

INSPECTION REPORT

ST LAWRENCE SCHOOL

Horncastle

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120757

Headteacher: Derek Smith

Reporting inspector: Mary Last

OIN: 17171

Dates of inspection: 10 – 13 June 2002

Inspection number: 244757

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

© Crown copyright 2002

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
Age range of pupils:	5 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bowl Alley Lane Horncastle Lincolnshire
Postcode:	LN9 5EJ
Telephone number:	01507 522563
Fax number:	01507 522974
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Christine Walter
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17171	Mary Last	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Art and design; French.	What sort of school is it? How well the school is led and managed? What the school should do to improve?
9184	Geza Hanniker	<i>Lay inspector</i>		How well does the school cares for its pupils; How well the school works in partnership with parents.
17530	Mary Cureton	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Information and communications technology.	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22695	Ray Cardinal	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography; History; Religious education.	The school's results and pupils achievements.
8645	David Ward	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Music; Mathematics.	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
14596	Tony Fiddian-Green	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Science; Design and technology; Physical education.	How well are pupils taught?

The inspection contractor was:

*Westminster Education Consultants
Old Garden House
The Lanterns
Bridge Lane
London
SW11 3AD*

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	1
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?	7
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	10
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
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
RESIDENTIAL PROVISION	24
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	25
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Lawrence School caters for up to 120 boys and girls with moderate learning difficulties, aged between seven and sixteen. At the time of the inspection there were 83 boys and 30 girls, all of whom have statements of special educational needs. Some pupils have additional difficulties with challenging behaviour, and, since the last inspection, there has been an increasing complexity in some pupils' learning needs. The school is able to offer weekly residential facilities for up to 40 pupils and at the time of inspection there were 13 pupils in residence. A particularly popular feature of the school is the farm unit, where pupils gain experience of agriculture and horticulture. No pupils have English as an additional language, and 45 pupils are entitled to free school meals. Many pupils travel a great distance to school across the county of Lincolnshire by transport which is arranged through the local authority. The school is currently organised into primary and secondary departments, which have traditionally worked with a significant degree of autonomy.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Lawrence School is a long-established and well-regarded school. Pupils learn in an environment which meets their needs and interests effectively. Despite many strengths, there are difficulties in the organisation and management of the school, which have led to difficulties in precisely identifying what is taught in some subjects and in plotting pupils' progress over time. The standards of teaching are good and relationships between staff and pupils are very good. The leadership of the school is satisfactory. The recently established senior team has identified realistic targets for development. There are good procedures for administering the school's finances and for spending its money wisely for the benefit of the pupils. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The quality of teaching is good, with a well-planned range of activities and support from assistants which enable pupils to make consistently good short-term progress in lessons.
- The school provides a very good environment for learning, where pupils quickly develop an interest in their lessons and a growing sense of responsibility and maturity.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good, and the residential provision has a significant impact on pupils' personal and social development.
- Provision for rural science is very good and helps pupils to broaden their knowledge and experience of the natural world and the environment.
- There are very good opportunities for extra-curricular activities, and as part of the curriculum pupils gain experience of real work situations in school and in the local community; these activities help the pupils prepare for life after school.
- Parents are highly supportive of the work of the school and recognise that it helps their children to make good use of their increasing knowledge and skills.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The curricular content is too narrow in some subjects, particularly for younger pupils.
- Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are unsatisfactory and records of their achievements over time are inadequate.
- The headteacher, governors and staff have insufficient and inconsistent strategies for identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Senior staff do not have sufficient time to fulfil their teaching commitments and to complete the procedures for monitoring and evaluation.
- There is not enough communication between primary and secondary departments; good practice is not shared and the skills of some staff are not used effectively for the benefit of all the pupils.

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

Since its last inspection in 1997 the school has made satisfactory progress in remedying most of the weaknesses, and the most significant of improvements have been in raising standards of teaching and learning and broadening the curriculum. However, some significant areas of weakness remain, and these concern the breadth of teachers' planning and the recording of pupils' learning. In response to the last inspection and to the recent introduction of National Literacy and Numeric Strategies, the school has provided good staff training which has resulted in regular attention to the pupils' use of their literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils' individual educational plans and their targets for learning are not yet of consistently high quality across the school, but teachers now place a clearer emphasis on meeting the pupils' individual needs in lessons. Some members of staff carry too many responsibilities and have not been able successfully to undertake a large teaching commitment in addition to management responsibilities.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year 6	by Year 9	by Year 11	Key	
Speaking and listening	B	B	B	<i>Very good</i>	<i>A</i>
Reading	C	B	B	<i>Good</i>	<i>B</i>
Writing	C	B	B	<i>Satisfactory</i>	<i>C</i>
Mathematics	C	B	B	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	<i>D</i>
Personal, social and health education	B	B	B	<i>Poor</i>	<i>E</i>
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B		

**Individual Educational Plans.*

Pupils' achievements are good overall. The pupils make particularly good progress in speaking and listening, so that by the time they leave school they can communicate with ease and maturity. Pupils' achievements in reading and writing are satisfactory and they make better use of their writing skills as they get older. Many pupils read basic texts spontaneously. Some pupils still find writing difficult but higher attaining pupils are able to record their thoughts in writing. In mathematics, pupils make satisfactory progress in Year 4 to 6 but good progress in Years 7 to 11 because the work is more challenging and matched more effectively to their individual needs. Pupils make good gains in their knowledge and use of numbers, and as they get older they reinforce their learning within the community or the college. In science, pupils progress well with practical work and enjoy doing experiments. They benefit from rural studies in the farm unit, where they quickly understand the basic principles of animal care and horticulture. The impressive progress that pupils make in their personal and social development is praised by parents. It enables their children to leave the school with a good range of certification.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: pupils have very positive attitudes in lessons and at other less formal occasions during the day. They are pleasant and helpful to visitors and hold mature and interesting conversations.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good: pupils behave very well in lessons and try hard to complete the work set for them. During breaks and lunchtimes the atmosphere is friendly and relaxed, with many instances of pupils helping each other or the staff. Pupils appreciate the points they receive for good behaviour and for work in classrooms.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: the improvement pupils make in their personal development and maturity is clear to see, from the way in which older pupils take more responsibility for tasks around the school and help the younger pupils when they can.
Attendance	Satisfactory: many of the pupils travel long distances to school, but the school is making good progress in reducing the number of pupils who stay away without good reason.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 4 – 6	Years 7 – 8	Years 9 – 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.

The quality of teaching and learning is good, and it enables pupils to make good progress in preparation for leaving at 16. Teachers plan and use methods that are relevant to meet the pupils' learning needs, and support assistants are skilled in helping the pupils to learn. Relationships between the staff and pupils are very good and help in developing very positive attitudes to learning. Teachers make every effort to include all pupils in the activities during lessons, and all gain from the individual attention given to them by teachers and other staff. The attention given to the pupils' targets is generally good but not always consistent, especially when regular staff are absent. Teaching in English, mathematics and

science is good throughout the school and promotes good levels of learning and a determination to do well. In all other subjects, teaching is good overall. Staff promote pupils' learning and thinking through conversational skills, whether at break, lunchtime or in the residential unit.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory: whilst the curriculum is satisfactory overall, significant weaknesses remain in planning for full coverage of all aspects of some subjects for pupils aged 7 to 11. Provision for rural science is very good, and pupils have many opportunities to work with animals and poultry. Work experience opportunities are a major strength of the school, and pupils act responsibly and safely in the school kitchen and dining room.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Pupils have many good opportunities to improve their social skills and develop a sense of moral values. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own beliefs and values and to respect the beliefs of others. There are, however, few opportunities for pupils to understand the implications of life in a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good: the staff ensure that pupils work in a supportive environment and are given good guidance in all aspects of their education. The residential provision is very good.

The parents are very supportive of the work of the school and are confident that their children achieve good standards of work, responsible attitudes and improved behaviour.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory: following the recent reorganisation of responsibilities, the headteacher and senior staff are now gaining a clearer view on how to ensure that the school runs efficiently. They are preparing appropriate plans to share good practice and to improve communication between departments.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory: the governors are experienced, knowledgeable and able to provide good support, and they visit the school frequently. Whilst they have nominated governors to oversee literacy, numeracy and religious education, they are not yet fully involved in monitoring classroom practice throughout the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory: the school has not fully addressed the last inspection findings in respect of identifying its strengths and weaknesses. Only the headteacher regularly monitors lessons, and other delegated monitoring strategies have not been effective in dealing with problems concerning staff roles and responsibilities. However, the school has recognised that this is an issue for immediate attention and has already put into practice the necessary procedures.
The strategic use of resources	Good: the school thinks carefully about its expenditure and ensures that all money is spent for the benefit of the pupils. The level of resources has improved since the last inspection; equipment is used well in lessons to promote pupils' learning.

There is a sufficient number of well-trained teachers and teachers' assistants to meet the needs of the pupils in classes. The accommodation is generous in size and enables pupils to work in a pleasant learning environment.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like the school and make good progress. • Teaching is good and results in good behaviour. • The school is well led and managed and works closely with parents, who are well informed about how their children are getting on. • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school. • The school challenges pupils and expects them to do their best. • The school is helping children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The arrangements for homework, to ensure that it is more consistent. • The range of activities outside school hours.

Inspectors agree with the parents' positive comments. The school and the local education authority have identified some targets for building upon the strengths of the school. Inspectors agree that while the amount of homework is satisfactory it is not always set consistently between classes or subjects. Although parents are critical of the range of activities provided outside school time, inspectors feel that given the diverse area from which the pupils are drawn the school could not reasonably provide more than its current level of activity.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Although all pupils have significant special educational needs (SEN), their achievements are satisfactory, given the nature of their learning difficulties and their previous negative experiences in education. Judgements are therefore based upon the work they are currently doing, the progress they are making towards the targets in their individual educational plans, their work in lessons, and an analysis of their work prior to the inspection. Satisfactory achievement was also reported at the last inspection.

2. Achievement in speaking and listening is good. By age 11, pupils listen carefully to the teacher and to each other. They are responsive in answering questions. By age 14, they listen well and comment appropriately. By age 16, they collaborate orally in problem-solving activities. Achievement in reading is satisfactory by age 11, and then good. By age 11, pupils develop their knowledge of stories and characters through the 'big book'. They pick out key words and identify features of punctuation. They read with understanding from workbooks, and higher attainers read simple texts. By age 14, pupils have read a range of texts, and they know the difference between prose, verse and plays. They can analyse content, for example in classifying advertisements. By age 16, they have tackled challenging texts, including Shakespeare. Achievement in writing is satisfactory by age 11. In one lesson pupils were able to invent addresses for characters in a story and write them down. By age 14, pupils' achievement in writing is good. Pupils redraft, paying attention to punctuation and paragraphs and arguing to show both sides. Good progress is maintained by age 16, with pupils writing in a range of styles, including business and personal letters.

3. The National Numeracy Strategy is effective in supporting teachers' planning and assessment where it is used analytically, but in some classes there are too few strategies to identify and record all aspects of pupils' learning. In mathematics, pupils' achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 and satisfactory in all other year groups. Younger pupils develop their number skills through a variety of activities, including songs and games. By age 11, pupils understand the four rules when applied to numbers up to about 20. They count in twos and tens beyond 20 and use the language of mathematics such as 'equals' and 'multiply'. Achievement is good in Years 7 to 9 because the curriculum is well balanced, with a variety of activities. By age 14, pupils reinforce their knowledge of number patterns and sequences. They construct models and use decimals and fractions. By age 16, pupils develop further their understanding of calculating with money and their knowledge of number patterns and multiplication tables, but their skills in mental calculations are inadequate.

4. In science, pupils' achievement is satisfactory by age 11. They sort animals into categories and understand some animal habitats. They understand features of different animals and use the terms 'vertebrate' and 'amphibian' correctly. By age 14, pupils' achievement is good because they build well on previous work to achieve breadth in their understanding. They develop their experimental skills well, for example in dissolving and then recovering solids. By age 16, a strong feature of their good achievement is in rural science, including their practical work. They make good progress in animal care and horticulture, and are able to gain a nationally recognised qualification in rural science. Achievement in French is very good. Pupils are highly challenged to speak the target language, which they do with interest and enjoyment.

5. In physical education, achievement is satisfactory. Pupils learn to swim by age 11. Planning shows that pupils have opportunities to take part in games, gymnastics and dance activities and also in events for sports day. By age 14, pupils practise running against the clock and learn how to do a standing long jump. By age 16, pupils develop skills in passing and shooting in basketball, and an awareness of different tactics. They learn team skills and respect for playing by the rules.

