

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. CLARE'S SCHOOL

Mickleover, Derby

LEA area: Derby City

Unique reference number: 113046

Headteacher: Carmel McKenna

Reporting inspector: Michael McDowell
1405

Dates of inspection: 9th - 12th June 2003

Inspection number: 249354

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

© Crown copyright 2003

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special, moderate learning difficulties

School category: Community special school

Age range of pupils: 11 - 16 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Rough Heanor Road
Mickleover
Derby
Derbyshire

Postcode: DE3 9AZ

Telephone number: 01332 511757

Fax number: 01332 519968

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. Walter Lowndes (Acting)

Date of previous inspection: September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1405	Michael McDowell	Registered inspector	Geography, religious education, English as an additional language, Educational inclusion	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9348	Mary Le Mage	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
10781	Robert Thompson	Team inspector	Information and communications technology, design and technology, modern foreign language	Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development
10782	Henry Moreton	Team inspector	Mathematics, music, citizenship	
30142	John Morris	Team inspector	Science, history, physical education, special educational needs	
30559	Jennifer Taylor	Team inspector	English, art	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Chase Russell Limited,
 Winnington Hall,
 Winnington,
 Northwich,
 Cheshire CW8 4DU

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	23
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	24
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St. Clare's is a day, community special school in Mickleover, maintained by the City of Derby LEA. All the pupils have statements of special educational need, (SEN), because of their learning difficulties. About a third also has behavioural difficulties. A small minority has physical difficulties or sensory impairments that are a barrier to learning. A few have autistic spectrum disorder. There are 102 pupils aged between 11 and 16, and the school has capacity for 105. There are 26 girls and 74 boys and the majority is White and predominantly British. The other pupils come from Indian, Pakistani, African or Caribbean families or they have mixed backgrounds. There are no Traveller pupils or refugees. Other than English, Panjabi and Urdu are the predominant home languages but all pupils are English speakers and none is at an early stage of acquiring the English language. On entry to the school, pupils' standards are well below the average for their age. A substantial minority of pupils comes from areas of the city with high levels of social and economic disadvantage.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Clare's is a very effective school. It provides learning opportunities that are good overall and very good for pupils in their final years of schooling. Teaching is good and a substantial minority of lessons is of very good or excellent quality. As a result, after two or three years in the school, pupils achieve very well and by the end of Year 11 most gain creditable grades in the national examinations. Pupils respond very positively to the broad range of opportunities for personal development. The head teacher provides very clear direction and, overall, leadership and management are very good. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection and the school now gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Achievement is good in years 7 and 8 and very good in years 9,10 and 11
- The head teacher provides very clear direction and strong leadership and ensures that the school realises its aims
- Teaching is good with a significant proportion of lessons being of high quality
- The opportunities the school provides for personal development are very good
- Pupils enjoy coming to school, have very positive attitudes to learning and behave very well
- The respect given by pupils to others' feelings, values and beliefs is excellent
- Pupils take responsibility for themselves and others, are fully involved in the school and through the school council have a significant voice in what it offers and what it expects of its pupils
- Relationships between pupils and with those who teach and support them are excellent
- Especially for pupils in years 10 and 11, opportunities for learning and preparing for life after school are very good
- The school cares for its pupils very well and ensures their welfare, health and safety
- The school checks what pupils know, understand and can do very thoroughly, keeps full records and reports their progress and achievement very clearly to parents

What could be improved

- Curriculum leadership in English and literacy is fragmented and this reduces the overall effect it has on raising standards
- Pupils' achievement in years 7,8 and 9 is lower than in years, 10 and 11, when subjects are not taught by the subject leader or a specialist teacher.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved very well since it was last inspected in October 1997. It was left with four matters to improve. It has tackled these issues rigorously. As a result pupils make much better progress in information and communication technology than they did and older pupils now achieve very well in science. Teachers in all subjects plan their lessons better and make use of many different strategies to aid learning. The knowledge and understanding of the requirements of the curriculum in science for pupils in years 9, 10 and 11 are much better. Accommodation has been improved for science and for physical education and there are now regular acts of worship and very good opportunities for spiritual development. In other aspects of its work, including the quality of teaching and learning, the provision of learning opportunities, and the development of specialist teaching provision, there has been a marked improvement.

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	C	B	very good	A
reading	C	B	Good	B
writing	C	B	Satisfactory	C
mathematics	B	A	Unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	B	A	Poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	A		

By the time they are ready to leave school, pupils achieve very well. Pupils build on the good foundations for learning that are laid down in years 7, 8 and 9. By the end of Year 11 almost all have completed courses that lead to nationally recognised examinations and they gain creditable grades. Pupils who have other needs in addition to general learning difficulty make similar very good progress. Pupils make good progress towards the targets in their individual plans. The school achieves the targets it sets for pupils' learning at the end of Year 11. Pupils make sound progress in English at first, but by Year 10 their literacy skills are more firmly established and they make faster progress and achieve well. In mathematics, pupils achieve well in years 7, 8 and 9, but in years, 10 and 11, where there is more specialist teaching, achievement is very good. In science achievement is satisfactory in years 7 and 8 and very good in years 9,10 and 11. Achievement in personal, social and health education is good. Achievement is good in years 7, 8 and 9 in both art and physical education and very good in years 10 and 11. Achievement in citizenship is very good. It is good in design and technology. In music and geography achievement is good and it is satisfactory in history and French. In information and communication technology pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils' achievement in religious education is good in years 7 and 8 and it is very good in years 9, 10 and 11. Pupils in Year 11 do very well in the 'silver challenge' and 'silver award' of the Associated Schools' Direct Accreditation Network, (ASDAN), and achieve outstanding results.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils are enthusiastic about attending school and in most cases try hard to give of their best.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good; pupils behave very well within the classrooms, in moving about the school and during their breaks. The incidence of exclusions is static and low.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent; relationships between all who attend or work in the school are very positive and make a crucial contribution towards the successful learning. Pupils show great maturity in their contributions to school council meetings and in putting forward their own ideas
Attendance	Good; the number of unauthorised absences is falling and is less than at the time of the last inspection. Attendance has improved steadily over the last four years

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good

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

Teaching is effective and enables pupils to learn well; a significant proportion of lessons is of high quality. In those lessons where teaching is very good or better, teachers have a keen understanding of the individual needs of their pupils and carefully set tasks that, while within their capabilities, also challenge and extend their learning. These lessons are well planned and build upon what has previously been taught. Teachers use their excellent relationships with pupils to ensure that they become fully involved in the lesson and learn as well as they can. A wide variety of teaching methods is used and individual pupils are supported effectively by their learning support assistants. Teachers expect that pupils will succeed. They check their work very well and use dialogue very skilfully for this purpose. Pupils are made aware of how well they are succeeding and what they will need to do in order to improve. When teaching captures pupils' interest and their learning needs are met, they work hard in lessons, use the time they are given well and try hard to complete their tasks. On very rare occasions, pupils with significant emotional and behavioural difficulties prevent the teaching of the planned lesson. When this occurs, the chance to make progress or build upon previous learning is lost. While there is a good school policy concerning homework, the opportunity to promote pupils' independent learning skills by home study is not taken as frequently as it should be. The quality of teaching in English is good overall but significantly better for pupils in years 10 and 11 than for younger pupils. Mathematics is taught well to pupils in years 7,8 and 9 and very well to pupils in years 10 and 11. The teaching of science is satisfactory for pupils in years 7 and 8. Teachers' subject knowledge, while adequate, is not as extensive as that of those who teach years 9, 10 and 11. In those years teaching is often very good. Limited use is made of the specialist accommodation and resources in science lessons for younger pupils. Teaching and learning are very good in citizenship and in courses leading to ASDAN 'silver award' and 'silver challenge'. They are good overall in design and technology, geography, and history. In art where there is specialist teaching they are sometimes excellent and overall the quality is good. Teaching and learning is also occasionally excellent in physical education and the quality is good overall. Teaching is satisfactory and promotes sound learning in French. The overall standard of teaching and learning in religious education is high. It is at its best when teaching is informed by specialist knowledge of the subject. Personal social and health education is taught well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good; pupils are given a full range of learning opportunities. For those in years 10 and 11 the opportunity to follow examination courses and the excellent opportunities to prepare for life beyond school make the curriculum very good.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good; for older pupils in particular, the citizenship programme contributes very strongly to social development. A range of other structures including the school council support this too. Moral development is firmly grounded in the school's code of conduct to which pupils contribute their ideas. Pupils are strongly encouraged to think of others and to value and respect their beliefs.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good; what each pupil achieves is accurately assessed and clearly recorded. The health, safety and welfare of pupils is very well safeguarded.

The school makes considerable efforts to work in partnership with parents and to inform them about their children's progress and achievements. Pupils are drawn from across a wide geographical area and this limits parents' opportunities to become directly involved within the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Very good; the head teacher leads the school very well and plans and clearly communicates the educational direction it must take. Staff, including those with additional responsibilities, share her commitment to the provision of high quality education.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory; the governors maintain oversight of the school's curriculum and finances, conduct regular meetings and have adopted the committee structure now required. They have been disadvantaged in their work by the failure of the Local Education Authority to nominate governors.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good; through its well- developed performance management strategy the school maintains oversight of the quality of teaching and learning. Targets for pupil achievement in Years 8 and 10 are set, that form benchmarks against which overall school performance is measured.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory; there are sufficient qualified teachers to meet the requirements of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils. Resources are satisfactory in quality and quantity. Accommodation is cramped and limited. Resources, including staff are deployed well. Subject expertise is well used in most cases. However, there is an inefficient duplication of leadership in English and literacy. The school compares its performance with that of other local provision. In order to achieve the best possible value from its resources this process should be widened. More could be done to compare pupils' progress with that of similar pupils elsewhere.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school expects their child to do their best and to succeed The school is approachable if they have a problem or a question The school is well led and managed 	<p>A minority felt that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There was insufficient homework The school did not provide enough activities outside of lessons

