

INSPECTION REPORT

St MARTIN'S SCHOOL

Alvaston

LEA area: City of Derby

Unique reference number: 113042

Headteacher: Mr P Ormerod

Reporting inspector: Katharine Halifax
25439

Dates of inspection: 9th - 12th June 2003

Inspection number: 249353

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Wisgreaves Road Alvaston Derby
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Hayes
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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25439	Katharine Halifax	Registered inspector	Science Geography History Physical education	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management Key issues for action
8937	Howard Allen	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
22821	Linda Wolstencroft	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Music Religious education Personal and social education Educational inclusion	
16198	Carol Etherington	Team inspector	English French Special educational needs	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
22466	Diane Pearson	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology citizenship	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school caters for pupils between the ages of 11 and 16. Of the 83 on roll, over two thirds are boys. All but one speak English as their main language. Two pupils are looked after by the local authority. All pupils have statements of special educational need. Of these 56 have moderate learning needs. An increasing number have complex and challenging behaviour. A small number are in the power of courts, a further three have contracts with the County Council for anti-social behaviour. Forty-eight pupils receive free school meals. At 57% this is high. Pupils come from various primary schools, only a very small number have been to a special school for primary aged pupils. A significant number are referred in Year 9, this has necessitated the creation of a second class for that year group. Records on entry show, in addition to learning difficulties, pupils generally have low self-esteem, low levels of attainment and significant underachievement. As such attainment on entry is well below that expected of pupils of this age. On leaving the school, most pupils go on to further education or training with a few finding employment or choosing to stay at home. As the inspection was in the second half of the summer term, Year 11 pupils had left the school. The school has gone through a turbulent period with five headteachers or acting headteachers in the last two years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Though judged to be satisfactory, this is a rapidly improving school that has successfully overcome major difficulties. The quality of teaching is good and this is reflected in pupils' learning. Whilst there is room for improvement in attendance and in some subjects, pupils' achievements overall are good. The school is well led but some aspects of management and the curriculum are in need of improvement. Nevertheless, it provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The new head teacher has inspired staff and brought about remarkable improvement in a very short time.
- Equally important, staff have remained committed and determined through very trying times.
- The quality of teaching is good and is reflected in improved achievement.
- Pupils' achievements in science are very good.
- Very good provision allows the youngest pupils, those new to the school and those who have lost interest in education or are at risk of exclusion to settle, become included in activities and to succeed.
- Links with the community and a very wide range of activities out of lessons make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

What could be improved

- Weaknesses in the curriculum have resulted in unsatisfactory standards in music, in pupils' awareness of other cultures, and in opportunities for higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 to access a wide range of nationally recognised awards.
- Pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory.
- Some aspects of management need attention. For example, policies, aspects of health and safety and monitoring the effectiveness of the school.
- Links with parents and carers are unsatisfactory.
- Individual education plans and the way some teachers use the results of assessment are unsatisfactory.

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

Following the last inspection in 1997 the school went into a decline. Little was done to remedy the issues highlighted by the report resulting in standards being at risk. Behaviour was poor and there were a number of assaults on staff and other pupils. With the support of the local education authority and the leadership and management of firstly a temporary headteacher aided by the interim senior management team and the new headteacher, the school has been turned around. As a result of their vision and hard work, standards are improving at a very good rate with achievement in some subjects being higher than at the time of the last inspection. Though not all the issues identified by the previous report have been fully addressed and progress has been poor, the skill, determination hard work of the two headteachers, governors and staff have led to rapid improvement, particularly since September. Consequently improvement since the last inspection is judged to be satisfactory.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year 9	by Year 11	Key	
speaking and listening	B	B	very good	A
Reading	B	B	Good	B
Writing	C	C	Satisfactory	C
Mathematics	B	B	Unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	B	B	Poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C	C		

Standards and achievement in many subjects have fluctuated since the last inspection. However despite the unsettled period, achievement is now good in English, mathematics, design and technology, information and communication technology, physical education, French and personal and social education for pupils of all ages. Standards and achievement in science are now very good. Achievement in citizenship, art and design, geography and religious education is satisfactory. In history, pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve well, achievement for those in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory. Music is not taught regularly so pupils do not do as well as they should. Though all pupils in Year 11 gain some form of national award, in some subjects the awards are not sufficiently challenging. Governors and managers have yet to agree targets for the whole school achievement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good overall. Pupils who attend regularly show a much improved attitude to school and to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Following a period where behaviour has been poor, behavioural management systems are making a significant impact. A small number still has problems controlling their behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Though pupils are beginning to take responsibility for their actions, many do not take responsibility for their learning.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. A significant number of pupils has unsatisfactory levels of attendance. The rate of unauthorised absence is high.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	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.

Good or better teaching was seen in most subjects and both age groups. Teaching in English, mathematics and personal and social education is good. Teaching in science is very good. Numeracy, communication skills and literacy are taught well in all subjects, though pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write independently. This reduces their rate of progress in this area. Teachers plan carefully how pupils of different capabilities will learn, so all make good progress in the knowledge and skills they acquire. Strengths in teaching include teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach, the way pupils' behaviour is managed, and teamwork between teaching and support staff all of which contribute significantly to pupils' learning. The way teachers record pupils' achievements and use individual education plans are areas for improvement. A few members of staff lack confidence when using computers.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Whilst there are strengths in the provision for inclusion and links with the community, the curriculum does not meet legal requirements for music and opportunities to gain suitable nationally recognised awards are limited for higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. It is good for their social and moral development. Pupils have too few opportunities to recognise and understand cultural diversity.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. Staff know their pupils well and provide good support and guidance. However, some aspects of health and safety need attention. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are unsatisfactory. The monitoring of academic progress is inconsistent and the quality and use of individual education plans are in need of improvement. Links with parents and carers are unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The head teacher has achieved a great deal in a very short time. He and key staff have drive and a strong sense of direction. They are committed to improvement and high achievement. However, many are new in post and are having to cope with a backlog of work.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. Of necessity the new governing body has had to spend a great deal of time discussing finance and staffing issues. As a result there is need for improvement in some other aspects of their work. Governors have made some very good appointments.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Managers know what the school does well and the challenges they still face. The monitoring of classroom practice and of the effectiveness of the school are areas for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Imaginative use of staff, the accommodation and equipment makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. A satisfactory start has been made to applying the principles of best value, for example, in consulting parents and pupils about the service that is provided.

Staffing, the accommodation and resources are good overall. Recent refurbishments have resulted in the accommodation being brought up to standard. Skilled teachers and support staff are contributing well to achievement. Equipment is good in quantity and quality.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents appreciate the recent improvements in school • They think the school is now well managed. • They like the changes to the buildings. • They appreciate the way the new headteacher has tackled poor behaviour. • Most are comfortable approaching the school if they have a problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents feel their child does not get enough homework. • Some parents feel there is still room for improvement in pupils' behaviour. • Some parents feel the school does not work closely with them.

The inspection team agrees with the strengths identified by the parents. In response to their concerns, though the provision of homework has been inconsistent, this is happening more regularly and contributing to learning. Effective systems have been put into place with the result that behaviour is improving and is now, overall, good. Managers recognise links with parents are an area for improvement.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Prior to attending the school many pupils have made little progress at their previous schools due to their learning needs, behavioural difficulties and often irregular or poor attendance. As a result attainment on entry is well below that expected of pupils of this age. Staff are successful in settling most pupils and encouraging a good attitude to work. This has a positive effect on pupils' progress. Despite the difficulties experienced by the school, stability has been achieved in most subjects. In subjects where there has been continuity, standards and achievement have improved as in science, English in Years 10 and 11 and physical education. There has been improvement in the range of nationally recognised awards available for pupils in Year 11. However, these do not stretch higher attaining pupils. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. The achievements of pupils with additional special educational needs and those looked after by the local authority are similar to those of others in their class because of the support they receive.

2. Achievement in English is good in both age groups. This is good improvement for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and is because of the introduction of the national strategy and the appointment of a new subject manager. Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening and in reading because of carefully planned activities that are matched to pupils' capabilities. Similarly, achievement in mathematics is now good in all age groups for the same reasons. Pupils improve their numeracy and reading at a good rate because most teachers plan for them to improve their skills in other subjects. Whilst teachers plan for pupils to write, much of this is using single words or sentences. Consequently, progress in writing is limited because pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write independently, imaginatively or at length. In Years 10 and 11, the work of higher attaining pupils in English and mathematics contributes to the Youth Award Scheme. In English, this does not sufficiently credit the work produced. The work of lower attaining pupils is suitably recognised through the National Skills Profile.

3. Achievement in science is very good because of skilled teaching, high expectations, good resources, very well planned lessons, very good use of assessment and interesting, meaningful activities. Pupils of all levels of attainment have produced a very good volume of neatly presented work, and all have a good awareness of all the required aspects of the subject. In addition, pupils make good gains in literacy, numeracy and in the use of new technology. However, though pupils record their work in a number of ways, progress in writing is limited because pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to write independently. Pupils in Year 11 are entered for Certificate of Achievement. The number of pupils achieving merit and distinctions is increasing year upon year. This year, 14 pupils have been awarded distinctions.

