

INSPECTION REPORT

THE PRIORY SCHOOL

Pickeridge Close, Taunton

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123939

Headteacher: Mr. Glyn Toller

Reporting inspector: Janet Bond
2642

Dates of inspection: 3 –6 March 2003

Inspection number: 249407

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community Special
School category:	Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties (EBD)/ Boarding
Age range of pupils:	11-16 Years
Gender of pupils:	Male
School address:	Pickeridge Close Taunton Somerset
Postcode:	TA2 7HW
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Alan Munk
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2642	Janet Bond	Registered inspector	Mathematics Art and Design Music Special Educational Needs	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught?
19727	Eric Langford	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Residential provision
1358	Glyn Essex	Team inspector	English Physical Education	How well is the school led and managed?
17182	Michael Farrell	Team inspector	Information & Communication Technology Design & Technology Geography History Personal & Social Education Educational Inclusion	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
22058	Christine Richardson	Team inspector	Science Religious Education French	How good are the curricula and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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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?	12	
The school's results and pupils' achievements		
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development		
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	14	
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	16	
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18	
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	19	
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20	
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	<u>2223</u>	
RESIDENTIAL PROVISION	<u>2324</u>	
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	<u>2425</u>	
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	<u>2930</u>	

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Priory is a special school for boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It is designated to admit up to 55 pupils between the ages of eleven and sixteen. Of the 54 pupils on roll, 20 have been admitted in the last 12 months. Eleven pupils are in residence although the boarding provision is for 20 pupils. The future of the boarding provision is undergoing a local authority review. All pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs so it is not appropriate to compare the attainment of pupils with national expectations or averages. There are no pupils from ethnic minorities or who have English as a second language. Originally the school was an all-age school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and for secondary-aged pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. In 1999 it was changed to a school for secondary aged boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Since then the local authority has held a review of provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural needs. Last term the school heard the other similar school in the county would close and that they would continue. In the last two years two teachers have left and three have been appointed. At the time of the inspection three members of staff were away, two of whom are on long-term illness leave.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good and improving school. Good leadership and management, in particular the headteacher's very good educational direction, have significantly improved the school since the previous inspection. The school is highly effective in meeting pupils' emotional and behavioural needs. Pupils make very good progress in their personal and social development and in their behaviour. Better curriculum provision has led to Year 11 pupils gaining a wider range of qualifications. Teaching, learning and achievement are satisfactory. Although much of the teaching is good or better some lacks challenge and the help for pupils with low literacy and numeracy skills lacks an effective focus. Given the school's above average income, it provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Charismatic and visionary leadership by the headteacher has enabled the school to significantly improve the quality of provision available to pupils.
- Excellent relationships effectively support pupils' very good attitudes to learning. This has resulted in their improved progress in most subjects and their improved achievement in accredited course work.
- Pupils make very good progress in their personal development as a result of the effective emphasis given to each pupil's personal targets and the very rich range of learning experiences provided by the school.
- Pupils make very good progress in improving their behaviour. They understand the systems used, consider them fair and agree they are applied in a consistent way.
- Provision for the care and welfare of pupils, both in school and in the boarding house, is excellent. Pupils value and respond to the respect and consideration shown to them.
- The excellent provision in the boarding house very effectively supports pupils' increasing maturity, personal development and learning.

What could be improved

- A growing number of pupils, when they enter school, have very low basic literacy and numeracy skills. Provision for these pupils is unsatisfactory.
- A small but significant proportion of teaching lacks sufficient sustained challenge and interest to maintain a high level of learning.
- The school does not systematically use information about pupils' progress to improve schemes of work or to evaluate the impact of development planning on improving standards that pupils achieve.
- The accommodation and resources for physical education are poor and severely restrict the range of activities that can be made available for pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the last inspection in June 1997 has been good, which has resulted in raised levels of achievement. The key issues identified at this time have been addressed and now:

- The curriculum is relevant, balanced and planned for each year group. Individual Education plans (IEPs) are in place and information about pupils' progress is recorded
- Pupils' attainments have improved each year and more Year 11 pupils gain a greater range of accreditation
- Subject co-ordinators are more effective in managing their subject and monitoring planning
- There has been an improvement in teaching and resources in all subjects. Staff are more effectively deployed
- Health and safety issues have been addressed
- The school now has a clear specification for the age range and intake of pupils.

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

IEPs are Individual Education Plans for pupils with special educational needs

It is a strength of the school that pupils make very good progress in their personal and social (PSE) development. PSE work is effectively taught in all subjects and in all aspects of school life, such as assemblies and lunch times. Standards have risen and there has been a year-on-year increase in the accreditations achieved by Year 11 pupils, who now achieve better than other pupils in similar schools. Pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening as a result of the many opportunities, such as the student council, for them to take an active part in discussions and decision-making and because they know their opinions are valued. However, the progress pupils make in reading is not consistent. Higher attaining pupils make good progress in higher reading skills, but lower attaining pupils make

limited progress. Progress in writing is more consistent and is satisfactory. In mathematics, pupils make satisfactory progress and higher attaining pupils achieve well in accredited course work. Pupils with limited computational skills do not have enough opportunities to progress quickly. Pupils make very good progress in art and design and design and technology as a result of high-quality planning and skilful teaching. Pupils make good progress in science, music and physical education because teaching is consistently good or better, teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and work is made relevant and interesting for them. Except in geography, pupils make satisfactory progress in all other subjects as a result of better planning and improved teaching and resources. In the limited range of work they do in geography pupils' progress is often good. However, there is no planned work for each year group in the subject. Although they achieve well in other subjects as a result of good individual support, pupils with limited basic literacy and numeracy skills do not make sufficient progress quickly enough. The school has set appropriate targets for continuing pupils' improved achievement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy most of their learning, work hard and are keen to do well in accredited course work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils think the school rules and behaviour systems are fair and help them improve their behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent relationships very effectively support pupils' very good personal development. Pupils trust staff and appreciate and respond in a mature way to the opportunities provided for them to take an active part in decision making.
Attendance	Good. Pupils want to come to school.

