills very well in lessons across the curriculum. They encourage them to listen carefully when others are speaking. As a result, pupils make very good progress and become confident to express their own knowledge and ideas. From an early age, they are taught how to take part in discussions. For example, during a session to review their targets and progress, Year 4 pupils took turns to answer questions and listen to what others had to say. The

teacher kept them firmly on track so that their contributions were relevant and took account of what had already been said. They were confident to speak out, because of their very good relationships with their teacher. Occasionally, teachers fail to pay enough attention to the quieter pupils, instead allowing the more vociferous ones to dominate lessons. Additionally, pupils with particular speech and language difficulties do not consistently have specific targets set for them to achieve, so their needs may be overlooked. However, the provision for speech and language therapy is good and makes an effective contribution to these pupils' progress. In Years 10 and 11, the course accredited by the English Speaking Board, with dedicated lessons, gives pupils' progress a real boost and, as a result, it is very good. They learn and practise a range of useful skills – such as the ability to carry out independent research, to present themselves with confidence, and to use a telephone in a mature and effective manner. This contributes to their success during work experience placements and prepares them well for their future. A strength of the teaching is that staff encourage pupils to be as independent as possible. In one lesson, Year 11 pupils carried out individual research tasks related to the presentations that they are to make later in the year. They were enthusiastic and could explain why they had chosen their topic and answer questions about it. For example, one pupil described how she had enjoyed her work experience with elderly people and talked about what this had involved.

64. Pupils' progress in reading gets off to a good start during Years 3 to 6. They start to recognise their names and simple, frequently used words, and learn the sounds made by letters and groups of letters. In literacy lessons, teachers provide plenty of opportunities for them to apply this knowledge – for example, through the shared reading of big books. Pupils in the group of lowest attainers enjoyed reading together 'This is the Bear'. The teacher used facial expressions well to help them understand the meaning of words such as 'cross' and 'lost', and rewarded their own efforts with praise – 'I like that. Brilliant!' However, the oldest and most able pupils in the group were not particularly interested in the fate of a lost teddy. In one or two other lessons, too, resources were not suitable for the full age range represented. By asking questions and encouraging them to think about the story, teachers develop pupils' ability to use other ways of tackling unknown words – for example, looking at the pictures or deciding what might be a sensible guess. Between Years 7 and 9, the highest attaining pupils apply their reading skills to an increasing range of writing. For example, in the group for the most able pupils, cuttings typical of popular newspapers formed the focus of a series of lessons. Pupils could read common words fluently and a few could recognise difficult ones, such as 'languishing'. The teacher made sure that they understood what the stories were about, so that they were able to match them to the correct headlines. Pupils in Years 10 and 11, working towards the Certificate of Achievement, continue to read a good range of fiction. For example, the oldest pupils have recently started to read an abridged version of 'Macbeth'. The teacher ensured that they were able to appreciate the plot and characters, preparing them effectively by investigating facts about Shakespeare's life and the period – such as theatres. In the Year 10 class, pupils are encouraged to practise their reading because the classroom contains a suitable range of fiction and non-fiction books, magazines and newspapers. By contrast, the cramped accommodation used by Year 11 pupils prevents them having such easy access to literature. The older pupils in particular use books and reading to help them to learn in other subjects. For example, Year 11 pupils used reference books to find out information about various religions.
65. Pupils' writing skills are supported very well by twice-weekly spelling lessons, following a commercially produced programme. As a consequence, the results of their annual assessments in spelling show that pupils make good progress. The youngest pupils, and those who find spelling particularly difficult, follow a different course, which helps them to learn the names of letters and the sounds they make. The learning

support assistants who lead these sessions make learning enjoyable by using interesting resources – such as ‘feely bags’ containing small objects whose names begin with certain letters. During one lesson, pupils in Years 3 to 6 enjoyed finding toy ducks or trains and putting them alongside the correct initial letter. Teachers provide pupils of all ages with regular opportunities for writing. Most of the lower attaining pupils can write their own names and many can tackle familiar short words. In order to write sentences, many younger pupils dictate their ideas to adults and then copy out what they have written. As their skills improve, teachers increasingly require them to attempt to be independent, and then to re-draft their writing after it has been checked and corrected. However, in subjects other than English, pupils are sometimes only expected to copy – even those who are able to do much more than this. Teachers often use shared reading sessions in order to raise pupils’ awareness of the function of words or to enrich their vocabulary and writing. For example, when they were reading the story of ‘The Golden Throne’, about Ancient Egypt, Year 7 to 9 pupils in the middle ability group could all identify verbs and provide alternatives – such as ‘scream’ and ‘shriek’ instead of ‘howl’. Teachers then encourage pupils to apply this knowledge to their writing. However, although they can suggest lively vocabulary during oral sessions, pupils find it much harder to incorporate this into their writing. Some of the most effective writing is found when pupils write poems, especially when these follow a clear structure. For example, Year 10 pupils’ poems in response to the terrorist attacks in America were thoughtful and contained powerful images – ‘The ash fell like snow’. This work also showed pupils’ ability to use information and communication technology to present their work, choosing colours and fonts to good effect. However, during the inspection, little use of computers was seen in English lessons – for instance, to help pupils correct and improve their writing quickly. This is an area for development.

66. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has a clear picture of its strengths and where developments are needed, and of national initiatives and priorities, so planning for the future is informed and measured. This includes the school’s intentions to improve the unsatisfactory library accommodation and resources.