4. Pupils achieve well in French, information and communication technology, design and technology and personal and social education. This is because teachers are confident in these subjects and the planned programmes enable pupils to make good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding. Achievements in French are recognised through national awards. Achievement in design and technology and information and communication technology contributes to the Youth Award Scheme. Achievement in history is good in Years 7 to 9. In geography pupils achieve well in Year 7. This is because of inspired teaching and activities that enable pupils to acquire the skills specific to those subjects at a good rate. In Years 8 and 9, achievement in geography is satisfactory. In these classes the subject is taught through information and communication technology with too little emphasis on

geographical skills. Achievement in religious education is satisfactory, but too little time is allocated to the subject so pupils do not study topics in sufficient depth. Work in history, geography and religious education in Years 10 and 11 contributes to the Youth Award Scheme. A limited amount of time is available for these subjects and, though pupils meet the requirements of the scheme, their subject knowledge is narrow and limited, especially in geography and religious education.

5. Achievement in art and design is satisfactory and has been affected by the long-term absence of the specialist teacher. Music is not taught regularly so achievement is poor. No systems are in place to identify and provide for pupils who may have a particular gift or talent in music or in art and design. Achievement in physical education is good in both age groups. Pupils achieve a number of nationally recognised awards in gymnastics, on the trampoline and local authority awards in swimming. Achievement in athletics is very good. Those who have a particular talent, for example, in weightlifting and athletics are encouraged and supported in their training programme.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. The school population has changed since the last inspection with an increasing number of pupils with very complex and challenging behaviours. Following the last inspection pupils' attitudes and behaviour deteriorated and attendance figures plummeted with other pupils absenting themselves from lessons within school. In the recent past there has been a high level of serious incidents resulting in a number of exclusions. With the arrival of the new headteacher and as a result of staff training and new systems this has been turned around. Recently, the number of pupils being excluded has decreased significantly. However, there are still a few minor incidents of bullying, particularly of name-calling. Though attendance is unsatisfactory, some who were reluctant to attend are now attending regularly. Staff now have high expectations of how pupils will behave. As a result, behaviour is now good. Most pupils have a positive attitude to school though some find it difficult to work independently. Nevertheless, overall, this represents satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

7. A positive attitude during lessons enables most pupils to progress well. Indeed, on occasions pupils are bursting with enthusiasm. Such was the occasion in a Year 9 science lesson when pupils showed immense concentration as they investigated different types of chocolate to determine whether they were igneous or sedimentary 'rocks'. Even when pupils do not find lessons interesting they are able to sustain concentration for long periods. Pupils are tolerant of others who find it more difficult to remain on task and do not usually allow this to affect their own learning. Nearly all pupils who attend regularly enjoy school. Year 11 pupils who had left by the time of the inspection were happy to return and speak to inspectors reporting they had enjoyed their time at school. A few pupils show little enthusiasm for school and their attendance is poor even when compared to schools of a similar type. Managers recognise the need for all pupils and their parents to understand the importance of good attendance.

8. Most pupils behave well. Lessons are now rarely disrupted due to pupils' behaviour and those pupils who are at risk of exclusion due to previous poor behaviour show significant improvement on returning to school, responding well to the carefully planned programme to get them back into lessons full time. Records evidence that pupils who regularly absented themselves from lessons or who needed individual support now take an active part in lessons. During the inspection pupils' behaviour was very good when they went off-site to take part in activities at sports centres and swimming pools. For example, pupils proudly represented St Martin's at an inter-school sports day at a nearby running track where their behaviour was exemplary and they were a credit to the school. Many pupils acknowledge they find it difficult to manage their behaviour at break times and appreciate the opportunity to

use up their excess energy in the numerous sporting activities provided by staff to keep them out of mischief.

9. Very good relationships amongst pupils have been established both in and out of lessons. Pupils usually get on very well with staff and are polite to visitors. They respect the school environment and this is reflected in the absence of graffiti around the building. Most pupils currently have difficulty taking initiative in their learning and are not sufficiently able to evaluate their own work. Staff recognise the need to ensure pupils are better able to work things out for themselves and are not so dependent on directed work to make progress in their learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

10. Monitoring and support visits by the local education authority evidence a decline in the quality of teaching and learning following the last inspection as staff became disillusioned receiving no support from management. While some members of staff managed to keep positive during this time, others lost heart or left. Over the past few months, since the appointment of the new headteacher, morale has improved greatly. Staff report they now feel valued and have been helped to improve their practice by very good professional development. This, alongside some very good appointments, has resulted in overall improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. There has been a reduction in the percentage of unsatisfactory teaching and a significant increase in the amount of good and very good teaching observed. During the inspection, the quality of teaching ranged from poor to very good. Three lessons were unsatisfactory or poor. All of these were taught by teachers who also taught good, and sometimes very good, lessons. Very good teaching was seen in both age groups and in most subjects. Teaching is good because teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects they teach; they manage pupils' behaviour effectively; they plan work which is challenging for pupils of all capabilities using enterprising strategies and working closely with support staff. As a result of these factors learning is good and pupils achieve well. Managers recognise the need to improve how teachers use individual education plans and have identified this as an area for improvement in the school development plan.

11. Teachers work hard and settle pupils quickly, providing an atmosphere conducive to work. In most lessons, pupils' behaviour is managed very well, allowing others in the group to get on with their work and effective learning to take place. Expectations of behaviour are emphasised at the start of each lesson as pupils are reminded of classroom rules so they behave well. Staff respect pupils and expect them to do so in return. Inappropriate behaviour is not tolerated. At the first sign of inappropriate behaviour, staff quickly intervene. On most occasions this is successful. If the situation persists, further warnings result in the pupil losing reward points or being removed from the lesson for a short time so others may continue undisturbed. On returning from a short break out of lessons, pupils apologise and quickly settle to their allotted task.

12. Lessons are planned to a common format. Teacher conscientiously plan how pupils of with different needs will be challenged and how they will learn. Through carefully chosen questions, teachers and support staff make sure pupils are made to think while having the opportunity to display their knowledge and be successful. Worksheets are usually well matched to pupils' capabilities so pupils are not overwhelmed by not being able to read the content. Conscious of the small number of girls in some groups, staff ensure they are fully included in all activities. This allows all pupils to make good gains in their learning regardless of need, gender or background.

13. Teachers use a good range of teaching methods. Recognising that some pupils have become disenchanted with education they think of imaginative ways to gain pupils' interest. This was seen in a history lesson where the teacher encouraged pupils to become 'archaeologists' or members of 'Time Team' as they investigated interesting objects from the time of the Tudors. Even the most reluctant pupils were enthralled by the high quality objects, describing them in detail and making sensible suggestions for the use of, for example, a 'rushnip'. Teachers realise some pupils have limited concentration, so plan contingency activities. This was the case in a French lesson when pupils became restless whilst learning new vocabulary for facilities in a hotel. The teacher had already prepared a worksheet in anticipation that this might happen. After ten minutes of focused writing, the pupils were sufficiently settled to continue with the original task.

14. Teachers and learning support staff work well together. Joint planning and a consistent approach gives pupils confidence and fosters a realisation that standards must be maintained. Staff suitably reinforce and praise acceptable and thoughtful behaviour. Praise for the way pupils behaved sensibly while waiting to enter the room and remarks such as "Thank you for staying in your seat" and "Thank you for not interrupting while I was speaking" highlight examples of respect and appropriate behaviour to encourage other pupils and to improve self-esteem. Staff know when to give support and when to stand back so pupils learn from experience. This was evident in an information and communication lesson when pupils were designing and making a label. One pupil, who did not find the task easy, was able to outline and fill her initials using colour because the verbal prompts by the teacher gave her the confidence to work her way through the program. The considerable skills of support staff are used to full effect in helping pupils maintain concentration and meet their behaviour targets. Individual skills such as working with computers and in literacy lessons make a considerable contribution to pupils' achievements.

15. All pupils have identified literacy and numeracy needs, and though some class teachers set targets in these areas, these are not used in individual education plans and not communicated to other staff, which limits their effectiveness and pupils' rate of progress. Nevertheless, teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to improve their reading and spelling in all subjects. For example, when pupils come across unfamiliar words on a worksheet they are encouraged to use strategies such as recognising the initial letter sound or breaking the word up into syllables. Through this and weekly spelling tests pupils make good gains in reading and spelling. Pupils improve their skills in speaking and listening and extend their vocabulary at a good rate as new words such as 'fragile' and 'delicate' are explained at the start of each lesson.

16. Pupils have produced a good volume of neatly written work. However, much of this is copied or has required the insertion of missing words. In addition, pupils have too few opportunities to write independently or at length, this reduces progress in writing. Many teachers provide opportunities for pupils to improve numeracy. For example in food technology, after cooking a healthy snack of jacket potatoes and various fillings, pupils spent time working out individual bills reflecting the fillings that had been chosen. In physical education and design and technology, pupils measure and in history and science, they produce bar charts and pie charts of information they have collected. A few teachers plan for pupils to use new technology to support their work. For example, pupils used an electronic microscope in science to investigate plant cells and the Internet in geography to research rivers. However, some staff still lack confidence when using computers. They hand write their plans, schemes of work and individual education plans all of which is time consuming. Similarly, when working with pupils, some teachers provide too few opportunities to use new technology.

17. All lessons end with a review of pupils' behaviour and work. Where this is most successful, teachers expect pupils to be realistic and agree whether they have met their target, such as staying on their chair for fifteen minutes. Most pupils make a reasonable suggestion for scores for meeting their targets as well as scores for behaviour and punctuality. Where teaching is particularly good, pupils also consider what they have learned and identify the progress they have made. However, on some occasions the points are not reviewed or points given do not reflect what has happened in the lessons. This devalues the reward system and denies pupils the opportunity to be realistic about their performance.