Pupils know what they need to do to improve their behaviour and are very honest when deciding and setting their weekly targets.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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 has improved since the last inspection and as a result pupils' learning has improved. Teaching is very good in personal and social development. Teachers take all opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour and to think about the impact of what they say and do on others. Teaching is very good in speaking and listening, art and design and in design and technology where teachers plan a rich range of experiences and are skilful in supporting pupils achieving high standards of work. Teaching is consistently good or better in science, music and physical education as a result of teachers having a good knowledge of the subject and a good understanding of pupils' learning needs. Teaching in English and mathematics is variable but never less than satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory in all other subjects. Although lesson planning has improved, in some lessons there are an insufficient variety of appropriate activities or the challenge and pace for learning are not sustained to the end of the lesson. There is limited use of homework to support pupils' learning. Excellent relationships between staff and pupils, coupled with the very good teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants, effectively supports all pupils in their learning. Teaching for very early literacy and numeracy

skills is unsatisfactory. The timetable of lessons and planned work does not allow enough time or focus for these important skills to be effectively developed, and not all teachers are skilled in their teaching.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is broad and made relevant to pupils' age and learning needs. Extra-curricular activities are excellent and fully enjoyed by pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Excellent provision is made for pupils' personal and social development. There is very good provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development and satisfactory provision for pupils' cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Excellent. The school provides a very high level of care where pupils trust staff and all are encouraged to give of their best.

The school works very well with parents who have positive views of the school. Communication with parents is very good and they are kept very well informed. Pupils have access to an impressive range of lunch time and after-school clubs and activities, and transport is provided for those wanting to stay.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good leadership and good management by the headteacher have effectively led the school through changing and challenging times. As a result of this there have been significant improvements in the quality of education the school provides.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. Governors fulfil their statutory duties well. They have made a significant contribution to the many changes that have taken place. They are well placed to develop more effective procedures to monitor the outcomes, in terms of pupil progress, of their decision making.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory and improving. The school gathers information on pupils' progress but is not fully using it to make changes.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Except for physical education, the budget is managed and used effectively to improve pupils' learning experiences.

The reflection of the school's aims and values in all aspects of school life is excellent. All are valued and encouraged to give of their best and all have a strong sense of community. All effectively contribute to school developments and improvements. The school makes satisfactory use of the principles of best value and is developing procedures to monitor the effectiveness of spending and developments on pupils' achievement. Staff are well deployed to ensure individual needs are met. Resources are good for most subjects and are used well to support pupils' learning. Accommodation is well maintained and the improvements made to provide specialist teaching rooms have effectively contributed to rising standards.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school and the school works closely with them.• They feel the school provides an interesting range of activities outside of lessons and children like school.• Parents feel the school is well led and managed and teaching is good.• Parents believe the school expects children to work hard and give of their best.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not all parents think their child is making good progress.• Many parents think there is not enough homework.• Some parents think behaviour in school is not good.

Inspectors agree with parents' views about what pleases them most. Inspectors judge that pupils make satisfactory progress overall, with good progress in many subjects and in accredited course work. However, inspectors agree that those pupils with low levels of attainment in English and mathematics do not make enough progress. Inspectors agree that homework arrangements are not satisfactory but judge that behaviour is very good in school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Most pupils enter school with below average standards of attainment, particularly in the key subjects of English and mathematics, and a growing number have very low standards in literacy and numeracy. They have poor personal and social skills and poor attitudes to school and learning. As a result of a very effective behaviour management system, excellent relationships, the availability of a wider range of accredited course work, improved teaching and a well planned and relevant curriculum, there has been a good improvement since the last inspection in pupils' attainments.
2. Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well in their behaviour and in their personal and social skills. They make very good progress in speaking and listening, design and technology and art, and good progress in science, music and physical education. In all other subjects except geography pupils' progress is satisfactory. Pupils' attainments in the Year 9 national tests have improved over the last four years, with this year a small number of higher attaining pupils achieving at a level appropriate to their age. Pupils' attainments in these tests are better in mathematics and science than in English. Over the last four years there has been a continued improvement in the number of General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) passes gained and pupils' grades are better than the national figures for pupils in similar schools. The increasing range of accredited courses the school offers has supported pupils in achieving passes in Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT) and in The Associated Board of the Royal School for Music examinations.
3. Progress towards targets in pupils' Individual Behaviour Plans (IBPs) is very good and is satisfactory towards their targets in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Teachers' planning effectively focuses on individual targets, particularly personal and behaviour targets, in all lessons. Pupils are tested each term in English and mathematics and the information is beginning to be used to inform subject and whole-school planning. Appropriately, the school is now setting targets for whole-school improvement which are providing a more directed focus on raising pupils' standards in subjects.
4. Since the last inspection the achievements of all pupils have improved and continue to improve in most subjects. Progress overall has improved because work is better planned for each year group and, in teachers' lesson plans, there is a very good focus on what pupils will learn during lessons to enable their skills, knowledge and understanding to be built on and developed systematically. Pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening. This is because, as part of their subject work and as part of their personal and social education (PSE) work, effective opportunities are provided in all subjects for pupils to build upon their existing skills through lively discussions. Very effective opportunities are provided at other times during the school day, such as assemblies and the student council, for pupils to take part in debates and discussions, and learn how to express their own point of view as well as listen to the views of others. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in reading, spelling and writing. In reading, higher attaining pupils make good progress but frequently pupils with low levels of attainment make very limited progress. In writing progress is more consistent and most pupils make satisfactory progress. The small group of pupils with very limited reading and writing skills are not provided with sufficient appropriate work to rapidly improve their skills, although effective additional support from learning support assistants allows them to participate satisfactorily in all subjects.
5. Pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics, particularly in number work and in applying mathematics. In statutory assessment tests pupils' attainments are above average in comparison to similar schools and higher attaining pupils achieve at a level in line with national expectations. There has been an improvement in the number of pupils achieving GCSEs in mathematics. These improvements in pupils' attainments are the result of better planning of work to be covered by each

year group and the introduction of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy. However, on entering school, a small number of pupils have low levels of attainment particularly in their computational skills. The needs of these pupils are not sufficiently addressed to enable them to make rapid progress in this area. Pupils make good progress in science because it is taught very well and made relevant and interesting to them. Higher attaining pupils achieve at an appropriate level for their age in statutory assessment tests and the number of pupils achieving GCSEs has increased.