The inspectors' findings support the positive views of parents; they also agree that attention should be given to making sure that the policy for giving homework is consistently carried out. They disagree with the minority of parents who felt that there are too few activities provided outside of lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In Year 7, which, for the majority, is their first in the school, pupils start to develop good learning habits and to respond to the planned lessons that are a feature of most subjects. By Year 9, they have benefited from teaching, which is, chiefly, good, and the effective support they are given. They make good progress and achieve well. Their progress, particularly in important areas such as mathematics and science, accelerates as they move up through the school and they receive a greater proportion of their lessons from specialist teachers. By the end of Year 11 achievement is very good. This is a substantial improvement since the last inspection, which reported that progress was satisfactory or better across the age range.
2. By the end of Year 11 almost all pupils have successfully completed courses for nationally recognised examinations. They gain grades that are much better than expected and which are, in some cases, good in comparison to those achieved, nationally, by pupils of similar age. As well as having general learning difficulties, a significant proportion of the pupils have other special educational needs that present a barrier to learning. However, these pupils, similarly, make good progress in years 7, 8 and 9 and very good progress in years 10 and 11. Pupils make good progress towards the targets in literacy and numeracy that are set for them in their individual plans. The school sets overall targets for the outcomes of pupils' learning by the end of Year 11. Over the past two years these targets have been met.
3. In English and the establishment of literacy skills, pupils in years 7, 8 and 9 make steady progress at first and their achievement is satisfactory. By Year 10 and Year 11 their literacy skills are more firmly established and they make faster progress; their achievements are good. While they reach different standards, there is no significant difference in achievement between pupils of very different capabilities. Pupils by Year 9 have developed sufficient confidence to hold conversations with adults. They offer clear explanations about their work and ask and answer questions appropriately. They enjoy reading and are willing to read aloud from textbooks or worksheets in different kinds of lessons. A minority of pupils is fluent and has a good understanding of the text. They make effective use of their knowledge of letters to sound out new words. Most are willing but less accomplished readers and need adult support to read unfamiliar words. Similarly in writing, while all write simple sentences with capital letters and full stops, higher attaining pupils are more assured in their spelling and spell familiar words correctly.
4. By Year 11, pupils' speaking and listening skills have developed well. They contribute to discussion and in lessons they speak clearly and empathetically about characters in books that they read. They make good contributions when they are required to report their reading experiences or share their preferences. They contribute well in discussions in careers or personal, social and health education lessons. The quality of the oral contribution of older pupils to the work of the school council is high. Pupils write for a wide

range of purposes. The written work in the pupils' work folders for the ASDAN Silver Award and Challenge, for example, contains well-written diaries of work experience. These are presented very neatly, are accurate in spelling and punctuation, carefully constructed, and thoughtful.

5. In mathematics, pupils achieve well in years 7, 8 and 9. They develop their practical skills in taking measurements and telling time and improve their understanding of processes such as multiplication and their accuracy in simple calculation. By year 9, pupils know the characteristics of two-dimensional shapes and identify lines of symmetry in them.
6. In years 10 and 11, there is a greater measure of specialist teaching, and this is reflected in pupils' achievement, which is very good. All pupils make as much progress as can be expected in the use of money, calculating costs and giving change. They are familiar with fractional numbers and express these accurately as percentages. They are beginning to understand probability and they make good accurate use of calculators. Their very good progress in numeracy is confirmed through the progress tests pupils take each term in years 7 to 10. At the end of Year 11 pupils are entered for the OCR, (Oxford, Cambridge and Royal society of Arts), Entry Level Certificate in mathematics. In 2002 almost all gained this award.
7. In science there is satisfactory achievement in years 7 and 8 and very good achievement in years 9,10 and 11. The difference in achievement is largely attributable to the fact that older pupils have more access to specialist teaching and resources than younger pupils. The quality of science teaching is markedly better from Year 9 to Year 11. The good teaching they receive in Year 9 leads to faster progress so that by the end of their first three years of secondary education, despite an uncertain start, their achievement is good. They have kept good records on many topics that reflect the diversity of the work they have done. This is well presented and neat and shows that they understand much of what they have been taught. By age 16, pupils are achieving very well and they work hard to gain success in the Edexcel Entry Level science examination. They are on course to gain creditable grades. In 2002 almost all pupils who were entered for the examination passed it well, some with gold awards.
8. Achievement in personal, social and health education is good for all pupils and the additional measures that the school takes to promote pupils' independence and awareness leads to very good personal development by the end of Year 11.
9. Achievement is good in years 7, 8 and 9 in art but in Years 10 and 11, in which a very well taught GCSE course is followed achievement is very good. Achievement among younger pupils might be higher still if they had access to the very high quality teaching and the specialist resources made available for older pupils. Each year a significant number of pupils gain good grades in the GCSE, even in comparison with their peers in mainstream schools. Achievement in citizenship is very good. Here the work done by the school in taking part in a pilot programme for the teaching of the subject is paying off. There is consistently good achievement in design and technology where the well-equipped workshop and food preparation area, together with the specialist teaching of the subject leader is available to all.
10. There is good achievement in music and in geography for pupils in years 7, 8 and 9, and satisfactory achievement in history and in French.
11. In information and communication technology pupils of all ages make good progress and achieve well. In physical education achievement from Year 7 to Year 9 is good; thereafter

achievement is very good. Pupils are entered for the OCR Entry Level Certificate that accredits their work in games, gymnastics, swimming and athletics.

12. Pupils' achievement in religious education is good in years 7 and 8 and very good in years 9, 10 and 11, where many pupils obtain good grades in the OCR Entry level Certificate. Pupils in years 10 and 11 prepare for the 'silver challenge' and 'silver award' of the Associated Schools Direct Accreditation Network (ASDAN). This involves elements of work within subjects such as mathematics art and design and design and technology together with a structured approach to work related learning and work experience. It also reflects pupils' interests in leisure pursuits and the wider community. Their achievement is outstanding largely because of the high quality of teaching and support they receive. All pupils gain either the silver challenge or the silver award. Throughout the age range and in all subjects there are no significant differences in achievement between girls and boys or by pupils from different ethnic groups.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. The pupils' attitudes to school are very positive. Their behaviour in and around the building and while outside for lessons or on visits is very good and this is a notable improvement since the last inspection when attitudes, behaviour and personal development were considered to be 'mostly satisfactory'. This improvement is closely linked to the increasingly good provision the school makes for moral and social development. Despite the presence of a number of pupils who have emotional, social and behavioural difficulties, the school has a calm and settled atmosphere and relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Pupils benefit from the school 'code of conduct' being implemented consistently across the school.
14. Pupils respect one another and are tolerant of others' views and opinions. These positive attitudes owe much to the personal and social education programme, citizenship lessons, and the work they do in religious education. Pupils are mostly highly motivated by their work and find it stimulating and absorbing. They have very positive relationships with each other and with their teachers. In most lessons they respond to the teaching that they receive with enthusiasm.
15. The behaviour of pupils in the playground and in the dining hall at lunchtime is very good. Staff apply the school code of conduct very effectively and pupils know what is expected of them. Individual teachers help pupils understand the difference between right and wrong. Pupils are very polite and well mannered as they move around the school and are courteous to visitors. For example, at lunch-time they greet visitors, offer to sit beside them, fetch their dinners and clear up their plates after lunch. The pupils' ability to interact positively with visitors is in part due to the success of the schools' very good promotion of the social use of language and communication.
16. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are very good. It was noticeable how pleased pupils were when they arrived at school and were greeted individually at the entrance by their classroom staff. The high level of co-operation among pupils is a result of the school's very good provision for their social development. Pupils showed very good relationships during lunch-time clubs, such as the 'craft club', where social interaction is as important as the craft element in the club. During the inspection, pupils participated in a special school athletics meeting. One of the inspectors accompanied the pupils. On the way back, one of the pupils said "Thank you for supporting us sir". Their behaviour and politeness were exemplary.

17. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in school are very good. The ethos of the school encourages pupils to become independent. An excellent example of this philosophy is the 'school council'. Many decisions in school are taken through the council; 'Jonathan's Garden', a tribute to a pupil who, sadly, died while still at school, was developed because of pupils' decision reached at the school council. At one of their meetings during the inspection week, pupils questioned the length of the morning session. They thought the morning was too long. The head teacher promised to investigate their concern and report back to the council.
18. Pupils feel valued by the school and trust the staff. This helps to foster good responses to work and improve behaviour. Pupils work in an atmosphere that is free from oppressive behaviour and where there is an absence of bullying. Although the level of exclusions from school remains static rather than declining, this is largely the result of the school being willing to offer a place to pupils who are known to have behavioural difficulties. Records show that exclusions are chiefly attributable to a small group of boys.
19. Pupils in the school do much work for others less fortunate than themselves. For example, they make up food parcels for distribution to homeless people and collect for charities such as Women and Orphans in Peru, The Children's Leukaemia Society, Red Nose Day, UNICEF and many more. This emphasis on giving to others has a very positive effect on pupils' personal development.
20. Attendance at the school is good. While absence figures are just in line with schools of a similar type nationally, the attendance figures are distorted by the positive steps to promote inclusion that the school is willing to take. The school takes on some pupils who would, otherwise, be excluded from formal education. It is necessary in the first instance that these pupils attend part-time. While this is preferable to their not receiving schooling at all, this arrangement increases the school's absence rate and it does not comply with statutory requirements. Attendance at the school has improved steadily over the last three years and is also showing continuing improvement in the current year. The rate of unauthorised absence has fallen steadily over the same period. The questionnaires completed for the inspection indicate clearly that pupils enjoy school and want to attend.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

21. Teaching is good overall and effective in enabling pupils to learn well. More than a quarter of lessons observed was of a high quality. In just under half of the remainder the quality was good. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory. This is a marked improvement since the last inspection in which one-tenth of lessons was judged to be unsatisfactory and there was a much smaller proportion of high quality teaching.
22. In lessons in which teaching was very good or excellent the teachers were clearly expert in their subject and knew the curriculum requirements very well. This enabled them to approach their lessons with confidence and assurance. In the best lessons this keen understanding of purpose was linked to very good, detailed knowledge of the individual needs of their pupils, their learning characteristics, and their present capabilities. Pupils' particular needs arising from gender or ethnic group are recognised, understood and well met. This solid foundation enabled the teachers to anticipate pupils' needs and reactions, use a range of effective strategies to manage their behaviour and also challenge them to extend their learning. The best lessons in all subjects are well planned and build upon what has previously been taught. Teachers in these lessons make use of the very good relationships they have with pupils to ensure that they become fully involved and learn as well as they can. Where teaching is strongest, a wide variety of teaching methods is used

and individual pupils are effectively supported in the classroom, by learning support assistants. Teachers expect that pupils will succeed. They check carefully to see that pupils understand their work. Teachers often use general question and answer sessions and dialogue with individual pupils very skilfully. Pupils know how well they are succeeding and what they will need to do in order to improve. In all instances, when the teaching captures pupils' interest and steps are taken to anticipate their emotional, social and learning needs they work hard, use the time they are given to the full and try hard to complete their tasks.