18. Some parents expressed concern about the amount of homework their child receives. The provision of homework is satisfactory and takes various forms. For example, learning new spelling, completing crosswords or word searches and undertaking research in preparation for a new topic. Inspection evidence shows this contributes well to pupils learning.

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

19. Since the last inspection, some improvements have been made in curriculum provision. Despite the difficult period the school has been through aspects which were found to be strengths have mostly been maintained. However, while some weaknesses have been addressed, others remain in need of improvement. For example, standards and achievement in mathematics and English for pupils in Years 7 to 9 have been improved by the recent appointments of two specialist teachers and through changes made to the way the subjects are taught. However, changes in geography are too recent to have had a significant impact on learning. Whilst some subjects now have schemes of work which provide a balanced programme ensuring pupils build on prior learning and achievements, this is not so in all subjects.

20. Overall, the school provides pupils of all ages with a satisfactory range of learning opportunities. Elements of the primary national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented well and are supporting improved achievement in English and mathematics. A good start has been made in citizenship, both within the programme of personal, social and health education and in other subjects. Good arrangements are being developed by a new member of the senior management team in conjunction with local education authority, to take into account the new Key Stage 3 strategy that is designed to give more cohesion to the curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9.

21. However, some subjects are not taught, for example music, while art is adversely affected by staffing difficulties. In addition, the time allocated to religious education and, to a lesser extent, history does not allow for the subjects to be covered in depth. The use of time allocated to the daily form period ranges from poor to good. While some teachers use the time effectively for personal, social and health education or citizenship, others do not plan what is to be taught resulting in over one and a half hours each week being under-used.

22. A strength of the provision is the use of facilities in the local community to enrich pupils' learning and the very good range of out of lesson activities that give very good opportunities to gain new experiences and skills and to try out a variety of leisure activities. Lunch times offer various sporting activities organised by teachers and support staff and two computer clubs are held each week. These contribute well to standards and achievement in physical education and in information and communication technology. After school, pupils take part in interesting activities such as sports and the cinema club. During the day, visits linked to different subjects, such as places of worship in religious education, theatre visits in English, and farm visits in geography contribute to learning. Social skills are improved

through recreational activities including visits to watch football. Residential visits enable pupils to experience outdoor and adventurous activities and improve their independence. In addition to contributing to pupils' personal development, the annual cultural trip to France provides pupils with the opportunity to use their knowledge and skills of French acquired in the classroom.

23. Representatives of the community such as the specialist drug education worker and the learning support officer from the local college visit regularly to talk to pupils, and members of the education and business partnership contribute well to the life of the school in different ways. For example, Rolls Royce staff are redesigning the school's logo, and the Rotary Club is helping with environmental projects in the school grounds. Other links such as a local history project 'Voices' with BBC Radio Derby extend pupils' learning in addition to making a useful contribution to skills in speaking and listening. Many local businesses provide good opportunities for pupils to experience the world of work including in shops, children's nurseries and car maintenance and with the Army amongst many others. Pupils needing more support during their experience do not miss out as they are provided with opportunities within school, for example in the school kitchens or working alongside the site manager. These supplement the good quality careers education provided in conjunction with careers guidance from Connexions advisers. A programme of college visits and taster courses enhances pupils' awareness of the opportunities available to them after school and prepares them well for the next stage of education and for later life.

24. Pupils work towards Certificate of Achievement in science and French. In addition they gain nationally recognised awards through the National Skills Profile in some key skills, with higher attaining pupils being entered for the Youth Award Scheme. Whilst pupils' achievements are increasing in both of these, not all aspects of the subjects they study are covered by these options. For example, pupils in Years 10 and 11 study a good range of literature that would allow them entry to Certificate of Achievement but only a small amount of this is used as part of the Youth Award Scheme. Conversely, what is taught in others subjects is tailored to what pupils need to achieve to gain the limited accreditation offered. This is so, for example, in history, geography and religious education where pupils miss valuable opportunities to study the subject in more depth. Managers have identified the need to extend accreditation as an area for improvement.

25. Arrangements for meeting pupils' special educational needs and for dealing with any additional needs, such as speech and language therapy, are now good. There have been several improvements since the last inspection, including building up the provision following the difficult period of management that has had to be overcome. The co-ordinator has ensured that procedures now meet the requirements of the recently revised special educational need Code of Practice. For example, some parents had expressed concern that their child's annual review of stated provision was not taking place on time. Records confirm that this had been the case for some time and that there were often long delays between the reviews being held and parents receiving copies of the resulting reports from the local education authority. To address this the co-ordinator has implemented a programme of regular reviews. Despite criticism at the last inspection, pupils' individual education plans remain unsatisfactory. They are inconsistent in quality and few have targets for literacy and numeracy. Though links have been established with staff so that information about pupils can be shared and staff are made aware of targets to improve pupils' behaviour, academic targets are not available. Managers recognise the need to set targets in literacy and numeracy and to ensure teachers in all subjects are aware of these so the next steps in learning can be identified and pupils can progress more rapidly.

26. In the recent past absence rates have been unacceptably high. In addition, once in school, numbers of pupils have absented themselves from lessons. The behaviour of a

significant number was such that they were at risk of exclusion from school. In order to address this the headteacher and governors appointed a teacher and agreed a policy to include and support the return of all pupils to the classroom. Individual timetables have been drawn up for such pupils, in some cases providing education off site at local colleges and in the work place. Effective individual and very small group work with the inclusion teacher have resulted in pupils who refused to work now attending their timetabled lessons with their class group. A small number of pupils still experience difficulty managing their behaviour and, at times, need a short period out of the classroom to cool down in order to avoid disrupting the learning of others. A system whereby a senior teacher is always on hand to talk with the pupil is successful in providing a listening ear, giving the pupil the opportunity to explain and come to terms with their problems.

27. Prior to attending St Martin's, pupils have been educated in a number of primary schools. Many have been referred because of behavioural difficulties in addition to their learning needs. In the past pupils in Year 7 have experienced difficulties as a group because of constantly moving from teacher to teacher due to the composition of the timetable. In order to address this, pupils in Year 7 are now taught as a class for English, mathematics and science. This has had pleasing results with the group being settled, forming friendships and far fewer incidents of inappropriate behaviour. This has had a positive impact on learning resulting in good achievement.

28. Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Though this represents a decline since the last inspection, considerable changes have occurred in the school and positive developments have begun especially over the past few months. The provision is well supported by the planned programme for personal and social education though staff have not had the opportunity to consider ways in which this could be addressed in other subjects. This is especially so for cultural development.

29. Spiritual development is enhanced through weekly themes for assembly and pastoral time such as 'a problem shared' a topic on bullying and 'honesty is the best policy'. During the week of the inspection the theme was "love thy neighbour". An assembly story told of a man who, whilst seeming to do good, ignored his needy neighbour. This was followed by an opportunity for pupils to sit quietly and reflect or take the opportunity to pray. Further opportunities for spiritual development are provided in religious education lessons. Following a lesson on the life of Anne Frank a candle was lit and pupils engaged in some minutes of quiet thought. The use of class time allocated to 'thought for the week' is variable with some staff making good use of the time while others made poor use of the time.

30. Moral and social development are well supported through daily routines including the system of 'class books'. Individual classroom displays of class codes further guide and support pupils' behaviour and contribution to school life. Regular assemblies contribute significantly to moral and social development in emphasising responsibility and values amongst pupils. For example, during the inspection an assembly began with everyone listening to a recent version of a song about favourite things which included diamonds and rubies. Pupils reflected on the difference between this and the original song where favourite things cost nothing but still gave pleasure. These assemblies reinforce a sense of community amongst both staff and pupils. Adults provide very good examples of how to behave appropriately. Pupils are treated fairly and with respect. Staff reinforce the ideals of right and wrong and many encourage pupils to participate in discussions about behaviour when awarding points at the end of each lesson. Individual time spent with those who exhibit inappropriate behaviour to encourage them to consider the effect of their actions on others and how they might change is reflected in the improved behaviour. Pupils consider wider issues, for example, those which affect the environment through lessons considering the

ecological balance in science. An awareness of the needs of others is fostered through activities such as a 'bad hair day' to raise money through comic relief.

31. On occasions pupils have too little opportunity to think for themselves or take responsibility. In lessons, teachers and support assistants often undertake the most simple of tasks, such as getting work out or giving out equipment. While this may have been necessary to maintain order in the recent past, most pupils are now ready to take on more responsibility. Similarly, outside lessons pupils are often over-supervised, being escorted from lesson to lesson or having a high number of staff patrolling at break times. This limits the opportunity for them to develop self-discipline. Year 11 pupils who returned during the inspection confirmed they felt they should be given more independence and responsibility. They reported how they had taken up issues on behalf of others by, for example, forming a delegation that complained meal portions were too small for older pupils. This was well received and dealt with by the headteacher.

32. Provision for cultural development is unsatisfactory. Activities in some subjects such as art, religious education and French contribute to pupils' appreciation of cultural difference but there is no planned programme to prepare pupils for living in a multi-racial society. Nevertheless, a good start has been made in art and design where pupils have been introduced to work from other cultures, for example, Aboriginal art. Pupils learn about the customs and festivals of a number of different faiths in religious education but insufficient time allocation to this subject limits opportunities to develop this further.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. Since the last inspection a satisfactory level of provision for pupils' general welfare, health and safety has been maintained. However, the poor attendance of a few pupils adversely affects the school's ability to support them in key areas such as their behaviour and personal development. Staff have successfully created an atmosphere of warmth where pupils now feel safe and valued. Managers rightly consider a good environment for learning is important and this is reflected in the recent improvements to the school buildings and grounds that are maintained in a clean, bright and generally safe condition. Year 11 pupils returning to school commented on how much better the school looks and all pupils spoken to consider the school is now a 'nicer place'.