MATHEMATICS

67. Pupils’ achievements across the school in mathematics are very good and they make very good progress. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. The most significant factor contributing to this is the positive way in which the school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy.
68. Pupils enter the school with very limited mathematical skills and attainment well below national expectations. On entry they lack confidence and have a negative view of their own ability in the subject with many gaps in their mathematical knowledge. This changes as they move through the school. Pupils become progressively more confident, especially in their number work and use of mathematical language. As a result, they work hard in order to improve further. The oldest pupils achieve success in an accredited course in mathematics.
69. The quality of teaching has improved very significantly since the previous inspection. At that time, over one quarter of lessons were unsatisfactory. Teaching is now very good overall. Because teachers have high expectations of how pupils’ work is to be recorded, pupils present their work neatly and accurately, and show how they have worked out problems. Work is well matched to pupils’ individual needs. This is made easier for teachers by the way in which pupils are grouped into classes according to

their ability in mathematics.

70. During Years 3 to 6, pupils learn basic number skills and find out that mathematics is fun. For example, pupils in the middle ability class matched names to two-dimensional shapes and described the properties of the shapes – ‘three straight sides is a triangle.’ They linked their literacy skills to developing their mathematical vocabulary, by finding the sound of the first letter, to help them read the names – for example, ‘pentagon’ or ‘square’. They enjoyed themselves when they found shapes inside a ‘feely’ bag. They recognised them by touch only, and described them to other pupils, who tried to identify the shapes from their descriptions. This activity worked very well. It motivated and excited the pupils, who tried very hard and took great pride in their success. Teachers are very careful to meet the needs of all pupils. For example, in the class for the lowest attaining pupils, four pupils with speech and language difficulties worked with a learning support assistant. She used signing very effectively to help them practise counting from one to ten. They made good use of resources made by the staff – such as number cards hanging from a washing line and skittles on a floor map – and practised writing numbers and recording what they had achieved. Other pupils in the class counted in different steps up to 30, forward and backward, and counted on from given numbers. The teacher’s very good organisational skills resulted in all pupils making equally good progress. During the introduction to the lesson, the whole class was seated in a semi-circle. The teacher used questions very effectively to ensure that all pupils took an active part in the counting activity, so she could judge how well they were learning.
71. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 continue to learn through practical activities. For example, less able pupils roll two dice and take the smaller number away from the larger. They record their results and present them as a bar graph. In discussions, they use correct mathematical language – such as ‘more than’, ‘less than’, and ‘same as’. They understand that ‘take away’ is the same as ‘subtract’, and that ‘addition’ is the same as ‘plus’ or ‘the sum of’. Teachers make very good use of the National Numeracy Strategy. In particular, they are skilled at managing mental warm-up activities at the start of lessons. Learning begins as soon as pupils enter the room, so no time is wasted. Higher attaining pupils count in twos, halve and double numbers, and count on and backwards in tens. They find the square root of numbers and show a good understanding of patterns and sequence of numbers. They work with positive and negative numbers. Because teachers are enthusiastic and confident, pupils are eager to answer questions and keen to describe and explain their work to others, helping the whole class to make progress. In a lesson for the lowest attaining group, the teacher used practical, real-life examples very effectively, to help pupils learn. For example, they considered when an inventory would be useful – in a hospital – before counting and recording pieces of science equipment. When collecting results from each group, the teacher seized every opportunity to reinforce what they had learned – for instance, asking pupils to add the tens or units, to reach a final total. In this lesson, a related task was set for homework. The teacher explained it thoroughly and made it clear that she expected it to be completed in time for the next day’s lesson.
72. The oldest pupils, in Years 10 and 11, achieve very well in all aspects of mathematics. For example, they measure accurately in centimetres, estimate distances and check these by measurement. They give clear descriptions of how they have solved problems, showing a good understanding of their work. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and this is shown in their skilled explanations of new work and the enthusiasm and confidence of the staff, which makes learning fun. Because of this approach, pupils respond very positively, they are eager to answer questions and take great pride in completing their work, and in the way that they

record and present it. Praise and encouragement are used very well, successfully motivating pupils and helping them remain on task. An important feature is the way in which pupils are involved in discussions about their work, so that they understand what they have done well and what needs to be improved. In a lesson where pupils designed patterns for tiles, this approach enabled pupils to improve on their first attempts and make very good progress.

73. Pupils learn to apply their mathematical skills very effectively in other subjects. In physical education, for example, they use tapes to measure distances and compare their past and present performances. In science, pupils use their measuring skills of counting, estimating and recording in their experiments, they learn to use data logging and the digital microscope. In design and technology and food technology they learn to weigh and measure accurately. The Year 11 pupils help to run a tuck shop, and handle money well, always carefully counting out change and keeping accurate accounts of their dealings.
74. Information and communication technology is used well in mathematics. Younger pupils enjoy programs which hide and reveal numbers. Older pupils learn to use computers to present their work. For example, they use graphics to represent data in graph form. They discuss which method of presentation best illustrates the data collected and which is most easily understood.
75. The present co-ordinator, on a temporary contract, has only been in post for part of this term. The previous co-ordinator prepared and introduced the school's response to the National Numeracy Strategy. This has laid the foundation for very high achievement in mathematics across the school.