23. These excellent qualities in teaching and learning were very clearly illustrated in a religious education lesson for pupils in Year 7. The class included more than one pupil with behavioural difficulties. The teacher was confident in his subject knowledge and planned a variety of interesting activities to secure pupils' attention and help them remember the main point of the lesson which was to learn and remember the symbol used by the Sikh faith for 'One God'. The teacher's confident, open and friendly manner conveyed clearly to the pupils that they were expected to try hard and that they would succeed. Skilfully, the teacher saw the potentially most troublesome pupil co-operating well at the start of the lesson. He praised him for this and challenged him to build on what he had achieved. This had the desired motivational effect. The teacher kept an eye on this pupil but ignored minor misdemeanours very well so that he was not constantly, criticising him. The pupils all showed great enthusiasm when the learning task was presented as a code breaking game; it caught their imagination. It was also clear from the answers that pupils gave to questions about previous learning that the teaching they had received in the past had been very effective.
24. The shortcomings in lessons relate to two major causes. Some lessons are taught by non-specialist teachers. In most instances where this happens, the flair and confidence that characterise teaching in the best lessons are missing. While lesson objectives remain clear and explicit in most instances, on occasions the range of activities used to achieve these is dull and lacks challenge. Sometimes the chosen tasks drain the subject of the lesson of its potential to be stimulating. For example the choice of the poem 'The Highwayman' as the subject of a Year 9 lesson, is potentially exciting but any thrilling language-enriching potential that enjoying this poem might present was lost beyond recall when the task resolved itself into filling in missing words on a worksheet. Besides subject confidence, the other shortcoming in teaching is class management.
25. On one occasion, pupils with significant emotional and behavioural difficulties made the teaching of the planned lesson impracticable. When this occurred, the pupils in the class were unable to benefit from the lesson planned for them and the chance to make progress or build upon previous learning was lost.
26. Homework is given and noted down in pupils' homework diaries but this is not done consistently and parents are unsure about how much homework is given. While there is a good school policy concerning the setting of homework, in practice, the opportunity to promote pupils' independent learning skills by setting some is not taken as frequently as it should be.
27. The quality of teaching in English is good overall but is better for pupils in years 10 and 11 than for younger pupils where lessons tend to be satisfactory rather than good. In lessons for older pupils there is a good range of activities and the sensible practice of drafting and refining written work was established. In some good lessons the learning support assistants provide a vital link for pupils with hearing impairment, signing when necessary to reinforce spoken instructions.

28. The teaching of mathematics is good in years 7,8 and 9 and prompts good progress. In years 10 and 11, however teaching is of even higher quality and is very good. This is chiefly because of teacher expertise but also because of the focus given to teaching and learning by the syllabuses for externally accredited courses and increasing emphasis on learning mathematics for real-life situations.
29. The teaching of science is satisfactory for pupils in years 7 and 8 where the shortcomings sometimes relate to teachers' confidence in teaching the subject and sometimes to the limited use being made of the specialist accommodation and resources in science lessons for younger pupils. For pupils in years 9,10 and 11, science is expertly taught and pupils' learning prompts high levels of examination success.
30. Teaching and learning are very good in citizenship and in courses leading to ASDAN silver award and silver challenge. They are good, overall in design and technology, in which specialist teaching is offered to pupils across the age range. Teaching is very good in geography, and good overall in history. In art, when lessons are given by a teacher with specialist knowledge of the subject, teaching and learning are sometimes excellent and, overall, the quality is good. Teaching and learning is also occasionally excellent in physical education and the quality is good overall. Teaching is satisfactory and promotes sound learning in French. The overall standard of teaching and learning in religious education is high. It is at its best when teaching is informed by specialist knowledge of the subject. Personal social and health education is taught well.

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

31. There has been steady development since the last inspection when the curriculum was reported to be 'broad and balanced' and to meet both the needs of the pupils and the requirements of the National Curriculum. The last inspection also reported that the curriculum met requirements by providing pupils with religious education, sex education and guidance about drugs. The good careers guidance and education given was held to be a significant strength. There were, however, too few activities provided outside of the classroom. The strengths then identified remain and the school has rectified the lack of extra-curricular provision in several ways including the provision of many lunch time clubs.
32. The curriculum is now good. A full range of learning opportunities is provided that is both relevant to the pupils' needs and fully meets statutory requirements. The school has developed a learning environment in which pupils are encouraged to try to do their best. It takes care to ensure that the activities and learning experiences that it offers are wholly appropriate to the age of the pupils. Pupils with additional special educational needs have access to the same, full range of lessons and opportunities as all others and these are made accessible to them by adapting the ways in which they are taught and presented. However, the number of individual special teaching and management programmes for the many pupils with speech and communication problems has been reduced since the reorganisation of the local authority Speech and Language Service. Pupils who need speech and language support are given help through group activities led by school staff members, who are advised by speech and language therapists. For most this arrangement is effective. Lessons are planned so as to ensure that tasks set are well matched to pupils' attainment levels. The planning of courses within subjects is structured to ensure that what is learned initially is extended and built upon. This helps to lead pupils onward to the achievement of success in nationally recognised examinations. The school involves its pupils in developing and enriching its stimulating learning environment and this helps them to become more self-reliant and confident.

33. The school is familiar with the approach to the teaching of literacy skills required by the National Literacy Strategy and has adapted this soundly to make it more useful for pupils with special educational needs. Similarly, the school has modified the National Numeracy Strategy to match the content better to pupils' needs. The effectiveness of these aspects of the provision is monitored by tracking the progress of pupils. The learning opportunities planned for all pupils, including those with additional barriers to learning such as sensory impairments, physical disabilities or emotional and behavioural difficulties are good. Inclusion of pupils with additional needs is promoted well. During the school assembly there is very good signing for pupils with hearing impairments to support the use of phonic mike transmitters. The transmitters are used very effectively within lessons. In physical education there is excellent support for pupils by staff and peers. This support enables pupils to gain confidence to take an active role and improve their personal performance.
34. Overall, provision for the older pupils is more fully developed and even better than that for pupils in the first three years which is good, nevertheless. The curriculum for year 10 and 11 pupils is very good. Its strength is in its relevance and in the preparation it gives pupils for adult life. For Year 11 pupils, opportunities include work experience and college links. The emphasis is well directed at developing independence skills. Pupils are encouraged to make their own way to and from their college and work experience venues. However, for those not as independent, appropriate support is provided in their work experience placements, for example transport to and from school. The growing emphasis on the school's Youth Award Schemes makes a significant contribution to the overall development of the curriculum and is encouraging greater independence at an earlier age.
35. A further positive feature of the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is that pupils follow courses that lead to examinations and having their work accredited by national examination boards. Opportunities for accreditation are extensive and exist at several levels so that pupils of all capabilities have access to a range of courses suitable to their specific needs. In art and design, for example, all pupils are entered for the GCSE. Pupils have the chance to obtain nationally accredited certification in all core subjects and many other subjects through the Certificate of Achievement.
36. Pupils' access to and use of information and communication technology is developing in line with the school action plan and it is used more and more in all areas of the curriculum. Learning opportunities in some subjects are, however, slightly diminished by weaknesses in the accommodation. This is particularly the case in science and art. Similarly the library is situated so that it is in effect a thoroughfare and is often used as an area for those pupils who need to be temporarily withdrawn from lessons, a teaching space for individual pupils and a base for the speech and language therapists. This has some impact on its usefulness as a resource to promote the independent learning skills of pupils.
37. Specific citizenship lessons have been introduced effectively for Year 7, 8, 9 and 11 pupils and elements of citizenship are identified in all subjects. These elements are most prominent in English, history and religious education. Lessons for personal, social and health education are timetabled for all classes. The range of topics and activities offered in PSHE is good and there are plans to develop these further. Careers education is good and is supported well by the Careers Education Advisor and the Connexions Personal Advisor. The preparation of pupils to move on to the next phase of their education is greatly enhanced by the good links with local colleges of further education and the Education Business Partnership.

38. The curriculum that takes place outside of the classroom is also good. It includes lunch-time clubs for activities such as needlework, craft, drama, health and beauty and origami. In addition, there are sporting activities and competitive fixtures with other schools in football and cricket. The school also hosts a Youth Club that is run by the local Youth Service. The school makes provision for visits to widen the pupils' horizons. Visits have been made to Derby Museum and Art Gallery. There is a joint project with a local group - 'Q' Arts - that promotes art in the community, and this results in pupils' work being displayed in the 'Q' Gallery. Pupils also take part in the local tradition of well-dressing at Derby Cathedral.
39. Opportunities for pupils to develop greater responsibility through the Schools Council and the recent introduction of a prefect system enable pupils to become responsible members of the school and ultimately the community. This is a significant feature of the provision for pupils' personal development that is now very good and much improved since the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory in part with particular weaknesses in opportunities for spiritual and cultural development.
40. Spiritual development is now supported very well. Pupils are encouraged to respect the feelings and beliefs of all others and to celebrate and remember the contribution of special people that they have known. Pupils have built a garden in memory of a pupil who died while attending the school. The well planned curriculum in religious education in particular gives many opportunities for pupils to explore what others believe and to think about what might be beyond the here and now. Provision for social and moral development is very good. Assemblies are used very well to promote the social cohesiveness of the school community and organisations such as the school council give pupils practical experience in playing a part in a social structure. Provision for social development is also made through the personal, social and health education and citizenship programmes and this is very good. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They are helped to understand the principles that underlie moral decision making by the consistent example provided by the adults who work within the school and by the careful counselling of pupils who overstep the mark. A strong contribution to the good provision now made for pupils' cultural development arises from the curriculum, especially in art, music and religious education and to a lesser extent English.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school places high priority on the care it provides for its pupils and this aspect of the work of the school has improved since the time of the last inspection. The school is an environment where pupils feel safe, secure and valued. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good. Staff know the pupils well and are responsive to their needs. Pupils are happy at school and want to be there. Pupils' good attendance is a high priority for the school and is monitored carefully. First day absences without explanation are immediately investigated. Child protection and medication policies and procedures are in place, and these are correctly adhered to.
42. The provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is good. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. They are expected to work alongside other pupils and work in groups or independently. Those pupils with additional behavioural difficulties generally respond well to the very good ethos of the school. On occasions when this does not happen, the school deals with incidents appropriately and parents are informed. Everyone is clear, through regular staff meetings, which pupils are in need of additional care. Some pupils have a member of the support staff designated to them to ensure that they join in fully with class activities. Pupils who have more challenging behaviours receive good support through a recently introduced behaviour strategy. The staff, in consultation with

the educational psychology team, have identified a group of pupils who require additional support to manage their own behaviour. In one physical education lesson a pupil causing problems with off task behaviour was given considerable positive support. However, he continued to be disruptive and was taken to a non contact teacher for counselling and an opportunity to calm down. After about ten minutes he returned to the group and took an active part. At the end of the group activity the teacher said, "Well done, ...glad to see you back". This was a clear example of good practice. The school has satisfactory access to a range of support services including the educational psychologist, speech therapist and school doctor. The school nurse visits regularly and is involved in curriculum issues as requested.