34. Staff value and aim to include all pupils. This is reflected in training programmes for all teachers and non-teaching staff. As a result, for example, child protection procedures are very clear with all staff having an understanding of the need to report any concerns about pupils' welfare to the teacher responsible. A system of regular health and safety checks has only recently been introduced but has already resulted in safety improvements such as extra security measures. Furthermore, audits have identified training needs, for example in assessing risks in lessons. A well-equipped medical room and good first aid and accident recording procedures are now in place. A suitably detailed plan is made of potential risks prior to visits out of school. However, insufficient has been done to assess potential hazards in some subjects such as design and technology, science, physical education and information and communication technology. For example, during the inspection there were occasions on which staff and pupils had to negotiate trailing power cables during lessons. Though staff supervise pupils leaving school at the end of the day, congestion caused by vehicles transporting pupils home and the narrow road outside the school are potential hazards. Only a small sign warns motorists of the site of the school. There are no flashing lights and no traffic calming measures. This concerns staff and drivers alike.

35. Managers have been slower to respond to the risks faced by staff and other pupils resulting from the changing intake that includes many more pupils with complex and

challenging behaviours. As a result, until recently, there have been assaults on staff and the poor behaviour of some pupils has had an adverse effect on the learning of others. Managers recognise the extra risks associated with the problems certain pupils have and know they must ensure adequate staffing is provided for such pupils at all times. A recent review and change in procedures, including the appointment of a member of staff with specific responsibility for inclusion has had convincing results with the school now being a much more orderly place. A consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour by all staff has resulted in the accepted boundaries now being much clearer to pupils.

36. Overall, good support is available for pupils with additional special educational needs. A member of the support staff liaises with the speech and language therapist to ensure pupils who require help undertake their daily programme of exercises so they improve their communication skills in the classroom. However, not all staff are conversant with additional resources which would aid learning. Such was the case in an information and communication technology lesson, where a pupil who struggles with reading would have benefited from the use of a reading stand to display the related work. In addition to pupils with statements for emotional and behavioural needs, many more pupils have challenging behaviours related to their learning difficulties. All of these pupils are being helped to gain self-control and to take responsibility for managing their behaviour through good quality behaviour management plans which are consistently applied by all staff because pupils' targets in this area are shared with them. Whereas while a useful system for rewarding good behaviour for all pupils has been introduced, this is not always applied consistently. In some lessons, insufficient thought is given to the awarding of points associated with the rewards system and, as a result, pupils who have displayed inappropriate behaviour sometimes receive points that do not reflect reality. On a few occasions, insufficient time is given during pastoral sessions at the end of the day to reflect on how well pupils have done.

37. Managers recognise the attendance of a few pupils is a problem and have taken some steps to address this. For example, in the appointment of the inclusion teacher. Once in school, some teachers call the register at the start of each lesson to ensure pupils who have arrived at the school have not absented themselves during the changeover between subjects as they would have done in the past. However, not enough is done to encourage all pupils to attend regularly. While some pupils have targets to improve their attendance in individual education plans, there is no whole school target. The school fails to act sufficiently quickly in the case of pupils who fail to arrive or when there is a downward trend in a pupil's attendance. Not enough is done to celebrate the good attendance of many of the pupils.

38. Overall, arrangements for the assessment of pupils' academic progress are now satisfactory, though, as at the time of the previous inspection, they are still applied inconsistently. This is partial improvement since at the last inspection when arrangements were judged to be unsatisfactory. However, the use of information collected on pupils' progress is inconsistent and remains, overall, unsatisfactory. As at the time of the previous inspection, individual education plans remain unsatisfactory and are of limited use. Though all pupils have identified literacy needs and most have numeracy needs, few plans include targets for these areas of learning. On the few occasions when such targets have been included they are not sufficiently focused or measurable. Though class teachers agree the targets with pupils and they are shared with parents, they are not available, for example, to the teachers who teach English and mathematics, and more widely to all teachers. Consequently some staff are not aware of the levels that pupils are working at, and what they need to do to achieve their targets and raise their levels of attainment.

39. Assessment procedures are now managed by a newly appointed member of the senior management team. She has made a good start in identifying where improvement is needed and has prepared a good quality action plan. Effective links with the co-ordinator for

special educational needs and other key staff have been established. Assessment procedures that measures pupils' emotional development and their behaviour and conduct are effective in identifying pupils who need early intervention and support in order to enable them to behave more appropriately in lessons. This is starting to have a positive impact on the learning and progress of these pupils. The introduction of half-yearly assessments of progress in English, mathematics, science and information and communications technology is being used well to record achievement and identify areas of weakness. The action plan for assessment correctly identifies the need to introduce moderation so that teachers' marking and assessments of the levels which pupils achieve in each subject is more consistent. All pupils are compiling a useful record of achievement or progress file.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

40. There has been insufficient improvement in this aspect since the last inspection and much remains to be done. Nevertheless, under the leadership of the new headteacher, efforts have been made to improve links with parents and carers by providing more information and involving them in the work of the school. The provision of a room for parents has made them feel valued. There has been a significant increase in the number of parents attending annual reviews. Parents appreciate the recent improvements under the leadership of the new headteacher and are now more confident that their children are receiving a good education. Parents acknowledge that the school is well led and has done well to tackle the problem of the poor behaviour of some pupils.

41. Parents now receive regular newsletters informing them of what is going on in school and celebrating some of the successes of their children. An attractive brochure has been produced that provides useful guidance for parents and carers. The format of the annual report parents receive has recently been revised and they now receive more information about how their children are doing at school. However, despite the recent changes, reports are still too focused on pupils' behaviour and provide insufficient information about the knowledge and skills pupils have acquired.

42. Whilst the school has recently set up a parents' room, this tends to be used only for interviews with parents. It is not yet used as a base where they might learn more about how the school is run and how they might support the work of the school. To date, no information meetings have been held to help parents better understand how they can support their child's learning at home. Parents and carers have little opportunity to meet with others to discuss problems they have in common. However, this has been recognised by managers who are attempting to establish a parent's liaison group.

43. Managers have started to consult with parents and carers about what they think about the school. However, such consultation has not yet enabled parents' views to be fully taken into account when important decisions about the school are made. For example the school has not yet consulted with parents and carers about how the school might help make it easier for them to attend consultation meetings about their children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. Since the last inspection the school has experienced a period of weak leadership and poor management which resulted in a loss of morale and high staff absence putting standards at risk. Following the departure of the headteacher, deputy, business manager and governors eighteen months ago, the remaining staff, acting headteachers and new governing body have set about renewing staff confidence whilst endeavouring to provide an effective education. The appointment of the new headteacher at the start of the academic year engendered a new enthusiasm in jaded staff. His leadership is an inspiration to all. Teachers

and support staff report they now feel valued and part of a team. This has resulted in a feeling of optimism.

45. During his time in post, the headteacher has achieved an exceptional amount. He has recognised and built on the many strengths of long serving members of staff and has given staff, pupils and parents the opportunity to identify what they like or dislike about the school and their ideas on how the school should move forward. Staff now have a clear vision of where the school is going and have demonstrated their commitment by giving freely of their time, particularly undertaking considerable amounts of training to improve their skills and understanding of what makes an effective school. Faced with numerous areas for improvement, the headteacher recognised his priorities were to get pupils back into school and into lessons, to improve their behaviour and to give staff the confidence and skills to provide a quality education. This he has done in a remarkably short time. Though not all policies are up to date and the curriculum is in need of attention, the school is operating smoothly and a commitment to improvement and high achievement underpins all that is happening.

46. The deputy headteacher, who has been appointed from within the school, has risen to the challenge well. He provided excellent support for his colleagues throughout the turbulent period doing all he could to maintain an element of stability. He continues to be a good example as a practitioner. He and the headteacher have quickly established an effective working partnership, both having a high profile around the school. During the transitional period, following the departure of the headteacher and the appointment of the new headteacher the interim senior management team was the backbone of the school. Despite the difficulties left by the original management team, the interim team endeavoured to maintain professional standards with the determination to survive. The team has since been restructured with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Each brings individual skills, which contribute significantly to school improvement. All give willingly of their time in the classroom and as, for example, co-ordinators for special educational needs and assessment. As with the deputy, both are good examples to other teachers. Though the team is new, all are experienced staff and are meeting the challenges with vigour.

47. Though not a full complement, the new governing body provides good support to the headteacher in helping the school recover from its difficulties. Starting with out-of-date or non-existent documentation, chaotic finances and an interim management team they have successfully established the financial stability of the school and appointed a good senior management team. Understandably because their energies have had to be focused on these areas, their contribution to curriculum development has been limited. They now recognise the need to turn their attention to this alongside health and safety and ensuring their annual report to parents meets legal requirements. Guided by the headteacher, they are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have contributed to the ambitious development plan which accurately reflects the needs of the school. Wisely, the plan is only for four terms, giving the school time to stabilise. A systematic review of the progress of the plan evidences creditable improvement.

