

INSPECTION REPORT

SPRINGWELL DENE SPECIAL SCHOOL

Swindon Road, Sunderland

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108881

Headteacher: Mrs M D Mitchell

Reporting inspector: Mr J Morris
23696

Dates of inspection: 17th – 18th June 2003

Inspection number: 249333

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	13 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Swindon Road Sunderland
Postcode:	SR3 4EE
Telephone number:	0191 5536067
Fax number:	0191 5536059
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Myers
Date of previous inspection:	12 th May 1997

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
23696	Mr J Morris	Registered inspector
11368	Mrs K Lee	Lay inspector
27409	Mrs S Hunt	Team inspector
17907	Mr M Bowers	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Bench Marque Limited
National Westminster Bank Chambers
Victoria Street
Burnham-on-Sea
Somerset
TA8 1AN

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Springwell Dene is located in Springwell housing estate in the city of Sunderland. It has 65 places for day pupils aged between 13 and 16 with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD). There are currently 62 pupils on roll, including two girls. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs (SEN) with EBD as their main difficulty, but several pupils have additional difficulties. All pupils are from a white British background and 13 per cent of them are looked after. Attainment on entry to the school, which is in principal at the start of Year 9, but can be anytime in Years 9, 10 or 11, is well below average. The school's socio-economic circumstances are very unfavourable.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an outstanding school which meets the needs of its pupils extremely effectively. All pupils make excellent progress in their personal development and achieve very well academically. This is because leadership and management are excellent and teaching is very good. The school provides excellent value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make excellent progress in their personal development and achieve very well academically. They have very positive attitudes to school and behave very well.
- Teaching and learning are very good. All staff make a very significant contribution to the pupils' learning in lessons and their progress over time.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The school has a tremendous sense of common purpose and pursuit of excellence.
- The school provides very good learning opportunities and social experiences for the pupils. The academic curriculum is very good and the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.
- Pastoral care, the promotion and monitoring of personal development and academic assessment are excellent.
- The school has an excellent partnership with parents.

What could be improved

- There are no significant shortcomings in the school's outcomes or provision.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in May 1997. Improvement has been excellent. This is because the school has taken appropriate and effective action on the identified issues and successfully maintained and developed the many aspects of its work found to be good, very good or excellent at that time. In particular, there have been very significant improvements in pupils' progress, the quality of teaching and learning and the accommodation.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

All pupils make extremely good progress in personal, social and health education (PSHE), including careers education and citizenship. They make tremendous gains in their self-confidence and self-esteem and their attitudes to school. This forms the foundation for their considerable progress across the curriculum, which is always good and often very good. All pupils have individual targets and there are whole school targets for the National Curriculum assessments at the end of Year 9 and examinations, including GCSE. These targets are challenging and invariably achieved or exceeded. This inspection finds significant evidence of very good progress in English, particularly reading, mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education, art and design and music. There are positive indicators in other subjects, such as science, geography, history and religious education, but there is insufficient evidence to make a precise judgement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes to school. They show great respect for the staff, building and resources and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good overall. The majority of pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. They understand and try very hard to comply with the school's rules and to achieve their personal targets. Occasionally, individual pupils have difficulties coping in some situations.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and staff and among the pupils are excellent. Most pupils see themselves as important members of the school community. Their self-confidence, self-esteem and sense of social responsibility increase dramatically in their time at the school.
Attendance	Attendance is below average. However, many pupils attend school more frequently than they have in the past and the rate of unauthorised absence has decreased.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 9 – 11
Quality of teaching	Very good

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

Teaching and learning are very good. This judgement is based on 20 lesson observations and extensive examination of pupils' work. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and teaching and learning were very good or excellent in a very high proportion of the observations. The quality of teaching is very good in English, mathematics, PSHE, ICT, physical education and art and design. There is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements in other subjects but there are very positive indicators across the curriculum. The key skills of communication, including literacy, numeracy and ICT are taught extremely well. Support staff make a tremendous contribution to the teaching by supporting pupils very effectively and leading some lessons in, for example, PSHE and ICT.