SCIENCE

76. Achievements in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in science are good because teaching focuses on discussion of scientific ideas and the development of investigation and enquiry skills. Through these methods, pupils are now making very good progress from year-to-year. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection. Higher attaining pupils in Year 10 have made particularly fast headway in the last three years. They have progressed from National Curriculum Level 1 at the start of Year 8 to Level 3 by the end of Year 9, and now they are working towards GCSE single science at foundation level. This fast progress is a direct result of the appointment of a specialist science teacher nearly three years ago, with very well developed teaching skills. There has been an increased emphasis on practical work and pupils play a very active part in lessons. The teacher's love of the subject is very evident, and pupils enjoy coming to lessons. Their confidence and self-esteem are boosted because all their contributions are valued. The creative use of resources is especially effective in capturing pupils' imagination and interest and promoting often very good progress.
77. In an excellent lesson for Year 3 pupils who are still working towards National Curriculum Level 1, aspects of biology, chemistry and physics are carefully intertwined. Pupils begin by observing that their models of hedgehogs made previously of soft clay have become hard. The lesson builds on these observations to promote the idea that materials can change. This leads to an investigation about the forces that can be used to change the shape of lumps of plasticene. All the pupils are given choices, and they make decisions about the shapes they will make, bending, twisting, pulling and flattening their plasticene. Higher attaining pupils extend their awareness of forces by discussion and by using a wider range of forces. 'What will

happen if we put our plasticene into water?’ asks the teacher. ‘It will melt’, ‘It’ll get wet’, ‘It’s soft, so it’s not a magnet’ says a third pupil. One girl shyly says that she does not know what will happen, and the teacher praises her for her contribution. ‘Let’s try it’ says another pupil as interest in the task builds. They are all learning to predict. Even after the first trial, when all the plasticene sinks, many of the pupils still think it will bobble on the surface next time. By teacher’s patient repetition of the experiment where everyone has a turn, and excellent questioning techniques, pupils begin to apply their learning from earlier in the lesson and predict that their plasticene will sink. ‘How can we make our plasticene float?’ asks the teacher, challenging them again to think. By trial and error pupils create different shapes until they find that boat and cup shapes float. Pupils are learning by investigating and thoroughly enjoying the experience. They are all actively engaged in the lesson from start to finish. A boy with a hearing impairment is fully integrated and makes the same excellent progress as the rest, because an learning support assistant signs for him very effectively.

78. Year 6 pupils learn very successfully about the planets in our solar system and about the vastness of space because the teacher uses a very wide range of resources. Big books, video, posters, and three dimensional models all help pupils to understand. Pupils are involved in their own research, and the teacher encourages them to ask questions. Very clever use is made of hard boiled eggs to help Year 8 pupils develop their understanding of the structure of the earth. Their eggs become ‘miniature worlds’. They create continents by cutting out pieces of shell and they learn about the earth’s core and mantle as they dissect their eggs and expose the yolks. They use tubes of toothpaste, weakened by a pin hole, to understand how volcanoes erupt. Through discussion of their pieces of volcanic lava, pupils reach an understanding about why it is so much lighter than the other rocks they are given to hold. Year 11 pupils use a ticker tape machine to investigate and calculate the speed of a trolley down a ramp. They correctly predict and confirm through their investigations that the steeper the slope, the faster the trolley speeds down the ramp, and the wider apart are the dots on the ticker tape. These pupils are successfully meeting the requirements for the Certificate of Achievement in science and a small number are working towards GCSE single science foundation level.
79. The provision for science is very good because of very strong leadership and management of the subject and very successful teaching. Excellent use is made of community links to support the science curriculum. Armed with Newton meters on a visit to a local supermarket, for example, pupils learn how much force is needed to pull empty and loaded shopping trolleys. Visits to field centres, power stations, museums, and the theatre add richness to the science curriculum. The quality of science accommodation, however, still limits the range of investigative work that can be performed, especially for pupils in Years 10 and 11 preparing examination course work. Current use of information and communication technology in science is modest but set to improve with the recent purchase of new software and hardware. Good assessment records are in place and the assessment and annotation of examination course work are highly commended by the examination board. Teachers make insufficient notes, however, on the written work of younger pupils, to record what has been learned independently, or how much support has been provided.

ART AND DESIGN

80. Pupils achieve very well and make very good progress. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection. Throughout the school, very skilled, mainly specialist teaching enables pupils to produce work that is occasionally of a similar standard to that seen in mainstream schools. At present, the oldest pupils do not enter for GCSE examinations, but units of their work are accredited.

81. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils are prepared to try very hard. For example, pupils in Year 3 concentrated deeply on their task as they arranged and pasted samples of textiles, making a textured pattern. This lesson also illustrated another strength of the teaching – the very useful links that are made between art and other subjects. In this instance, pupils' reading skills were developed, because the pieces of fabric were labelled. Pupils were encouraged to use the sounds made by the letters, in order to read 'silky', 'shiny' and 'crunchy' etc. A pupil with a hearing impairment was helped effectively by the learning support assistant, who used signs to describe some of the textures. History was the starting point for an activity for pupils in Years 4 and 5, as they used clay to make 'Greek' pots. The teacher had prepared them well for this, by allowing them to practise with plasticene during the previous lesson, and so develop their practical skills. They had a clear idea of how they wanted their pot to look and attacked their work with enthusiasm. However, additional activities had not been planned for the pupils who finished early, so the best use was not made of all the available time.
82. Between Years 7 and 9, pupils develop and improve the skills they have acquired. The teacher has very high expectations for pupils to achieve. They learn to pay very great attention to detail. For example, during one lesson, Year 9 pupils observed and investigated bricks. They made rubbings of a selection of bricks and developed their vocabulary as they discussed the textures they uncovered – one brick looked and felt like bark. Pupils were able to select a rubbing that interested them particularly and begin a detailed drawing of this. They concentrated very hard on their tasks, because the teacher and support assistant asked them questions and praised their efforts and results – 'I love what you're doing'. This encouraged pupils and boosted their confidence so that, at the end of the lesson, they were able to comment on each other's work – 'I like that one, because of the detail and the colours.'
83. The oldest pupils are able to work much more independently, applying their skills to more extended projects – for example, a study of Picasso's 'blue period'. They learn new techniques – such as the use of water colours to represent their observations of still life arrangements. They become aware of a wide range of artists and styles, from Van Gogh to Cubism, and increasingly use aspects of these in their own work. It was not possible to observe any lessons in Years 10 and 11, but it is clear that pupils are taught very well.
84. Art is very well led and managed. The numerous excellent links with the community – for example, with visiting artists, local industry and other schools – are all carefully planned to extend and enrich the curriculum. Pupils' frequent successes in local and national art competitions raise their self-esteem and the profile of the school. Art displays in the entrance, corridors and classrooms enhance significantly the school environment. A classroom is used as an art room, but this is small and isolated from the main building. There are limited facilities for working in three dimensions, particularly the use of clay. There is a need to increase the challenge of the accreditation offered to pupils in Years 10 and 11 – for example, by re-introducing GCSE. A further area for development is to make more effective use of computers to support pupils' learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

85. Pupils' achievement and progress overall in design and technology are satisfactory, in line with the findings of the last inspection. Resistant materials technology and food technology are taught separately by the subject co-ordinators. Pupils benefit from

their specialist knowledge and expertise to achieve pleasing outcomes. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and at times it is good.

86. In resistant materials technology, pupils in Years 3 to 6 gradually develop their designing and making skills. Pupils in Year 6 have been taught the skills needed to plan and construct large-scale working models, using thick card sheet as the basic material. For example, during one lesson, pupils were able to cut the card to size, sand the edges to make them smooth, then score and fold the card accurately to make an elongated box as the housing for a spindle. The spindle was the mechanism to move the pupils' model spiders up and down inside the box, which was to become a drainpipe. The nursery rhyme 'Incey Wincey Spider' was used effectively as the basis for the topic.
87. During Years 7 to 9, pupils practise and build on their skills. Year 7 pupils have learnt how to construct shelters from natural materials on a field trip. They have then applied their learning in the classroom by making small-scale models of their shelters out of a variety of materials, satisfying certain requirements. In one lesson, the teacher helped the pupils to judge how well their models met these requirements, using an indoor plant mist spray, for example, to test how waterproof they were. Later in the same lesson, the pupils took it in turns to take digital photographs of their models. With help, they were then able to download and print out their pictures from a computer in the classroom and use them to illustrate their personal record booklets, in which they started to judge how successful their models were. This was a good use of information and communication technology by the pupils, which succeeded because of good teaching of the skills required.
88. In Year 9, pupils learn the skills needed to make a piece of enamelled jewellery and about the properties of the various materials they must use to achieve this. In one lesson, the teacher briefed the pupils well on the necessary safety precautions they must observe in handling and working copper blanks, using coloured enamel powders and using tools such as a pillar drill and a blowtorch. The language used throughout by the teacher was well matched to the pupils' level of understanding. As a result of effective teaching, the pupils knew and could explain that to achieve good results they had to handle the copper as little as possible, to avoid leaving greasy marks on it. They also knew that they could only apply one enamel colour at a time and that to add colours would mean adding new layers of enamel in turn. They then worked carefully, safely and precisely to practise these new techniques, in line with the teacher's clearly stated explanations and expectations.
89. In food technology, pupils can use the practical skills needed to make simple dishes – such as apple crumble and bread-and-butter pudding – as part of a balanced diet. They also learn about related health and hygiene issues. For example, in one lesson, Year 7 pupils showed by their answers to the teacher's questioning that they could explain the steps they must take in the kitchen to reduce the spread of harmful bacteria. The teacher then made good use of information and communication technology to extend the pupils' learning of basic hygiene, using a video clip from a CD-ROM to show them how rapidly bacteria multiply. They talked about how bacteria can affect food and the signs to look for of food going off. From this, one pupil went on to speak about having to throw food away at home because it had gone mouldy, showing that he was able to apply what he had learned.
90. In Year 10, pupils have units of their work in food technology accredited. During one lesson, the task was to make shortbread biscuits. Good teaching resulted in the pupils showing that they knew the preparations they had to make first. They were able to organise themselves independently for the task by putting on aprons, washing their

hands, lighting or setting the gas and electric ovens to preheat them and fetching the equipment they needed. Most were able to follow the given recipe without support – for example, by weighing out accurately the required amount of flour. Those who were less successful still knew that their first attempts were over or under weight and were able to ask for help in correcting their errors.