43. The procedures for monitoring behaviour across the school are very good and are well implemented by all staff. They are known and respected by the pupils. Even pupils with significant behavioural difficulties frequently offer spontaneous, genuine apologies after incidents. The promotion of desired behaviour in the school is very good as every pupil has an individual behaviour target. Their progress towards this target is monitored. Targets are frequently referred to in lessons. However, the staff are aware that behavioural targets set for pupils are sometimes too broad and training for all staff to address this problem has been planned. The whole open, supportive atmosphere of the school is such that there is very little opportunity for oppressive behaviour to develop, but when it does, it is handled appropriately. The recent addition of 'Bullying Boxes' in the school will further inform the staff of potential difficulties.
44. A very good health and safety policy is in place. It is implemented well by all staff on a day-to-day basis such as the induction of pupils in safety procedures in lessons, particularly design and technology and physical education. Fire drills are normally held termly, at different times of the day, which is good, and they are recorded fully. There are comprehensive risk assessments in place for all areas of the buildings and grounds and for all visits off the school site.
45. Pupils hold regular school council meetings to discuss openly ideas for improving the school. Their ideas and requests are always fully explored by the staff of the school and wherever possible they are implemented. The School Council was instrumental in the original idea, and the specification and development of 'Jonathan's Garden' to commemorate their friend who died whilst a pupil at the school. The assembly areas when pupils arrive at the start of the day were suggested by the School Council. It amends the school Code of Conduct on an annual basis and it has recently been involved in selecting books for the library. The School Council is a major focus in the school, involving all pupils by the way in which it is organised and it has a major influence on the life of the school. This supports pupils in a very direct way, really demonstrating the respect the adults in the school have for the pupils and their ideas. It results in a high level of confidence in the pupils and high self-esteem. The Youth Award Scheme provides very effective support for pupils in years 10 and 11 to be involved in their own learning, working with others, using communication, number and information and communications technology skills and problem solving. Careers guidance is individualised to further enhance pupils' personal and social skills and is successfully linked to some work experience and visits to places of training and employment.
46. Throughout the school good attendance, positive attitudes to behaviour and application to their studies are rewarded by certificates and prizes presented to individual pupils at regular award and achievement assemblies. In addition, whole classes are encouraged to work together for mutual benefit by the class awards system that enables them to work towards a reward of their choice for the whole class when an agreed threshold has been reached.

47. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Assessment data are well used to check pupils' progress. The process of discovering what pupils know, understand and can do begins with an initial examination of pupils' attainment when they enter the school. Teachers analyse the results of assessments in English and mathematics and set realistic targets for individual pupils. These targets are reviewed regularly. This target setting informs the planning of what to teach next. Teachers and pupils examine how much they have learned in plenary sessions held at the end of many lessons. Pupils with special needs, who need different forms of support, are identified early. They are given good support by teachers and classroom assistants. Their progress is monitored closely. By the time pupils leave the school at the age of 16 they have a comprehensive portfolio, which details their academic and non-academic achievements.
48. Procedures for monitoring academic progress are well established. Teachers make extensive use of assessment data, with detailed analyses of pupils' past performance. Each term samples are taken of pupils' assessed work and these are kept in a portfolio. Senior staff monitor these samples. There is regular testing and each year teachers judge pupils' performance against the benchmark of National Curriculum levels of achievement. However, not all progress shows up when such a broad measure is used. Schoolwork is marked regularly and pointers for improvements are given in the pupils' books but insufficient use is made of measures such as the P-scales to monitor the small steps in learning that pupils characteristically make and which show clearly what has been gained over time. Annual reports on pupils' progress clearly indicate how well they have done and these reports are of a very high standard.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. The partnership between the school and the parents of its pupils is very good, as it was at the time of the last inspection and parents are very pleased with the school's provision and achievements. Parents consider St Clare's to be a very good school. The parents' questionnaires completed for the inspection revealed that they are particularly pleased with: the school's high expectations that pupils will behave well and work very hard, the way in which the school receives any questions or problems parents may have, the quality of the leadership and management in the school, the good teaching in the school and the way in which the school helps pupils to become mature and responsible.
50. A small minority of parents expressed concerns about insufficient extra-curricular activities and the amount of homework being set. The inspection fully endorses parents' positive viewpoints and judges extra-curricular activities to be good. Although the inspection found that the school has a very good homework policy, it is not being consistently followed across the school and, therefore, the inspection agrees with parents' concerns in this area.
51. The school has consistent procedures to enable contact and good exchange of information with parents who do not come to school daily due to the majority of pupils being transported to the school by the Local Education Authority. This contact allows parents to have a comfortable and mutually supportive relationship with the school, and the opportunity to give the school additional, relevant information about their child. By the use of the home/school diaries and the termly booklets about what their child is going to be taught, the school has an effective means for parents to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. However, inspection of the diaries showed very few parents take the opportunity to enter into a dialogue with the school, although most diaries are signed regularly by parents. The number of parents who help in the school is very low and across the school the contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is satisfactory.

The school receives support from parents and friends when fund raising. Overall, the impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good.

52. Information to parents through written reports and annual reviews is very good. Parents receive clear information on progress as part of the review of pupil's individual education plans. Pupils' work in all subjects is reported annually and in great depth, to parents. Whole school information for parents contained in the prospectus and the Governors' Annual Report for Parents is pleasantly presented and informative, but some statutory information is omitted. For example, the governors' report does not contain an account of the school budget nor does it report the progress made by the school against school improvement targets and the targets set by the OFSTED action plan.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. When last inspected, the leadership and management of the school were found to be satisfactory. The head teacher had coherent plans to improve standards and the school was making progress towards the realisation of its objectives. There was sound leadership of the curriculum but co-ordinators were not as fully involved in promoting the highest standards as they should have been, by, for example, monitoring teaching in their subjects. There has been significant improvement in the overall quality of leadership. It is now very good and in most subjects co-ordinators promote standards well.
54. The head teacher leads the school very well and is certain about the educational direction it must take if it is to continue to develop and improve on the high standard she has already set. She has taken steps to develop her own skills and practice through relevant and demanding professional courses. She perceives her own qualities accurately. She communicates her views effectively and inspires confidence in those who work at the school by placing a high priority on acknowledging their contributions. As a consequence, their self-belief is strongly supported and this enables them to work more confidently and successfully. They fully share her commitment to the provision of high quality education.
55. Those who have specific responsibilities within the curriculum or for other aspects of the school carry these out well. For historical reasons, however, the co-ordination of English and literacy is divided amongst three teachers and, while all try hard to play their part, this duplication blunts the edge of leadership in this vital area and, unnecessarily, complicates the task of managing the subject.
56. The aims of the school are realised, very fully, in all aspects of its work. Pupils are strongly encouraged to achieve as much as they can and, over the years since the last inspection, the range of opportunities for pupils to have their work examined and acknowledged by external bodies has greatly increased. The means by which pupils' personal development is supported have also been increased in both range and effectiveness. The school acknowledges that pupils' views, about the education that they are receiving, are very important, and it has developed effective structures to sound these out and to act upon them when necessary. The School Council plays a genuine role in shaping the school's approach to matters such as the learning experiences that the school should offer and how the management of behaviour should be approached.
57. In order to set realistic targets for school performance, the progress of individual pupils and the overall achievements of groups are both monitored by the school. A programme of testing and re-testing is in place to check progress in literacy and numeracy. However, because pupils learn slowly as a result of their special educational needs, it is important to use a means of measuring attainment and judging progress that will clearly show the small but significant gains that are made. The school is not doing enough to measure

pupils' progress in small steps. The national scale for measuring the progress of slower learning pupils within the National Curriculum is the P-Scales. These scales are used to some extent by the school. However, full value is not yet extracted from the opportunity the P-Scales provide, to compare the progress of groups of pupils year on year within the school, or with the performance of pupils with similar levels and needs elsewhere in the country. In order to be assured that the school is offering as much as possible to its pupils such comparisons should be made. Where it is possible to make comparisons with similar schools nationally, for example in the matter of average points score in GCSE for pupils in Year 11, the school is seen to be achieving well.

58. The school improvement plan is very thorough. It sets priorities for development in pupil achievement, the curriculum, leadership and management, and the site and premises. The current phase of the plan plots developments from 2002 to 2004. The resources needed to make the changes envisaged are carefully identified. The plan is very closely linked to the school's annual budget proposals. It is clear from the improvement plan that the school has itself recognised areas for development similar to those identified by the inspection. In this context, a particularly strong and generally successful element within the plan concerns the means by which effective leadership is developed throughout the school.
59. The governing body has been under strength for too long. A major difficulty has been getting the local education authority to nominate governors. As a result, at the time of the inspection, approximately half of the governing body were employees of the school. This places a great strain on other governors because governors who work at the school are not permitted to be members of some committees. The work of the governors is further hampered by the lack of a substantive chair of governors. The "acting" chair works hard and effectively to fill the breach. Within these limitations the governors do a conscientious and satisfactory job. They meet with sufficient regularity, are familiar to a great extent with the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the challenges it must face and give the head teacher strong support.
60. While the governors are well informed about the standards achieved, they have not sought to compare these with those achieved by similar schools elsewhere. Because they do not do this, they are unable, fully, to carry out their duty to challenge the leaders of the school to do even better.
61. With the exception of the difficulty arising from the part -time attendance of a very small number of pupils, the governors ensure that the school fully meets all statutory requirements. The school's finances are carefully controlled. The proposed annual budget is drawn up by the head teacher and thoroughly discussed with governors before being approved by them. Expenditure is regularly monitored to ensure that it remains within agreed bounds.
62. The school has coped very well with pressures arising from the vagaries of funding by the local authority to provide resources to meet the needs of those pupils who have additional learning needs, such as hearing impairment or emotional and behavioural difficulties. To meet these special needs the school is required to provide individual learning support from the time the pupil enters the school. However, the additional funding due is paid only retrospectively, at the end of the financial year, and sometimes for technical reasons is not paid at all. This places an unnecessary strain on the school budget that might well have an adverse impact on standards.
63. The efficient bursar and the administrative staff support the work of the school very well. Good use is made of new technology to ensure that all personal, educational and financial

records are kept accurately and up to date. Financial procedures are well developed and effective.