The school meets the needs of all its pupils equally well, including those with additional special educational needs and the very small number of girls. The school successfully identifies pupils with particular talents, for example in music, and takes effective action to acknowledge and develop them. Pupils demonstrate high levels of interest and involvement in lessons. Most pupils show good self-control when presented with intellectual or physical challenges.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a very good range of learning opportunities for its pupils. The requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education are met, with the exception of modern foreign languages and, in this case, the school follows correct procedures to disapply the pupils. The provision in PSHE, physical education, including outdoor adventurous activities, art and design, music and drama very successfully motivates pupils in other subjects.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes excellent provision for the pupils' personal development in all respects. The wide range and number of extra-curricular activities and residential opportunities, including sports and drama, are exceptional and very successfully promote the development of the pupils' personal qualities and skills beyond lessons. The four whole school sessions every day, known as 'circle', both promote and reflect the school's ethos.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Excellent. This is an extremely caring school. National and local requirements and guidance for pupils' personal welfare, including child protection and health and safety, are met in full. The procedures to monitor personal and academic development and performance are highly effective.

The school has an excellent partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The headteacher and senior management team provide outstanding leadership and direction to the work of the school. All teachers and many members of the support staff have significant responsibilities. They make a very significant contribution to school management and pupils' progress.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. The governors have a good understanding of the school's many strengths and have supported it very well through a difficult period, when it was housed in temporary accommodation. Statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. There are extremely rigorous and effective systems to monitor and improve the work and effectiveness of the school, including using available national data to compare the school's performance with that of others.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. The school makes excellent use of available finance, including specific grants, and it is very successful in its efforts to raise additional funding. The school maximises the use of the available accommodation and learning resources.

The accommodation has recently been developed and refurbished and is outstanding. There are some excellent learning resources, for example for ICT and physical education. The application of the principles of best value is excellent.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Of those parents who responded all, or nearly all, of them think that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the school is approachable, they are kept well informed and the school works closely with them; the school has high expectations; the school helps their children become more mature and responsible; the school is well led and managed; the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons; the teaching is good; their children are making good progress and like school. 	<p>Of those parents who responded a small, but significant percentage think that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> their children do not get the right amount of homework; behaviour is not good enough in school.

The inspection team shares the parents' very positive views of the school. The school provides homework for pupils and parents who want it and many say they do not. Behaviour is very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils make excellent progress in their personal development and achieve very well academically. They have very positive attitudes to school and behave very well.

1. There is substantial evidence of nearly all pupils making tremendous gains in their personal development and across the curriculum during their time at the school. Inspection judgements are predominantly based on examination of pupils' completed work and teachers' records and assessments. However, this school makes the best possible use of national data on schools for pupils' with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) to measure how well it is doing. This data shows that pupils' performance in the national assessments at the end of Year 9 and GCSE examinations is above average for schools of this type. This is a much more positive picture than at the time of the last inspection when, although it was stated that 'pupils make the best possible progress overall', progress in the core subjects of English and mathematics was only satisfactory. The foundation for the pupils' achievements in other subjects is their excellent progress in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and the related areas of citizenship, careers education and vocational education.
2. In statistical terms, pupils do best in art and design. Results in GCSE examinations are very good. The very high quality of pupils' work on display around the school illustrates this achievement and the high status given to the subject. This work includes a wide range of highly individualised two-dimensional work using a variety of styles and media and some extremely impressive examples of ceramics, large three-dimensional animals using recycled materials, African style masks and metal sculptures. This results from the very high quality teaching, which concentrates on generalised skills and understanding in Year 9 and develops individuality of expression in Years 10 and 11. It also arises from the nature of the subject and methods of assessment, which do not involve formal examinations or the need to use and demonstrate extensive literacy skills.
3. This previous statement may imply that pupils are in some respects underachieving in literacy. Many, if not all of them, do have significant difficulties with the key skills of literacy or numeracy or both. This can clearly create a barrier to learning in many other subjects. However, substantial evidence, from GCSE examinations and other recognised courses, samples of pupils' work and lesson observations, shows that pupils make very significant gains in these core subjects in their time at the school. Their progress in reading, in particular, has a very positive impact on their learning. All do well and some pupils' records show extremely rapid improvement against standardised reading tests in a short period of time.
4. The excellent provision for information and communication technology (ICT), both as a discrete subject and as an aid to learning in many others, is also very important in enabling pupils to develop and demonstrate their skills and understanding. The provided examples of Year 11 work included nationally accredited units covering a very wide range of specific ICT applications and skills, which also contribute greatly to basic literacy, numeracy and research skills. One of the assistant headteachers explained four examples of pupils' completed electronic control devices, which included a bicycle wheel safety light and a door alarm and involved a very good mix of mathematics, science, design and technology and ICT skills. These illustrated high levels of understanding, planning and construction and pupils had given good consideration to the factors involved in mass production of such items in their writing about this project.