91. Pupils' progress in design and technology is satisfactory rather than good, because the planning and pace of lessons do not always allow pupils time to learn in greater depth about the properties of the materials they are using. This can lead to pupils being told facts, rather than being given the opportunity to find the information out – for example, the best method of joining particular materials. In food technology, pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop and apply designing skills. There are also times when pupils would benefit from having more time to think about what they have learnt when they complete units of work. While pupils often make good spoken contributions to lessons, they find it more difficult to learn from writing and illustrations when these are not well matched to their levels of literacy and understanding. They can find it hard, for example, to understand the graphical conventions of some diagrams and interpret them correctly.
92. Resistant materials technology and food technology are well managed as separate subjects by the co-ordinators. In Years 10 and 11, pupils are motivated to sustain their learning by having units of their work accredited. However, the school needs to consider ways to plan the better integration of the two separate subjects in future, to ensure that pupils' learning is broad and balanced – for example, how food may be used and investigated more widely by younger pupils. There is also a need to extend the range of topics all pupils explore, in order to give them the chance to reach higher levels of achievement. Since the last inspection, the accommodation for food technology lessons has been refurbished to a good standard for its purpose.

GEOGRAPHY

93. It was only possible to observe a small number of lessons during the inspection. However, it is clear that achievement and progress are satisfactory, for pupils of all abilities. This is broadly similar to the position at the time of the previous inspection. In the lessons seen, the teaching was satisfactory. There is a well-structured programme of work that teachers use when planning work. This helps to ensure that pupils' learning builds on what they already know, understand and can do.
94. During Years 3 to 6, pupils learn about some of the features in their environment – for example, the weather and the jobs people do. They begin to become familiar with maps, and the higher attaining Year 6 pupils can give accurate coordinates in order to pinpoint particular locations. Teachers make the work relevant to pupils' ages and interests. In one lesson, the youngest pupils considered routes and destinations. This was linked to visits the class had made to their own homes. They had taken photographs, which helped them to appreciate the different types of houses and their similarities and differences.
95. Secondary-aged pupils build on this early work. For example, Year 8 pupils know that when contour lines appear wide apart on a map, then this means that the land is flat. They can use an atlas in order to find countries in Africa that are mostly desert. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, and usually handle challenging behaviour calmly and consistently. They use questions effectively to make pupils think hard – for example, about the names of crops grown on farms in England.

96. The subject is well organised. As a result, resources have improved, but there is a need for more computer software. At present, there is not enough use made of information and communication technology to help pupils to learn. Good use is made of visits to make geography more meaningful to pupils.

HISTORY

97. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. This is in line with the quality of teaching. The quality of teaching and pupils' progress are more consistent than at the time of the previous inspection, which is a good improvement. Lower attaining pupils make equally good progress, because teachers make sure they receive the support they need.
98. Teachers plan interesting lessons, which motivate pupils to become involved. For example, during a lesson about the Ancient Greeks, Year 4 and 5 pupils enjoyed finding out about slavery, because they acted out the roles of slaves and masters. The 'slaves' were given tasks such as tying their master's shoelaces, fanning them and taking their coats. Through these activities, they became aware that the slaves had no choice in the matter. Pupils began to appreciate how people would feel in this situation – tired, sad and angry.
99. During Years 7 to 9, pupils learn more detail about periods in history and the reasons for changes and events. For example, pupils in Year 8 find out about the industrial revolution and the impact that machines had on the lives of people in towns and the country. In one lesson, the teacher's skilful use of questions helped them to make deductions about the lives of the children who worked in factories. By encouraging pupils to think about people in the past, teachers make history more meaningful to pupils.
100. In one lesson, Year 10 pupils considered the Holocaust. They were shocked at what they found out, and were quiet and sensible. Because the teacher made sure that they could distinguish fact from opinions, and armed them with information about the Holocaust, pupils were able to write an imaginary newspaper report of a visit to a concentration camp when the war was over. This lesson made a very good contribution to pupils' writing skills. However, computers are not used regularly in history to support pupils' learning.
101. History is well led and managed. There is a structured programme of work which enables the non-specialist teachers to plan suitable lessons. Good use is made of visits and opportunities to teach pupils about local history – for example, the history of the school building.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

102. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection and is due to good teaching using very good resources. The relatively new co-ordinator has good knowledge of the subject and how it needs to develop. The provision of a very good computer room has resolved the accommodation issue from the last inspection. The co-ordinator has ensured that there is no access to unsuitable Internet sites. This is good practice. A carefully structured programme of work allows pupils to achieve external accreditation by the end of Year 11 – Unit Awards or Youth Award Schemes. Pupils enjoy their work and work hard towards their goal of achieving these awards.

103. The refurbished room and new computers have released older machines to go into classrooms. Most classrooms now have two computer stations. Information and communication technology is used well in a few other subjects. In science, pupils use data logging and a digital microscope. In English, some literacy lessons are time tabled in the computer room. The outcome is seen in a very impressive display of poems written by pupils in Year 10. However, computers are under used in other English lessons. In mathematics, pupils use computers very effectively to improve the presentation of their work and to graph results. In design and technology there is good evidence of the effective use of a digital camera to record pupils' work. The recent changes to resources and the accommodation have not had time to have an impact on the use of computers across the curriculum. The co-ordinator has provided some training for staff but the training that accompanies the new resources will take place next term.
104. During Years 3 to 6, pupils make good progress in learning basic computer skills. Year 6 pupils show a good understanding of logging onto the computer. They understand the specialist language used – such as 'icons', 'drag', 'cut' and 'paste'. They create patterns and when they wish to remove something they use the 'dust bin'. During this work they use mathematical language well and show good knowledge of shapes, because the teacher stresses the links between the two subjects. At the end of the lessons they date their work, give it a title and save it correctly.
105. Teachers praise and encourage pupils, with the result that they are proud of their work and keen to show it off. By the end of Year 9, pupils use a wider range of programs – for example, using shapes to design a robot. As they progress, they build on their previous knowledge, draw shapes, and use different colours and effects to improve their work. During one lesson, pupils used a multi-media program to make presentations. These included sound, music and text. At the end of the lesson they each gave their individual presentations to the class. This was very good use of information and communication technology, and also enhanced pupils' skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. They were challenged by the work and enjoyed trying hard and being successful. As a result, pupils' attitudes and behaviour were very good.
106. During Years 10 and 11, pupils work towards accredited courses. These cover many information and communication technology skills – such as entering text, moving and changing text, highlighting and using colours and effects to present their work. Pupils log on and enter their password, find appropriate programs and work with little supervision, increasing their independent learning skills. They are able to do this, because the teacher matches the work accurately to their ability and makes it interesting.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