6. Pupils make very good progress in art and in design and technology because teaching and planning are very good. High expectations by the teachers result in high quality work by the pupils and an improvement in the number of pupils gaining accreditation. Pupils make good progress in physical education and music because planning and teaching are good and effectively enable all to participate. Although pupils make good progress in physical education it is in a narrow range of activities because of inadequate facilities. In religious education, history, French and information and communication technology (ICT) pupils' achievements are satisfactory and improving in relation to their previous attainments. Religious education lessons are made relevant and effectively allow all pupils to contribute at an appropriate level. In ICT pupils learn to access the computer and to apply their skills by using technology to research information. In history pupils effectively learn about the past and relate their learning to present times. French lessons are relevant and interesting to pupils and good teaching encourages their interest and enthusiasm. Pupils' progress in geography is unsatisfactory because there is no overall planned scheme of work for each year group, which means that pupils cannot build on earlier skills. In the units of work currently available in geography, where teaching is good pupils make good progress and enjoy considering issues such as the impact of climate changes.
7. Pupils make very good progress in their personal and social development and in managing their behaviour because they understand and enjoy the behaviour systems that are consistently and fairly applied. All opportunities are very effectively taken in all aspects of school life to encourage and reinforce each pupil's personal and social skills. Therapies, including anger management and counselling, significantly contribute to the improvements in the boys' behaviour management and their attitudes to learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good and are a strength of the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy coming to school. As one pupil commented "This is the only school I can understand", and parents confirm their children want to come to school. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They arrive in a cheerful manner and are courteous to staff and other pupils. They show a keen and active interest in school life, for example as members of the student council, and are greatly committed to the school community, fully involved in the very good range of activities such as lunch time clubs. As a result of working in an atmosphere free from oppressive behaviour pupils show a very high level of trust in staff and each other. This can be clearly seen by the free way in which pupils talk about sensitive matters in front of other pupils in lessons.
9. Pupils consistently display very good attitudes, both in lessons and other activities. They respond positively and with enthusiasm to most of the demands made of them. They do this because in most lessons teachers provide them with activities that are interesting and support them to succeed at tasks they have not done before. In a Year 7 French lesson pupils had great fun role-playing entering a room and greeting the occupants in a variety of ways in French. Year 8 pupils sustained intense interest and concentration for the whole of a music lesson as they improved their understanding of pulse and rhythm. All pupils show very good attitudes when in large groups such as assemblies or attending college. In assembly they listen attentively, contribute to discussions and bring mature humour appropriately into some situations. At college pupils respond very well to the responsibilities given to them by staff and show a mature and responsible attitude to college life.

10. The behaviour of pupils is very good. They show respect for each other and staff and are very careful when handling the school's equipment. One class, in a religious education lesson, showed great care with the special objects that other pupils had brought in from home. Because pupils have a strong sense of community and take care of their environment, inspectors saw no signs of graffiti in the school or boarding house and the building is well looked after. Behaviour in most lessons is very good because pupils are interested and want to succeed. They listen to each other respectfully in lessons. Support staff play an important role in helping pupils to behave well. They work well with pupils to help them maintain their concentration and very good behaviour. Pupils and staff follow the school behaviour system consistently and pupils judge it to be fair and worthwhile. As a result they try hard to achieve points and so behave very well. Pupils behave very well around school, for example in evening activities, in using the tuck shop, and in attending student council meetings.
11. Pupils' personal development is very good and relationships are excellent. Pupils form constructive relationships with each other. Their relationships with teachers are excellent: as one pupil said, "The school helps you believe in yourself." Pupils show very good initiative and are willing to take responsibility, for example in the very articulate student-council. They respect other people's differences, particularly their feelings, values and beliefs, and make no comment if another pupil makes a mistake in a lesson. They reflect on what they do and understand its impact on others. In weekly target setting lessons they are very honest and show a good self-knowledge of their weaknesses and what they need to do to improve. One older pupil who did not manage his behaviour well in one lesson went straight to the headteacher and apologised for messing things up.
12. Pupil attendance for the reporting year is influenced in a negative way by a number of long term school refusers who remain on school roll while the local authority seeks alternate, and more appropriate, placements. Otherwise, attendance is good. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and the trend over the past two years is for improved attendance and reductions in the level of unauthorised absence. This represents an area of improvement since the last inspection. The number of exclusions compares favourably with national figures and is lower than those for similar schools. The majority of pupils are transported to school and most arrive promptly. Punctuality in school is very good and lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. Teaching is satisfactory overall and in many subjects and lessons it is good or better. This is an improvement since the last inspection when nearly a quarter of the teaching observed was poor or unsatisfactory. Now teaching is good or better in over half of the lessons observed, and only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen during the inspection. However, at the time of the inspection three teachers were away and their teaching responsibilities were shared between the headteacher and other skilled teachers. As a result of improved teaching pupils' learning and progress have improved. Where teaching is good or better, lessons are planned well to ensure that all the pupils in the class have appropriate and sufficiently difficult activities and they make good gains in their learning. Expectations of what pupils will achieve are set at appropriately high levels so pupils consistently achieve well. Although all teachers put a great deal of care into their lesson planning, this does not always result in the high quality of teaching and learning they strive for. Where teaching is satisfactory often the pace and intellectual challenge slacken or the activities are insufficiently demanding so pupils' learning at a high level is not sustained. Explanations are not always clear enough to ensure pupils' full understanding.
14. Teaching is consistently good, frequently very good and occasionally excellent in science, design and technology and physical education. At the time of the inspection the art teacher was away, however scrutiny of pupils' work, records and the teacher's planning file shows teaching in art is also consistently good or better. Teaching is consistently good in music and French. In all these subjects teachers have good subject knowledge, are knowledgeable about what pupils need to learn and are particularly skilful at maintaining pupils' interest and excitement in their learning. Pupils are actively involved in what they are doing and clear explanations help pupils take their learning forwards. Teachers' respect pupils' questions and efforts and pupils respect teachers'

subject knowledge and good management strategies. Excellent relationships support pupils in being confident to attempt unfamiliar work. They know their efforts will be appreciated, problems sorted out and successes celebrated. Pupils are proud of their work because they achieve well.