6. Achievement in information and communications technology (ICT) is satisfactory. By age 11, pupils can log on and find a program, with assistance, and save their work. By age 16, pupils use the Internet, design posters by using varied formats, and print and save their work.

7. There is not enough evidence available to form a judgement about younger pupils' achievement in design and technology. Achievement is satisfactory between Year 7 and Year 11, with pupils designing and making models, using a variety of materials and with increasing sophistication. Year 11 pupils were seen testing model land yachts which they had designed and made. Pupils are suitably involved in evaluating their work and there is some good use of ICT. Pupils use a variety of tools and develop good safety awareness in their use of equipment. Older pupils in particular achieve well in food technology and learn a variety of skills, including reading recipes, weighing ingredients and timing cooking.

8. Pupils achieve well in humanities in Years 7 to 11. There is insufficient evidence to form a judgement of achievement in Years 3 to 6. By age 14, pupils make good progress in developing skills and knowledge and understanding. In history they use sources well, for example in investigating family life and conditions in mines in past times. They use maps to make decisions on location and they develop their awareness of environmental issues. By age 16, pupils develop well their use of subject-specific terms and methods. They use statistics to describe countries at different stages of development and draw a sketch map to describe flooding in York. They make good use of terms to describe features of both world wars and draw comparisons between the conditions endured by different groups.

9. Achievement in art is satisfactory, and pupils' work includes the use of mixed media. In personal, social and health education (PSHE) the pupils' achievements and the gains they make in their attitudes and maturity are very good, and are a major feature of the school's success. Pupils grow in maturity as a direct result of the high expectations staff place upon them. Whatever the level of their learning difficulty, they all progress well in working co-operatively within the classroom or in the community. Pupils are particularly successful in serving lunch to their fellow pupils, and do so with respect, care and politeness.

10. In religious education, pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. They learn about different religions but do not make sufficient gains in knowledge as they move through the school. Their learning about religions is better than their learning *from* religion. In Years 3 to 6, pupils gain a range of experiences in celebrating different religious festivals, including the Jewish New Year and the Hindu festival of Holi. Achievement in Year 7 and in Years 10 to 11 is better than in Years 8 and 9, because different world religions are studied in greater depth. Older pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to develop skills in reflecting on and responding to social and moral issues.

11. Achievement in music is good throughout the age range. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 were seen taking part in the musical production of 'Noah'. They sang well in tune, with expression and energy, and articulated words and phrases clearly. They also displayed

good rhythmic skills and good skills in learning by heart. In Years 7 to 11 pupils learn to play a variety of instruments, including guitar and keyboards, and learn various popular and religious songs. They also develop their knowledge of instruments well through listening to music. They use and understand different forms of musical notation.

12. There is no discernible difference in the achievements of boys and girls in the school. The achievement of pupils with additional needs is the same as that of other pupils in the school. Although the school has had difficulties with staffing, recording and curriculum coverage, which may limit the overall access to some subjects, it does its very best to ensure that every pupil is included in all activities within individual lessons.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Throughout the school, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They go eagerly to lessons, are genuinely interested, and take a pride in their work and are pleased with their achievements. Almost all pupils sustain concentration well in lessons. They take part with enthusiasm in other activities outside the daily curriculum. Pupils in the boarding wing are particularly keen to take part in the recreational activities which are provided for them. Overall, pupils show a high level of respect for personal property, school equipment, the buildings, and the general environment of the school. They respond well to the pleasant and well-kept site.

14. Overall, pupils' behaviour is very good. They listen carefully and work willingly in response to their teachers' instructions, and persevere well both in individual and group tasks. As they move around the school at break times they are exceptionally considerate and polite to one another and to the adults and visitors in school. Boys have excellent inclusive attitudes toward the only two girls in the boarding house. No sign of sexism or racism was observed during the inspection. Pupils enjoy the 'house' system and are loyal to their peers and to the staff who belong to their 'house'. They are genuinely pleased when they receive merits for good work and behaviour, and even the oldest pupils are very keen to receive the 'student of the week' award.

15. Bullying is uncommon in the school. When minor incidents do occur, they are dealt with promptly and effectively in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy. Boarding pupils willingly accept the 24-hour routines. They are very sensitive to the needs of others who live in. All pupils co-operate very well in recreational activities. They enjoy competing in games and usually accept losing with good grace.

16. During their time in the school, pupils develop strong relationships with one another and with the adults in school. Over the 24-hour day, boarding staff provide a firm yet friendly framework within which all pupils can work and play without harassment. As pupils move up the school most of them take on a very good number and range of responsibilities, which they carry out excellently. For example, they set out and clear away equipment in lessons and help with cutlery and dishes at meal times. The school's kitchen staff make an important contribution to the teaching of good manners and conduct, especially at lunchtime. All senior pupils undertake work experience in the school kitchen. This links in with an effective careers education programme, and all these factors contribute well to pupils' increasing self-confidence. Pupils also have good opportunities to express themselves clearly and confidently in the regular dramatic and musical events which are performed to parents and wider audiences.

17. Over the last school year, 11 pupils have been excluded in accordance with required procedures. Pupils' attendance is just satisfactory. Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection, and although authorised absence is at similar level to that at the last inspection, the school is making good progress toward the targets it has set for reducing unauthorised absence rates. Pupils in Year 11 are those most frequently absent without due cause and a few regular truants distort the good attendance overall. The school is aware of this trend and works closely with the education welfare officer to reduce truancy and to improve attendance. Almost all the pupils travel long distances to get to school and several make commendable effort to attend regularly. The introduction and use of an electronic attendance data-processing program has made the tracking of individual pupils' attendance patterns more effective. The attendance records are clear and efficiently used. Most parents respond positively to the 'same day' follow-up call from the school if their child has not arrived and they have not notified the school. Pupils generally arrive to school on time but there are some regular latecomers, mainly because of transport difficulties and the long journey time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It was judged to be satisfactory or better in almost all lessons, with one unsatisfactory lesson in English and one in food technology. Three lessons were excellent; one each in English, mathematics and French. Seventy-four lessons were observed during the inspection time, and in eight lessons in every ten the teaching was good or very good.

19. The high quality of teaching is characterised by challenge and practical tasks which interest the pupils, so that they work hard and do well. For example, in an outstanding French lesson in Year 8, pupils were highly motivated by the use of various articles of food and drink and they were able to choose between 'chips ou frites'. They very soon learned that 'chips' was a false friend to them as it was not the meaning that some expected. Their participation was total. All pupils tried hard to copy the excellent French language model supplied both by the teacher and by the support assistant, who was able to help the less confident pupils by preparing their answers quietly with them before their turn to speak in class. Classroom support assistants consistently work well with teachers, and together they enable pupils to make good progress in all subjects and complete their work successfully.

20. The percentage of good teaching represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, when teaching was reported as good or better in about six in every ten lessons. The instances of unsatisfactory and excellent lessons were about the same as those in the last report.

21. Teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 are good overall, and over half the lessons seen were good or very good. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, activities for pupils are undemanding and the planning inadequate, so that some pupils are not extended enough in their learning. In Years 7, 8, and 9 the very great majority of teaching was good, with one excellent lesson and none unsatisfactory. For Years 10 and 11, the majority of teaching observed was good, with none graded as unsatisfactory.

22. Where teaching is very good or excellent, teachers motivate the pupils very well, such as in an excellent English lesson where pupils were listening to a story and were enthralled by the teacher's talented reading. In a very good mathematics lesson, for pupils in Year 7, the teacher started with a game that helped multiplication skills, and the enjoyment the pupils gained from this activity helped them learn very well and without apparent difficulty. A Year 6

lesson began with a song about counting, and later a puppet was used to excellent effect, talking to pupils and asking them questions about their number work so that they were able to use their imagination fruitfully. In these very good or excellent lessons teachers give very clear instructions, so that pupils understand what is expected of them and all are fully involved. For example, in French with Year 8, very little English was used and pupils were fully challenged to respond in French. Excellent resources were used, such as a real menu from a French café.

23. Where there is very good teaching, pupils respond and behave very well. They are fully motivated, and consequently the quality of learning is very good. Where teaching is no more than satisfactory, teachers do not always sustain pupils' interest until the end of the lesson. For example, in a religious education lesson, opportunities were lost by not asking pupils about the symbolism of the Seder meal, and the reading of the description was long and involved. It was too difficult for many pupils to understand.

24. Teachers generally have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, and they use their skills well to promote pupils' learning and help them to make good progress in lessons. Some teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of their subject and this often results in very good teaching. For example, in lessons in French, science, information and communication technology and home economics, the levels of expertise are very good.

25. Teachers plan well overall, and support assistants are fully aware of what the lessons are about. Teachers know their pupils well and set appropriate targets for their individual needs and according to their educational plans.

26. Teaching is good in English, mathematics and science, and there were several instances of very good or excellent teaching in these core areas. Overall, the school uses the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies successfully. Some teachers are using these as guidelines to form a basis for the programmes of study, such as in mathematics in Years 7, 8, and 9. Others are using the National Strategies fully and well, such as the strategy for Literacy, again in Years 7, 8, and 9. Overall, this results in a generally good focus on pupils' learning, and their effective use of these basic skills. This is exemplified well, for example, when pupils use mathematical skills in home economics to measure ingredients, or when they use speaking and listening skills in science in discussing the video they are watching. Pupils also make good use of these skills when they are away from school. Year 9 pupils went to see the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight aircraft, and they asked questions and responded well to the guide's comments and questions to them.

27. Pupils with additional special needs are very well supported. Teachers are skilled in managing pupils' behaviour. They show a particular understanding for some of the more vulnerable pupils, resolving difficult situations that may well have caused problems for a whole class. They encourage other pupils to help and to show sympathy for those who are upset.

28. Pupils' personal and social development is fostered well by good teaching across the school. All staff understand their pupils well and share the intention of making sure that they benefit and grow in maturity as they move through the school. The school ensures that pupils are taught personal and social skills about hygiene, sex and drugs education, healthy lifestyles, and relationships with others. These are addressed in taught lessons,

and also in the boarding wing of the school and at such times as assemblies or lunchtimes. Staff provide good role models and sit with pupils at meals, or play games and provide activities after school in the residential areas. The school nurse joins in by helping in science with pupils' sex education, providing her expertise and teaching effectively in partnership with the science teacher.

29. Older pupils are given opportunities for work experience, and during the week of the inspection two senior boys were working with the school's catering staff. They were fully involved in all aspects of this valuable contribution to the school's life, and they demonstrated how well they were being taught and the benefits they were learning from the experience. Two other pupils attend the local secondary school for science lessons, leading to GCSE work.

30. Teachers use well the time allocated for lessons and do not hesitate to extend pupils' experiences to very good effect if occasion arises. For example, several classes were taken out of science to see a newborn lamb, and to hear an explanation of how the foster mother ewe was persuaded to adopt it after her lamb was stillborn. This very good practice by staff, and the equally good experience for pupils, adds to the pupils' work on reproduction in science but also broadens their experience of life very well.

31. The procedures and use of assessment vary between teachers. In the best practice, skills and achievements are tested and recorded fully. The very good practice seen in subjects such as French and science is not consistently applied across all subjects, and in some there is very little assessment at all. In lessons, most teachers encourage their pupils well and let them know how they are doing, but more formal procedures are not consistent. The opportunities to 'capture' the steps of pupils' progress are not always taken, and, where this is the case, assessment cannot be used for future planning. Despite some strengths, assessment is unsatisfactory overall.

32. Teachers make good use of resources, ranging from the very straightforward, such as tools and materials in design and technology, to the full use of the animal unit and the plots of ground that pupils cultivate. Specialist rooms, and areas such as those for home economics, science and rural science, add much to the school's resources, and teachers take full opportunities to use these for the benefit of pupils and their learning. For example, in a home economics lesson, pupils in Year 11 were seen making marbled cakes which would later would be sold to raise funds for the school. The room was completely refurbished four years ago, and now provides an excellent facility. Pupils benefit greatly from all the resources that teachers use, such as video tapes, music, large books and mathematical equipment.

33. Overall, the school has a good number of computers, and most rooms have at least one, and often more. In several subjects, such as science, physical education, and rural science, pupils use computers to enter their findings and record their work. In home economics, they use a database to record facts and figures about their work and this includes costings of what they make. This very good link across the subjects of the curriculum is enabling pupils to apply well what they have learned and to find practical uses for their skills.