107. Achievement and progress in French have not improved since the last inspection – both are unsatisfactory. There continues to be insufficient time allocated to French to enable pupils to make satisfactory progress over time. In Years 7 and 8, pupils have one lesson each week. In Years 9 to 11, pupils learn French for a total of three terms only. They do make satisfactory progress in individual lessons, in line with the quality of teaching.

108. Pupils start French in Year 7 with little confidence. They soon learn to greet each other, say how they feel, count objects, and make simple choices of drink and food. Year 8 pupils can state where they live, how old they are and name some of their likes and dislikes. The teacher always insists that they repeat words and phrases in order to practise their accents and pronunciation. As they progress through the school, they 'go shopping' and work out prices in francs and metric quantities, as they pretend to buy food, drink and clothes. They increase the number of phrases they use and understand, repeating phrases to improve their accent.
109. The teacher is well prepared, greets pupils at the door of the classroom and uses French as much as possible, with lots of body language and clues to help pupils to understand. From the moment they enter the room, instructions and requests are made in French – for example, to find the correct desk and sit down. This is good practice. Role-play is used effectively to promote work and relationships in class. The majority of pupils respond well to this approach, but in one Year 8 class, five pupils came into the room determined not to participate at all, and if possible to disrupt the lesson. Despite detailed planning, anticipating challenging behaviour, and valiant efforts from the very experienced support assistant, two of the pupils had to be offered 'time out', taking their work with them to another room to complete. This had the effect of settling the class down, and allowing the rest of the fourteen pupils to continue the lesson and make progress. Credit to the pupils who remained on task and completed their work, despite the interruption at the beginning of the lesson. As pupils left the lesson they commented upon how they had enjoyed their French experience.
110. French is taught in a multi-purpose teaching classroom, which does not allow the teacher to display the room attractively and in a way which would motivate the pupils. Information and communication technology makes little contribution to pupils' progress in French.

MUSIC

111. Pupils' achievement and progress in music are satisfactory overall. These are lower than the standards seen in the last inspection, when progress in music was described as being generally good. Because of recent staffing changes, there is an acting co-ordinator for music at present. His specialist knowledge of the subject is good and pupils benefit from this. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some good aspects.
112. During Years 3 to 6, pupils cover a suitable range of work, developing their ability to make music and listen to and enjoy it. In a lesson seen in Year 6, pupils' learning was good as a direct result of good teaching. The teacher was particularly effective in assessing pupils' individual skills as the lesson went on and using those judgements to extend their learning. Pupils listened and clapped to the beat of a drum machine, first together then individually. They found the changes harder to follow as the teacher varied the beat. So the teacher asked them to listen carefully to the machine and explained that the original slow beat was first doubled, then doubled again. They were able to try again and clap in time accurately. Later in the same lesson, when pupils had been singing and clapping in time to the piano, the teacher could hear that two pupils were clapping to the rhythm rather than the beat of the song. The teacher made good use of this and reinforced the learning of the whole class by giving out percussion instruments. Some pupils then used these to follow the rhythm and others played on them to the beat, so they could all hear the effect of the two aspects of the music together.

113. Older pupils in Years 7 to 9 have been learning about what inspires the creation of different styles of music, such as television and film themes and the blues. For example, in a lesson seen in Year 9, the teacher wanted the pupils to listen critically to the theme from the series 'Space 1999'. The teacher gave the pupils a well structured worksheet for them to record their responses, under technical headings such as 'volume', 'timbre', 'tempo' and 'pitch'. The teacher explained these terms carefully to the pupils in language that was easier for them to understand. In this way, they were prepared well for the listening task ahead. A less successful element of the lesson was that the planning and pace did not allow the pupils enough uninterrupted time to form their own judgements before they were asked for their responses.
114. Music contributes well to pupils' social development and cultural awareness. For example, there are four pupils taking part in a lunchtime recorder group, preparing to play in a county music festival later in the year. Pupils in Year 6 have rehearsed and performed a song with actions in front of the whole school in assembly. Pupils in Year 11 have taken part in a workshop run by visiting Indian musicians and learnt about a variety of instruments previously unknown to them, although they do not have regular music lessons..
115. The acting co-ordinator has drawn up a clearly written policy for managing music throughout the school. However, there is no detailed programme for the areas of work pupils should cover in each year to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. As a result, lessons are only planned in the short term. This makes it difficult to ensure balance and progression in pupils' learning. For example, there are few opportunities for pupils to create and develop their own musical ideas. The acting co-ordinator has begun to address this with advice and support from a specialist teacher in another local school. There is no specialist teaching accommodation for music. Resources for teaching and learning music are satisfactory at present. They will need to be improved as the range of learning activities offered to pupils expands and should include appropriate applications of information and communication technology.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