15. Where teaching is good or better in other lessons, teachers are skilful in maintaining pupils' interest and attention by making the work relevant to them and by frequent changes of activity. In a very good Year 9 English lesson the teacher used a variety of activities to ensure pupils had a good understanding of the time when Macbeth was written. Using brochures from the Globe Theatre they discussed how the audience stood or sat and got a good idea of how the audience behaved, likening them to a football crowd, as well as understanding the shape of the building. The use of a video helped them recognise the costumes of the time and a "jigsaw" activity prompted their writing. In an excellent Year 7 geography lesson, well planned with different work appropriate to individual pupils, a very good discussion engaged pupils' attention and a high level of trust enabled pupils to talk confidently. Planned individual, paired and group work kept pupils interested and ICT was used well to produce survey sheets. Pupils were very enthusiastic to participate saying, "Can we do the survey now?" and were keen to produce their own survey sheets. At the end of the lesson the teacher skilfully checked pupils' learning and understanding. In many lessons and subjects teachers plan for and effectively use ICT to support pupils' learning.
16. Where teaching is satisfactory, frequently the high level of challenge and good pace of learning are not maintained throughout the lesson. Planned follow up work is not prepared for those pupils who finish ahead of others. In a very small number of lessons pupils were not always managed as well as possible or were able to divert the teacher from the intended task by engaging them in conversations about other things. Work prepared for pupils was not as interesting as it could be, and activities were not changed sufficiently frequently to maintain pupils' interest and attention. Insufficient time is planned for teaching basic literacy and numeracy skills, and a number of teachers do not have the necessary skills and expertise to do this.
17. Several factors have contributed to the improvement in all subjects in teaching and learning. In nearly all subjects the curriculum has been rewritten with appropriate work planned for each year group. Subject leaders teach their subject to most pupils, particularly those in Years 10 and 11. The new Key Stage 3 National Strategy has been introduced. These changes have resulted in teachers being more knowledgeable about what pupils need to learn. Improvements in assessment mean teachers can more accurately plan work for individual pupils. Monitoring of teaching by the headteacher has enabled support to be appropriately given to teachers where needed. Particular strengths of the teaching are the teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants, the good knowledge and understanding of the emotional and behavioural difficulties of the pupils, the consistent application of the school reward system and the very effective use of the school system of lesson planning. However, homework is not used consistently to support pupils' learning.
18. The effective partnership between teachers and learning support assistants contributes significantly to pupils' improved progress. In nearly all lessons learning support assistants are fully aware of the role they are to play, which pupils they will be working with and what pupils are to learn. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils made good progress in their learning because they were divided into two groups for the practical activity, one group led by the teacher and the other by the learning support assistant. In other lessons they work with individual pupils and provide good individual support which helps pupils concentrate and learn. Learning support assistants contribute well to the on-going monitoring of pupils' achievements and needs, which enables lesson planning to be effectively informed. At the end of most lessons time is given for pupils to explain to the whole class what they have been doing, enabling all to celebrate individual achievements and enabling the teacher to check on what pupils have understood and remembered.
19. Pupils behave well in most lessons because they find the work interesting, because they have excellent relationships with staff, because teachers manage pupils' behaviour skilfully and because the school reward systems are consistently applied and fully understood and valued by the pupils. If any pupil does react inappropriately, teachers manage unobtrusively and make sure the learning of others is not interfered with. A member of the senior management team is normally

available if any pupil requires some time out of lessons and they skilfully manage and diffuse inappropriate behaviour. Pupils with additional special behavioural needs benefit from this approach and are fully included in all lessons and activities. In good lessons appropriate activities are planned for and changed frequently, and because pupils are actively involved, they are keen to participate and confident to try new challenges. In a well paced Year 9 mathematics lesson pupils responded to the high expectations of the teacher by being alert and attentive and were confident to volunteer to show their ways of dividing an irregular shape to calculate the area in front of others. In most lessons teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to make choices and decisions and pupils are treated with respect and consideration.

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

20. The very good curriculum reflects the aims of the school very well. These are reflected in the very good provision for careers and vocational education, the extensive links with the community and the excellent provision for personal, social and health education and extra-curricular activities. These aspects make significant contributions to pupils' learning. The good balance between the academic elements, the planned activities out of lessons, and the personal and social skills programme, provides a broad range of relevant and important opportunities for learning. The curriculum is taught in a way that is clearly relevant to pupils' needs. The consistent management of behaviour makes a major contribution to the curriculum because of the excellent relationships that provide a secure foundation for the very effective support and guidance provided by all staff. Since the last inspection there has been a good improvement in the curriculum because:
- The requirements of the National Curriculum are met in all subjects
 - There are guidelines for all subjects
 - Detailed, useful planning systems have been introduced.
 - The range of accredited course work has been significantly extended
 - Co-ordinators manage their subjects more effectively
 - Teaching resources have improved
 - The facilities for science, design and technology, food technology and ICT have been improved very effectively
21. The result of these improvements is that teachers' planning is of good quality and pupils work towards accreditation in most subjects at the end of Year 11. Careers education is very effectively planned and integrated into citizenship and personal, social and health education. It very effectively provides pupils with opportunities to explore the world of work. The quality of discussion about preparation for work experience is of a high quality and pupils are prepared very well for life after school.
22. Statutory requirements, including the provision of religious education according to local guidelines, are met. The numeracy and literacy strategies have been introduced satisfactorily and there is some planned and effective use of literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. However, for a small number of pupils, the provision in literacy and numeracy is not as good as it could be. A growing number of pupils have low basic literacy and numeracy skills when they enter the school. Current programmes of work do not sufficiently meet the additional needs of these pupils. There are suitable extension activities for higher attaining pupils in most lessons. The school has identified a small number of pupils with particular talents and makes good provision to meet their needs.
23. Equality of access to, and opportunity within the curriculum is very good. The school works hard to ensure that the needs of pupils are met and that they have equal access to all areas of the curriculum and opportunities to succeed in them. Day pupils join the small group of boarding pupils for evening activities and all pupils enjoy lunch time clubs. All pupils have opportunities to go to the college and have time on work experience.
24. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE), and citizenship, is excellent. It is based on national guidelines and the school's own programme for teaching good health topics. Some topics are introduced in science and others in discrete citizenship lessons.