48. The staffing ratio is in line with requirements and now stable which is an improvement since the last inspection, particularly as over the past two years there have been difficulties appointing and retaining suitable staff. However, despite all that has been happening, some teachers have endeavoured to provide stability for pupils enabling standards in some subjects to be maintained, or, as in science, to improve. Co-ordinators are now in post for all subjects other than music. The recent appointment of co-ordinators for English and mathematics is already making an impact on standards and how literacy and numeracy are taught in other subjects. Most teaching assistants are well qualified and make a significant

contribution to pupils' learning, not only through their subject knowledge, but also through specific responsibilities, for example child protection and nursing care.

49. As yet there are no formal procedures for induction or to support newly qualified staff; however recently appointed staff report they feel valued and supported well when they join the school. Procedures to judge the performance of teachers are in place; teaching observations have been implemented and linked to required staff development. Job descriptions are now signed and dated which is an improvement since the last inspection. The site manager is an asset to the school. In addition to cleaning the school to a high standard he saves money by preserving the exterior of the buildings and maintaining the grounds. His major strength is in his work as a lunchtime supervisor when he takes time to talk to pupils, or to play football or cricket with them, building up excellent relationships which boost pupils' confidence which is manifest in loyalty and in pupils who now are proud of their school.

50. The accommodation has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. The use of capital grants and bids has significantly improved the environment. However, not all the issues identified by the previous report have been remedied. Whilst new showers and toilets have been provided for the girls, improvements are still needed to facilities for the boys. These are planned for the summer break but, instead of an initial estimate of £3000 following the last inspection, the cost has now risen to £13,000: a further indication of inefficient management by the previous regime. In the few months the headteacher has been in post many improvements have been made to the accommodation. The recent refurbishment of the ceiling has greatly enhanced the appearance of the hall. Now the roof no longer leaks, allowing for attractive high quality displays that are used effectively to celebrate achievement and contribute to pupils' learning.

51. Areas of the buildings which were previously used by pupils who absented themselves from lessons to lounge have been converted into useful teaching spaces. The library has been moved for easier access, a room for pupils who need time out of lessons to work with staff has been provided, along with a room for parents who may wish to speak confidentially with staff. In addition, new windows, new wiring and other features have improved the fabric of the buildings greatly and made pupils feel valued. As a result there is now no sign of vandalism or graffiti. Best use is made of the space available to provide a welcoming, clean and interesting environment. However, two classrooms are small especially the information technology room. Pupils do not have sufficient desk space and this occasionally impacts on their attitude and behaviour. Specialist rooms for most subjects contribute significantly to pupils' learning. The use of leisure centres allows good access to a wide range of sporting and leisure activities. Resources have improved since the last inspection and are now good in most subjects. There are enough computers to ensure pupils do not have to share. However, some of the resources for geography, such as the atlases, are dated. The library is in the process of developing; staff recognise more books are needed and as yet there is no formal system for use, although it is beginning to be used more effectively for research. The school buys in expertise for residential visits and uses the school mini bus to advantage for field study visits in the local community.

52. Financial management has improved since the last inspection and is now good because of the work put in by the new governing body, acting headteacher, recently appointed headteacher and temporary finance officer. Prior to this, the latest internal audit found the school systems lacking in a number of areas. These have now been addressed and finances are back on track. The hard work by the temporary finance officer has ensured systems are now efficient, manageable and open to scrutiny. Funding is now allocated fairly to each subject and reflects the targets in the school development plan. At eight percent, financial reserves are high. This is because the local authority is in the process of retrieving money due to a fall in pupil numbers in September. Day-to-day administration is satisfactory,

though the short hours worked by the administration officer place unnecessary demands on the headteacher and classroom support staff who are needed to answer the telephone or greet visitors. The record of the school assets maintained by the administration officer is not up to date despite a number of requests to staff. Recently, all teachers completed training in the use of new technology. However, not all use computers in their planning, classroom practice and in records. This impacts on the efficiency of the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. In order to improve standards whilst consolidating initiatives that have recently been put into place, the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- Raise standards and achievement by improving what is taught especially in music, in pupils' awareness of other cultures, and in opportunities for higher attaining pupils in Years 10 and 11 to access a wider range of nationally recognised awards.

(paragraphs 1, 2, 5, 21, 24, 28, 32, 57, 60, 62, 75, 85, 94, 98)

- Improve pupils' rate of attendance

(paragraphs 6, 7, 37)

- Build on the strengths in management and improve areas of weakness by ensuring suitable policies are in place, ensuring health and safety procedures are met, and in monitoring the effectiveness of the school.

(paragraphs 34, 35, 45, 47, 64, 88, 97)

- Improve links with parents and carers

(paragraphs 40, 41, 42, 43)

- Ensure consistency in the way some teachers use the results of assessment and in individual education plans.

(paragraphs 15, 25, 38, 59, 63)

In addition to the above areas, the following minor issues should be considered for inclusion in the school's development plan

- Providing more opportunities for pupils to write independently (paragraphs 2, 3, 16, 66)
- Ensuring staff make better use of new technology. (paragraphs 16, 52, 88)
- Ensuring an accurate record of the school's assets is maintained. (paragraph 52)
- Providing more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for learning and for their personal development (paragraphs 9, 31)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	59
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	47

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	19	24	13	2	1	0
Percentage	0	32	41	22	3	2	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	83
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	48

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

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	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	15

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	7

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

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	83	44	3
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

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.5
Average class size	8

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	352

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/03
	£
Total income	915952
Total expenditure	841120
Expenditure per pupil	9896
Balance brought forward from previous year	22612
Balance carried forward to next year	74832

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
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	83
Number of questionnaires returned	26

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	35	8	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	27	4	8	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	35	23	12	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	16	8	36	28	12
The teaching is good.	56	28	4	4	8
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	65	19	12	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	27	0	8	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	31	4	4	0
The school works closely with parents.	54	23	15	8	0
The school is well led and managed.	54	38	4	4	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	23	4	12	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	35	0	12	8

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

ENGLISH

54. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, though many of the improvements made are very recent due to the period of instability experienced by the school. This is evident in pupils' work, where both the quality and quantity of work show fluctuations, reflecting the fact that some pupils in Years 7 to 9 have had as many as five different teachers of English in one term. Nevertheless, the key issue to improve standards for this age group has finally been addressed by the recent appointment of a permanent teacher of English for these pupils. She has introduced many necessary changes and there is evidence of rapid improvement, especially where relevant parts of the primary National Literacy Strategy have been incorporated. This is resulting in improvement of basic reading and writing skills, and in pupils' knowledge of grammar, punctuation, phonics and spelling rules. In addition, a good scheme of work is being introduced that is giving pupils access to a good range of literature, for example non-fiction, fairy tales, the 'Harry Potter' books and popular authors such as Roald Dahl. Standards for pupils in Years 10 and 11 have been maintained throughout the unsettled period because of the determination of the teacher for older pupils. Consequently, achievement in English is, overall, good. Pupils now make good progress in nearly all aspects of English, with the exception of independent writing.

55. Pupils start the school with different levels of attainment, depending on their special educational need and on the amount of schooling missed through attendance problems. Pupils make good progress when speaking and listening. Those needing speech and language therapy make good progress because of individual programmes designed by a qualified therapist and implemented daily by a dedicated support assistant. All pupils have opportunities to answer questions, and to give their views on the literature texts they share and to take part in simple discussions. By Year 9, most pupils are sufficiently confident to speak in front of the class and take turns to respond, having respect for what others say, even if this does not correspond with their own views. However, they do not always express especially well when reasoning their answers as many of the questions asked by some staff require pupils only to recall facts rather than predict what might happen, for example in the next chapter of a book. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have more opportunities for discussion, many of which focus on moral issues and which extend pupils' understanding of citizenship. For example, pupils thoughtfully considered whether a dog that had bitten a young child should be put down. Older pupils grow more confident in making conversation and speaking in public, including in the community, through experiences at college and in the work place.

56. In reading, pupils in Years 7 to 9 learn independent reading skills at the appropriate level extending their range of skills to recognise new words and in improving their levels of comprehension. A programme of additional literacy support activities, operated by teaching and trained support staff, makes a significant contribution to their learning of phonics, grammar, punctuation and spelling rules. As class groups, they respond well to texts, showing enjoyment of the stories and listening carefully when books are read aloud. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 continue to improve their independent reading skills, with many reaching levels that will help them in later life, for example in reading instructions or safety information. They demonstrate a maturing understanding of the texts they read together, and relate these to their own lives, for example, newspaper articles.

57. In writing, younger pupils learn to form individual letters correctly and follow a handwriting scheme. Though not all learn to write successfully using a cursive script, the majority of pupils improve the presentation of their work significantly during their time at the school. The oldest pupils use their presentation skills to good effect when undertaking

coursework, enabling them to compile attractive submission files for external awards. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils in both age groups to write independently, imaginatively or at length in English and in other subjects.

58. Though teaching is good for both age groups, it varies in quality from lesson to lesson, including a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching for pupils in Years 7 to 9. However, examples of good and very good teaching were observed in both age groups. The most effective lessons were where teachers had high expectations for what pupils would achieve and for how they behave. Resources were very well chosen and very good relationships between pupils and with adults contributed to good quality learning. These strengths were evident, for example, in a very good lesson with Year 10 pupils, where the choice of text on the theme of shoplifting provoked mature reflections on peer group pressure and a sense of keen anticipation as pupils tried to predict whether the main characters would get caught and prosecuted. Very good relationships between staff and pupils encouraged most pupils to have the confidence to read parts of the story aloud and all pupils contributed well to the discussion, responding positively to skilful questioning by the teacher and unobtrusive support and encouragement from an experienced teaching assistant. Less effective teaching did not have sufficient focus and activities did not ensure that the targets for the lesson were achieved, leaving the teacher unable to assess what pupils had actually learned.