116. Pupils in all years make good progress in physical education and achieve well. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those for whom English is not their first language make the same good progress as their peers. They are fully integrated into the routines for physical education, changing for lessons, and participate in all the activities. A hearing impaired pupil has very good access to instructions by observing and having his signer to support him. There is a small number of pupils who in addition to their learning needs have difficult behaviours and emotions to conquer. They are managed well in physical education lessons and generally make good progress over time.
117. Higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 reach standards in line with those of mainstream schools – boys at football and girls at hockey – winning inter-school competitions in these sports. In an inter-school football match for boys in Years 10 and 11, for example, pupils not only demonstrated accurate ball skills but also a generally mature approach to team work and competition. They think about strategies, find spaces and pass the ball, and make full use of the pitch. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make good use of their mathematical skills to record their progress in health related fitness exercises. Younger pupils develop their swimming skills and confidence in the water. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6, for example, can swim six widths of the pool, and respond very positively to their instructor's challenge to improve the symmetry of their swimming strokes. A small number of Year 6 pupils

are still developing their confidence in the water and making good progress. One girl was delighted when she put her head under water for the first time.

118. The overall quality of teaching is good with many very good features, especially in the development of pupils' games skills for football, hockey and basketball. Pupils receive very effective individual support to improve specific skills that they find difficult. A Year 4 girl, for example, made very good progress once given well targeted support from the teacher to co-ordinate her jumping skills. A Year 5 boy made very good progress learning to control and pass a football, and understanding how to perform these skills. He not only had individual support to develop these skills but also had to explain to the class what he had learned. In this example, the pupil was developing his speaking skills as well as his physical skills and understanding. Similarly, pupils in Year 8, are developing their speaking skills by discussing how well they have worked as a team at the end of their basketball game. Pupils are mainly responding very positively to the general routines for physical education lessons, getting changed quickly in the very good new changing rooms, and enjoying the range of warm up activities. The self esteem and confidence of a Year 5 boy, who was the first to get changed in his lesson, was boosted significantly when he was invited to lead the warm up activities to music for his lesson in the hall. Girls in Years 10 and 11, however, do not change quickly enough for physical education. They can take at least twenty minutes and keep the rest of the class waiting. Strategies have yet to be devised to solve this problem. Once in the lesson, however, the girls enjoy the activities and play a full part.
119. In a hockey lesson for boys and girls in Years 10 and 11, very good use was made of previous assessments of pupils' hockey skills to identify that they need more practise to develop the 'flick pass'. A very good demonstration and plenty of time to practise this skill with a partner led to all the class making very good progress.
120. The school has in the last year made a very successful appointment of a specialist physical education co-ordinator who is providing a very clear lead to ensure that National Curriculum requirements for the subject are in place. Improvements in physical education since the last inspection are good and continuing to improve, especially in the quantity, range and use of equipment. The curriculum for games, gymnastics, athletics and swimming is very good. The next steps have already been planned to extend the provision for dance and outdoor and adventurous activities. At present, information and communication technology plays little part in helping pupils to make progress in physical education.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

121. Pupils' progress and achievements are satisfactory overall. This is as a result of satisfactory and, on occasions, good teaching, using the well structured programme of work developed by the co-ordinator. Teaching was seen to be good particularly in Year 3 and Year 11. These findings are broadly in line with those of the previous inspection.
122. A scrutiny of teachers' records and work recently completed by pupils shows that pupils know about key aspects of religion in the Christian tradition. The work of older pupils extends their understanding of the place of religion in people's lives by being linked to other major world faiths. For example, pupils in Year 9 know that rules and regulations in a community like a school establish patterns of behaviour. Pupils in Year 10 have discussed their own personal beliefs and then learnt how widespread

religious belief is in the modern world by finding out more about aspects of Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam.

123. In the best lessons, the teachers are skilled in using their knowledge of the pupils and building up new understanding based on their existing view of the world. For example, in a lesson seen in Year 3, the teacher introduced pupils to the term 'Advent' by explaining that it was a word to describe the build-up to a very special event at Christmas. The teacher and pupils first talked about special events in their own lives, such as holidays, weddings and birthdays. The teacher's good knowledge of the pupils meant they were helped to speak in detail about the preparations that had been made for one pupil's birthday party attended by the rest of the class. The teacher knew this had been an event of special significance for the pupils. It was a very appropriate example to help them begin to learn more about events in the Christian calendar and to learn that the periods building up to these events are given special names because of their importance.
124. Teaching is also effective when good links are made between religious education and other subjects, to help pupils see and make connections between different aspects of their learning. For example, in a lesson for Year 9 pupils, about patterns in religion, the teacher explained that Rangoli patterns for painting in the Hindu tradition are symmetrical. Because the pupils had also been learning about symmetry in their numeracy work, they were better able to achieve the task of drawing their own Rangoli patterns by understanding how to construct them. As the task proceeded, pupils were able to show the teacher how they had applied their earlier learning. For example, one pupil drew patterns and then explained that they were symbolic line representations of a fish and a frog. In this way, the pupil showed a good grasp of the symbolic significance of this traditional art.
125. Older pupils benefit from the opportunity in Years 10 and 11 to continue their work in religious education within the Youth Award Scheme. This gives religious education continuing value in the eyes of the pupils until they leave school. In a lesson in Year 11, the teacher's good lesson preparation and knowledge of the pupils meant that they could work effectively on completing aspects of their coursework. Suitable reference books were available in the classroom and pupils showed they were able to select appropriate illustrations from them – such as pictures of a synagogue and a mosque - and pieces of information to add to their own topic work. Good learning took place. While some pupils were confident and could work largely on their own, others asked for and received further guidance to help them, not only from the teacher but also from their fellow pupils.
126. None of the staff teaching religious education in the school has specialist expertise in the subject but the co-ordinator has worked hard to review and develop a programme of work for all year groups, soundly based on the Local Agreed Syllabus. There was no direct evidence during the inspection of the use of information and communication technology to support and extend pupils' knowledge and learning. The school needs to consider ways in which pupils could be offered opportunities for this in the future. There are suitable plans to further develop the procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress in learning in the subject as they move through the school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