For example, pupils in Year 7 discussed ways of communication and anger or conflict management. Pupils in Year 10 considered national budget priorities, discussing whether more money should go to provide better hospitals than student grants. Some geography lessons include impressive work on PSHE, which is integrated fully into aspects of most lessons. There is a coherent programme for sex and relationships education, which is supported well by outside visitors and sensitive approaches by staff. The school helps pupils to make healthy and informed choices about drugs and their effects by encouraging them to develop skills in decision making and problem solving. The school effectively involves external agencies and parents where appropriate.

25. Provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent. The wide range of activities include making pancakes, swimming, a range of sports at the local leisure centre, learning to play musical instruments or computer games. Activities are organised well and the skills of staff are used very effectively to ensure that activities can be pursued to a high level. These activities provide pupils with very valuable opportunities for co-operative working and working as a team.
26. Links and communication with local schools are satisfactory and there is a strong link with a nearby secondary school for support in science. College links are strong and provide very good opportunities for pupils to be given individual responsibility. Work is linked well with citizenship activities at school where Year 10 pupils are constructing a herb garden. At college they make the slabs and garden furniture they will use.
27. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by the school's very good links with the community. Pupils make visits to local businesses in preparation for their work experience and to develop their industrial awareness. There is a good level of community involvement when the school prepares for its annual, and most successful, Children in Need Appeal. The website of the school is very active, especially during the 24 hours of the appeal.
28. The provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Provision for spiritual and moral development is very good and for social development is excellent. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There is a strong community atmosphere in assemblies when the values of the school are reinforced very well. In very powerful and moving moments, pupils bow their heads to pray or reflect upon the innocent victims of war and people who are ill. Pupils in Year 10 talk freely about their views on death and the after-life during religious education lessons. Teachers' thoughtful questions encourage them to think about people's feelings and actions. Curiosity and interest are stimulated in science and French when pupils watch the 'magical' movements of iron filings or work out the value of Euro notes and coins. There is a climate in the school within which all pupils can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected.
29. There is a very clear code of behaviour in classes and throughout the school. It is used very effectively to promote moral and social development and provides a very good framework for pupils when they go out of school, for example to college or on work experience. Pupils value the rewards they earn and the fairness of the systems that help them to earn points and prizes. Prize giving day is a highlight of the school year and pupils know that their successes will be recognised and celebrated. Pupils have a clear idea of what is right and wrong. They are polite and courteous to visitors and value the open and safe environment in which they can express their views and practise moral decision making. Relationships in the school are excellent and provide pupils with very good examples on which to model their own social and moral behaviour.
30. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to share experiences with others. They participate enthusiastically in special community events such as the Children in Need activities and Prize Day. They value working as a team or in pairs to discuss issues. Older pupils enjoy the responsibility of making the school a better place when they plan work on the herb garden. The student council meeting is an impressive opportunity for pupils to state their views clearly and feel that everyone values what they have to say. An understanding of citizenship lessons helps pupils to engage in the democratic process and participate in community life. Work experience and attendance at college provide positive links with the world of work and the wider community.

31. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have a good understanding of the history and traditions of this country and learn about others in geography and history. Stories, drama, art and music from many countries and cultures are used effectively to extend pupils' knowledge and use of cultural imagery and language. Pupils show interest in learning about other faiths and cultures in religious education and about Europe in French. They reflect upon the qualities shown by famous people and celebrate religious festivals in school and church. Pupils understand the significance of the Remembrance Day service and celebrate this with sincerity.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. The provision for the care and welfare of pupils and the quality of pastoral support they receive is excellent and a strength of the school. This is an area of significant improvement since the last inspection.
33. Excellent child protection procedures are in place, which are well understood and used by staff in the best interests of the pupils. All staff are aware of the need for vigilance in the regular monitoring of the well being and welfare of the pupils in their care. The procedures in place to support the monitoring arrangements of the looked after children in school are excellent and ensure their specific needs are fully addressed. The school has established excellent procedures for the reporting and monitoring of incidences of physical restraint involving pupils in the school. These include the good practice to review all occurrences of physical restraint to identify and promote opportunities for improvement in the use of behaviour modification programmes. Staff are well trained in the use of physical restraint, and pupils agree that its use ensures that the safety interests of pupils and staff are maintained at all times. Good software filter procedures are in place to safeguard pupils from inappropriate material when accessing information on the Internet.
34. Pupils feel safe and happy in school and have the confidence and independence to raise queries and concerns with staff. Pupils have easy access to very good pastoral support with trained staff able to provide sensitive counselling, from anger management and helping to build self-esteem through to offering tender loving care in support of upset pupils. Staff know their pupils well and all are committed to ensuring the best interests of the pupils at all times.
35. Good health and safety procedures are in place and risk assessment is included in the school's planning process. During the inspection period staff and pupils demonstrated good health and safety awareness in and around the school and on out-of-school visits. Day-to-day health and safety matters are effectively dealt with by the headteacher and school caretaker. Most of the issues raised in a recent health and safety inspection undertaken by the local authority have been addressed. However, there is no formal governor involvement in the health and safety aspects of the school or a practice for health and safety to be reported at termly governors' meetings. The school employs staff fully trained in first aid and good and effective procedures are in place for the management and reporting of pupil injuries that occur during their time at school. Very good and secure management arrangements are in place for the correct recording, storage and administration of prescribed medicines to pupils, as and when requested by parents.
36. There are very good standards of catering achieved in the school with a menu range providing appetising meals and a well balanced and nutritious diet for pupils. The school premises are maintained to a good level of cleanliness and kept tidy. The school provides a safe environment for both pupils and staff.
37. The very good and well established behaviour management practices help to enhance and promote the self-image of pupils and contribute greatly to the overall very good attitudes to learning displayed by the majority of pupils. Great emphasis is placed on promoting good behaviour and the school operates a number of incentives to encourage and reward pupils' good work and behaviour, both in and around the school. The comprehensive, whole-school, social behaviour policy is discussed and personalised within each year group to provide pupils with a meaningful focus of their teachers' expectations and rewards for good behaviour. The weekly review of behaviour and individual pupil target setting, undertaken by each year group with their teacher, makes a major contribution to maintaining the very good behaviour noted during the

inspection week. The well documented behaviour procedures are liked and understood by pupils and parents, all of whom judge these to be applied by teachers in a fair and consistent manner.