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

34. Whilst the curriculum is satisfactory overall there are significant weaknesses in certain areas, and these limit the breadth of pupils' learning in some subjects and some classes. The school provides an unsatisfactory curriculum for pupils under 11 because the content of lessons lacks some breadth, and not all aspects of every subject are satisfactorily covered. Physical education is not regularly taught, although swimming is a feature of provision this term. The religious education curriculum lacks a clear and continuous focus, with the result that pupils' coverage is difficult to identify. In history and geography, planning is good, but delivery is very variable, and this leads to an unbalanced curriculum for some classes. Information and communication technology (ICT) is not systematically taught by specialist staff to all pupils. For pupils aged 11 to 16, there is a satisfactory range of worthwhile opportunities which meet the interests, aptitudes and special needs of pupils.

35. The school's curriculum policy is inadequate. It fails to give an overview of what is provided and does not show how the key stages link. At the present time, curricular provision cannot be effectively monitored across the school to determine continuity in pupils' progress. This is because although there are members of staff with sufficient skill to carry out such work, they do not have enough opportunity to complete the tasks, due to an overload of other work. This omission prevents the school from recognising its strengths and weaknesses and has contributed to the difficulties in reporting and assessment.

36. Programmes of study take account of the National Curriculum. The school emphasises the importance of communication in its good provision for English. There is, however, no well developed whole school policy for communication throughout the curriculum. Strategies for teaching literacy vary widely in their effectiveness, but are generally satisfactory and continue to improve. Strategies for teaching numeracy are satisfactory.

37. The school has heeded the advice of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority in recently introducing some externally validated examinations by the end of Year 11. These include social skills, animal husbandry, horticulture, ICT, French, numeracy and literacy. Some pupils study for science examinations in the local secondary school. The needs of all pupils and the curricular provision set out in their statements are fully met.

38. The school makes best use of the specialist skills of staff for pupils over 11. Subjects are taught by specialists whenever possible. However, the skills of these members of staff are not used to full effect for younger pupils. Where primary teachers are not subject specialists they do not benefit from observing and sharing good practice or receiving subject specialist advice. The school has recognised this weakness in its systems and is currently considering introducing whole school responsibilities for co-ordinators.

39. The organisation of the school day is currently being considered in the hope that transport can be organised to enable pupils to arrive earlier and leave later. This problem was identified as an issue at the last inspection, and although the situation has improved it still limits the amount of teaching time. However, once the pupils are in school, the organisation is good and teachers all make good use of the time available.

40. Although all staff make determined and persistent efforts to include all the pupils in planned activities, not all pupils have the same curriculum experience, especially those under 11. They do not all have the opportunity to take physical education every term, and not all pupils are able to choose to study history and geography in Years 10 and 11. There

is not enough assessment information available to teachers for them to ensure that the needs of all pupils are fully met. As a result, not all pupils share equal opportunities in physical education. Although this only affects a minority of pupils, the current situation contravenes the school's equal opportunities policy.

41. The additional special educational needs (SEN) of some pupils are effectively met by work with the speech and language therapist, the physiotherapist or an occupational therapist. The organisation of annual reviews of pupils' statements is good, and parents are consulted, though many have difficulty in attending because they live along way from the school. The school meets statutory requirements for maintaining pupils' statements and for the recently redeveloped Code of Practice.

42. There is very good extra-curricular provision. The school has strong, varied and interesting programme of visitors to the school, and of visits out. Pupils visit a variety of galleries, museums and places of interest nearby and further afield. They have visited the Globe Theatre in London and the Magna Millennium Museum, celebrating 'Air, Fire and Water', in Rotherham, and these have expanded their horizons and helped their learning. Pupils have experienced sailing and canoeing in Norfolk. There are frequent visits to France. The extra-curricular provision made as part of the 24-hour curriculum is a further significant strength. Liaison with the main school is excellent. All pupils in the boarding house have homework appropriate to their stage of learning. There is an effective programme of social skills development containing elements of life skills, numeracy and literacy. Pupils are given good and consistent opportunities to learn the social use of language.

43. Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good. The governors have approved the programme for sex education. Pupils are left in no doubt as to the dangers of drug abuse. A satisfactory programme to address issues of citizenship has recently been introduced.

44. The school provides very effectively for work-related education, including careers education and guidance. A highly efficient and well-valued careers officer makes frequent visits to the school to interview pupils, from the age of 12, and to raise their awareness of career possibilities. She works closely with pupils and their parents and carers until they leave school. All pupils are given sensible action plans. The careers officer attends all transitional reviews when pupils move into employment or further education. She provides consistent and impartial advice on what comes next, based on very good local knowledge of what is available. The school keeps track of the choices pupils make and reports on them to its governing body.

45. Links with local colleges are very good. Pupils have very good opportunities to attend link courses and familiarise themselves with what is on offer when they leave school. There are very good opportunities for pupils to undertake work experience, both outside school and on the school premises. Pupils' practical experience of rural studies is a good strong feature of their vocational education.

46. The school has very good links with the community, which contributes well to pupils' learning, particularly in work experience placements. There is a variety of business-led charitable organisations which contribute to school funds. The school rural studies unit links with farmers to fatten pigs for slaughter, and this gives pupils insights into the realities

of farming. The community also buys the eggs and other produce sold by the school. Other children are invited to enjoy the facilities of the boarding house, including the swimming pool, and this fosters social relationships. During the week of the inspection, plans were made for pupils to visit the local fire station to see a display which was to be specially put on for them. A local policeman visits the school from time to time.

47. The school has very good relationships with partner institutions. Links are constructive. The school makes use of information from pupils' previous schools whenever possible. It familiarises pupils and parents with the expectations and patterns of work required by the school before the new pupil is admitted. There is a useful programme of taster visits, and some pupils enter the school for a trial period. Potential pupils are visited in their school setting until the school is fully informed of their strengths and weaknesses in numeracy, literacy and personal development.

48. Inclusion into other schools is beginning to develop. Pupils are included in some lessons in mainstream schools. Plans are well advanced to welcome mainstream pupils into the school's rural studies lessons. About two pupils each year are returned to mainstream education. On these occasions, the school liaises with the new school effectively and provides the necessary support and guidance. Parents and pupils or carers are fully involved in the process. The school provides an adequate summary report as pupils are transferred back, as it is required to do. When pupils are 16, the school provides them with a survey of their academic and personal achievement as a basis for future courses. This is enhanced by a National Record of Achievement for each pupil.

49. The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Its greatest strengths are the arrangements it makes for promoting the pupils' sense of moral values, and this work is at the heart of the school's purpose. By the time they are 14, pupils have developed a very good sense of right and wrong and are prepared for taking responsibility as mature members of society. The school's expectations that all pupils will know what is required of them, in terms both of work and of behaviour, helps all the pupils to improve their understanding of society and their place within it. Arrangements for social development include many opportunities for pupils to mix socially and to understand how to behave in the community. The school provides a satisfactory emphasis on cultural matters, particularly in such subjects as music and art. Pupils also study other cultures in subjects such as geography and history, but there are few opportunities for them to understand the implications of life in a multicultural society. The main provision for the pupils' spiritual development is within religious education lessons and assemblies, where pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own religious beliefs and values and those of others. These opportunities are beneficial to the pupils in deepening their understanding. However, other opportunities, both within lessons and at other times of the day, are sometimes overlooked because staff do not routinely plan a link between what they teach and such issues as spirituality or multiculturalism. For example, teachers could place more emphasis on pupils' understanding of the texts of songs or hymns and how they reflect other people's beliefs.

50. Since the last inspection, there has been an unsatisfactory level of improvement in provision for the curriculum. The curriculum is now broad and balanced for pupils over 11 but not for younger pupils. There is now sufficient time during the school day to teach English and modern foreign languages in Years 7 to 9. Provision for reading throughout the school is now good. Although a curriculum co-ordinator has very recently been appointed, the whole school policy for curriculum remains inadequate. All subjects now have policies and schemes of work, but the quality of lesson plans varies between and within subjects. There is still insufficient time or willingness on the part of some co-ordinators to undertake development, monitoring and evaluation of their subject. There is now a homework policy

which provides pupils and teachers with a wide area of discretion, but in fact little homework is set except for pupils in the boarding house. Reading books still do not go home regularly with all pupils. The missed opportunities for parents to become more fully involved in the learning of their child, mentioned in the last report, persist. Although many parents would like to be more involved, they have difficulty in getting to the school, owing to the long distances and problems over public transport.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

51. The school provides good levels of personal guidance and support for its pupils but the use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning is unsatisfactory. The school promotes the welfare of its pupils in a safe and kind environment.

52. The pupils' personal development is well supported, and the encouraging and considerate staff know the pupils well. At their regular weekly 'pupils meeting', teachers discuss developments in pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Several members of staff are experienced counsellors who quickly identify in pupils any changes and signs of disaffection that require attention. Guidance to all the pupils is continuous throughout the day, and they feel and understand the benefit of this. Consequently, pupils have confidence in adults in the school; they know that the staff think about them helpfully, and they can turn to a good range of people with any of their problems. They talk freely and boldly to adults, visitors included. Personal responsibility for the pupils' own actions is developed through encouraging them to reflect on their achievements, for example by self-evaluation of their own work, and keeping their own Record of Achievement portfolio up to date. The school has joined the Investors In People scheme, which promotes good relationships further, and planning is well in hand to start the Healthy School initiative. The school provides opportunities to widen the pupils' outlook and perception of the world beyond their everyday experiences, through a broad range of extra-curricular activities, including the chance to visit France. Guest speakers, such as local police personnel, talk to the pupils about their work, and this helps them to understand the roles and responsibilities. Those who need 24-hour support gain a great deal from weekly residential placements and short-term boarding experience.

53. The school has good procedures for recognising pupils' personal achievements and gives rewards for outstanding work or behaviour. These commendations are welcomed by the pupils and enhance their self esteem. They may take the form of certificates for achievements, for example attendance, 'licence to cook', 'sewing machine driving licence' or computer competency. The staff nominate individuals for the 'student of the week' award and pupils vote for those they consider worthy. Although the school council is convened and led by teachers, the pupils learn to take collective responsibility and represent others.

54. The council has achieved some notable successes, for example initiating the introduction of the school uniform, purchasing lockers for pupils, using school funds, and running collections for charities.

55. The school places great emphasis on co-operation between individuals and groups. To give them experience of co-operating, the Year 10 and 11 pupils are involved in a car-washing scheme for staff as part of their Youth Award mini-enterprise exercise. The pupils are planning to finance a joint outing from the profits made.

56. Child protection issues are handled effectively. The school's policy follows the Area Child Protection Committee's guidelines. The designated person has been trained and there is a nominated deputy for him. The staff know their duties well, their training is updated every term, and they have access to relevant information about procedures and individual pupils, both formal and informal.

57. There is routine contact with outside agencies on an 'as required' basis, for example with the social services, health service or police. The designated person or other members of the senior staff take part in case conferences. Pupils and staff are well aware of the health and safety requirements, as was evident in design and technology lessons and in the classrooms, for example when pupils were using machinery or scissors. Some occasional lapses were evident and these have been brought to the school's attention. Regular fire drill practices take place. All teachers and some supporting staff have received basic first aid training. The school does its own health and safety inspection, in which members of the governing body participate.

58. The school has good procedures and systems for monitoring attendance. The importance of regular attendance is reinforced to pupils and their parents at every opportunity. Good attendance earns merits, and pupils covet these. The reporting and follow-up of absenteeism has been reviewed and reorganised recently, and the form teachers and supporting staff play an increasingly prominent role. All absences are correctly noted at the beginning and at the end of the day. A member of the support staff transfers the register information to an effective electronic data processing program at the beginning of each day, and makes follow-up calls if the parents have not notified the school of the intended absence. A senior member of the staff meets the education welfare officer regularly to devise schemes to help pupils with attendance problems.

59. The monitoring and promoting of good behaviour and discipline are very good. The behaviour policy and procedures encourage a positive and consistent approach to dealing with incidents. Staff apply these very well, and they result in very good relationships between pupils and staff and, by example, between pupils. Incidents are consistently reported and recorded, and the system of dealing with them is very well established, but each case is treated on its own merit. Boys and girls are treated with equal fairness. There are no written school rules, as a matter of deliberate policy, because the school believes it is more suitable to work without these in the circumstances. The results justify the decision. Tried and tested strategies are used to suit individual pupils: some may be placed 'on report' to encourage good behaviour and considerate attitudes, while others may be 'on report' for poor behaviour. Good behaviour earns merit points for the individual and for his or her house. The merits are appreciated, and pupils of all ages take pride in receiving them and in contributing to their house's cause. All the pupils gather together to collate the house points collectively once a week, in a good-natured, competitive spirit.