5. Everything at Springwell Dene is inter-connected. Pupils achieve very well because of the quality of the teaching and learning and the relevance and breadth of the curriculum. These are supported by the excellent provision for the pupils' personal development, the rigorous procedures for ensuring the pupils' welfare and academic assessment and the highly productive partnership with parents. The pupils' records of achievement provide a clear and accurate summary of their considerable achievements in just three years, or in some cases less than this, and exemplify the relentless pursuit of excellence in the work of the school as a whole. All of this stems from, and is maintained by, the outstanding leadership and management.
6. However, given the nature of the difficulties of pupils with EBD, the most important factor in the pupils' progress is their own attitudes, behaviour and personal response to the school's expectations and challenges. Most of the pupils clearly enjoy school. They are keen to be at school and to do well in their classroom work and participate fully in the other sporting, vocational and social activities. Relationships are excellent throughout the school and pupils form lasting friendships with each other and members of staff. Many pupils maintain contact and visit school after they leave. All pupils respect other members of the community, the building and the learning resources. Participation in the school council, organised by a member of the support staff, encourages the development of personal responsibility and involvement in decision-making. Pupils develop good skills for independent research through the use of high quality books, including dictionaries and thesauri, and computers, including CD-Rom and the Internet. For example, in an English lesson based on the book *Treasure Island*, one pupil insisted that 'obtuse' was an excellent word to describe one of the characters and another looked it up in a dictionary to check its meaning. By Year 11, pupils have developed the necessary personal qualities and basic skills to carry out an analysis of their own strengths and weaknesses. In vocational education, they use this personal understanding sensibly in examining the requirements of different employers when conducting a search of a careers database, writing letters of application and completing forms.
7. Nevertheless, it is to be expected that such pupils can not maintain self-control at all times. For example, one pupil stormed out of a physical education lesson because he could not accept being out during an indoor game of cricket. Another knocked over a chair and left a mathematics lesson because she found the work too demanding. On these infrequent occasions, when individuals behave aggressively or leave lessons, the staff manage the situation extremely effectively. The disruption to other pupils is minimised and they are, in turn, very good at not getting involved. The pupils who have 'lost it' always calm down eventually, understand how these incidents affect their merit points and, invariably, express some sense of regret or apologise.

Teaching and learning are very good. All staff make a very significant contribution to the pupils' learning in lessons and their progress over time.

8. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Judgements on the quality of teaching and learning are based on the observation of 20 lessons, extensive examination of pupils' work and discussions with all classroom staff. The picture is extremely positive, with no significant shortcomings, and teaching and learning are judged to be very good overall. There is no evidence of unsatisfactory practice and teaching was very good or excellent in over three-quarters of the lessons seen. These findings are substantiated by the other sources of evidence. For example, the teachers' planning files and pupils' records of achievement show that the highly structured programmes of study are tailored to meet individual needs and outcomes are rigorously recorded and assessed.