59. Teachers in both age groups in many other subjects, notably mathematics, science, history and information technology, give pupils additional opportunities to develop and apply their literacy skills. For example, pupils improve their speaking and listening, reading and writing when describing to each other how they reached a set of results or how they planned an investigation. The learning of spelling and meaning of specialist vocabulary, using the new words accurately in discussion and when recording their work contributes very well to reading, writing and spelling and in extending vocabulary. Whilst these aspects are good, opportunities are missed as not all teachers plan to consistently incorporate these skills into their teaching. Although pupil's individual social and behavioural targets are shared with all teaching and support staff, their literacy targets are devised by their class teacher and not always shared with the staff who teach English or who work with them in other subjects. As a result, not all staff are aware of the difficulties that act as barriers to pupils' learning and the next steps pupils need to master in order to better progress.

60. The curriculum is good, with many strengths such as the good range of literature that pupils study including popular modern fiction, poetry and plays, for example, by Shakespeare, and trips to theatres and performances by visiting theatre groups. However, there are few opportunities to read multi-cultural texts such as stories and poems reflecting the traditions of other cultures. Subject management is good. The joint managers are aware of the strengths of the subject. They have already identified that schemes of work do not include sufficient opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to support learning, for example, when drafting and redrafting written work, and when reading for information in research tasks. However, they have not yet planned to extend pupils' chances to write independently and at length. Although presentation skills are good, and pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work, few older pupils try to write more than one sentence at a time. This weakness is caused, in part, by planning specifically to allow pupils to reach levels of achievement necessary for the chosen award schemes, which results in higher attaining pupils not being sufficiently challenged to achieve more. Because the range of award opportunities is too narrow, this results in much of the very good work that pupils do being under-used by only being submitted as part of a module from another subject. Consequently, pupils do not receive the recognition that their good achievement deserves.

MATHEMATICS

61. Following a period of unsatisfactory practice, the recent appointment of a permanent co-ordinator has brought about rapid improvement to the provision and organisation for mathematics. This has resulted in overall good progress since the last inspection. The co-ordinator is the subject teacher for most groups, which provides a very good basis for assessment and an overview of standards and individual progress. Pupils in Year 7 are taught by their class teacher. This provides a secure base with known adults where good working practice is now established.

62. The National Numeracy Strategy has had a positive impact on both teaching and learning. By Year 9, pupils have a good awareness of number, measures, simple fractions, percentages and decimals. They use a calculator with confidence and make good progress working with money. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve well. By the time they leave, many are competent using the four rules with whole numbers and calculate with increasing care. They work through money problems and use timetables, for example, to find the time of a television programme. Pupils in both age groups make good progress in mental mathematics through the fast pace with which they tackle problems. For example, good use of mental skills introduced Year 10 pupils to probability. Pupils were fascinated as the topic related to the current sporting activities. They identified with the events to gauge distances jumped and points scored. Boys and girls work equally well with teachers being careful to pose questions to each pupil to check their understanding. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11 have completed the Youth Award Scheme. Their work is presented well and shows good use has been made of practical mathematics in the work place such as money management, travel skills and measurement. Lower attaining pupils achieve equally well with their work being credited through National Skills Profile. As in other subjects, this does not fully credit the efforts of all pupils, especially the achievements of higher attainers.

63. The quality of teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to very good, being good overall. As a result pupils make good progress during lessons and achieve well. Where pupils present challenging behaviour the well-planned lessons and use of a variety of resources ensure they maintain concentration and do not disrupt the learning of others. In the most successful lessons, resources are interesting and used effectively; the teacher and assistant support each pupil well to ensure all understand how they work out their answers. Good attention is paid to speaking and listening and reading questions. Pupils make progress in literacy well because help is given to improve reading and spelling. In addition, activities such as using a 'numeracy dictionary' to interest pupils by, for example, in Year 8 finding the words 'imperial', 'capacity' and 'metric' in displays thus extending their understanding and mathematical vocabulary. Teachers of science, history, geography, design and technology and physical education provide good opportunities for pupils to improve their mathematical skills, though these are not always identified in planning. Data handling is used well in information and communication technology as well as other subjects. This was illustrated well in a Year 9 history lesson where pupils deduced information from pie charts showing the differences of the life of a thirteen year old pupil in 1815, 1945 and the present day. Although work is provided to support learning for all levels of attainment very few pupils have focused numeracy targets in their individual education plans that would increase their rate of learning. Work is marked alongside pupils. This is helpful with relevant comments to support understanding and fun stickers and certificates celebrating progress. A small amount of homework contributes to learning, but this is not set regularly.

64. Subject management is good. The co-ordinator knows the strengths and areas for development. She recognises the need for a more consistent use of information and communication technology to reinforce skills and the need to monitor lessons to check the

impact of teaching on learning. Resources have improved since the last inspection and are now good. These contribute well to pupils' learning.

SCIENCE

65. Achievement in science is very good. This is good improvement since the last inspection and is the result of more focused teaching, improved resources and the provision of a specialist room.

66. Pupils improve their knowledge of living things, materials and their properties and physical processes at a very good rate. They are motivated by the practical activities, willingly discussing their findings. After planting cress and observing its growth, pupils in Year 8 explained they should have made sure their test was fair by, for example, using the same number of seeds and the same amount of compost. Higher attaining pupils described how they set up investigations such as constructing a circuit and predicting which bulb might light. Pupils make good improvement in their mathematical knowledge by, for example, counting and comparing their heartbeat following exercise and compiling a graph of hearing loss. Good improvement is made in the use of specialist vocabulary because pupils are expected to learn to spell the key words used in the lesson for homework each week. In addition to extending pupils' vocabulary, this helps them improve their reading and spelling. Other homework activities such as crosswords and word searches similarly reinforce what has been learned in lessons and contribute to progress in literacy. Whilst pupils record their work in different ways, much of this is copied. This reduces pupils' progress in writing.

67. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection and is now very good. Despite pressure and losing preparation time under the previous management regime, both teachers have endeavoured to give of their best. They plan lessons that will interest and inspire pupils. Tasks are imaginative. Such an example was a lesson to identify and describe the characteristics of rocks. Pupils recalled their knowledge of the properties of rocks as they investigated three types of 'rocks', which were varieties of chocolate, from the planet Mars deducing that the chocolate with air bubbles was igneous, having been "thrown out of the volcano trapping bubbles of gas inside". Cream and brown layers in a second sample suggested the rock was sedimentary. Teachers target their questions carefully to individual pupils to make sure all levels of attainment understand the work, that girls and boys are equally involved and that all sustain concentration. Where pupils have difficulties providing an answer strategies such as a quick-fire game of 'hangman' improve pupils' spelling and contribute to self-esteem by giving success so all make good gains in their knowledge and understanding. Pupils enjoy their science lessons and talk with enthusiasm about visits out, for example, to the national rock centre. They explained in detail what they had learned and how, following the visit, they used the Internet to find out more information, and an electronic microscope to examine their fossils more closely.

68. Subject management is very good. Policies, the scheme of work and methods of assessment and recording are good examples for other staff. Achievement is recorded and used to plan further work, thus improving progress. Topics have been chosen that challenge and motivate pupils who have lost interest in education such as the module on forensic science for Certificate of Achievement.

ART AND DESIGN

69. The previous inspection reported that art was taught only to pupils in Years 7 to 9 and that progress was at least good. This has improved in that art and design is now taught weekly to all year groups. However, during this inspection there was insufficient evidence on which to base judgements on the overall quality of teaching and learning as pupils were taught by short-term supply teachers who are covering for the teacher who is absent long-term.

70. Examples of work show that pupils have studied colour and form and worked using a range of media including clay, paint, pastel and crayon. Pupils in Year 7 are working on camouflage, creating pictures of tigers using a range of 'earth' colours. Those in year 10 have worked on still life pictures and used fresh fruit to inspire work in textiles, using different fabrics and embroidery to reproduce the form and colour of the item. They have looked at the work of a famous artist, successfully creating their own picture in the same style. Pupils in both age groups work successfully in the style of other artists including three-dimensional work produced following the study of the work of Henri Rousseau, Aboriginal art and studies of architectural patterns: all of which make a useful contribution to pupils' cultural development. Art work, including flower pictures in inks which have been entered for a local competition for Derby in Bloom, is attractively displayed around the school celebrating pupils' achievements.

71. Staff absence means a non-specialist is currently teaching the subject. Achievement for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory but the absence of a scheme of work to guide learning results in limited opportunities to further develop skills. The work of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is accredited as part of their work towards the Youth Award Scheme. The specialist art room is well resourced. This contributes to the quality of learning.

CITIZENSHIP

72. Pupils in both age groups have a satisfactory understanding of citizenship through their work in class and the many good opportunities provided to contribute to the community. By Year 9, through work on the 'United Kingdom and beyond', pupils have an awareness of the work of local councils, parliament and the European Union. They have used the Internet to research information on the Palace of Westminster. By Year 11, pupils have an understanding of community health issues and know that services such as the blood transfusion service are of help to others. Pupils working towards the Youth Award Scheme have compiled a Young Citizen's Passport which assists them in answering questions about community issues which concern them. Experiences in college, careers education and in the work place contribute well to pupils' understanding of citizenship.