64. There is a satisfactory number and match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. All staff work very well as a dedicated, enthusiastic and hardworking team. They are committed to providing the best they can for all pupils. The school ethos is reinforced through the positive way that visitors are welcomed into the school by the administration staff. Arrangements for the induction and support of newly qualified and newly appointed teachers are appropriate. The weaknesses in staffing that were identified at the last inspection, notably in the teaching of science in years 10 and 11, have been successfully addressed. There is a well-developed strategy for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching through which targets for development are set.
65. The accommodation is satisfactory. Careful attention to the grounds, the provision of social areas, and the well-sized playing fields all enhance the school's facilities. The school site is very well maintained and cleaned to a high standard. The quality of art displays around the school, in classrooms and corridors reflects pupils' high standards of work. Since the last inspection several improvements have taken place. The weaknesses in accommodation for both science and art have been addressed. Experimentation and investigative work can now take place in science. There is now an art room that contributes to the very high standards of pupils' work. Problems remain with the small library and the main hall. They are both used as thoroughfares and for several purposes. The difficulties in parking are unresolved. There is still no specialist music room but this is not affecting standards because of the very good leadership and management of the subject leader. In spite of the very cramped conditions in some classrooms and around the school, the staff provide a very good standard of education.
66. Learning resources are satisfactory overall. The weaknesses in science, music, history and geography, identified at the time of the last inspection, have all been successfully addressed. Resources for information and communications technology have significantly improved. Resources for literacy and numeracy have been improved to enable the staff to teach both national strategies appropriately. While the books in the library are satisfactory in terms of quantity and quality, it is not used as a resource to support pupils' independent learning and research activities. Because the school is very effective in meeting the special educational needs of pupils and enabling them to gain in confidence and achieve very well, it gives very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

67. In order to continue to develop and improve the quality of education it offers to its pupils the governors, head teacher and senior managers should:

- (1) Unify the curriculum leadership in English and literacy so as to heighten its positive impact and raise standards. (Paragraph numbers 55 and 80)
- (2) Raise the achievement of pupils in years 7,8 and 9, by providing, in subjects where this is lacking, more teaching by teachers who specialise in, or lead, the subject, than is presently the case. (Paragraph numbers 1, 6, 7, 9, 24, 27, 29, 30, 91, 96, 147 and 156)

In addition to the issues for improvement outlined above, the governors, when drawing up their action plan in response to this inspection, may wish to consider the following matters that are also referred to in the report:

- Ensure that homework is consistently set in accordance with the school policy for this. (Paragraph numbers 26, 80 and 87)
- Take steps to compare the performance of pupils at the school, in each age range, with that of pupils with similar needs, who are educated elsewhere. (Paragraph numbers 57 and 60)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	66
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	38

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	9	9	30	17	1	0	0
Percentage	13,5	13.5	45.5	26	1.5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	102
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	42

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7*

* None at an early stage of language acquisition

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	8	School data	5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

All pupils are working below the levels required for testing because of their special educational needs.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

At the end of Year 11 all pupils were entered for Entry Level examinations in English, mathematics and science. All reached or exceeded the standard required for the award of a certificate. All pupils were entered for the GCSE examination in art. All gained grades, with two pupils gaining grade B and two gaining grade C. Most pupils were entered for Entry Level certificates in physical education and religious education. In the ASDAN youth award scheme most pupils achieved a bronze or silver award.

Overall, the pupils in Year 11 were more successful in nationally recognised examination and award schemes than their contemporaries in similar schools elsewhere.

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	84	57	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	4	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	1	1	0
Black or Black British – African	2	1	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	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)	13.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.4
Average class size	11

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	325

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/2003
	£
Total income	882,391
Total expenditure	917,924
Expenditure per pupil	8,999
Balance brought forward from previous year	47,466
Balance carried forward to next year	11,933

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.4
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	102
Number of questionnaires returned	46

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65.2	26.1	4.3	4.3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45.7	39.1	6.5	0	8.7
Behaviour in the school is good.	45.7	37.0	6.5	2.2	8.7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19.6	41.3	21.7	8.7	8.7
The teaching is good.	60.9	30.4	4.3	0	4.3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60.9	28.3	8.7	0	2.2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73.9	21.7	2.2	0	2.2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69.6	28.3	0	0	2.2
The school works closely with parents.	60.9	26.1	8.7	0	4.3
The school is well led and managed.	67.4	23.9	2.2	0	6.5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60.9	30.4	4.3	0	4.3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45.7	28.3	13.0	4.3	8.7

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

ENGLISH

68. After a steady start in years 7, 8 and 9, progress accelerates and pupils in years 10 and 11 achieve well. These standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
69. By the end of Year 9, most pupils respond in simple sentences to questions from adults and ask pertinent questions of their own. They read with accuracy, though not all are fluent readers. Many pupils, nevertheless, enjoy the opportunity to read aloud to their classmates. They try hard but tend to rely on adult help when they come across unfamiliar words. All identify and can discuss the main elements in stories they hear or read. A minority are fluent and expressive readers who use strategies such as 'sounding out' the letters to read unknown words with considerable confidence.
70. Most pupils write clearly and legibly in print form and make appropriate use of capital letters and full stops. A minority have further punctuation skills and spell familiar words accurately.
71. By Year 11, most pupils talk with some confidence about their work. They listen well and contribute to discussion. Good oral skills were heard when a group of older pupils engaged in a discussion about the story of Anne Frank. They empathised with the life of the Frank family during the World War 2, expressing their views about the evils of racism and the persecution of the Jews. In this lesson the pupils' work in English made a good contribution to their spiritual and moral education.
72. A high proportion of pupils read with fluency and expression. Most pupils show enjoyment and growing confidence in their reading. They understand much of what they read from texts adapted from well-known novels, for example 'A Kestrel for a Knave'. They sound out words that are unfamiliar. They know appropriate terms such as 'novel' and predict successfully the next event in a story read within the group. A minority produce paragraphs of independent writing and develop stories and they all write for a range of purposes including film reviews and character studies, for example from the Dickens' story with which they were familiar, 'A Christmas Carol'. Most write formal letters well. For some pupils throughout the age range use is made of additional means of communication. They use pictures and symbols to make choices and they copy sentences accurately. All pupils have opportunity to compose poems. This skill develops from identifying simple rhyming words such as 'bin and thin' to older, more able pupils writing more sophisticated verse, which shows good progress.
73. The school is implementing suitable parts of the National Literacy Strategy to structure the teaching of reading and writing for all pupils. The strategy provides an effective structure for planning the teaching of literacy skills and a context for checking and recording progress. There are daily literacy lessons that are satisfactory or good, for all pupils, and teaching and learning concentrate on the development of basic reading and writing skills. All pupils have clear targets for reading, writing, speaking and listening as part of their individual education plans. Pupils in Years 10 and 11, successfully follow a course leading to the Entry Level, Certificate of Achievement award. In 2002 all pupils who were entered passed the examination. Those in Year 11 are on course to achieve similar success.

74. Most teaching and learning in English is good with some very good examples. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this very well to the benefit of their pupils. The National Literacy Strategy framework gives effective structure to the best lessons.
75. In lessons that are satisfactory rather than good, elements of the lesson structure recommended by the National Literacy Strategy are omitted. The most frequent omission is the concluding plenary session that should provide pupils with the opportunity to review what they have learnt and how they could improve their work. This means that the teacher does not check on pupils' understanding and point the way ahead for the next lesson.
76. Many English lessons do, however, make profitable use of other parts of the recommended lesson structure particularly in providing an introduction to the lesson for the whole class, and following this with individual or small group tasks. Very good use is made of questioning to challenge pupils and ensure all are included in the oral part of the lesson.
77. There are high expectations of achievement and behaviour and these pay off in the very good attitudes and efforts made by pupils. All pupils benefit from the skilful support of classroom assistants. Overall, very good relationships between adults and pupils are evident in all classes. Staff use the school's system of positive behaviour management effectively and this works for the majority of pupils. However the small minority of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties sometimes need to be withdrawn from lessons, although the amount of time lost is kept to a minimum. As a result of the good teaching they receive, most pupils develop confidence in their abilities and are enthusiastic about learning. This in turn prompts them to work even harder and listen even more attentively to their teachers. Pupils' desire to learn is very positive but teachers do not always share the learning objectives for the lesson with them so they the pupils can measure the rate of their own learning.
78. Provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is good. However, whilst the provision specified in the pupils' statements of special educational needs is made, the targets transferred to the pupils' individual education plans are sometimes too broad. For example, 'to develop basic academic skills'. This makes it difficult for staff to make full use of targets in their lesson plans or as a benchmark against which to measure pupils' progress.
79. Pupils' work is monitored and checked. There are good systems in place to monitor progress. Assessments are made bi-annually and the results are analysed to identify areas that need further support and to check progress. Targets are set based on this analysis for both individual pupils and particularly the literacy groups. Focus for additional support is reviewed to take account of pupils thought to be underachieving. Results are recorded in the pupils' individual profile. These procedures help to make sure that the work offered meets the pupils' needs and is within their capabilities.
80. There are in effect three co-ordinators for English, one being allocated responsibility solely for Literacy. This arrangement does not lend itself to clear subject guidance and management. The leadership provided by the co-ordinators is satisfactory. They support teaching and learning in the subject by identifying priorities for development based on evidence about the standards achieved in the subject. The co-ordinators have implemented the National Literacy Strategy and satisfactorily adapted it to match the needs of the pupils. There are policies for both English and Literacy which indicate that Literacy will focus on the technical aspects of the language such as spelling and grammar, and that English will address the more creative and imaginative elements,

such as the study of texts like 'The Highwayman'. This separation is unhelpful. There are no formal, planned links with other areas of the curriculum that would enable pupils to develop their basic skills further. Some use is made of homework but this useful tool for developing pupils' independent learning skills is given insufficient prominence. It is a shortcoming that some of the English lessons for younger pupils are planned when it is unlikely that they will be at their most attentive or productive, for example the last two lessons on Friday afternoon.