9. The quality of teaching is very good in English, mathematics, PSHE and citizenship, ICT, physical education and art and design (this last subject is explained in the previous section). Lesson observations and substantial work scrutiny were carried out in all these subjects. The school is fully conversant with and pays due regard to the National Strategy at Key Stage 3 and recent developments in the curriculum, such as the teaching of citizenship as a discrete subject. The key skills of communication, including literacy, numeracy and ICT are taught extremely well through a wide range of activities.
10. In a Year 10 English lesson, pupils used vocabulary well and showed considerable insight into the feelings of the characters in John Steinbeck's classic, 'Of Mice and Men'. For example, when asked to give one word to describe 'when you feel you have no future' pupils' suggestions ranged from 'sad' to 'suicidal'. In a Year 9 PSHE lesson, pupils made very significant gains in learning about member states of the European Union because of the excellent planning and highly stimulating variety of activities. This lesson was part of a GCSE unit on citizenship. In a good Year 10 PSHE lesson, pupils learnt well about the differences between tabloid and broadsheet newspapers but some opportunities for collaborative working were missed.
11. It is essential to note that the teaching, whilst systematically planned and organised, is characterised by a flexible approach driven by the pupils' needs and interest. For example, in a mixed Years 9 and 10 mathematics lesson, one pupil worked (largely independently and with great diligence) on areas of complex shapes, whilst the rest of the group were learning how to interpret bar charts. Furthermore, lessons are, at times, delivered in an innovative way. For example, the window blinds are kept closed in many lessons and, particularly in mathematics, the lighting is kept at a very low level. Although members of the inspection team had some difficulty with this, it clearly works for the pupils. The mathematics teacher explained that it prevents pupils being distracted by anything happening outside and helps maintain calm. He stated that whenever he suggests changing these arrangements the current pupils insist that they prefer them. Teachers often make effective use of humour and a non-confrontational method of challenging pupils to motivate individuals who arrive at lessons in an agitated or indifferent state of mind. This exemplifies the teachers' excellent knowledge and understanding of the pupils and the excellent relationships throughout the school.
12. The school makes very effective use of modern technology and high quality learning resources across the curriculum. In addition to the very well equipped ICT suite, there are computers in all the classrooms and electronic whiteboards in several of them. Discrete ICT lessons are planned very well to systematically reinforce and extend pupils' skills. The whiteboards were used in all of the English, mathematics and ICT lessons observed. This resource is used extremely well by adults to make teaching points, demonstrate skills, set tasks and evaluate learning. There are very good opportunities for pupils to show what they know and understand using this facility.
13. Physical education lessons are very well planned and include a very good variety of activities including warming up, developing specific skills and playing team games. All of this is conducted at a rapid pace with constant adult-pupil interaction. The teacher appropriately varies the structure and timing of activities based on his excellent knowledge and understanding of the different groups of pupils to maximise their co-operation and involvement. However, he insists that all pupils participate in all of the different elements of the lesson and that no lesson is dominated by 'the game'. This is a very good example of the high expectations that all staff have of both work and behaviour, with points given to all pupils at the end of every lesson. The school successfully helps pupils to accept routines, rules and structures as a part of everyday life.

14. There is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements in other subjects but there are very positive indicators across the curriculum. For example, the quality of pupils' work, on display and made available for scrutiny, and discussions with subject leaders, suggest that teaching is at least good in science, design and technology, geography, history, music and religious education. These tentative judgements are further supported by the observation of one lesson each in science, design and technology and music.
15. The needs of all pupils are met equally well through lessons and at other times. This applies to the very small number of girls currently attending the school and the increasing number of pupils who have additional special educational needs (SEN) to EBD. The facts that many pupils attend more regularly than they have in the past and that all pupils' academic performance is high show that this is a very inclusive school. The school is quick to recognise pupils with individual interests or skills and takes effective action to develop such potential. At present, two pupils in Year 10 with considerable musical talent are being given tremendous support. Although the school only teaches music formally in Year 9, in accordance with National Curriculum requirements, these two pupils are included in these lessons and have additional opportunities. In addition, the school has acquired additional accommodation away from the main site, which is used for group teaching of specific skills, notably horticulture, and for one-to-one work with those pupils who have the most significant social difficulties.
16. A very significant factor in the success of this school is the teamwork of all the staff. Support staff are highly valued by the school. They are encouraged to be involved as much as they want to be in every aspect of school life, including training opportunities, and their skills are used to great effect. Their willingness to take on responsibilities for important aspects of the school's work and to lead lessons is remarkable. This in no way diminishes the contribution or commitment of the teaching staff. They are equal members of a highly effective team. Rather, it is an appropriate recognition of the support staff's outstanding input into the school and impact on the pupils' progress. During the inspection, a quarter of the lessons seen had support staff in the lead role. These lessons in PSHE, ICT and design and technology were all judged to be good or better and, in two cases excellent. This reflected very high quality planning and organisation, stimulating presentation of challenging activities and excellent relationships and use of resources.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The school has a tremendous sense of common purpose and pursuit of excellence.