60. The school takes very firm stand against any form of bullying and harassment. This is based on the school's fundamental aim of providing 'a learning environment which will allow teachers to teach and pupils to learn'. Although there is no explicit anti-racist or anti-sexist policy, the absence of such anti-social behaviour testifies to the success of the overall ethos which is taught in personal, social, health and citizenship education lessons, assemblies and main curriculum lessons. The school has developed clear and simple guidelines for the occasional use of physical restraint where necessary to protect pupils from harm. Exclusion is used as a last resort, and because the great majority of pupils prefer to be at school it is an effective sanction. All events leading up to exclusion are well documented and the follow-up procedures are clearly defined, with the result that they are put into practice effectively and consistently.

61. The school's arrangements for assessing pupils' progress in the short and long term are unsatisfactory. The main weakness is one of inconsistency because the school has not adopted a common procedure or format for the assessment or recording of pupils' work, progress and achievements. As a result, teachers have developed their own systems, which vary in effectiveness. In the best practice teachers assess the pupils regularly, and link the details of how well pupils have learnt to the evaluation of their own teaching. The information then recorded provides a good basis for planning future lessons and for reporting progress to parents. Because different teachers record different aspects of learning and do not systematically assess the *same* aspects, no one in the school has a clear overview of progress. In the best practice, teachers assess the pupils regularly and link the details of how well pupils have learnt to the evaluation of their own teaching. The information then recorded provides a good basis for planning future lessons and for reporting progress to parents. The best teachers' records are in the upper part of the school, where comprehensive information on learning within the schemes of work, the achievement of other social and personal skills, and the pupils' progress towards nationally accredited qualifications all contribute to a full and useful record.

62. The statutory procedures for meeting the requirements of the Code of Practice are good. Meetings to review statements, and the setting of targets, are well organised and help parents understand what their children are learning. The delay in improving assessment and recording strategies has been influenced by two major factors. In the first place, staffing difficulties have prevented those staff with monitoring responsibilities from gathering sufficient evidence to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the system. Secondly, the school has been evaluating various newly-published schemes for identifying with more precision its pupils' achievements on a whole school and individual basis. Whilst this is an action to be admired, the school has not yet settled on a cohesive, straightforward and consistent format to be used by all staff.

63. Because assessment procedures and the recording of pupils' achievements have not been fully monitored by senior staff, omissions and unsatisfactory recording are a feature of the files of a significant number of pupils. The pupils' targets are generally well addressed in lessons but vary in value because many lack sufficient focus on achievable, measurable outcomes. Where targets are more specific, pupils' achievements are easier to quantify and it is possible to see what the pupil has learnt, for example to blend certain letters to help reading, or to become more competent in the use of punctuation. Annual reports to parents include information on all the subjects studied. They are detailed, but there is not always a sufficient focus on what the pupils have actually learnt, understood and can now do as a result of the year in school. There have been no required strategies for recording pupil's achievements, and together with the lack of time for senior staff to monitor outcomes the overall process is unsatisfactory. The school has identified the improvement of assessment and recording procedures as a focus in its current planning. Nevertheless, it has not fully addressed the main weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report.

64. Older pupils are increasingly involved in assessing their own progress, and in the best lessons there is good use of the final few minutes to review the work covered. Higher attaining pupils in particular benefit from reflecting on their activities, although few can yet make an objective judgement on their level of achievement and whether they could have done better. Pupils' experiences and progress build into a record of achievement over time which is valued by pupils and parents as a reminder of the pupils' time at school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

65. The parents have very good opinions and positive views of the school. They have responded in substantial numbers to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Although very few attended the pre-inspection parents' meeting, a range of opinions was canvassed after a school production of 'Noah', which took place during the inspection and was very well attended by parents and friends. All comments were positive and complimentary about the staff and the school, and what they provide and do for the pupils, except in occasional instances which have been brought to the school's attention. A few parents were less satisfied or unsure in respect of the amount of homework and the range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school. Inspection evidence indicates the homework is generally satisfactory and that it supports the pupils' learning. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, though homework is still inconsistent in range and regularity in some instances. The school provides a very good range of interesting extra-curricular activities outside the lessons.

66. The school makes every effort to ensure that the links with parents are effective, and these links are very good. Before the school admits a pupil his or her parents pay a visit to see the premises and meet some of the staff. No parent expressed any reservation about the approachability of the school. Parents feel welcome and are confident that they could take their problems to the school, and that they would be informed whether their children were doing well or badly. The school endeavours to see the parents of each pupil at least once a year. Some members of the senior staff make home visits if parents cannot find the transport to come to the school or if the school has serious concerns. The school combines sports day with the governors' annual general meeting for parents, and in this respect it reaches out to more parents than is usual in the majority of schools.

67. Where necessary, the school makes every effort to involve parents in improving their children's attendance and behaviour, and also ensures they are informed when the child is making good progress.

68. Most parents' involvement with the school is satisfactory, as is their contribution to their children's learning at school and at home. Approximately half of the parents attend the yearly review and about a third attend the parents' evening after the yearly attainment report is published. Parents respond well to the terms of the home-school contract and they are generally supportive of the initiatives the school takes or proposes for their children. They come from great distances to see their children perform in school plays, and contribute generously to charities. There is no parent teacher association, but some of the parent governors raise funds occasionally towards educational projects.

69. The quality of information provided by the school is good. The prospectus and the governing body's annual report to parents contain the required information, as well as other useful facts and messages about the school and its achievements. Occasional newsletters inform parents of the major aspects of the curriculum the pupils follow. Notes are sent to inform parents of forthcoming visits and seek their agreement, and to tell them of one-off events, for example the Jubilee Street Party. Parents appreciate the school's efforts to contact them either by telephone or in writing to let them know of good things their children are doing, and not simply the reverse. The yearly attainment reports to parents are informative. They generally include specific targets for the next year, and information about what their children know, understand and can do in the subjects studied.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

70. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory but there are weaknesses in monitoring and overseeing the whole of its work. Since the last inspection the school has undergone a significant period of instability caused by long-term illness and staff shortages, and these have caused continuing problems for the leadership and management team. Following the restructuring of its management team the school was then required to reorganise the balance of its classes. However, this move was not completely successful and resulted in a high degree of autonomy for both primary and secondary departments. Because the school did not have sufficiently secure means of monitoring its strengths and weaknesses at that time, the differences which emerged between departments were unclear. As a result, although the school has been running efficiently on a day-to-day basis, there was little effective communication between the primary and secondary departments.

71. After reconstructing classes as requested by the local education authority (LEA), a decision which was later reversed, the school reorganised its staffing and subsequent responsibilities of the senior managers. The LEA review was held at the beginning of the year. The school again revised its structure for management and the roles and responsibilities of senior staff. A major and effective change quickly came about when one member of staff took responsibility for the management of major whole school procedures, such as the content of the curriculum. Some problems remained, due to continued long-term absence and staff vacancies. The staffing problems have now been largely resolved, and the school is using these further opportunities to strengthen its procedures for monitoring and evaluating. Although there are relevant and imminent plans to address major issues, and sufficient staff to undertake the task required, the current effectiveness of the senior staff is unsatisfactory. The staff have the skills and knowledge to develop structures and put into practice relevant strategies, but they do not have sufficient non-teaching time to complete them effectively. For example, an imminent change is planned so that the responsibility for managing the care provision and the whole school curriculum is shared by two people.

72. Nevertheless, the senior team is resilient and well thought of in the school and by the parents. Many praise the headteacher's understanding and in-depth knowledge of the pupils, and all agree that the school runs efficiently.

73. The governing body has also been subject to much change since the last inspection, and the current chair of governors recently resigned before the end of the current inspection, owing to ill health. Remaining governors are interested and supportive, and generally wish to help. There is a good deal of expertise among the governing body to provide support to the school. Governors visit regularly and have nominated roles for overseeing literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education. Although they visit regularly, they do not yet analyse more fundamental issues such as the quality of teaching and learning. All are aware of the need to develop these structures and are preparing to undertake some trial observations.

74. The school is up to date with its arrangements for performance management, and several staff have commented positively on its value. The school has also begun to identify ways in which it can start to gather data to guide its work in the future. When fully implemented, this work should help governors to see individual examples of strengths and also inform them about the effectiveness of their former decisions. Other procedures, such as the review of statements and annual reviews, are well organised and meet statutory requirements, despite the inadequate information provided by assessment for some pupils.

75. The school organises good reports to parents, but because its assessment procedures are inconsistent some of the information about progress is gleaned from memory rather than from recorded fact. In order to build upon good quality teaching, the headteacher has observed all teachers' lessons at least once. The current criteria for observation are unsatisfactory because they are not sufficiently critical to help teachers improve their skills by addressing their weaknesses.

76. Other members of staff have not yet taken a full role in monitoring teaching, and subject co-ordinators have not yet fully tracked lesson plans, assessment and record keeping in all subjects. Where co-ordinators have a comprehensive understanding of practice in their subject, they are able to discuss with clarity and understanding what is taught, how well it is taught, and what pupils are learning, but there are no clear structures for identifying such important aspects of learning.

77. The school administration office gives good support to all staff and pupils. There is effective use of information technology to keep the school's accounts in order. The arrangements for ordering and checking on stock and deliveries are secure and understood by all. Where it can, the school tries hard to compare prices and obtain the best value for its money. The geographical area limits opportunities for joining with others to make maximum savings, but the school has obtained favourable rates from several local tradesmen; this is particularly true with regard to the new delivery of pigs.

78. When all are present, the school has sufficient teachers and classroom assistants to meet the needs of all the pupils and students. However, there is a regular reliance on part-time and supply teachers to ensure that the school is up to strength. The work undertaken by such staff is not efficiently monitored. Staff have sufficient levels of expertise to deliver the National Curriculum and religious education, and to meet the individual learning needs of each pupil. Training has been plentiful and all staff have benefited from aspects which are crucial to their role, such as personal support, health matters, teaching, and English and mathematics. There is also a good number of trained and effective teaching assistants who provide good support to the teachers and mainly individualised guidance to the pupils. The good relationships these staff have with pupils are a major factor in their success. The school buildings are satisfactory and provide a good space for pupils to learn and to move around within. However, there are some signs of minor dilapidation, such as doors that remain unpainted or small items of broken furniture which have not been replaced. In most classrooms there is a bright and welcoming atmosphere which not only inspires pupils to do their best but acts as a 'signpost' to the school and the start of a new and exciting day. The front entrance of the school is welcoming, and there is a good library with a fine array of books, including big books for younger children. Resources have improved since the last inspection and are now used well to promote children's learning, but because there was little focus on ICT during the inspection very few pupils were seen using computers as a tool for learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

79. The headteacher, staff and governors should continue to improve the quality of education in the school by taking the following steps:

- Ensure that each subject in the curriculum includes full coverage of national curriculum requirements, by:
(*Paragraphs: 10, 34, 35, 40 138, 111, 166*)
 - * auditing subject plans to identify how well current schemes of work cover recommended content;
 - * monitoring teachers' planning to gauge how well the schemes of work have been implemented;
 - * ensuring that pupils' records identify if they have learnt what was planned;
 - * requiring all subject teachers to plan and record pupils' successes and difficulties in a common format;
 - * monitoring the coverage of each scheme of work at least termly.

- Introduce consistent and required procedures for identifying pupils' progress by:
(*Paragraphs: 1, 3, 31, 50, 64, 81, 104*)
 - * developing an agreed format for recording throughout the school;
 - * ensuring that staff are trained and confident in its use;
 - * sharing examples of current good practice;
 - * collecting and analysing the results of such assessments to provide details of the achievements of individual pupils and of groups;
 - * ensuring that the outcomes are used to plan pupils' future learning.

- Improve the procedures for identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses by:
(*Paragraphs: 32, 61, 62, 64, 66*)
 - * involving governors more directly in analysing the school's performance;
 - * setting clear and unequivocal targets for improvement with success criteria, a timescale for completion, and a person responsible for monitoring outcomes;
 - * requiring all staff to comply and involving them in consultation and discussion;
 - * including staff and governors in direct activities to better inform them of issues;
 - * nominating one member of the senior management team to quantify and monitor results;
 - * using the results in the strategic planning structure of the school so that all these actions are linked to overall improvement.

- Improve the effectiveness of the senior management team by:
(Paragraphs: 61-63, 66)
 - * reviewing the roles and responsibilities of senior and middle managers to ensure that staff have sufficient opportunities to undertake their nominated tasks;
 - * agreeing a relevant and realistic teaching commitment for each member of the senior management team;
 - * delegating some identified aspects of monitoring to subject co-ordinators;
 - * providing training in the skills needed, where appropriate.