127. Pupils make good progress in personal, social and health education and achieve well because the quality of teaching is almost always good, and at times it is very good. The provision has improved well since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator is

very effective in leading developments in the wide range of provision that constitutes personal, social and health education. Extensive use is made of community links, including the Life Education Centres, former pupils who have found success in their chosen careers, local employers, and the careers service, adding depth to the pupils' experiences.

128. The curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs, very relevant to the age of each class and increasingly challenging in its content. Pupils in Year 3, for example, learn about 'myself', road safety, healthy eating and personal hygiene. Year 6 pupils learn first aid, continue their education about sex and relationships and about the use and misuse of drugs, which begins in earlier years. Year 7 discuss bullying and peer pressure; and learn to recognise their emotions and distinguish fact from opinion. Years 7 and 8 build on their earlier work about road safety with lessons on cycling proficiency. Year 8 extend their understanding of citizenship by learning about the rules that govern society and how leaders are elected. They discuss racism, fair treatment and achievement. In a Year 8 lesson to develop pupils' understanding of 'achievement', they recognised that the term is broad ranging and not just about passing examinations and winning at sport. They generated ideas like achieving merit marks, achieving personal targets, helping at home, remembering to do homework, and carrying out a successful operation. The teacher was very sensitive to pupils' needs during this discussion. Year 8 pupils also develop a good understanding of fair treatment when, for example, they reflect on a fictitious story about a boy reprimanded for being late to school because he had been looking after his sick mother.
129. Pupils are prepared very well for leaving school through their work in personal and social education. In Year 9, pupils discuss rights and responsibilities and learn about prejudice and discrimination. Year 10 pupils extend their understanding of these themes, and have recently made an award winning public presentation on the topic. In Year 11, pupils discuss homelessness, parenting skills, the law, and voting in local and national elections. Provision for careers education and guidance is good. It begins in the primary phase, meets the statutory requirements for provision in Year 9, and offers good opportunities for work experience for all pupils in Years 10 and 11. In work on the qualities needed to perform different jobs, pupils in Year 10 begin by explaining the meaning of different personal qualities like 'sociable' and 'generous'. A pupil with hearing impairment provided a very good explanation of the word 'patient'. Pupils then discussed the personal qualities of each member of the class, and did this thoughtfully and sensitively. The courses on offer for Year 11 pupils at local further education colleges were recently evaluated and found not to be meeting learning needs. The co-ordinator is currently working with college staff to develop more appropriate provision. Year 11 pupils have on the whole very realistic views of themselves and their futures because they have had good preparation in lessons. Their teachers work very hard to boost pupils' self-confidence because they have to overcome the jibes of people who make fun of them because they go to a special school. 'When I'm asked what school I go to I make something up because they say you're thick', reported one pupil and others agreed.
130. Attention to equality of opportunity and racism features prominently in displays round the school and teachers are careful to give all pupils the opportunity to participate in lessons. There is, however, a small number of very quiet pupils, boys and girls, with targets to develop their self-confidence and improve their participation in lessons. Teachers are not always providing these pupils with sufficient opportunity to answer questions during whole class teaching. Their participation is often better developed during individual work. The progress that pupils make in meeting their personal, social and behavioural development targets is, however, discussed thoroughly during good quality tutorial lessons. These, and indeed all lessons about personal and social

education, make a good contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills, through discussion, encouraging explanation and asking for assistance, and when drafting their Records of Achievement. In a Year 10 lesson on the idea of leisure time, speaking, listening, reading and writing were all promoted. Whereas lower attaining pupils can write only briefly – 'listening to music', for example – the higher attaining pupils write more extensively, 'I have a stereo in my room and I listen to my music', and 'I like reading girl magazines such as...and collecting the freebies'. Pupils from Years 2 to 5 are taught very effectively about road safety with well-planned resources and plenty of opportunity for discussion. The last fifteen minutes of the day is another good opportunity to promote discussion and personal and social development when issues that have arisen during the day, or future events, are discussed.

131. There is very limited use of information and communication technology in the personal and social education programme and this is an area for development. The co-ordinator has already identified that published assessment procedures for this subject, aimed at pupils who are still working towards National Curriculum Level 1, are not challenging enough. The provision of more appropriate assessment procedures is therefore another area for development. There are times when the subject is taught by supply teachers. The co-ordinator does not have enough time to manage the subject and check on the quality of teaching to ensure that the quality of temporary teaching is as good as that of the established staff.