17. The previously reported high standards of leadership and management have been maintained and, in some respects, improved under the current headteacher. She provides outstanding leadership and vision to the work of the school. She has been a member of staff since the school first opened 16 years ago and was appointed as headteacher two years ago, following two years as acting headteacher. The highly effective deputy headteacher, who also started at the school when it opened, is retiring this summer. The senior management team, comprising the headteacher, deputy and two long-serving assistant headteachers, has provided a clear focus and steer to the work of the school since the last inspection. But, as stated elsewhere in this report, the true measure of the effectiveness of this school is the exemplary teamwork and contribution of all staff. Prior to the inspection the headteacher stated that, "We have a highly collaborative decision-making process, which values and empowers staff. When staff develop, the school develops. It is the people who change organisations. Our establishment reflects the quality of the people working in it." This is a very accurate and articulate description of this school and spells out how leadership has a very positive impact on staff and pupils. All teachers and several support staff have significant responsibilities. These are fulfilled with great commitment and professionalism and

contribute to the aspects of leadership and management and have a direct impact on the pupils' progress.

18. The school governors are effective in their role. They have a good understanding of the school's considerable strengths. Last year the school was housed in temporary accommodation whilst its own building was developed and refurbished to its current very high standard. This was a difficult year for staff and pupils. The governors were highly supportive during this period and are highly appreciative of the additional time and work put in by staff, in both managing the temporary accommodation and the organisation of the new building. The governing body is particularly active in planning and managing the school's budget, making appointments and dealing with other staffing issues. They tend to be reliant on the school staff on matters of the curriculum and teaching. The newness of some members of the governing body means that they are less well-informed and involved in these aspects than they might be. However, their willingness to fulfil their role, pay full regard to statutory requirements and support the school is unquestionable.
19. Financial planning and management are highly effective. The school's income per pupil is low in comparison with similar schools nationally. This is the case even when additional funding (to the basic budget from the local education authority) is taken into account. Extremely good use is made of specific grants such as the Standards Fund and Single Regeneration Budget 6. Considerable additional funding is raised, particularly by one of the assistant headteachers. The use the school makes of this funding is excellent. Because the budget is 'tight', the senior management team and governors give full consideration to the available options, in relation to developing staffing, accommodation and learning resources, based on the best possible effect on the pupils. A large carry forward from the last financial year into the current one arose from the consequences of being in the temporary accommodation and unfilled staff vacancies. There are appropriate plans to reduce this figure to within acceptable levels. Office staff make an efficient and effective contribution to the management, administration and smooth running of the school.
20. The school makes full and very effective use of available staffing. There are very good procedures for the performance management of teaching staff, and the excellent opportunities for the training and personal development of all staff are closely linked to the priorities of the high quality school development plans. The school's resources for learning are extremely good, for example in ICT, physical education and design and technology, and these are used to maximum effect. The accommodation is maintained to a very high standard by the school caretaker.

The school provides very good learning opportunities and social experiences for the pupils. The academic curriculum is very good and the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent.

21. The school relentlessly strives to provide a broad, balanced, relevant and stimulating range of experiences for the pupils. It is constantly looking for ways to modify and improve its provision, including supporting pupils after they have left. The school disapples pupils from learning a modern foreign language, following correct procedures through the local education authority and in full consultation with parents. This is partly due to a lack of staff expertise but is primarily a well-considered professional decision based on the needs and interests of the pupils. Parents are confident that, if only one or two of them were insistent on their child learning another language, the school would find a way of doing it. In all other respects the school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and is taking great advantage of the Department for Education and Skills flexible view of the curriculum at Key Stage 4. There have been significant improvements since the last

inspection, particularly in relation to the increased length of the school day and the much better provision for music, which were specific points for action.