38. The school has a philosophy of zero tolerance towards bullying and has worked successfully to promote a culture of anti-bullying amongst the pupils. During the inspection there was no evidence of any oppressive bullying or harassment of pupils. Past incidents of inappropriate behaviour are judged by pupils and parents to have been swiftly and effectively dealt with by staff to the benefit of all involved. Very good procedures are in place for monitoring and improving attendance. The practice for pupil registration in school fully complies with statutory requirements. However, there is no formal practice to report on pupil absence levels to the governors' termly meetings, other than as end-of-year statistics in the governors' annual report to parents.
39. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. The school maintains Records of Achievement for all National Curriculum subjects that help track progress, provide levels of attainment and contribute to pupils' annual written report. Information is collected on accreditation results and compared with other similar schools. Reading records and regular reading and maths assessment results are maintained. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in subjects are mainly good. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection when the school lacked diagnostic assessments of pupils' capabilities. However, the wealth of information gathered is not always used effectively to evaluate programmes of work, teaching or the long term achievement of groups of pupils. All pupils have IEPs and IBPs which are regularly updated, although not all targets are sufficiently precise to ensure accurate monitoring of achievement. Parents and pupils contribute effectively to annual and transitional reviews.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. Parents are very supportive of the school, hold the staff in high regard, and believe their children receive a high quality of care, education and personal development. Parents consider it to be an open school with all staff very willing to listen and talk with them about their children's progress. This represents an area of significant improvement since the last inspection.
41. Analysis of the returned parent questionnaires shows that a minority of parents disagree that behaviour is good in school. The inspection team could find no evidence to support these views. Discussions at the pre-inspection parent meeting and with staff and parents during the inspection week did not support these views and suggest some parents misunderstood the questionnaire and related their answer to their child's statement of need. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is very good. The home-school agreement is supported by the great majority of parents, with many actively involved as partners in developing their child's behaviour and learning at home.
42. Parents are welcomed in school and encouraged to become involved in their children's learning and personal development. There is a good practice for staff to telephone parents with any queries or concerns and to inform parents of particular good work or behaviour their child has achieved. The vast majority of parents attend the annual review meetings and are fully involved in the review and setting of their child's IEP targets. The autumn term open evenings are very well attended and provide parents with good opportunities to discuss their children's progress with the school staff. The good practice of providing free transport and crèche facilities for school events and meetings effectively encourages good attendance. Parents spoken with during the inspection stated how much they appreciated these arrangements and how valuable the meetings are.
43. Parents of boarding pupils are communicated with on a weekly basis and there is a good practice in school to ensure that staff make contact with all parents at least each half term to discuss the progress of their children. The regular communication links between staff and parents provide an effective conduit for the informal exchange of information about pupils' progress and development at school and in the home. The quality and range of information provided to parents, particularly about pupils' progress, is very good and represent an area of significant improvement since the last inspection. Parents are kept up to date and well informed on a regular basis about all aspects

of school life, organised events and pupil activities. Regular "Dear parent" correspondence ensures parents are kept informed about plans and changes to their child's time in school. The comprehensive school prospectus and the governors' report to parents are informative and act as very helpful reference documents on all aspects of school life.

44. Reports to parents are of a high quality, easy to read and provide a good level of detail in terms of targets, work effort and attainments gained by their child in school. A small minority of parents considered they were not kept well informed about how their child was doing at school. Given the range and frequency of information provided by the school and the willingness of staff to communicate with parents, by telephone or by a home visit, this view is not supported by the inspection team.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. The headteacher provides very good leadership. Leading by example, he has inspired a strong sense of purpose and a consistent commitment to improvement during a time of great change and considerable uncertainty about the future of the school. At the same time, management at all levels has continued to promote the school's underlying values very effectively and the excellent relationships which exist in the school reflect its success in achieving its aim to provide "a safe, caring, disciplined and supportive community".
46. Good teamwork among all levels of management has been an important element in achieving these aims, both during the school day and in the boarding house. The delegation of responsibilities, both within the senior management team and at other levels, is considerably more effective than at the time of the last inspection and the headteacher has successfully promoted a stronger sense of corporate responsibility in this way.
47. The governing body provides very active and effective support for the school. Governors are well informed and minutes of their meetings show that their discussions are detailed and wide ranging. They also conscientiously carry out their role as a critical friend of the school. At their last full meeting, for example, they produced several useful and very pertinent amendments to the draft school development plan and expressed a number of well founded concerns about staffing and curriculum issues. They are particularly effective in their monitoring of financial matters, with a very clear understanding of budget priorities and constraints. They have played a full part in supporting the headteacher in discussions about the future of the school and have a good grasp of the longer term issues facing the school. Their participation in the formal monitoring of standards, the curriculum and teaching is limited, however. They are beginning to increase the frequency of their visits to school but these are not carried out on a systematic basis and they do not result in formal feedback. They do not receive sufficient information to evaluate the school's performance in areas such as reading standards and attendance and their pursuit of best value, although often effective in practice, is not sufficiently systematic.
48. The school has begun to make more effective use of assessment data to assess how its performance and costs compare with other schools. It has, for example, calculated the value added to pupils' attainment between key stages and to compare its results with national figures for other schools of this type. It is also setting whole-school targets for pupils' attainment, although it has yet to find consistently the right level of challenge in these. The monitoring of teaching is improving. Some observations of teaching now take place but the arrangements for recording and reviewing the findings lack rigour, as do other school monitoring activities. There is, however, a high level of awareness among management of the strengths and weaknesses in the school, particularly in teaching and the curriculum, and the school is well placed to make progress in this respect by introducing more structured systems of evaluation.
49. Management has devoted considerable time and funding to the development of teaching and these efforts have been rewarded with clear improvements, particularly in the subject knowledge of teachers, which was identified as a key issue for action in the last inspection. A good programme of professional development has made a major contribution to this improvement and the arrangements for appraisal and performance management are well managed and effective. There is

a recently introduced policy for the induction of new staff, both teaching and support, but, particularly in the case of the latter, it lacks detail on the process to be followed. A helpful and informative staff handbook, however, provides a very good resource for new staff.