- Develop a consistent and shared approach to all the school's work by:
(Paragraphs: 38, 119, 133)
 - * encouraging staff to work together to share good practice, particularly between the present primary and secondary departments;
 - * reviewing the current arrangements for subject management;
 - * using subject specialists to teach across all age groups.

RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

80. The residential provision is very good. It has a significant impact on the very good personal and social development of pupils. There have been good improvements since the last inspection report. For example, there is now a designated head of Care, who is a qualified teacher, although there is still need for a person qualified and experienced in residential care. The grouping of pupils is now good, with separate areas for boys and for girls. Care staff are in place to receive pupils after the lessons finish, and they talk the day through with them, asking about successes and any problems that may have arisen.

81. The residential provision continues to be a strength of the school, although staff involved have sometimes been stretched to the limits because of staff absences due to sickness. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop personal and social skills, and they are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves. For example, they are able to choose and prepare some of their meals and, later, snacks at the end of the day. Suitable activities also give them some good opportunities for personal development. They go into the town for shopping or to the local library after school, and they choose from a variety of games and pastimes both in and out of school. They play games in pairs or as one large group. This was very well exemplified where the whole group, including several members of staff, were playing a card game, with pupils trading or keeping the cards dealt. Soon, some were out of the game, and this called on their ability to lose gracefully. It was very noticeable how well they all took this, accepting it with good humour and still retaining an interest in the game.

82. Child protection procedures are in place satisfactorily, and the headteacher is the responsible, named person. He has received training, but no other members of staff have been trained, and this is an area for development. A complaints procedure is in place and pupils are aware of this and how to use it if necessary. Two telephones are available for pupils to have direct access to outside help if they should need it. Due regard is taken of health and safety issues, such as the keeping of any medicines in a locked cupboard in a locked room.

83. Care staff meet regularly to discuss any problems of the week, and pupils' welfare is uppermost at these times. Staff work hard to provide a wide range of activities and outings, including theatre visits and swimming, and visitors come and talk about their jobs, such as the Fire Service or the Red Cross. Pupils were seen learning first aid with Red Cross officers during the inspection.

84. The school provides a member of staff who is awake through the night, as well as those who sleep in school and are on call. The quality of care is such that pupils feel secure and valued, and staff work very hard to establish the very good relationships that exist in the residential wing. Accommodation for residential care is good. Efforts are made to keep the accommodation bright and cheerful, and pupils either have their own rooms or share with one other. Privacy is respected and they are able to decorate their rooms, if they wish, with posters and photographs. This adds a personal touch to the rooms, although some boys choose not to do it. The girls on the other hand have added colourful posters to their accommodation, making it very welcoming. Communal areas provide enough space for games and pastimes such as snooker, pool and television, and pupils live together in a happy and secure environment, learning to respect and get on with one another. One highlight during the inspection week was when all the boarding community gathered to watch one of England's games in the World Cup. It is worth noting that no one made any adverse comments about the opponents, and everyone got on very well together.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed.

73*

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

87

*69 lessons were graded

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	18	35	12	1	0	0
Percentage	4	26	50	17	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	113
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	45

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	3.6

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	112
Any other minority ethnic group	1

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	11	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

Y3 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	10
Average class size	8

Education support staff:

Y3 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	305

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

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

	£
Total income	793250.00
Total expenditure	779301.00
Expenditure per pupil	7150.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	5311.00
Balance carried forward to next year	19269.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

113
36

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	74	17	3	6	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	25	3	3	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	31	0	3	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	31	14	3	11
The teaching is good.	81	14	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	39	8	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	14	0	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	17	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	56	31	8	0	6
The school is well led and managed.	78	17	3	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	22	8	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	24	3	0	29

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

ENGLISH

85. Provision for the subject is good. Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening. By time they are 11, pupils listen carefully to the teacher and to each other. They are responsive in lessons and delighted to answer the teacher's simple questions, for example on the big book the class are reading. They take pleasure in the sound of rhyming words as they are asked to shout them out. Pupils understand instructions and are able to take direction during play rehearsals. For example, during a performance of 'Noah', one pupil read the narrative clearly and confidently. The others performed their parts appropriately and without self-consciousness. By the time they are 14, pupils listen well to the teacher and make relevant comments. Higher attaining pupils have developed some skills of oral collaboration, and can work together on a task productively, but lower attaining pupils find it difficult to do. In one lesson, pupils were able to predict orally what would happen next in a story, to which they had listened with a high degree of interest and attention. Pupils do not have enough opportunities for drama and role play at this key stage. By the time they are 16, pupils collaborate orally, for example to sequence the actions for making tea correctly. They read out their group decisions to the class clearly and accurately. In the lesson on Shakespeare's 'Romeo and Juliet,' pupils entered into effective discussion with the teacher and with each other as they marshalled their facts to say who the main characters were, how they were related, and what part they played in the complicated plot.

86. By the time they are 11, pupils have made satisfactory progress in reading. They very much enjoy the big books presented to them in lessons. They can understand the simple tales and can say what happened to the characters. All pick out high-frequency words from the large print. All differentiate between upper- and lower-case letters and know some of the ways in which capital letters are used. Pupils of average attainment read words, phrases and continuous prose from a simple workbook. Higher attaining pupils read very simple text for information and pleasure, although the level of their understanding varies.

87. By the time they are 14, pupils have made good progress in reading. In lessons, they have tackled a range of demanding and worthwhile texts in abridged or adapted form. They identify genre, and readily pinpoint the difference between prose, verse, and play scripts. In their study of language, they have successfully classified advertisements according to the style of text used, the nature of the information given, the fantasies they sell and the lifestyle they proclaim. Higher attaining pupils confidently embark on such analysis with minimal assistance and draw independent and valid conclusions from the information they obtain.

88. Pupils have made good progress in reading by the time they are 16. In lessons, they are helped to read adaptations of texts usually presented to pupils of their age in mainstream education, such as 'A Kestrel for a Knave' and 'Animal Farm'. They have read unabridged poems by such classic poets as W.H Auden and Matthew Arnold. Pupils have enjoyed a drama workshop of the Globe Theatre in London. All have tackled a Shakespeare play with confidence and a measure of success.

89. By the time they are 11, pupils have made satisfactory progress in writing. In one lesson on the big book 'Chicken Licken' pupils identified on a map where they thought the animals in the tale might live, invented an address for each, and wrote it down. In this

lesson, high-achieving pupils wrote postcards to an animal, using the appropriate conventions. Lower achievers copied and 'over-wrote' letters and words. Average achievers wrote captions and simpler accounts, often using a computer to present their work in striking and original ways.

90. By the time they reach 14, pupils have made good progress in writing. Redrafted work is substantially correct, properly punctuated and, on occasions, paragraphed. Pupils make good use of the word processor, for example in creating 'Wanted' posters for a monster. They wrote short but impassioned essays arguing against fox-hunting in the week before a fox took twelve of the school chickens, a circumstance which helped pupils to realise that argumentative essays should provide a balanced argument for and against the issues under consideration.

91. Pupils maintain their good progress in writing, and by the time they are 16 have written in a range of styles, including business and personal letters, personal accounts, and simple summaries of plot and descriptions of character which reflect their literary studies. Handwriting is legible and, when redrafted, work can be substantially correct.

92. Teaching is good overall in Key Stage 2, although the standards of teaching seen during the inspection ranged from excellent to poor. In the best lessons, teachers are highly knowledgeable about the development of language, and use the recommendations of the National Literacy Strategy very well to promote learning.

93. In an excellent lesson, the teacher's reading of the big book was spirited and engaging, and created great excitement. Management of difficult pupils in this lesson was so good as to appear effortless. Pupils were praised whenever possible and this helped them maintain their concentration. Learning support assistants were well briefed to help pupils of widely differing attainment to learn well. The activities presented to the pupils appeared to them as games, and caught their interest and imagination. This helped them to maintain their concentration. Assessment in this lesson was very good, with pupils reliably building on previous attainment. Pace was brisk. Pupils were enabled to make the greatest progress of which they were capable. The lesson's well-organised plenary session consolidated learning and helped to promote secure future learning and an acceptable level of social behaviour. In the poor lesson, preparation of new material had been inadequate. The choice of the big book was ill-advised. Pace was very slow, expectation low, and pupils failed to respond. Although much of the teaching is good or better at this key stage, not all pupils make good progress, because the standards of teaching vary greatly.

94. Not all teachers are confident in using the commercially prepared and fairly recently introduced medium term lesson planning which is provided for them. Curriculum monitoring and co-ordination at this key stage are unsatisfactory. Pupils' work is not looked at in the regular, methodical way that would ensure continuity of learning and this impedes progress overall. There is no consistent method of assessment between classes which would allow the school readily to identify differences in the learning of individual pupils, and to take appropriate action when there is need to improve it or provide greater challenge. The good assessment practice of some teachers, however, allows them to modify the learning experience of pupils according to individual needs. There is too little communication or joint planning between the primary and secondary departments, and the skills of specialist staff are therefore not shared throughout the school.

95. Teaching and learning are consistently very good for pupils in Years 7 to 9. Planning is of a high standard and fully meets national recommendations. Learning objectives in lessons are clear and are usually achieved. Activities are rigorous and demanding. They interest and challenge pupils and there is usually a buzz of activity in the

classroom. Learning support assistants enable all to achieve at least a measure of success in the tasks they are set. As a result, pupils become increasingly confident and self-motivated in their learning. In the lesson on the adapted novel 'Frankenstein' the teacher gave an appropriate and knowledgeable introduction to the novel, its history, and the type of writing. Pupils were interested in the tale, which they already knew about, and rapidly became enthusiastic. The teaching and learning support assistants explained some of the text, and helped pupils in their response to some initial reading. This lesson was very well planned to support phonics. It was rigorous in its insistence on 'look, cover, write and check'. Pupils' reading was helped as they were invited to pick out keywords from the text. They were able to make the maximum progress possible because good and carefully prepared resources were well adapted to individual needs.

96. Although progress seen in lessons was very good, progress overall is less good because the excellent curriculum is only recently established and pupils have only lately increased their rate of progress. Liaison with the previous key stage is unsatisfactory, so pupils have not made the seamless transition between key stages which would have enabled them to achieve continuous progress.

97. Teaching and learning are good for the oldest pupils in Years 10 and 11. They benefit from are fully prepared materials, enjoy the activities, and respond by entering into productive discussion. Groups within classes are carefully constructed to help pupils of different abilities. Pupils' motivation is helped by texts which are well adapted to help their understanding, and by imaginative strategies such as card games, with flash cards which help them understand challenging texts. Although progress is good, there is some evidence that high-achieving pupils could successfully be entered for a more demanding externally assessed examination, and the school is already looking into this. All pupils are included in every activity. The subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' social and cultural education.

98. Co-ordination of English in the secondary department is excellent and ensures that pupils build reliably on previous learning. The recently appointed co-ordinator has already achieved a very high level of improvement. She has written a scheme of work of high quality, thus ensuring that all pupils make steady progression through Years 7 to 9. Detailed lesson plans have been introduced, and this has already improved standards of learning. Accreditation has successfully been introduced in Years 10 and 11, with increased curriculum time in which to teach it. There is now a coherent approach to reading in Years 7 to 11. Techniques based on Reading Recovery have been introduced into the school, and some pupils receive additional reading lessons on an individual basis. A worthwhile range of additional texts has been bought to enrich the curriculum. Liaison with information and communication technology (ICT) is now a significant strength, and continues to develop. The link between what is taught between Year 7 and Year 11 is greatly improved, so that when repetition occurs it is planned to reinforce the pupils' learning. The same cannot be said about the link between the primary and secondary departments, and the appropriateness of the work for these pupils is not so carefully analysed, monitored or checked. Even though improvement in the subject has been good overall, the school has not made any positive changes in the whole school approach to monitoring since the last inspection.

99. However, there has been further improvement in teaching and learning. Pupils now have the opportunity to take books home because the library has been properly organised. Resources for the subject are now good, although the number of texts from other cultures available to pupils could profitably be increased. There is now a separate provision for pupils in Years 4 to 7, though continuity between them is weak. Portfolios are being introduced to aid in the accurate assessment of pupils' work.

Literacy

100. The school is aware of the need to promote literacy consistently in all subjects. There has been a recent training day for all staff, and vocabulary lists of key words are now being devised to help pupils' learning. Several of these were seen being used effectively during the inspection. Further development of literacy policy and close monitoring, however, remain to be addressed.

101. Pupils' speaking and listening are good. There have been good opportunities for group and whole-class discussion in subjects such as English. In geography and history, speaking and listening is a strong feature in all lessons. In science, pupils are not afraid to ask questions or give opinions. In mathematics, a high standard of discussion was a positive factor in the good learning seen during an investigation lesson. In a music lesson, both narrator and singers in 'Noah' were able to rehearse their words effectively. Younger pupils have good opportunities for public performance.