22. The school makes very effective provision for the pupils' PSHE, citizenship and careers education, including work experience opportunities, as specific elements of the curriculum. The broader provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Through these key aspects of the school's work, pupils come to believe that they have value and can learn at school. This enables them to respond very positively to the other learning opportunities. Subjects such as English, mathematics and ICT provide pupils with basic skills for everyday living. The provision for physical education, art and design and music is very high quality and motivates and involves pupils. There are positive indicators across the curriculum, although it was not possible in the time allocated to the inspection to make secure judgements in all subjects.
23. The provision of activities outside lessons is outstanding. A large number and wide range of clubs are available after school. Staff organise and run different clubs at different times of the year but these are always provided on at least two days of the week. They include a mix of sporting, creative, key skills (such as reading and ICT), personal development (such as anger management) and vocational (such as motor vehicle maintenance) activities. There is an annual camp for students in Year 10 and there are frequent educational and social trips, which are particularly effective in reinforcing and extending the pupils' learning through outdoor adventurous activities and experiences of the theatre. Organised activities are provided during the short mid-day break period and lively but well-ordered games of indoor cricket and pool were observed. In the former, pupils showed great tolerance of an inspector who they invited to join in and then 'held his bat' for a considerable time!
24. There are four whole school meetings, called 'circle', every day. These provide opportunities for both pupils and staff to evaluate the previous session. They both generate and maintain the positive school ethos. This is exemplified by its Mission Statement, which reads, 'All members of Springwell Dene School are treated with respect and as individuals in order to enable them to make full use of their lives and maximise their potential.' The excellent provision for the pupils' moral and social development is manifest in all activities and at all times, through the staff's expectations of the pupils' work and behaviour and the calm atmosphere in the school. Individual endeavour, co-operation and collaboration, care and respect for other people and physical materials, and self-control when having difficulties are all promoted with great consistency.
25. The pupils' spiritual development is embedded in this approach and highlighted through the 'circle' sessions and work in subjects such as religious education, art and design and music. These subjects make a significant contribution to the pupils' cultural development and understanding of the world at large as well. This also applies to the impact of the large number of visitors to the school and educational visits linked to work in subjects such as drama, geography and history. For example, a visiting artist and members of the technology department have taught pupils skills for making metal sculptures. Photographs of this activity show tangible concentration and amazement on the faces of the pupils. There are frequent visits to the theatre and participation in drama workshops is highly stimulating for some pupils. The school is sponsoring a young African girl and this year pupils will be participating in a bike ride to raise funds to support her. In PSHE, pupils consider very important world issues such as the justification for the military action in Iraq earlier this year. A display of their views, making very good use of charts and graphs, shows that they debated this major event seriously. Through the additional sporting and adventurous activities and physical education activities during the school day, including

canoeing, climbing, sailing and skiing, pupils make very good progress in their spiritual, social and physical development. Overall, the school makes excellent provision for the personal development of the pupils and successfully develops their self-confidence, self-esteem and understanding of the needs of others.

Pastoral care, the promotion and monitoring of personal development and academic assessment are excellent.

26. The school has excellent policies and procedures for pupils' welfare, including child protection, health and safety and risk assessment. Risk assessments are in place for individual pupils and for specific activities, particularly adventurous and sporting ones. All pupils have individual pastoral tutors, whose role has been clarified and developed well since the previous inspection. During the registered inspector's pre-inspection visit to the school, one pupil was highly distressed because he had 'frozen' during an examination. The support and concern shown by the staff throughout the rest of the day exemplified the high quality of the day-to-day care.
27. Highly effective procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance have resulted in improved rates of attendance and a decrease in unauthorised absences since the previous inspection. Nevertheless, patchy attendance by some pupils remains an issue. The headteacher acknowledges that attendance of Year 11 pupils with EBD is 'notoriously poor' and the school is no exception in this regard. It is self-evident that better attendance would result in even better outcomes than the very positive findings of this inspection.
28. The action the school takes to assess the pupils' progress in their work, particularly in PSHE, English and mathematics and in their personal skills, particularly behaviour, is exemplary. Highly detailed assessments are carried out, for example through the use of standardised reading tests and against an extensive list of behavioural indicators. This information is carefully analysed and used to set individual targets and subsequent progress is rigorously recorded and monitored. Modern technology is used to great effect in this process. Subject co-ordinators use this information to identify specific gaps in pupils' learning and to predict their achievements by the end of Year 11, in terms of GCSE grades. Impressive examples of this recording and analysis of data were seen in English and mathematics as a part of the short inspection focus. A member of the support staff has made an extremely valuable contribution to the development of the school's system of measuring and tracking pupils' behaviour.