73. Teaching and learning is satisfactory with examples of good practice in preparation for the Youth Award Scheme. Although citizenship is not yet embedded throughout all subjects there are good examples in science and in geography where, for example, in Year 7 pupils compared the services available in a village to those of a town. Class based time generally makes a good contribution to the subject when pupils consider 'thought for the week'. During the inspection pupils shared their thoughts on what is a neighbour. Pupils are beginning to record their thoughts and experiences, though this is an area for development. Teachers' recording of knowledge and skills is in its infancy.

74. A very good start has been made to establishing this subject. Regular meetings have been held with the local authority co-ordinator and colleagues from other schools. The co-ordinator has researched the subject well incorporating present good practice in personal and social education. Other subject managers have taken part in training from which a

comprehensive audit has begun to form the basis for the outline of work. Well-displayed work illustrates involvement by all pupils with events such as Red Nose day, Children in Need and a broadcast from school with Radio Derby.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

75. As at the time of the last inspection, achievement is good overall. This is because the curriculum is good and is appropriate in meeting pupils' special educational needs. The range of experiences includes food technology and design technology. Pupils work with resistant materials such as wood and plastic, and good links are made to work in science and information and communication technology, for example work circuits. Pupils achieve well. However, they do not have the opportunity to gain nationally recognised awards. Most pupils are able to prepare a healthy snack with little help, know that some methods of preparing food are healthier than others and have made food for different occasions. They construct a circuit and test that is working using a light or buzzer. Pupils becoming increasingly confident using a range of hand tools such as a tenon saw and cut wood using a jig. Pupils improve their skills in speaking and listening by, for example, explaining how they assembled the components to make a battery powered toy.

76. The quality of teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to very good, being good overall. In the best lessons the teacher explained clearly what pupils were to do before the activity began and work stopped when further instructions were needed. Pupils were interested and motivated. They enjoyed the activities and worked sensibly, usually with good attention to health and safety rules. Where teaching was less effective pupils began working before the task had been fully explained. This resulted in some pupils not following appropriate procedures to ensure food was properly prepared. In the lesson which was unsatisfactory, the rules for health, safety and hygiene were not followed. In all lessons, staff had high expectations of pupils and relationships were good. Pupils helped one another. Good teamwork with support staff ensured that every pupil was working. Behaviour management was good which meant that time was not lost through disruption. Staff successfully developed pupils' responsibility for their own learning by setting tasks which needed to be completed in a set time. The development of pupils' independence skills was a focus for all areas of work but some opportunities to further develop social skills were missed where time was not managed well.

77. The subject is well managed. There have been recent improvements to the accommodation to bring it up to an acceptable standard. The subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development in its contribution to the development of independent living skills.

GEOGRAPHY

78. The key issue from the last inspection to raise standards in geography has only begun to be addressed in the past few months. As a result, though pupils are making at least satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress in lessons in Years 7 to 9, even taking account of their special educational need, their knowledge and understanding are limited. Geography in Years 10 and 11 is taught through the unit 'The Environment' as part of the Youth Award Scheme. Pupils in this age group have very little background knowledge and poor geographical skills which limits their understanding of work studied in the unit, for example, when investigating rivers.

79. Teaching for pupils in Years 7 is good. The teacher is knowledgeable, planning her lessons carefully so pupils of differing capabilities are suitably challenged. Achievement is meticulously recorded and used as a basis for further work. As a result, pupils in this age

group make good gains in their understanding of different settlements and using plans and maps. They use their observational skills well when studying, for example, high quality aerial photographs to compare geographical features. Teaching in other year groups is satisfactory. The subject is taught through practical activities and information and communication technology. Resources are generally used well. For example, pupils in Years 7 and 8 acquired a good understanding of the features of the River Severn from a video, being amazed by the sight of the Severn Bore. Pupils have a satisfactory awareness of basic plans and co-ordinates. However, the scrutiny of work and talking to pupils shows pupils in these two classes have a limited geographical vocabulary and fieldwork is not always recorded. Though teaching in Years 10 and 11 meets the requirements of the Youth Award Scheme, the teaching of geographical knowledge and skills is barely satisfactory. On occasions, the teacher assumes a certain level of knowledge and insufficient time is spent ensuring pupils understand the specialist vocabulary. Whereas good use is made of new technology, for example, for pupils to use the Internet to research a river of their choosing, work is needed in imparting geographical knowledge for pupils to get maximum benefit from this exercise.

80. Subject management is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is not a subject specialist and also has the responsibility of managing another subject. He recognises he needs further training. Some lessons are taught in the information and communication technology suite. Though this gives good access to computers, the room is too small and pupils do not have sufficient desk space. Resources are unsatisfactory. The atlases used were published in 1955, being last reprinted in 1985. Whilst teachers use videos well, outdated equipment limited the effectiveness of one lesson. In both age groups the teaching of geography makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding of citizenship by, for example, in Years 10 and 11, considering recycling and looking at ways to improve the school grounds, replacing broken tiles and cleaning surfaces. In Year 7 pupils are aware that commuters living in villages and using supermarkets has led to the demise of village shops.

HISTORY

81. Achievement in history is good because of the teacher's subject knowledge and enthusiasm, the quiet unassuming way she manages behaviour her very high expectations of standards and behaviour. After a decline following the last inspection, this represents very good progress over the last few months.

82. At the time of the last inspection, pupils had negative attitudes to the subject, rudely interrupting in lessons because the pace was slow and the work did not match pupils' interests or abilities. The situation has reversed. Pupils now enjoy the subject talking enthusiastically about the interesting objects the teacher provides as a base for their studies. All levels of attainment now make very good progress in the knowledge and skills they acquire. All aspects of the subject are covered well so pupils are aware of the passage of time, knowing that they can find out about the past from a range of sources, including photographs, objects, videos, newspapers and the Internet. Countless opportunities are planned and provided for pupils to improve their numeracy, reading and, in this subject, independent writing. Skills in speaking and listening are improved as pupils reason their suggestions how industry changed towns and transport systems. A very good understanding of citizenship is acquired through discussions such as working conditions for children in the 1800s and 'Farmer Marley's Problems' farming on common land. In these lessons and as homework, pupils make very good improvement in their writing because they are expected to write imaginatively, independently and at length about, for example as a child in the 1800s or why local historical figure Richard Arkwright was not an evil man. Mathematical understanding is promoted equally well. Drawing on previous knowledge, pupils deduced which pie chart represented each year by suggesting, for example, the one which had no

time for school was 1815 because children did not have the advantage of education at that time. By Year 9 they have a good understanding of life in Tudor times and in Britain between 1750 and 1900. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 gain an awareness of historical figures as part of the Youth Award Scheme.

83. The quality of teaching and learning is never less than good and often very good. The teacher very successfully creates a calm atmosphere conducive to learning. Pupils are motivated to learn because of the interesting activities and very high quality resources. For example, pupils were fascinated by a 'leatherjack', discussing what it was made of and giving reasons for who they think might have used it, commenting that children their age would have drunk ale because the water would have caused stomach problems. Relationships are very good. Respect for pupils is clear as was illustrated when the teacher thanked them for listening politely while she spoke and for completing the previous exercise to a high standard. Pupils respond proudly to praise and in turn respect the teacher. The marking of pupils' work is exemplary. In addition to praising pupils' efforts, indications as to how they might improve their work enable pupils to progress at a good rate. For example, 'well done you have found the major changes and placed them in the correct time period. What is a period of 10 years called? Don't forget capital letters for the names of people and places'.

84. Subject management is good. The co-ordinator is relatively new but has very successfully raised the profile of the subject in the few months she has been in post. The teaching of history makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

85. The provision for information and communication technology is good and has improved since the last inspection. This is reflected in improved standards and achievement. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 pupils successfully complete units of work including word processing, the use of spreadsheets, research information and present multimedia work using text, images and sounds as part of the Youth Award Scheme. Whilst this is good achievement, the award does not fully reflect the pupils' efforts in the subject.

86. Pupils in both age groups improve their key board skills at a good rate. They are beginning to handle information with more skill and relate this to work such as measurement. For example, in Year 8, pupils understand they have to enter data accurately for it to be of value and are beginning to use specialist vocabulary such as 'pie chart', 'cell' and 'field'. Pupils in Year 9 apply their knowledge well, giving sensible well thought out answers. For example, when discussing visitor numbers to the United Kingdom over a few years they suggested there could be more visitors during a hot summer and football events and fewer visitors during the foot and mouth problems. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 build on previously acquired skills. When word processing, they 'centre' their work, use different fonts or styles and colour, paying particular attention to different sizes and the spacing of letters. Using their knowledge of desk top publishing and art programs they have designed and made an attractive name tag.

87. Lessons are well planned and teaching is good. Consequently pupils make good progress and achieve well. Care is taken to provide interesting, relevant work to cover skills which include word processing, data handling, combining text and graphics, spread sheets and research using the Internet. All pupils are interested, behave well and enjoy the activities. Very good use is made of the interactive white board to introduce and reinforce learning and skills. Very good teamwork between the teacher and support assistant ensures pupils pay good attention to their work. Most pupils are beginning to understand how to correct an error; this is reinforced well by reviewing their work on the interactive white board.