102. Pupils' standard of reading does not fully support their learning, but they are helped to read and understand the simple learning materials put before them in lessons. There are consistently good opportunities for reading aloud in a range of subjects. The lack of fluent reading ability leads to some lack of progress in information and communication technology (ICT). All pupils are able to obtain some information from simple non-fiction or reference books, and all can obtain information from CD-ROMs and the Internet. Pupils read simple leisure fiction appropriate to their age. Older pupils enjoy looking at magazines which reflect their leisure interests.

103. All pupils record their work, although some need help to do this. In science, pupils write up experiments and respond to regular written tests. Writing is small in quantity, but presentation is satisfactory. Younger pupils copy and over-write words. They produce captions and write simple descriptions and statements. Letters vary in size, but capital letters and full stops are correctly used. Some pupils use a word processor to present their work.

104. Pupils in the secondary school have produced well-drafted and word-processed accounts of a visit to a local museum. They have answered questions in writing from 'Why do earthquakes happen?' to 'Why do we like getting dirty?' In design technology they write notes explaining how they made their candleholders. Diaries are a strong feature of learning, such as in rural studies, where pupils show an awareness of living things and rhythms of the year.

105. The boarding house liaises highly effectively with the school to support literacy within the 24-hour curriculum. Reading is particularly well promoted. Pupils are given good opportunities for further developing their social use of language. The school has appointed a highly committed governor to be responsible for literacy. She is already beginning to raise whole school awareness of the possibilities for further development.

Library

106. Library provision is good. There is a primary and secondary library, with additional books shelved in individual classrooms. The book stock of both libraries is appropriate and attractive, fully supports the curriculum, and provides leisure reading for all pupils. The number of books greatly exceeds national recommendations. They are no unsuitable, shabby or outdated volumes. Provision is made for books to go home if pupils so request, but this practice could be further developed to encourage all pupils to do so, fully involving parents in pupils' learning and in the work of the school.

107. The primary library provision is well run by learning support assistants. The school has bought into the school library service at this level, and a library van visits termly when it provides 30 to 40 new volumes. The school makes good use of topic collections, which are available to it on request. The primary school library also contains big books and story tapes.

108. The secondary library has recently been reorganised, and although there is no catalogue the books are colour-coded by subject and the codes prominently displayed in classrooms. Volunteers help pupils to borrow books.

MATHEMATICS

109. The school's provision for mathematics is good overall. The progress of pupils in relation to their prior learning is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 and also satisfactory in Years 10 to 11. In Years 7 to 9, where there is a majority of pupils, progress is good. The standards indicated in the previous report have been satisfactorily maintained. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils' attitudes are very good. The National Numeracy Strategy has been adopted throughout the school to serve as a scheme, a guide for lesson planning, and a basis for assessment.

110. In Years 3 to 6, pupils learn to count up to and beyond ten, sometimes through songs and games. They also count objects and animals, write and trace digits and recite number patterns and sequences. By the time they reach the end of Year 6, pupils have experienced a range of activities to enable them to understand the four rules when applied to numbers up to about 20. They can, however, count in twos and tens beyond 20. Many pupils satisfactorily use the language of mathematics, for example *zero*, *multiply* and *equals*. They calculate with confidence, often using objects, animals, counters or spots on dice. In one lesson, they looked at a picture of ten cakes arranged on two plates in order to learn addition, subtraction and multiplication. For example, they calculated 2×5 , $10 - 8$ and ten divided by two. From these practical activities, they learn how to formulate sums with figures. Most work out addition of tens and units with reasonable success. Pupils also know and name some shapes, for example triangle, circle and square, and also cube, cone and cylinder.

111. In Years 7 to 9 their good progress is the result of a well-balanced curriculum which includes practical work, the memorising of number patterns and tables, and mental calculation of low numbers. In two lessons, pupils in Year 7 played a trading game in which teams buy components that are used to build a three-dimensional model, which is then sold back to the banker in order to make a profit. In this game, pupils calculate how many components they need to buy and at what cost. They also learn how to construct the models and apply the correct mathematical names to shapes, such as tetrahedron. By the end of Year 9 pupils also reinforce their knowledge of number patterns and sequences, and use decimals and fractions, particularly as applied to money.

112. In Years 10 to 11, pupils continue to learn to calculate with money, and how hourly wages are reckoned. They continue to discover and learn number patterns and multiplication tables as well as how to 'tally' items in order to produce simple graphs. Lessons often relate to everyday needs, such as learning the value of items of furniture, understanding a phone bill and using a shopping list. Pupils use calculators well. They are presently being prepared for an externally validated test of numeracy. Mostly, pupils are confident and successful with simple, practical mathematical problems, but a significant number of them at this stage have inadequate skills in mental calculation, even with low numbers.

113. Overall, pupils' attitudes in lessons are very good. Pupils come to class happily, expecting to work and learn. They behave very well in lessons and respect the right of their peers to work hard and achieve well without distractions. Pupils mature well as they move into the older classes and acquire good working habits. In all year groups they work very well in groups or teams, and win and lose with good grace.

114. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is satisfactory with some very good features. In Years 7 to 11 teaching is consistently good. Overall, teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident in using it in their lessons. Lessons are well planned and organised. Teachers are firm and have good expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Where possible, good attention is paid to literacy, especially to the accepted conventions of the terms used in mathematics. Where teachers use number games, pupils listen and speak well and communicate their ideas clearly. During the inspection, however, information and communication technology (ICT) was not used in any lesson. Teachers have adopted the approaches of the National Numeracy Strategy well, and they ensure that these approaches fit realistically with the particular needs and inclinations of the pupils in this school, so that all are included regardless of their difficulties or abilities. Lessons usually include a mixture of whole class, individual and group work, with the different sections of the lesson timed in such a way as to promote a good pace of learning. At the end of lessons, pupils are sometimes drawn together to review what has been learnt. Within lessons, pupils' tasks are usually assessed well, and they are told clearly whether their answers are correct or not, and whether the teacher feels that enough effort has been made.

115. Throughout the school, the quality of pupils' learning is at least satisfactory and often good. They cope well when learning new skills but need very frequent revision. Almost all pupils work hard in lessons and do not waste time. They show much interest in their work and concentrate very well throughout the lesson. Where tasks are practical and realistic, they show a good level of understanding and older pupils develop an honest sense of their own capabilities in the subject. In Year 11, general progress and particular retention of knowledge is adversely affected by low attendance at this time of the year.

116. The subject is co-ordinated separately in the primary and secondary departments. This arrangement is not satisfactory, because teaching, learning and assessment cannot be monitored and because, in Years 3 to 6, there are some inconsistencies in planning and in assessment procedures. In Years 7 to 11 assessment data is recorded well on a computer database. The school's overall systems for evaluating the long-term progress of pupils are inadequate.

117. Mathematics makes a good contribution to the spiritual and social development of pupils, particularly through the regular collaborative work which is promoted in many lessons. In a few instances, the relatively higher achievements of individual pupils are openly recognised and celebrated by the teachers and other pupils.

118. The school places appropriate emphasis on the teaching of numeracy over the whole curriculum. All teachers of pupils in Years 3 to 6 and those who teach mathematics to pupils in Years 7 to 11 use the materials and methods set out in the National Numeracy Strategy and the Key Skills Initiative (for pupils in Years 10 to 11). Staff have received in-service training in the provision of the teaching of numeracy in the school. Overall, the staff recognise the importance of reinforcing pupils' skills in numeracy outside the mathematics curriculum. For example, pupils are involved in head counting in the daily registration period, in counting and weighing animals in the farm unit, and through songs and stories. Numeracy is also reinforced in art, French, music, and whenever the pupils visit the local community. Pupils in the boarding wing regularly deal with numbers when setting and serving at table, in their shopping activities in the local town, and in their evening games.

SCIENCE

119. Owing to constraints of the timetable, no classroom science was available for observation in Years 5 and 6. Analysis of the written work of these pupils shows that they make some good progress in their study of living things and life processes, which forms the basis of most teaching. However, the sample was very limited and there were no other topics available for scrutiny. From the planning, the indications are that the provision for science at these ages is satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in this age group. They understand how to sort animals into categories of living and non-living things. They study the fruit and seeds of some trees and plants and understand about some animal habitats. In human life forms they understand about teeth and the various parts, such as dentine and enamel, and they know that some animals have backbones and some do not. They use the terms vertebrates and amphibians correctly. The planning sheet indicates that later they study circuits and conductors, forces that push and pull, magnets and springs, and light and shadow.

120. By the time they reach the age of 14, pupils' achievement is good when related to their prior attainment. They study at least parts of all four aspects of the National Curriculum guidelines for science, and they build well on previous work. There is a good range of study provided for them.

121. In Years 10 and 11, the pupils' work concentrates upon rural science and their achievement is good. They work for the National Proficiency tests in this subject and make good progress in areas such as animal care and horticulture. This is very good provision, and pupils benefit from the practical work, which is related very well to their own needs and the local environment. Overall, this represents good progress since the last inspection report, where progress was sound in most areas except rural science, where it was good.

122. No judgements about teaching in Years 5 and 6 can be made because no lessons were observed, and the work sample was too small to use for overall analysis. One teacher carries out the teaching of science in the upper parts of the school, and teaching and learning are, overall, very good. This overall finding indicates good improvement since the last inspection report, where the quality of teaching was found to be good. However, the primary department teacher does not benefit from the skills of the specialist teacher as the latter is not involved in teaching or planning in Years 3 to 6.

123. The teacher's knowledge, and that of the support assistant, is very good and provides a very secure basis for the work and pupils' learning. The extra sharing of information and the links made with other work and subjects enhance learning very well. For example, several groups of pupils went out from science lessons to see the sheep and hear how a ewe had been persuaded to accept another lamb after hers was stillborn. Both adults

shared the explanations and made very good references to previous work in science lessons about reproduction, particularly the shape of the living animal being born and how the smoother it is the easier the birth.

124. Planning is very good, and it ensures that pupils' needs are met and that they have rich experiences in the topics of the science curriculum. There is plenty of opportunity for pupils to work at practical experiments. For example, Year 8 and 9 were observed dissolving solids, producing a saturated solution, and trying to work out how to recover a solid once it had been dissolved into a liquid. However, the teacher is always prepared to diversify from the planned lesson if the need and the occasion arise. For example, when Year 11 were working on their plots of land, several pauses were made so that they could all discuss crops, weeds, and how well various plantings were going. Planning shows a very good balance between the practical experiments and the factual learning and recording.

125. Methods are always very well suited to pupils' needs, and great care is taken over health and safety issues. All pupils are taught care when using apparatus and they wear protective goggles when carrying out experiments. The teacher is very skilled at involving pupils in the lessons, asking questions, and encouraging them to make their own suggestions for tests and findings.

126. Relationships are very good; there is a clear atmosphere of co-operation in lessons, and pupils work well with the adults. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and sometimes excellent. They are very interested in science and rural science and are keen to learn because the teacher makes lessons interesting and fulfilling for them.

127. Resources are used very well, and these include human resources, such as the lesson for Year 9 with the nurse attending. She shared the lesson with the teacher and support assistant, and pupils answered question from a 'Puberty Quiz.' Pupils' opinions were asked first and then the adults answered or elaborated if necessary. For example, they talked about male and female hormones and the effect these may have on people at the time of puberty. Pupils were well informed, and the adults were careful to include the emotional aspects of this topic so that it was not all concentrated on facts. Learning was very good as a consequence of the very good teamwork from the three adults. The discussions and use of an excellent video film enabled frank and informative work to be done, with references to past work and to lambs being born in the animal unit, which fitted in so very well with this topic.

128. The schemes of work provided in science enable pupils to study topics such as magnets, light and rocks. They understand about chemical reaction and they conduct experiments on it. For example they suspend a nail in liquids and note the reactions on the surface of the nail. They study the orbit of the earth round the sun and understand how we receive daylight and darkness. Later, they study food chains and plants, and the pulse rate in humans, and plot a simple graph of their findings.

129. The provision of rural science makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal and social development, adding much to their self-esteem and sense of achievement. They are learning about the care of animals and poultry, and how to feed and look after them. In the garden they clear ground by digging, prepare it for planting and sow seeds and learn how to thin them out later. They hoe to remove and prevent weeds and recognise a variety of plants and vegetables. This work in Years 10 and 11 is assessed by using the national criteria, and pupils are able to gain a nationally accepted qualification in rural science. Several pupils, over a number of years, have used this as a springboard for further training or in finding employment. Teaching and learning in this part of the science curriculum are very good, with the small, dedicated team of two working hard to give pupils the benefits of this 'hands-

on' experience. The work is not only practical however, but is also supported through information and communication technology (ICT), mathematics and English.