The school has an excellent partnership with parents.

29. A highly notable feature of this inspection was the extremely positive response of the parents through the questionnaires and the meeting with the registered inspector. The percentage of questionnaires returned was extremely high and all or nearly all parents responded positively to ten of the twelve questions. The number of parents who shared concerns about the provision of homework and behaviour was small but sufficient to warrant investigation. Inspectors find that behaviour is very good overall and when individual pupils occasionally lose control of their feelings and actions they are managed very effectively by the staff. Homework is invariably problematic with pupils with EBD, especially at secondary school level. This school has a clear policy of providing homework whenever it is requested by pupils or parents. For example, a Year 10 pupil told an inspector that he regularly does mathematics homework and has a diary to record how he gets on. A member of staff stated that his mum keeps a close check on this and that tasks are completed, 'nine times out of ten'. However, it is not provided as a matter of course as many parents say that it creates difficulties at home. All these findings are

confirmed by the views of the relatively very large percentage of parents who attended the meeting with the registered inspector.

30. The school has a very effective policy of actively involving parents in their children's education and the life of the school. Excellent information is provided through the statutory annual education reviews and written reports and a plethora of other materials, in particular the highly readable and very regular newsletters. There are formal opportunities for parents to meet with staff to discuss their children's progress at school and the school's doors and phone lines are always open if parents have any concerns. There is a parents' room at the school, which is used for coffee mornings when parents can meet staff or talk to each other. There are plans to invite speakers to these sessions, such as the careers service 'Connexions', if requested. Pupils' individual pastoral tutors make home visits every half-term and this is a further significant element of the school's provision.
31. The school combines the statutory governors' annual meeting for parents with its awards night for Year 11 pupils. The turn out is very high. Parents speak very highly of this evening and the written information they receive through the governors' annual report, teachers' reports on their children's progress, the school prospectus and regular newsletters. Examples of letters of thanks to the school and local education authority further demonstrate the parents' appreciation of the school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

There are no significant shortcomings.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

There are no issues for development at this time.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	20
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	11	3	1	0	0	0
Percentage	25	55	15	5	0	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 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	62
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	37

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	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	12.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3

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

Examination results and other significant achievements 2001-2002

AQA or OCR GCSE examinations			
	Number of pupils entered	A-C grades	A-G grades
English	10	2	10
Speaking and listening	10	3	10
Art and design	15	4	14
Information studies	11	0	10
Mathematics	13	2	10
Design and technology electronic products	7	2	5

Other AQA or OCR examinations and courses

	Number of pupils entered	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Entry level English	8	0	3	5
Entry level design and technology	3	0	3	0
Entry level mathematics	6	0	0	6
Entry level history	13	0	0	13
Computer literacy and information technology – Stage 1	16	16 passes		
Integrated business technology – Stage 2	5	5 passes		

Additional AQA accreditation

Unit Awards Across the Curriculum	Applies to all 65 pupils on roll	Year 11 = 300 units Year 10 = 111 units Year 9 = 83 units Total = 437 units
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Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	65	24	2
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y9 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.2
Average class size	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y9 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	350

Financial year	2002/03
	£
Total income	678,976
Total expenditure	644,554
Expenditure per pupil	9,916
Balance brought forward from previous year	34,941
Balance carried forward to next year	101,541

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
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 = 77%

Number of questionnaires sent out	62
Number of questionnaires returned	48

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	52	40	4	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	52	42	4	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	54	13	2	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	40	15	2	13
The teaching is good.	85	13	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	88	13	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	100	0	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	17	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	88	10	0	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	90	8	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	75	25	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	88	10	0	0	2