81. The library is situated in the lower school and is between two classrooms. This thoroughfare is used for small group and individual teaching, a withdrawal area for those pupils who need to leave the classroom to regain their composure and for the weekly visit of the speech and language therapists. This reduces the time it can be used for research and independent learning particularly for older pupils. This means that pupils do not have independent access to reading material in a central library, which adversely affects their personal development. During the course of the inspection the library was used on several occasions as an additional teaching space, which reduces its access for library-skills work. There is a limited range of books available. They include some traditional and contemporary children's fiction and some non-fiction texts. There are books about other countries and cultures including a small number of bi-lingual texts. Many library books are worn and unappealing to the pupils.
82. Recently the school council suggested titles of books they would like in the library and many have now been purchased. Library books are not classified according to a recognised system. A positive feature, however, is that, in all classes, there is a book box that contains various forms of reading material that interest pupils, including travel brochures and magazines. There is a wide range of dictionaries from simple colour coded ones to comprehensive adult dictionaries.

MATHEMATICS

83. Provision in mathematics is very good. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. The school is doing particularly well in adding value to pupils' attainment by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 11. Most pupils achieve very well in a wide range of nationally validated numeracy examinations, including in an adult numeracy qualification. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress in Years 10 and 11, and good progress in Years 7, 8 and 9. Pupils are very well prepared for the world of work or further education. Inspection evidence shows that standards are rising.
84. In Year 7 the less able pupils know that on a metre tape the 'M' represents metres and that the large number next to this is the number of metres indicated. The more able pupils read centimetres to metres on a tape correctly. In Year 8 the less able pupils understand that multiplication is the same as repeated addition. In Year 9 pupils know the divisions of time, including the 24 hour clock. They investigate the number of lines of symmetry in a two-dimensional shape. In Year 10 pupils solve problems with money; they add items and give change from £5 and £10. In Year 11 the less able pupils add and subtract coins to the value of one pound. They find the total cost of items from a shopping list, and play money 'games' using dice and coins. The more able pupils position the chance of an event happening on a probability line. They are able to express the probability of an event happening as a ratio and as a percentage. They work out the probability of throwing a six from one die, two sixes from two dice, three sixes from three dice, and so on. They use calculators accurately.

85. Teaching is very good overall. It is always at least satisfactory and frequently very good. The best teaching is in Years 10 and 11 and is characterised by high expectation, effective methods and excellent relationships. The teachers focus on the type of mathematics that is relevant to adult life. This, combined with good subject knowledge, detailed planning and pupils' enthusiasm to learn, explains the very good progress made by the time the pupils leave the school. In one Year 11 lesson, the teacher made the topic on probability both interesting and easy. The explanation was clear and well pitched, with the classroom assistant making telling contributions. This meant that all pupils followed the content and none were left behind. The same teacher, in another Year 11 lesson, used the accommodation available so that pupils could work collaboratively, with support as necessary. By using the National Lottery as an exemplar, all pupils were able to see the relevance of the subject matter. Most pupils enjoy their mathematics, listen very well in lessons and work co-operatively together. Since the last inspection, teachers continue to use the National Numeracy Strategy well, and assessment of pupils' work remains a strong feature.
86. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the development of mathematics in the school. The weaknesses in resources identified at the last inspection have been successfully addressed. There is a very good assessment system in place, which tracks closely the progress of all pupils, addressing the termly targets set in each pupil's individual education plan. The regular and accurate assessment of individual pupils measures how well they are doing. Numeracy progress tests are taken by all pupils in Years 7 to 10 to measure their progress towards the key numeracy objectives set out in the National Numeracy Framework. Additionally, each term a piece of numeracy work is assessed and placed in each pupil's portfolio. This means that in Year 11 they are entered for external accreditation when they are ready, so enabling their self-esteem to be raised. The quality of the documentation to support the action planning in the subject is very good.
87. Currently homework is not used enough to develop pupils' independence as learners and they do not have enough opportunities to evaluate their own work. For the higher attaining pupils the school should consider entry for the Standardised Assessment Tests at the age of 14 and GCSE at the age of 16.

SCIENCE

88. By the age of 16, progress and achievement, in science are very good. This is a significant improvement on the previous report. The previous full report considered there were significant weaknesses in most lessons, particularly by Year 11. In addition, a key issue was to improve facilities for the teaching of science. These issues have been addressed well by the school. A classroom has been developed as a designated science classroom and resource base for senior pupils, and this has helped to improve standards. The science co-ordinator has attended a number of in-service training courses and as a result, teaching is now more assured and effective.
89. By the age of 14 pupils make good progress. Their books show that pupils understand a good deal about a wide range of topics. There is evidence of good work on materials, making mixtures, thermal insulators, push and pull, floating and sinking, the solar system, planets, light sources, shadows, reflections, sounds, electric circuits, uses of electricity, the seasons, and the human body. There is a range of teaching strategies used to support and motivate learning, including, writing, drawing, and for the younger pupils, cutting out and sticking. This helps pupils to concentrate on their tasks because they are doing things of which they are capable. Emphasis is placed upon investigation work. Pupils are learning scientific principles and gaining in confidence to look for evidence.

Pupils at the lower level are working towards level 1 with support and at the higher levels at level 2. There is evidence of positive progress in presentation of work and understanding.

90. By the age of 16, pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. Pupils in years 10 and 11 study for the Edexcel Entry level science examination. The success rate is very good. Teacher assessment for this year shows that over 80 per cent of pupils will achieve either the silver or gold standard awards. These results, and the very good project work done by the pupils are very impressive. One boy in Year 10, who had been excluded from a mainstream school stated that he had improved his knowledge of science considerably and had done well in the external examination, saying, "I wouldn't have done so well in my last school". Pupils are learning scientific principles and gaining confidence to relate their investigations to evidence from their lives. In one Year 10 class which was carrying out group experiments on why certain solids float or sink in certain liquids, one pupil stated, "Possibly the salted peanuts float because of the salt. It is easier to swim in the sea because the water is salty". Pupils are developing confidence to use scientific vocabulary to talk about their ideas, as they address the question "What might happen if ...?".
91. During the course of the inspection the quality of teaching ranged from excellent to satisfactory. When teaching was very good or better, the teacher showed very good evidence of planning and excellent subject knowledge. The pupils respond to the well-structured and planned teaching. The excellent team-work of the teacher and support assistant together with planned work to match pupils' capabilities, cater for all pupils and improve learning outcomes for pupils of all abilities. The very positive and calm learning environment enables the pupils to learn well. When teaching is satisfactory the teachers are enthusiastic but overall planning lacks direction. Teachers in years 7 and 8 were notably less skilled in making science interesting and challenging than those who taught older pupils.
92. The co-ordinator is very keen and keeps excellent records of progress. The assessment of progress in science was praised in a letter from the Edexcel external assessor. Science in the senior age groups is well resourced. There are good ICT facilities including a microscope attached to a computer, which has promoted knowledge and understanding. The co-ordinator monitors schemes of work and teaching in Years 7 and 8 to promote progression and continuity across the key stages. The process is in the early stages of development. Cross curricular links are not currently planned although there is evidence of links with numeracy, literacy, geography and ICT. The subject development plan identifies further development of ICT in science.

ART AND DESIGN

93. Achievement in art and design is good overall with very good achievement in Years 10 and 11. They learn a wide range of techniques and skills. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through its subject matter and pupils learn to work independently. Provision and achievement have improved since the last inspection.
94. By the end of Year 9, pupils make good progress and are able to produce paintings, drawings, prints and two and three-dimensional work using a range of tools. They learn to use a wide range of different media, for example cutting stencils to form a template for screen-printing. Pupils experience colour, shape and texture, which enable them to use their senses well. They understand how to use a watercolour wash effect with trees in the

foreground to create landscapes. There are many examples of detailed observational drawings showing an understanding of perspective and how to use shading to create tones and textures. Younger pupils also demonstrate an understanding of proportion when designing houses. They concentrate well and are encouraged to work independently. Some pupils use cutting tools with increasing control to create better effect. As they gain in confidence they show a good capacity for experimentation. Pupils discuss and explain their work with pride and confidence.

95. By Year 11 pupils make very good progress and are building on previous knowledge and expertise. Teachers use appropriate technical terms such as "prototype", "foreground", "media" and "contrast" and this helps pupils to begin to talk as artists. They consider the use of materials to achieve the desired effect, including adapting their designs using computer imagery. Designs evolve over a period of time as attempts are evaluated and improved so that a high level of design is achieved. They study the work of other artists to get ideas, looking closely at detail for example 'The Weeping Woman' by Picasso. This helps lower attaining pupils in particular. Teachers' knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm provide the pupils with the encouragement and support they need to produce work of a high standard. Much of the work seen is of high quality. Pupils demonstrate their considerable skills in working in lino or metal to cut stencils for high quality screen prints. All Year 11 pupils are entered for the GCSE. Creativity is much in evidence. Higher and lower attaining pupils are equally successful in consolidating their work and developing their skills. Portfolios built up over time show a good ability to review, revise and refine work.

96. Teaching and learning are good overall with some excellent teaching in Years 10 and 11. Lessons are planned to meet individual needs and inspire pupils. Younger pupils who are not taught by subject specialists do not benefit from the more imaginative and challenging tasks presented to older pupils. Behaviour is never less than good because of the stimulating learning environment and inspirational teaching. Constant praise for effort is made and very good relationships exist between teachers, pupils and support staff. Pupils co-operate well, quickly become engaged in lessons and they thoroughly enjoy the work. All pupils are fully involved in discussion and teachers and pupils listen carefully to those pupils who have considerable difficulties in speaking and communication. Pupils gain in confidence as they discuss and reflect on their own work and that of the other pupils, but these opportunities are limited. Insufficient use is made of discussion to help the teacher check pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding particularly with younger pupils. Very good teamwork between teachers and class assistants is beneficial to the pupils. There is very good support available for those pupils with additional special educational needs, which ensures all pupils equal access to the curriculum. Art and design makes a very strong contribution to the personal development of pupils.

97. Leadership and management of the subject is very good overall. Since the last inspection a small Art room combining small cloakrooms and cupboards has been made. The accommodation has been improved.

CITIZENSHIP

98. Provision for pupils' education in citizenship is very good and is enhanced by well organised class discussion. The joint co-ordinators have established a very comprehensive long term planning framework that focuses on the key skills. Other subjects such as music, science, food technology, design technology and physical education make a planned contribution to citizenship. The work done by pupils is assessed and teachers regularly review the successes in the content, making

adjustments as necessary. The quality of pupils' written work is good, making an effective contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills.