50. The school development plan is a good working tool. It has benefited from widespread consultation and covers a range of appropriate areas for development in considerable detail, with clear allocation of responsibilities and clearly defined success criteria. It has also met a criticism in the last report by including realistic target dates. The plan now provides a much more effective strategy for school improvement than was the case at the time of the last inspection but it lacks sufficient emphasis on outcomes in educational standards. This shortcoming is linked with the absence, as in other areas of monitoring, of a system for reviewing and evaluating the plan's outcomes. The monitoring strategies prescribed for each target do not always provide an effective means of doing this.
51. That the school's action to meet its targets has been effective overall, however, is clearly demonstrated by the good rate of improvement achieved since the last inspection. A good example of this success is the action taken to improve school accommodation and stock of learning resources and the benefits this has brought to the quality of teaching and learning. The amount of specialist accommodation available has been greatly extended and resources are now generally good in all subjects apart from geography and physical education. The poor quality and range of accommodation and resources for physical education continue to place severe restrictions on the development of the subject.
52. The school is well staffed. The match in numbers, qualification and experience of staff with the needs of the pupils is generally good but teachers' expertise in the teaching of basic literacy and numeracy to the lower attaining pupils remains an area for development. Support staff are well qualified and good use is made of their individual expertise in their allocation to specific subject areas. The efficiency with which staff are deployed has greatly improved since the last inspection.
53. The redesignation of the school in 1999, the consequent fall in pupil numbers and the policy applied by the local education authority in adjusting the budget of the school to recognise these changes, have meant that the school has enjoyed a period of very generous funding. The funding per pupil in the current financial year has fallen significantly as the result of the influx of a considerable number of new pupils. In general, however, the school has benefited from a very healthy financial situation and the setting of priorities for additional funding has been made easier as a result. Financial planning has made good use of this flexibility. Governors are clear about the additional costs involved and they monitor movements within the budget carefully through the school's systems of financial control. These were described as good in the audit by the local education authority in November last year, which found many significant improvements since the previous audit in 1997. The school has made good use of the specific grants received for the training of staff and for the purchase of new equipment but it does not have a system for reviewing the outcomes of its spending on the numerous areas targeted by this additional funding.
54. Although the school has made and continues to make efficient use of its resources, there are a few exceptions and these reflect the shortcomings, mentioned above, in its systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of its spending decisions. There has been a very considerable investment in ICT but its potential is not currently fully exploited. A new school library, with a very good stock of fiction, has been established but is little used by pupils. The considerable burden undertaken by the headteacher in covering for absent colleagues is an inefficient use of his time but the governing body is aware of the need to address this issue through the staffing budget. The cost effectiveness of the boarding provision, which was identified as a key issue for action by the previous inspection, is still a major issue. Its funding has continued at historic levels but it currently provides for only 60 per cent of its pupil capacity and use also varies between two, three or four days per pupil. This is a situation over which the school has little influence, however. The facility makes excellent provision and its benefits extend to day as well as boarding pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. In order to continue to improve the quality of education provided, the headteacher and governors should:

- (1) Make better provision for pupils with low level basic literacy and numeracy skills by:
 - Arranging a programme of staff development in these areas of teaching
 - Improving the organisation and efficiency of the arrangements for this provision
 - Providing more appropriate resources and schemes of work in literacy and numeracy for these pupils(4, 5, 16, 22, 62, 63, 68, 72)

- (2) Further improve the pace, challenge and rigour of teaching by:
 - Further development of the Key Stage 3 Strategy
 - The use of a greater range of strategies and activities in lessons
 - Continuing professional development
 - More systematic monitoring of teaching(13, 16, 73, 103, 104)

- (3) To more fully inform school developments by:
 - Making better use of the information gathered from pupil assessments and accreditation results to inform changes to programmes of work
 - Monitoring the impact of changes, developments and spending on pupils performance.(39, 47, 48, 50, 53, 54)

- (4) Improve opportunities for pupils in physical education by:
 - Improving the accommodation and resources for physical education
 - Making better use of local sports facilities(6, 51, 115, 118)

The following should also be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

Complete the scheme of work and assessment procedures for geography (2, 6, 94)
Apply a more consistent approach to homework (17, 70)
Apply a more consistent approach to handwriting (69)
Encourage reading for pleasure (64)

Residential Provision

56. The quality of care and opportunities for personal development provided by the school boarding house are excellent and a strength of the school. This represents an area of significant improvement since the last inspection.
57. The school-week residential provision is a full and very effective partner in the provision of the school's 24 hour curriculum and is successful in its aims to foster the development of personal skills, social skills, self control and in support of pupils' social and emotional development. The excellent relationships that can be seen to exist between pupils and staff are particularly obvious during all meal times where a sensitive balance is achieved between informal "family type" social interaction and the ongoing training of social and personal skills.
58. The ethos and values underpinning the work of the boarding house reflect those of the school. They both very effectively support the work of each other and this provides a very consistent twenty four hour curriculum for pupils. Staff know their pupils and their individual needs very well, and the level and quality of care are excellent. The younger pupils receive clear, firm guidance and support. Older pupils are well directed and provided with lots of opportunities to develop mature and responsible attitudes in their preparations for life after school. All boarders are consulted and involved in decision making related to the boarding house provision. Parents are fully consulted on the progress of their children and welcomed into the boarding house to meet up socially with their children.
59. Record keeping is very good and contributes to the annual review reporting process. The school reward system has been appropriately developed and extended into the boarding house to provide a greater focus on the development of social and life skills. Pupils understand and like the reward system and believe it to be applied by staff in a fair and consistent manner. The boarding house is very well led and managed and contributes positively to the value for money provided by the school as a whole.
60. The extended curriculum provides pupils with access to a very wide and varied choice of activities geared to developing their social independence, interpersonal skills, self esteem and social and emotional skills. These include: local clubs such as YMCA, Army cadets and St John's Ambulance, off-site activities such as hiking in the Quantocks, crab fishing on the sea front, trampoline and archery, to on-site clubs and activities such as mini radio car racing, photography, gardening and art clubs.
61. The accommodation is well presented and offers pupils their own good size bedrooms. There is good provision of specialist rooms including photography dark room, pool room, art room, separate television lounge and quiet room, the latter also available for use by pupils meeting with their parents. Showers and toilets are maintained to a high standard and pupil dignity is encouraged and promoted at all times. Pupils are encouraged to take a pride in their personal and shared facilities and the high quality of the furnishings and lack of vandalism or graffiti in the boarding house is a testament to the positive way pupils respond.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	65
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	54