130. Overall, science is very well led by an enthusiastic and very well informed co-ordinator. He is fully committed to the subject and gives freely of his own time in addition to that allocated to the subject. He is very ably helped by the support assistant, who is fully involved in the animal unit and all other aspects of science.

131. Assessment procedures are very good and there are frequent tests so that pupils and teacher know exactly where they have reached in the programmes of study. The teaching of science is not monitored by the co-ordinator.

132. Resources are good, and the addition of the rural science unit is very good. The use of these resources is enabling pupils to learn very well. The subject has maintained high standards since the last inspection but no improvements have been made to sharing the scientific expertise of staff across the age range.

ART AND DESIGN

133. It was possible to see only two lessons of art during the inspection. Examination of pupils' work and the displays around the school demonstrate the breadth of pupils' art, much of which is linked to other subjects of the curriculum. Teaching is at least satisfactory and has many good features, such as showing pupils the work of other artists as a reference point. The teacher uses a very good range of resources, which in one lesson included flowers, leaves, seeds, buds and whole plants. This very wide selection enabled pupils to personalise their compositions. Pupils' work is guided by relevant schemes of work which require them to use an appropriate range of media. The teacher is persistent in her request that pupils use their observation skills to inform their work, and ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to take part.

134. Pupils' behaviour was good in the two lessons observed, and they tried hard to achieve their best work. Co-operation was good and pupils helped each other from time to time. During their evaluation at the end of the lesson they were supportive yet appropriately critical of each other's work. The development of such a self-critical approach is a positive feature in promoting the pupils' good progress.

135. The accommodation for art is shared with the other subjects and there is little room for displays. Although teachers share the space available and make every effort to display a range of work, there is too little space to inspire the pupils by further example or exhibition. The subject makes good contribution to pupils' social, moral and cultural understanding through the range of work they encounter. The limitations on space also prevent the teacher from reinforcing the pupils' literacy skills by including any texts or description to the displays. However, in other displays around the school where there is ample space for such comments to be added, the opportunity to do so is missed. At present there is no comment or suggestion as to how pupils might view the work of others and develop their critical skills.

136. There are good schemes of work, particularly for pupils in Years 7 to 11, but the skills of the art teacher are not used for the benefit of all pupils. The school has maintained the good standards found at the last inspection.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

137. It was possible to see design and technology only in the upper school in Years 7 to 11. Although no lessons were taught in Years 5 and 6 during the inspection, the evidence from brief discussions and planning documents indicates that the curriculum for these younger pupils is unsatisfactory, with very little design and technology being taught. Pupils do not appear to have many opportunities to follow the National Curriculum in terms of designing, making, and evaluating models with moving parts, hinges and fixings, or models with wheels and axles. No evidence of computer-aided work is available and although in the past, pupils at this age have worked in food technology, there have been no opportunities during this school year. They do, however, connect work with other subjects, and especially at Christmas or other festivals. The planning shows 'vehicles,' 'alarms,' and 'torches,' but no work or other evidence such as photographs was available for analysis.

138. In the upper school the subject lacks a co-ordinator, although two very competent temporary teachers have taken over. This results in overall achievement being satisfactory, and in several of the lessons seen it was good.

139. The quality of teaching and of learning in the Years from 7 to 11 is generally good, and some is very good. Teachers give pupils the chance to design and make models, using a variety of materials, including wood, acrylics and occasionally metal. One of the good features about the teaching and learning is the evaluation by teachers and pupils of the models they make, with suggestions for improvements and additions. For example in a Year 9 lesson, the teacher gathered the group around a bench and they discussed each model car individually. This was very good evaluation, and the pupils made such suggestions as using masking tape to give a straight line when painting, or using stencils for the numbers. This session made a good contribution to pupils' personal and moral development because they learnt that rules must be followed for their own safety and that of others. It also contributed very well to social development, because pupils learnt how to evaluate their own work and to accept any points for improvement in it.

140. Pupils understand that they must use goggles and behave sensibly when using tools and machinery. They are given opportunities to use drills, both hand and electric, and saws. They learn how to clamp their work so that sawing is easier, and they always use guards when operating machinery. There is a good sense of partnership in the design and technology room, and teachers have established very good relationships with pupils. They solve problems together and pupils receive plenty of encouragement.

141. Pupils use computers well to reinforce or extend their learning; for example, in a good Year 11 lesson a pupil was using the Internet to find information about racing car efficiency. Pupils are justly proud of their work, and this is enabling them to make good gains in self-esteem and confidence.

142. Other Year 11 pupils were observed, both inside and outside, working on their model land yachts. The teacher showed skill and a very clear understanding of how to get the best from these pupils. He received their suggestions and steered them in the right direction so that the model was improved. For example, when they were testing the yachts, adjustments to the sails were made and photographs were taken for the records.

143. In Years 10 and 11, pupils follow the youth award scheme which includes elements of design and technology. They have woven paper into a pattern, and framed the finished article. Others have made a candleholder from medium density fibre, following their own research and designs. Other work across the age range in the upper part of the school includes clocks with quartz movements, with acrylic or wood for the faces. Some pupils

have made containers, bird boxes and bookends, and have learned to use a square, tenon saws, a plane, chisel and the surform. They peg and glue joints and use a finisher for a smooth finish, or to shape their models. In all these projects they test and evaluate their work, which enables them to learn well and apply their knowledge to future projects.

144. Although food technology is part of the National Curriculum in design and technology, the school uses it as a separate subject called 'home economics', and textiles are included as well as cooking and catering skills. Only two lessons were observed in this subject, and the findings are drawn from discussions and photographs of past enterprises. This is a very good provision for older pupils and they learn a variety of skills here, such as reading the recipes, weighing ingredients and timing the cooking. Records are made on computers, together with costings and other details. These are good opportunities for links with other subjects. In the Year 11 lesson pupils were very well informed and very confident about their work. They knew how to weigh and mix ingredients and they were very good about clearing up the room after work. This was done very efficiently and without intervention by the teacher, so that pupils showed a high level of independence. There was a brisk pace to the lesson and very good relationships between adults and pupils. The outcomes of home economics clearly provide opportunities for success and very good social development, as well as enabling pupils to achieve well. They were planning to sell the cakes to raise funds for the school.

145. Overall, the provision for design and technology, together with home economics, is good for older pupils. It gives pupils the chance for practical experience as well as realising some of the school's published key skills, such as working with others, improving learning performance and solving problems. The two subjects contribute well to pupils' personal, moral and social development, and the department is not greatly impaired by the lack of a co-ordinator, since it is very well staffed by two competent and experienced teachers. There are few opportunities for younger pupils to be taught by specialist staff within the subject specification facilities. This is a weakness which the current co-ordinator is addressing. However, this weakness has not been improved upon since the last inspection.

HUMANITIES (GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY)

146. Pupils' achievement is good overall. Younger pupils develop their understanding of places by looking at the types of houses they live in and where they are located. They take part in a survey of buildings in the local area. They develop their understanding of past and present by looking at family trees and family photographs which show different stages in life. The pupils made a timeline to show events in the Queen's life and a chart to show places visited by the Queen on her Golden Jubilee tour. They compared the Silver and Golden Jubilees and acted out the events of the Coronation. Pupils' achievement in Years 3 to 6 is good when there is an equal emphasis on history and geography topics. Some pupils make better progress in history than in geography because of a lack of balance in the curriculum.

147. By the end of Year 9 pupils make good progress in developing history and geography skills as well as in knowledge and understanding. They investigate the lives of different families living in England between 1700 and 1900 and interpret sources to say whether or not individuals stayed close to home or in their working lives. Pupils illustrated and describe the different methods used by William to take control in England after the Battle of Hastings and decide which was the most effective. They study sources and write imaginative accounts of the darkness and danger experienced by children working in mines. Pupils evaluate the importance of different factors in finding a site for a wind farm, examining possible sites on a map and giving each one a score to decide on the best. They make good use of diagrams to classify the different areas of cities, and show good awareness of environmental issues when using arguments for and against the building of a reservoir.

148. By the end of Year 11 pupils make good progress in applying subject-specific terminology and methods to achieve greater depth in their understanding. They produce a report on floods in York and draw a sketch map to show the location of the city in relation to rivers. They also describe where rivers start, and compile a rivers vocabulary to define terms such as current, dam and meander. In a study of development they match definitions to key terms, including *life expectancy* and *infant mortality*. They use statistics to rank order different countries in terms of birth rate, death rate, adult literacy and food consumption, and classify rich and poor countries in terms of the level of health care. They use appropriate terminology to describe features of the home front in World War Two, including *blackout*, *gas mask* and *rations*. They compare food eaten in wartime Britain to that available to people in concentration camps. Pupils draw and label diagrams of trench warfare in World War One, using such terms as *firestep*, *parapet*, *artillery* and *field hospital*. They show a good understanding of the build-up to World War One and compare the strengths of the opposing sides at the start of the war. They write with understanding about the causes of the war by describing the events in Sarajevo as 'just an excuse'.

149. The teaching of pupils in Years 7 to 11 is good, with some very good lessons, but there was insufficient evidence to form a judgement on the teaching of younger pupils. Well-managed class discussion with a high level of challenge is a strong feature of the teaching. All pupils are involved well and they respond with very good attitudes and behaviour. Pupils listen very well to each other and all are given opportunities to contribute, including those with communication difficulties. Girls and boys are equally confident. The management of discussion gives all pupils, including lower attainers, the confidence to participate. The emphasis is on pupils extending their thinking rather than keeping the discussion at one level.

150. In a Year 7 lesson on the Black Death pupils were questioned in detail about their previous learning. They agreed that rats were the cause. They were questioned about how to stop the disease spreading and suggested 'getting rid of the rats'. Further questions helped them to understand the limitations of their reply. In a Year 9 lesson a 'brainstorm' discussion helped pupils identify the motives of the government in taking land from the native Americans. The morality of the policy was emphasised well so that pupils were able to reach conclusions on whether the policy was good or bad. Moral issues figured strongly in a Year 11 lesson when pupils studied the holocaust. The level of challenge in the lesson was very high, with pupils gaining an understanding of the reality of the situation through a study of video footage and an eye-witness account. The lesson ended positively with pupils discussing a message of hope. Resources are well used to develop skills. In a Year 7 lesson pupils located symbols at different grid references on a map and then used a second source to identify the symbols. The level of challenge was good, with pupils having to combine information from different sources. In a Year 8 lesson pupils were given latitude

and longitude positions and used them to find the location of earthquakes on a world map. They then calculate the latitude and longitude of volcanoes shown on the map. The combination of the two exercises very effectively consolidated pupils' understanding. In some lessons the high level of challenge in class discussion was not matched by the challenge in individual activities, and not enough time was devoted to the latter.

151. The arrangements whereby humanities is co-ordinated separately in the primary and secondary departments of the school are unsatisfactory. The curriculum is not planned as a coherent whole and in some instances there is insufficient monitoring of its delivery. This results in pupils receiving different experiences, and all are therefore not fully included. Structures have recently been revised to address the issue, and overall there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

152. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory because not all pupils have opportunities to study humanities. Assessment has developed well in terms of self-assessment and review and its use to inform planning, although specific assessment tasks have not been identified. Improvement from the last inspection is satisfactory, with pupils displaying very good attitudes and good achievement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

153. Lessons were seen in Years 2 to 6 and 10 to 11, but not in Years 7 to 9. Pupils' work was sampled in every key stage, and the part-time supply teacher who is organising some aspects of the subject was interviewed.

154. By the time they are aged 11, pupils log on to the computer, with help, and find their programme. In one lesson of nine and ten year olds, pupils used the programme 'primary colours' to draw and colour a simple shape. They successfully saved their work. By the time they are 16, pupils confidently use the Internet to search for and retrieve information. They design and print striking and original posters, using a variety of fonts. They vary the colour of their poster to good effect, produce word boxes, and place them carefully amongst their chosen photographs. They confidently save and print their work.

155. Teaching is consistently good. There is clear, expert instruction. Resources are good, and teachers are able to project the contents of their computer screen on to an enlarged wall screen. This helps pupils to understand what is being explained. Class management is particularly effective because pupils are well motivated by the computers and the activities they are given. Pupils show themselves capable of periods of extensive concentration. High-achievers often solve their own problems, although teachers and learning support assistants circulate usefully, giving a high level of excellent advice and ensuring that all pupils complete the task.