88. Subject management is good. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and, following inadequate training by a commercial provider, organised a second round of training for all staff. This has resulted in increased confidence though some staff are still reluctant to use computers in their planning and other work. New technology is used well to support some other subjects for example science and history. However, improvement is needed in planning how the technology will be used to support teaching in other lessons. There has been no monitoring of work in classrooms to evaluate the impact of teaching on learning and to assess pupils' skills. The planned programme does not reflect the targets required to meet individual needs. This is required, as smaller steps are needed for a small number of lower attaining pupils to ensure continued good progress. Resources in the computer suite are good and support learning well, especially the use of the interactive white board, video and digital cameras. This is significant improvement since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy the lunchtime computer club, where they mix well to play games and improve their keyboard skills. The very good emphasis on speaking, listening and reading supports literacy well.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

89. There have been several good improvements in the provision since the last inspection. Teaching is consistently good and pupils now make good progress in all of the required skills of learning a modern foreign language. The subject manager has recently researched an alternative award scheme for pupils to replace the one that has been used and is now discontinued. To reflect the fact that pupils in each successive Year 11 have achieved higher levels in the award, she has started to implement a more challenging award that will give pupils more opportunities to gain national recognition for their successes.

90. Overall, achievement is good in both age groups. When listening and responding to French, pupils in Years 7 to 9 understand and respond to basic greetings, short statements and simple questions. However, younger pupils just starting to learn the language need much adult help, including repetition and the use of gesture, which is gradually withdrawn as new vocabulary is introduced. By Year 11, most pupils listen to a tape recording and follow the instructions given, for example "*Ecoutez la cassette et écrivez les numeros qui correspondent.*" When speaking, younger pupils begin by saying a single word or short phrase in response to the teacher's questions. As their confidence grows and their vocabulary increases, pupils use longer phrases and sentences. The oldest pupils take part in short conversations and role-play exercises where they speak in full sentences, though these use a limited range of verb tenses, and mainly rely on the present tense with some use of the future tense.

91. When reading, younger pupils understand single words. Through reading instructions on worksheets, they gradually read phrases and longer sentences. The oldest pupils use real written materials such as hotel guides in French to find out information, for example, of the facilities a hotel provides. In writing, there is a similar pattern of progress. Year 7 pupils begin by copying single words, for example to name '*les animaux*' or to label items of food and drink that make up different meals. As pupils become more confident writers, they start to write sentences and, by the time they complete their coursework, they write a short letter to a French penfriend about what they think of school.

92. Teaching is consistently good. All of the teaching is by the subject manager, resulting in a consistent approach. She knows pupils well and this helps her to target appropriate questions to different pupils to check that they have understood. She has established good relationships and uses praise, support and encouragement well so even the least confident pupils feel they can contribute answers and try out new words and phrases. Pupils enjoy

spending time in the classroom because of the many themed displays in French to support learning, including real objects such as French food packets and magazines. They learn about language in a wider sense, because the teacher takes time to explain the derivations of new vocabulary and compares the French words with their English equivalents. Pupils always know what is expected of them as lesson aims and key vocabulary for the day are displayed, and pupils are encouraged to review their learning at the end of each lesson.

93. There are three main areas for development. The subject leader has already identified the need for training in relation to the new award scheme, and acknowledges that she may need to do a refresher course to improve her own knowledge and understanding of the language as pupils achieve increasingly higher levels of competence. In addition, she recognises more detailed ongoing assessment of pupils' progress in each of the four skill areas is needed so that work can be better matched to pupils' abilities rather than all pupils doing exactly the same work as happens in many lessons. Currently there is no audio recording of pupils' French conversation and little role play to give valuable opportunities to consolidate learning while allowing them to have better knowledge of their progress by giving them the chance to hear how much their accents and fluency have improved.

MUSIC

94. The provision for music is poor and does not meet legal requirements. Whilst there was improvement following the criticism of the previous inspection when music was judged to be unsatisfactory, difficulties appointing and retaining staff mean this is no longer the case. Music is not taught to all pupils, currently only being offered as a choice during activity afternoons. There is no teacher responsible for music. Little evidence was available on which to form judgements. No scheme of work or other planning documents were available.

95. Pupils have a limited access to music through regular assemblies. Music is played as pupils enter the hall and is used appropriately to illustrate points. In the assembly during the inspection pupils listened to two versions of the same song and commented on the difference in the two sets of lyrics. In the one lesson observed, some pupils in Year 9 have just begun to learn to play the descant recorder and are at an early stage of reading notation and placing their fingers in the correct positions to play the notes. Most controlled their breathing in order to produce a sustained sound. Pupils clearly enjoyed the activity as they made satisfactory progress when playing a tune together following the music. No evidence was available for composing or musical appreciation. However, out of lesson activities provide useful opportunities for pupils to make music and to listen and respond to a range of musical styles. For example, pupils have performed pieces from popular musicals such as "Grease".

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

96. Pupils make good progress and achieve well in personal, social and health education because of good teaching and the good programme which includes sex and relationships education and drugs misuse awareness. The programme makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development through the opportunities it provides for pupils to acquire independence skills and in preparing them for adult life. Pupils mostly demonstrate very good attitudes, tackling some difficult questions with maturity, for example crime, relationships, morality, work and benefits. However, insufficient attention is paid to preparing pupils for living in a multi-racial society. Those who will soon be embarking on work experience are helped to identify potential health and safety risks in the workplace using a set of illustrations. During these lessons, pupils learn strategies that help them to cope with problems and manage their behaviour. Sessions at the end of each day provide opportunities for pupils to consider issues and events important to them. However, not all teachers use the session effectively.

97. Subject management is good. The co-ordinator provides good support for her colleagues, though she has not had the opportunity to measure how well the subject is taught. Pupils' progress is recorded through a series of statements that show how each individual has achieved. In addition, pupils contribute to the recording thus improving their knowledge of their learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

98. Pupils' achievements in physical education are good in both age groups because of skilled teaching, access to a varied programme of challenging activities, and the amount of time allocated to the subject. Achievement in athletics is very good because of very good teaching of skills and the determination by pupils to beat their previous performance. Whilst pupils of all ages achieve proficiency awards in gymnastics, swimming and on the trampoline, no nationally recognised awards are available specifically for pupils in Years 10 and 11. In addition to physical education lessons, pupils improve their skills and keep physically active through daily opportunities to play football and cricket each lunch time and during optional activities such as tennis one afternoon each week. Though pupils have the opportunity to take part in adventurous activities during residential visits, this aspect of the programme is an area for improvement. The programme ensures pupils improve their physical fitness. For example, records of pupils' performance in cross-country show 85% of pupils improved their time significantly. In addition, pupils' measuring of their heartbeat using stop watches showed improvement in fitness levels.

99. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection with all teaching seen being good or better. Particular improvement has been made in lesson planning and the recording of skills. As at the time of the last inspection, lessons are planned to suit the range of capabilities within each class so pupils of all levels of attainment have the opportunity to succeed. Each lesson begins with a suitable warm-up paying attention to the muscles needed for a particular activity, for example, ensuring the shoulders and waist are flexible prior to putting the shot. Clear instructions ensure pupils know what is expected of them and that they understand the need to observe rules for health and safety. Very good use is made of demonstration to help pupils improve their performance. Pupils improve their skills at a good rate because the teacher keeps detailed records of their performance challenging them each lesson to improve upon previous results and because the activities are matched to individual needs.

100. Management of the subject is good. The teacher is aware of the subject's strengths and the areas for development. Recognising the school hall is unsuitable for physical activity he has negotiated the use of local sport and leisure centres. A number of pupils have progressed to using these facilities in their free time. Since the last inspection, work has been carried out on the girls' changing rooms, and showers have been provided. Facilities for the boys are still in need of improvement. In order to ensure activities appeal to girls as well as boys a decision was made to teach hockey as a game because some of the girls resented playing football. Individual talents are recognised, nurtured and supported. For example, the teacher ensures that physical education lessons contribute to the training schedule of a pupil who is a national champion in weight lifting. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development through, for example, consideration of the need for rules and how to cope with winning and losing.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

101. The provision has been maintained since the last inspection. Given the changes which have taken place in the school this is considered to be satisfactory progress. Religious

education is taught to all year groups and is planned with reference to the Derbyshire Locally Agreed Syllabus. However, too little time is available to ensure that all topics are covered in appropriate depth; consequently achievement is just satisfactory. A suitable curriculum in place but this is currently under review as a new Agreed Syllabus is to be introduced in the autumn.

102. Pupils gain an increased awareness of the major world faiths. Those in Year 7 have knowledge of the important symbols and objects of Christianity and have learned about the work of a minister of the Church. Pupils in Year 8 have an awareness of Hinduism and the story Rama and Sita, linking this with the celebration of Diwali. A greater awareness of major world faiths is gained in Year 9 as pupils learn about Sikhism. In Years 10 and 11, religious education is credited through the Youth Award Scheme. Pupils in this age group have a basic awareness of the Jewish faith, knowing that Anne Frank and her family were persecuted for their beliefs. They have knowledge of a number of religious festivals and beliefs of different religions and have compared the rites of passage such as marriage ceremonies.

103. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching but in the one lesson observed pupils were given a period of quiet time to reflect on the life of Anne Frank. The teacher's planning is detailed and ensures that all pupils can contribute to the lesson. Pupils' work shows that they make progress in the topics covered but because so little time is allocated to the teaching of religious education the progress made overall is limited.

104. The subject is well managed. Although a developing area, the co-ordinator has made a satisfactory start in improving resources including using information and communication technology. Visits to places of worship have enriched learning and contact with a local resources centre has ensured that good quality objects are available to support learning. The teaching of religious education makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' personal development.