99. In the Year 8 lesson seen the principle of elections to parliament was explained cleverly by simply using different coloured counters. These were placed on a paper model of the House of Commons so that pupils quickly visualised how the different parties were represented. The perceptiveness of the more able pupils was exemplified when one asked 'where does the Green Party sit?'. By the end of this lesson most pupils know that there is a General Election about every five years, that MPs are elected to Parliament and that they represent constituencies. They understand why the party with the most MPs governs and that the other parties form the official opposition. Above all, they are realising their responsibility when being able to vote when they are 18.
100. As a result of the school's innovative work in this relatively new subject area, all pupils benefit from developing skills in enquiry and communication, as well as being knowledgeable and informed about becoming informed citizens. This complements other good work done through, for example, the School Council.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. Improvement in design and technology since the last inspection has been good. Pupils across all years make good progress, including those with additional special needs, such as emotional and behavioural difficulties, hearing impaired and those on the autistic spectrum. They are acquiring a good range of skills in designing and making, often starting from a very limited experience in Year 7. In both design and making, pupils are learning how to use a variety of basic hand tools to prepare and finish a range of artefacts.
102. The subject has two co-ordinators who work well together to raise awareness of the breadth and depth of the subject and to develop the expertise required in food technology and resistant materials, graphics, electronics, structures and mechanisms.
103. By the end of Year 9, in food technology, pupils understand safety in the kitchen. They measure and weigh and understand the purpose of the switches on hobs and cookers. They understand how to use modern equipment safely, such as a 'contact grill' and make nutritious snack meals. They identify and name ingredients and utensils. They understand the need for hygiene and take great care in preparing food and washing up and clearing away at the end of lessons. Pupils understand basic nutrition and plan and prepare healthy meals.
104. By the end of Year 11, pupils take great pride in their 'survival cookery'. Pupils choose ingredients for their snacks, make and eat their meal, wash up and clear away crockery and cutlery. Pupils write up their self-assessments and discuss their work with staff, and how they could improve. Pupils use their mathematical skills well in food technology, such as timing, measuring and weighing. Pupils enhance their literacy skills by listening attentively, reading menus, writing up their findings and they use word processing to record some of their work and print out menus.
105. By the end of Year 9 in design and technology, pupils make good progress from a very low level on entry. They identify, name and use tools such as a coping saw for shaping cuts, files to smooth wood, tenon saw for straight cuts and a set square to ensure accurate marking. They acquire new skills and knowledge using plastic, glue, polishing, and tools such as a jig saw and drills. They improve their design and make skills.

106. By years 10 and 11, pupils are advancing their skills in design, including the production of design briefs, such as clocks, lights and jewellery. They use a greater range of tools safely and accurately, such as an introduction to power tools. They use their mathematical skills and knowledge to measure accurately.
107. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. This is good improvement since the previous inspection. This is largely due to the good subject knowledge and understanding of the teachers. They have good subject knowledge and also detailed knowledge of pupils' special needs and learning difficulties. Teachers and support staff combine well to ensure that every pupil has the same opportunities. This means that pupils are exposed to a range of challenging and interesting activities in practical and theoretical sessions. Pupils improve their basic skills and are involved in self-evaluation of their work. They make suggestions and respond to effective questioning. Teachers encourage the pupils with praise, and this spurs them on to try hard. Pupils understand what tools are supposed to do, for instance *'This saw, a tenon saw, this can cut straight, but this saw, a coping saw, can cut shapes'* one pupil stated. Because of very good relationships between staff and pupils, pupils work very hard and behave well. They have very good attitudes to their work because they are so interested. Design and technology has a positive impact upon pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
108. The management is well organised, each co-ordinator has identified areas for development and good schemes of work have been established. Assessment is detailed and reporting to parents is good. Accommodation in both strands is good, and learning resources and tools are good. Both co-ordinators are at present looking for appropriate external accreditation for their subjects. Pupils' achievements continue to improve and much has been achieved.

GEOGRAPHY

109. There is better provision for geography than there was at the time of the last inspection. Pupils in years 7, 8 and 9 follow a course that takes good account of their capabilities and of the requirements of the National Curriculum for Key Stage 3. They achieve well and make good progress in developing their knowledge of their own locality and the wider world. They have satisfactory opportunities to develop their skills in reading and understanding maps and in interpreting data about matters such as population or climate that is presented graphically.
110. Pupils in Year 7, who have been studying Indonesia, recalled significant facts about the country, its location in the world and its climate. They linked their broader knowledge of world climate zones to what they had learned of Indonesia. A pupil in a very good lesson that summarised much of what had already been covered, confidently answered that "Indonesia is hot because it is near the equator". At present these pupils are learning about tectonics and vulcanism. Pupils recalled from recent learning that volcanoes might be active, dormant or extinct, and that eruption produces ash, gas and lava flow. One pupil impressively described this as "pyroclastic activity".
111. By Year 9, pupils have looked in more detail at the natural processes that shape and form the landscape. They understand something of erosion and weathering. In oral answers they showed a broad knowledge of types of weathering and the causes that underlie each of these. In a practical activity they experimented with a range of materials to judge which might be most swiftly and easily eroded by abrasion. They noted the relationships between hardness and resistance to erosion.

112. Teaching is effective in enabling pupils to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the world and to improve their geographical skills. In lessons observed, the quality of teaching and the pupils' response to it was very good. Pupils extended their learning, showed that they recalled what they had previously been taught and were eager to share their knowledge and understanding with others. There is a wide variety in pupils' capability within each class but it was a good feature of the teaching that the most confident learners were encouraged to support others. The needs of those who required the greatest support were met by good deployment of learning support staff and by the teacher's careful attention to their individual needs. There was good variety in the teaching methods used, for example, in the lesson on relative rates of erosion referred to previously, the main activity was a practical investigation. Good attention was paid to the development of literacy skills, by for example, the featuring of the key technical words for the session on the whiteboard. Lessons were well planned with clear objectives for learning. Where these were reviewed at the end of the lesson, pupils were given a clear idea of what they had learned and achieved. The management of pupils' behaviour, including that of pupils whose behavioural difficulty is a significant part of their special educational needs, was effective.
113. Within the programme presently offered, resources are sufficient. However, if the subject is to continue to develop, more emphasis will need to be placed on learning outside the classroom in the field. Presently opportunities for pupils to build their learning on first hand experiences gained through fieldwork are too few. This may be partly because very little time is given to the subject; just a single weekly lesson. To build properly on the good work being done, more time is needed. The subject is well led and has been carefully and successfully developed since the last inspection.

HISTORY

114. No judgement was made about achievement in history in the last inspection. History is only taught up to the end of Year 9. Pupils make satisfactory progress and they are given opportunities to develop awareness of the past, mainly by discussion, cutting and pasting evidence, written work, and occasional visits or speakers.
115. Work is well presented in books. Pupils show increasing understanding of historical events and their influence upon life today. They have produced work on Medieval realms, the making of the U.K. and the Black Death, Britain since 1750, including examining the use of child labour, the Roman Empire, and native peoples of the Americas. Over time, pupils improve their presentation. Visits to support learning have included a trip to Elvaston Castle for a Victorian experience, Derby museum and the Silk Mill. However, visits are limited due to other demands on curriculum time.
116. Teaching is good. In the best lessons there is a strong oral element to the work and through dialogue the teacher helps the pupils to recall key elements in their past learning so that these may be applied to present topics. Visitors are used to bring the work to life. For example, a past pupil who is now a soldier visited to show pupils his uniform and equipment. The pupils then compared this with the uniforms and accoutrements of the Roman soldiers they were studying. They discovered that some elements were similar and that many were different. Teachers help pupils to record what they learn by producing well illustrated work and information sheets and they check what has been understood with careful questioning. Pupils are eager to learn and they show high levels of interest in the subject. This commitment is not always fully capitalised on because in a minority of lessons resources and tasks are not fully matched to pupils' capabilities.

117. The co-ordinator has made satisfactory efforts to improve teaching and learning in history since the last inspection. He is aware of the need to encourage the use of the recently installed Internet to source material, and improve the very limited school stock of artefacts and resource materials. The history co-ordinator does not monitor teaching but does look at lesson planning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

118. Improvement in information communication technology (ICT) since the last inspection has been good. Pupils across all years make good progress, including those with additional special needs, such as emotional and behavioural difficulties, hearing impaired and those on the autistic spectrum. They are acquiring a good range of computing skills, often starting from very limited experience in Year 7.

119. Teaching and learning are good. Pupils respond well to the teacher's high expectations that they begin working productively as soon as they enter the room. They behave very well and show very good attitudes to their work. Pupils are highly motivated by having hands on experience with computers.

120. Pupils are generally taught in small groups, half classes, due to the size of the ICT room. It is inadequate for larger groups and has lighting and ventilation problems. Teacher's skills and confidence in ICT are good as a result of them pursuing a recognised accredited training course. There has been a tremendous financial commitment towards raising the quality and range of the hardware and software available. In discrete ICT lessons, pupils extend their skills and understanding, such as keyboard skills, use of the mouse, painting, drawing, graphics and control. By the end of Year 7, pupils have produced 'calendars' using ICT. They are comfortable using PCs or the BBC Acorn machine. By the end of Year 9, pupils use simple databases and spread sheets. Pupils successfully identify programs they need, and they load and run them. Most programs have different levels of difficulty. Teachers challenge pupils by setting the level for each individual pupil, matched to ability. Teachers plan tasks that have immediate relevance, and this interests and motivate pupils.

121. Pupils in Years 10 and 11, follow the ASDAN Youth Award Scheme, in which they complete the data-handling module. They demonstrate their confidence in using computers when setting out their personal statements for their Youth Award Scheme work at the end of Year 11.

122. There are very good resources in the ICT room, and each classroom now has one computer station. This is good improvement since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has worked hard to achieve this level of resources. All stations are connected and have access to the Internet.

123. Teachers maintain clear, detailed records that involve teacher evaluation and pupil self-evaluation. In lessons, high quality questioning checks for understanding. ICT is well reported to parents in Annual Reviews and in Annual Reports.

124. Literacy and numeracy are promoted well in ICT lessons. Teachers explain new terms carefully, and key words are displayed on a board in the ICT room. Pupils read well from the screens, and show good comprehension of the tasks they are asked to perform. Many of the programmes include a high proportion of mathematical concepts enhancing pupils' mathematical skills and knowledge.

125. Leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has ensured the issue from the last inspection, of cross curricular use of ICT, has been successfully addressed. The co-ordinator has a clear plan of how to improve provision and achievement in the subject and has secured good improvement in standards, teaching and resources since the last inspection.
126. ICT contributes well to pupils' social and moral development. Pupils are very respectful of the expensive equipment they use. Pupils take turns, support each other and are quick to celebrate each other's successes.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

127. Improvement in French since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Pupils across Years 7, 8 and 9 make satisfactory progress, including those with additional special needs.
128. Pupils start to learn French in Year 7. At this stage many have limited language skills. By the end of Year 7, pupils greet each other, staff and visitors, which they do enthusiastically. They consolidate their vocabulary and respond accurately to simple instructions and commands. They participate in simple role-play games, playing shopkeeper and customer. In this role they greet each other, order a pet or food or drink, pay for their purchase using euros, and calculate change if required and leave the shop. This work enhances pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, as well as giving them a taste of French customs and life. Pupils in Year 7 have written to pupils in a French junior school, and the pupils there have replied. This is good practice and pupils plan to use e-mail in future to correspond with their friends.
129. By the end of Year 8, pupils show more confidence in speaking French. They count to 20, know the days of the week and months of the year. They express likes and dislikes of food and drink, listen to French music and sing French songs. Have great fun following simple requests and commands. When recording their work, pupils use word processing as well as writing.
130. By the end of Year 9, pupils show a good understanding of French customs and practices. They have good knowledge of famous French artists such as Monet and they are familiar with some of their work. They describe the colours and shades in Monet's pictures, both in English and in French. They improve their accents and vocabulary and self-confidence to speak French in front of their peers. They combine words to make spoken phrases, ask questions, and take part in simple role-play. In Years 10 and 11, pupils follow the ASDAN modules during their studies.
131. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers use praise, encouragement and humour effectively, which is appreciated by the pupils; as a result, they respond well and have positive attitudes to the subject. Teachers use the target language effectively, complementing this by body language and gestures. The learning resources that they have made match the needs of their pupils. Pupils improve their number skills by counting in French and consolidate their literacy skills as they write down what they have learned.
132. Because of effective teaching, pupils' attitudes to learning in French and their behaviour in lessons are very good. They respond well to staff requests, instructions and

commands. They are prepared to attempt new words and phrases, to build upon existing knowledge, extend their vocabulary, practice and improve their accents, and raise self-esteem and confidence. Pupils have the confidence to come to the front of the class and speak to their peers in French. In all lessons support was well planned and used. Learning support assistants used their experience and detailed knowledge of the pupils to avert situations arising, thus preventing small incidents becoming major ones.

133. French makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal, social, moral and cultural development when taking turns in role play, and in the way they support and encourage each other and are quick to celebrate each other's successes. They discuss and compare French and English customs and traditions, which enhances their cultural development. The subject is satisfactorily led, and the school recognises the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to use computers to help them with their work.

MUSIC

134. Provision in music is good. There has been a notable improvement in standards achieved since the last inspection. The subject co-ordinator has planned and organised a wide and interesting curriculum that ensures that between the ages of 11 and 14, all pupils receive well-balanced music lessons where the skills and conventions of the subject are systematically taught. Pupils build successfully on what they already know and can do.

135. It was not possible to see more than one lesson during the inspection. The Year 9 lesson observed was brisk and purposeful. The teachers' enthusiasm for her work was infectious, ably supported by the classroom assistants. All pupils were alert and ready to give of their best. They rose to the challenges set, taking responsibility in terms of using and sharing the instruments. The teacher set high standards by insisting on pupils giving their full attention.

136. Pupils are made to feel that music is for them and it is to be enjoyed. This is reflected in the careful and respectful way they handle instruments when practising or performing. They concentrate hard and co-operate willingly and cheerfully when working.

137. By the end of the lesson all pupils had played a round in two parts, with accompaniment, played a calypso rhythm pattern and practised the singing of calypso. The pupils with special educational needs were very well supported and a very good contribution was made to the development of pupils' social and moral development. For example, when one boy showed his frustration but persisted, others spontaneously called out 'well done'.

138. Pupils would benefit from longer lessons. Because there is no specialist room a lot of time is spent getting the equipment out and putting it away, as well as making the necessary changes to the room furniture so that when singing all pupils have good eye contact with the teacher and the classroom assistants.

139. The part time teacher who leads the subject does this vigorously and ensures that there are opportunities for all pupils to take part in a good range of musical activities including an annual production. These have included the 'Pied Piper', 'Stable Manners' and 'Snow White'. Pupils with special educational needs take a full part in lessons and activities. There is a comprehensive programme of work, which provides a good basis for teachers to plan their lessons. Resources are of a satisfactory quality and quantity.

140. The use of staff and resources, and the monitoring and evaluation of learning have improved since the last inspection. All the evidence suggests that the unsatisfactory teaching identified then no longer exists.
141. In order to develop music further, attention needs to be given to broadening extracurricular opportunities for all pupils, including in Year 10 and 11, seeking opportunities for pupils to benefit from more visits and visitors and developing the multicultural aspects of the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

142. Pupils make very good progress in physical education and by Year 11 they achieve very well.
143. The programme offered makes a significant contribution to each child's physical, health and personal development. Pupils of all ages and abilities are given the opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities.
144. By Year 9, pupils have made good progress across a broad range of games and physical activities. They have experienced basketball, football, unihoc, striking games, circuit training, dance, educational gymnastics, and a one-day outdoor pursuits course. In addition, all pupils in years 7 and 8 have a weekly swimming lesson at the Derby University baths. Current progress in years 7 and 8 in certain aspects of the courses offered is satisfactory rather than good. These classes have not been taught by subject specialists recently. External certification of progress is achieved in gymnastics, kwik cricket, swimming and water skills.
145. By the age of 16 pupils' progress has accelerated and achievement is very good. Pupils are entered for the OCR Entry level certificate, which has four sections, games (basketball), gymnastics, (trampolining), swimming, and weight training / athletics. Pupils study for a sport and leisure component within their ASDAN award, the British Gymnastic Association trampoline awards and a range of internal accreditation. These awards improve self-esteem development and inclusion for all. In addition, pupils of all ages are involved in inter school competitions in football, cross-country and athletics. During the course of the inspection, the inspector attended an inter-schools athletics competition at the Moorways Stadium, Derby. This was an excellent social event and an opportunity for pupils of all abilities to underline the progress they had made in physical performance, personal self esteem and social skills. It was good to see pupils cheering and clapping pupils from other schools for trying and shaking hands at the end of events. One pupil said, "I feel proud to represent the school and to show how much I have improved. This chance to race makes me feel more confident about myself".
146. The quality of teaching in physical education ranges from satisfactory to excellent. Seventy-five per cent of the lessons seen were considered to be very good or better. When teaching is very good or better the detailed planning by the teachers and the learning support assistants identifies the skills the pupils will acquire with a staged approach to learning. There are good warm-up sessions and stretch-out routines with all pupils actively engaged. Teaching encourages pupils to take an active role by suggesting exercises to stretch particular muscles and asking them to describe what they feel as they do these. The response is very good, and in their replies pupils develop their speaking skills. In the best lessons the enthusiasm and very good subject knowledge of the teacher encourages pupils of all levels of ability to improve their performance. When

teaching is of this high standard, pupils show excellent attitudes and behaviour. When teaching is less good, subject knowledge is less extensive and the emphasis on coaching of skills, present in the best lessons, is missing. Organisation is less crisp and this sometimes leads to pupils losing concentration.

147. The co-ordination of physical education in years 9,10 and 11 is very good. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and keen to develop teaching and accreditation. Recording of progress for each individual in each activity is very good, and clearly indicates the level of performance that has been achieved.
148. The co-ordinator has been on a number of courses organised by the Youth Sports Trust, is in the schools link partnership for PE, and has close links with other special schools. To promote inclusion and access the co-ordinator has purchased a range of equipment including different weight balls and textured balls with bells inside that are useful for work with pupils who have significant sensory or physical impairments. In addition another teacher has been on an elements workshop for physical activities for young people with profound and multiple impairments.
149. Team teaching is very good, enabling the less experienced teacher and support staff to benefit from the very good organisational and teaching skills of the co-ordinator. The learning support staff are enthusiastic and are good role models for pupils.
150. Following the last inspection report, a key issue for action was to improve the accommodation for the teaching of PE. Since that date progress to improve the on site facilities has been limited. Problems with the hall as a multi function area persist. However, the school has recently been awarded funding for a multi -use games area for the school and the community to be built on site.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

151. The provision made for religious education is much better than it was at the time of the last inspection. Then, both the teaching and the achievement of pupils were unsatisfactory and the curriculum for the subject was not sufficiently developed. Too much of what the pupils were expected to do was based on the completion of worksheets. Achievement is now good for pupils in years 7, 8 and 9 and very good for those in years 10 and 11.
152. Pupils in their first three years in the school follow a course closely linked to the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. They make good progress as they learn about the major world faiths including Christianity. They retain the facts that they learn well. For example pupils in a Year 7 class who are learning about Sikhism recalled that this was the newest of the great world religions having been established just under 600 years ago.
153. Pupils in years 10 and 11 are prepared for the Entry-Level GCSE examination. They are on course to gain grades that are good in relation to their capabilities.
154. Especially where the teacher has special knowledge of the subject the pupils enjoy their lessons and learn well. In half of the observed lessons the teaching was of high quality and there was none that was unsatisfactory. Lessons are very well planned by the subject leader and allow for a balanced variety of learning activities. Successful use is made of video material about major world faiths to allow members of these faith communities to present, first hand, an account of their beliefs and practices and how these affect the way in which they lead their lives. In the best lessons, there is a keen

understanding of the particular special needs of individual pupils. For example, excellent and effective strategies are used to ensure that those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, who have problems in concentrating and persevering, are fully involved in the lesson. There is also very good use of the strategy of teaching obliquely by, for example, embedding the facts to be learned within a game. A good instance of this was seen when pupils in Year 7, learning about the Sikh faith, were being taught the initial words of the Grant Guru Sahib, "Ik On Kar". This was presented as a code breaking activity in which the pupils were required to use a key to find this secret message. Pupils responded extremely well to this and worked at their task with great enthusiasm.

155. The better teaching, among its many strengths, exemplifies the second major purpose of religious education, that is, to learn lessons for life from religion. One such lesson is that of respecting others' views. The teacher did this very well in a very good session on the Five Pillars of Islam, when pupils in a Year 9 class, were encouraged to refer their answers to a pupil, who is a Muslim, so as to test out and verify what they were learning. His special knowledge was acknowledged and celebrated.

156. The subject is now very well led, an improvement since the last inspection when the co-ordinator was only just beginning the task of organising the subject within the school. Resources are good but the necessity under present organisational arrangements to have to teach the subject in several different rooms lessens the impact that a strong collection of books and artefacts might make on learning. It is also the case that those pupils in classes that are not taught by the subject leader fare comparatively less well than those who are. Overall, however, religious education makes a consistent and effective contribution to pupils' personal development, particularly to their moral, social, spiritual and cultural awareness.