156. Pupils' progress does not fully reflect the good teaching they receive, because in some cases low standards of literacy prevent them from wholly understanding the information given on the screen. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory, so it is impossible to know which pupils are making consistent progress and which are not. Although liaison with subjects such as English, science and design and technology is a strength and helps pupils to learn, procedures are inconsistent. Not all pupils in the primary department receive regular lessons in computing. Co-ordination of the subject is unsatisfactory.

157. There has been an unsatisfactory level of improvement since the last inspection. Although some adequate planning was seen, curriculum documentation no longer supports continuity and progression. Lessons, though good, do not reliably build on pupils' previous learning, and this compromises the progress of all pupils. All staff are now undergoing training of high quality. This is improving their skills and confidence in teaching, and is already beginning to lead to improvement. The externally accredited examination has lapsed.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

158. It was possible to see only one French lesson during the inspection. There is no permanent teacher for French but the temporary teacher is a skilled and experienced language teacher. It is clear from this single observation, from talking to pupils, and from examining their work that they make very good progress because they are being extremely well taught.

159. The major strength of the teaching lies in the relevance it has to the pupils' lives. For example, they simulate the ordering of food and drink in a French café by reference to an authentic menu with details of price in euros. The teacher has extremely high aspirations that all pupils will speak the target language, and helps them individually according to their abilities. For example, she challenges higher attaining pupils by simply showing them the range of resources on the table, indicating by gestures whether their responses are accurate or not. When pupils are less confident, and sometimes less competent in speaking, the teacher gives a choice of two words to increase their chances of choosing the correct one. By the end of the lesson pupils have all practised a range of café vocabulary such as 'croissants', 'the', 'fromage', 'jambon', and 'vin'. Pupils are encouraged to use any method they prefer to aid their understanding, but the teacher pays excellent attention to making sure that they do not get muddled over such confusing words as 'café' in French and 'café' in English.

160. The subject helps pupils understand that life has different cultures. They consolidate their spoken French in basic written exercises and enjoy all aspects of the lessons. Although the school has no permanent language teacher at present the excellent standards of work seen in the single lesson, and indicated in the documentation, illustrate an improvement in content and progress since the last inspection.

MUSIC

161. The school makes good provision for teaching music to all its pupils. Throughout the school, from Years 3 to 11, pupils make good progress. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good. The school has maintained the good standards indicated in the previous inspection report.

162. In Years 3 to 6 pupils achieve well and make good progress. During the inspection, pupils were involved in a musical production of 'Noah'. The rehearsal and performance of this musical provided good opportunities to observe what these pupils achieve. Pupils sing well in tune, and articulate words and phrases clearly. They sing in an appropriate style and with a good level of energy. Songs are performed with notable elements of expression, for example with attention to volume and speed. The singers achieve expression also by

contrasts of emphasis on beginnings and endings of words. All pupils learnt by heart the words of nine songs which feature in the musical play and performed them with minimal prompting. They acquire good rhythmic skills, well demonstrated in the simple dance routines and punctuated clapping which also feature in this musical play.

163. In Years 7 to 11, pupils also achieve well and make good progress. Although the emphasis at this stage is on vocal and instrumental performance, pupils also improvise and vary elements of the pieces they learn. In Year 7, pupils learn to play recorders and in the following year groups they sing, and play guitars, keyboards and percussion instruments, including the drum kit. They learn and perform a good range a variety of popular and religious songs, for example *Unchained Melody* and *Lord of the Dance*. Most pupils learn to play common chords on the guitar, and simple melodies and single finger 'autochords' on the keyboards. They use a mixture of staff notation, letter names and chord symbols, which they understand. They also build up a fair knowledge of orchestral and other instruments from listening regularly to music on CDs in their lessons. Pupils also have the opportunity to hear and appreciate good musical performance, for example when the school welcomes visits by budding professional musicians, from Live Music Now, and experienced professionals from The London Mozart Players.

158. All pupils respond well to music and to the teaching they receive. They attend lessons with enthusiasm, listen carefully to instructions and practise their tasks diligently. They understand the difference between the good and indifferent performances they hear, and know whether their own contributions are suitably accurate within an ensemble. Older pupils spend time rehearsing without immediate supervision. The school can produce at least two pop bands at any time. Some of these perform to a very high standard.

159. Teaching is good overall, with some examples of very good lessons. Pupils are taught mainly by teachers who have some specialist knowledge or expertise in the subject. Teaching at all stages includes a strong element of literacy, notably in providing opportunities for reading and memorising the words of songs. Numeracy is included in lessons with younger pupils, for example when they sing number songs such as '*Ten fat sausages*'. Pupils also learn some of the technical terms of music. Lessons are well planned and very well organised. Methods include a suitable variety of whole class, group and individual approaches. Learning support staff play an active part in lessons, both helping and reinforcing the teacher's presentation and instructions. The quality of learning is good. Pupils work with energy and enthusiasm and cover much ground in lessons. They are very interested in the subject and persevere well in their practising, and they understand clearly how well they are working and performing.

160. Pupils' musical achievements are assessed and recorded very well. In every lesson, the teacher tells the pupils what 'grade' they have received. These grades are recorded diligently and kept on computer. However, despite these strengths the staff miss opportunities for pupils of different ages to work together; for example, during 'Noah' the instrumental accompaniment was played by a member of staff but could have usefully challenged some older pupils.

161. A music club is provided for residential pupils. The main band performs at various school events and at other venues, sometimes to raise money for charity. Music makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural life of the school. Overall, the school has maintained the good standards indicated in the previous inspection report.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

162. It was possible to see only three physical education lessons during the inspection. The indications are that pupils achieve satisfactorily overall and make good gains in developing their skills in some lessons. Teachers plan in such a way that pupils enjoy the lessons and generally learn well. These findings are similar to those of the last inspection report, and indicate that standards have been maintained. Schemes of work show that pupils are given a satisfactory range of activities, although in Years 5 and 6 they concentrate mostly on swimming for the summer term. Pupils of these ages meet the requirement that they learn to swim, and they use the local swimming pool weekly for this activity in the summer term. The only other activity planned for Year 5 and 6 for this term is 'preparation for sports day.' In the planning documents for pupils in this age range, there is reference to games, gymnastic activities, and dance, but there was no opportunity to see anything of these. No judgements are made in this report about teaching and learning for these younger pupils.

163. Pupils in Years 8 and 9 were seen preparing for sports day by practising their running against the clock and learning how to do a standing long jump. A good link to mathematics was made when the teacher asked pupils to measure out the world record distances for long jump both for men and for women. They used their measuring skills well, and the result gave them a clear picture of how far these world athletes can jump. The support assistant timed the pupils in their running heats, while those jumping were coached well by the teacher. Pupils were generally well behaved and responsive to this lesson, and the planning shows that they will use a computer to record times and distances attained. The pupils who were not able to take part in the physical part of the lesson were involved well by the teacher, and they recorded the outcomes of those running or jumping. Overall, teaching and learning were good because everyone was fully involved and active in some way.

164. Two lessons of basketball were seen with pupils in Year 11. Skills of ball passing and shooting were practised in both lessons, and teaching and learning were good. Pupils understood some of the tactics required. They made gains in personal and social education, learning to co-operate well with each other and to work in a harmonious team. The teacher is confident and knowledgeable about physical education and knows how to get the best from pupils. They learnt about the fast break, the long ball and the slow build-up, all tactics in basketball. Shooting practice followed, and the teacher demonstrated well and was very patient with those who found it difficult. In the larger class, pupils learned the tactics and skills and joined in a lively game. This had good pace and challenge, and the pupils learned the practical application of the skills. For example, 'When there is a rebound from a failed shot at basket, then you need a very quick break away, before the opposition gets into defence,' said the teacher. Pupils learnt well and were able to put these skills and tactics into operation. They learn to play by the rules, and respect each other's efforts. No adverse comments or behaviour occurred during these lessons, and this illustrates the very good relationships established by the teacher. Behaviour and general attitudes were very good in both lessons.

165. Planning documents show that athletics are taught, and games such as rounders and cricket. In most plans, there are good opportunities for links to other subjects. For example, in athletics, links are made with personal, social and health education (PSHE) by teaching pupils about the need for a warm up activity, and for showering and hygiene. Communication and language skills are used in teamwork and tactics. The pupils learn to respect rules and develop teamwork, and most of all they enjoy the physical activity.

166. Resources are good for physical education, and they enable teachers to plan well so that pupils benefit from the subject and learn to work co-operatively. The school has maintained the quality of its work since the last inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

167. Achievement is unsatisfactory. Pupils learn about different religions but do not make sufficient gains in knowledge in relation to their previous learning as they move through the school. Their learning about religions is better than their learning *from* religions, and their skills in reflection and response do not develop well.

168. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 experience 'celebration days', held appropriately on the days when particular festivals are celebrated. For example, pupils celebrate the Jewish New Year. They make New Year cards, eat food, and make promises that all form part of the festival. In another example they celebrate the Hindu festival of Holi. They make and eat sweets and wear clothes associated with the festival. As part of their study of Christianity they take part in a Christingle service and make and eat pancakes on Shrove Tuesday. During the week of the inspection all primary pupils took part in a production of 'Noah' that gave them first hand experience of the Bible's account of events. Pupils gain good insights into certain aspects of religious belief through these experiences.

169. Pupils in Year 7 achieve a satisfactory understanding of the distinctive features of different religions. They sequence the events of Holy Week, including the Crucifixion, and the events of the Creation. They illustrate different aspects of Muslim prayer, including a prayer mat, and use key words in their writing, such as *Muhammad*, *Allah*, and *Mecca*. They produce detailed illustrations of stories from Hinduism. The achievement of pupils in Years 8 and 9 is more limited in comparison with that of pupils in Year 7. The level of detail in their work is slighter, and there is no evidence of pupils having opportunities for reflection and response. Pupils produce basic illustrations of different festivals, including Christmas and Easter. They list the principal symbols of Sikhism and describe its origins. They give brief descriptions of the features of Buddhist, Jewish and Christian marriage services.

170. On the evidence of work seen, the achievement in Years 10 and 11 is better than in Years 8 and 9 in terms of learning about religion. Pupils develop their understanding of the importance of religious symbols. They illustrate and describe important symbols in Hindu worship, and use information and communication technology (ICT) to describe the principal symbols of Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. They develop a satisfactory understanding of Christian worship and describe the functions of the altar, lectern, pulpit and chalice. There are some opportunities for personal response. In one example, pupils produced designs for wall hangings incorporating a message about personal commitment, such as 'Here I am, Lord'. They learn about the work of William Booth, although overall they do not develop a satisfactory understanding of the link between religious belief and social and moral issues. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to respond to religious perspectives on these.

171. Teaching is satisfactory and pupils display good attitudes and behaviour, though there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the teaching of pupils in Years 3 to 6. In a Year 7 lesson, group work was well used to enable pupils to gain a good understanding of symbols in religion. Pupils worked in two groups. In one group they examined symbols used in every day life and in the other group they looked at religious symbols. There was a good range of religious artefacts and everyday objects containing symbols to support learning, and pupils were able to gain 'hands on' experience. Time was well used so that all pupils experienced activities in both groups. In Year 8 and Year 9 lessons on Judaism, pupils handled and discussed the food eaten at the Seder meal. In the Year 9 lesson, pupils

had some previous knowledge of Moses and the flight of the Jews from Egypt, and the introduction to the lesson was able to build on this. In the Year 8 lesson, pupils needed to be taught the background necessary for them to understand the main activity. In both lessons pupils were fully involved in handling artefacts, although the level of challenge was only just satisfactory. Pupils read from cards the symbolic meaning of different food items, and opportunities were lost in discussion to encourage pupils to speculate about the meaning assigned to food eaten at the meal. In a Year 11 lesson, pupils watched a video about the work of Christian Aid in India. They identified similarities and differences between Britain and India and what the needs in India are. The tasks had only a moderate challenge, and writing activities were not well matched to the wide range of attainment in the class.

172. The present arrangements for co-ordinating the subject are unsatisfactory, especially the division between primary and secondary co-ordination. There is no overall planning to ensure that pupils' achievement is built consistently on their previous learning. The curriculum is not consistently broad and balanced for pupils throughout the age range. Although the subject makes a sufficient contribution to the pupils, social, moral and cultural understanding, many other opportunities are lost.

173. The primary curriculum lacks continuity and progression and parts of the secondary curriculum give pupils too narrow a range of opportunities, for example in Years 8 and 9. Planning fails to give sufficient emphasis to both learning about and learning from religion. Assessment procedures have not been developed. Improvement from the last inspection is unsatisfactory.