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	17	26	19	1	0	0
Percentage	3	26	40	30	1	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	54
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	26

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	16

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	6

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

Pupil Attainments

Year	Number of subjects offering accreditation opportunities		Number of Year 11 pupils	Number of passes A*-C/1-3		Number of passes A*-G/4-5	
	GCSE	CoA/EL		GCSE	CoA/EL	GCSE	CoA/EL
1999	3	3	17	0	8	19	5
2000	6	1	21	7	4	36	0
2001	7	3	13	8	9	35	0
2002	7	3	9	10	6	28	0

SATS/NCT Results 2002 : 12 pupils							
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6	Level 7
English	-	-	1 (8.3%)	2 (16.7%)	1 (8.3%)	-	-
Mathematics	-	1 (8.3%)	2 (16.7%)	4 (33.3%)	3 (25%)	-	-
Science	-	-	5 (17.4%)	2 (16.7%)	-	-	-

Computer Literacy and Information Technology, (C.L.A.I.T.)			
Year	No of pupils obtaining level 1 passes in 3 modules	No of pupils obtaining level 1 passes in 4 modules	No of pupils obtaining level 1 passes in 5 modules
2000	3	-	-
2001	6	-	-
2002	3	3	2

The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music			
Practical Examination 2002	B flat Trumpet preparatory test. <i>Pass</i>	B flat Clarinet preparatory test. <i>Pass</i>	No of pupils obtaining passes
2002	1	1	2

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	54	95	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	

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

Teachers and classes**Financial information****Qualified teachers and classes: Y7– Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.4
Average class size	7

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	256

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	920143
Total expenditure	885562
Expenditure per pupil	20126
Balance brought forward from previous year	56625
Balance carried forward to next year	34581

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	3
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
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	54
Number of questionnaires returned	24

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	38	42	12	8	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	12	21	8	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	21	50	17	8	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	18	23	23	14
The teaching is good.	67	17	4	0	12
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	54	29	8	8	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	25	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	29	0	0	12
The school works closely with parents.	62	21	12	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	83	8	4	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	62	17	17	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	71	21	4	0	4

Other issues raised by parents

Most parents believe the school builds up the confidence of pupils well and their children make friends in school. Most feel involved with the annual review of their child and all enjoy the prize giving ceremony.

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

ENGLISH

62. Achievements in English are satisfactory. There has been an improvement in the teaching of the subject since the last inspection, when it was found to be unsatisfactory for secondary pupils. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject were insecure at that time but an effective programme of training has helped to improve this situation, although weaknesses still exist in the teaching of pupils with very low levels of basic literacy. An improvement in the quality of learning resources has been a positive factor. The profile of pupils' achievements in English is, however, still a very uneven one. The development of pupils' speaking and listening is very good throughout the school. Progress in reading is satisfactory overall but it is unsatisfactory for the small but significant number of pupils who have difficulties in literacy. Year 10 and 11 higher attaining pupils, on the other hand, are making good progress in the reading skills required for GCSE accreditation. Progress in writing is more consistent than in reading. The school has addressed the weakness identified in the last inspection relating to the limited range of writing attempted by pupils. There has been a satisfactory improvement in this and better use is now also being made of computers to support this process, particularly for the drafting and revising of written work. As in the case of reading, however, the rate of improvement in the work of the higher attaining pupils is better than that achieved by pupils with difficulties in their basic literacy.
63. This profile of uneven achievement in English is clearly reflected in the results of statutory assessment at the end of Year 9 and of external examinations at the end of Year 11. Results at the end of Year 9 are well below those achieved in mathematics and, to a lesser degree, in science, although higher attaining pupils do attain appropriate levels. At the end of Year 11, results in GCSE and, in particular, in Certificate of Achievement examinations are generally below those achieved in other subjects. The information provided by standardised reading tests which are given at regular points throughout a pupil's school career confirm this picture of uneven achievement, with the lowest attaining pupils showing very little and, in some cases, barely discernible progress.
64. Teaching and learning in English are satisfactory. The development of speaking and listening skills benefits greatly from the excellent relationships and very good behaviour which prevail in the school. New pupils rapidly absorb the school's culture of listening to others and respecting their views. They develop the confidence to contribute to oral work and class discussions. As a result, very good progress is apparent, not only in English but also in other subjects and outside lessons, in pupils' ability to adapt their talk to different purposes, to develop their ideas and to make mature and very appropriate contributions to discussions and debates, both formal and informal.
65. There is a very broad range of attainment in reading and a clear division, at all ages, between those pupils who function as competent readers and those who are still mastering the basic skills. Higher attaining pupils make steady progress. By the end of Year 9, they are reading a greater variety of fiction with increasing fluency and are using their skills with more independence to locate information in other texts to support their work across the curriculum. In Year 10 and 11, higher attaining pupils make good progress in their response to a range of literary genres. Two pupils, for example, were able to read to the inspector from Jane Austen and Charles Dickens with good levels of understanding and expression and were able to comment confidently on the authors' language and style. Other pupils, who go on to take the Certificate of Achievement course, are given a more restricted diet of reading which focuses on the functional skills needed for reference purposes, in work-related information, for example, in which they make satisfactory progress. In discussion, both these and other pupils reported that they do not use the school library. The school does not do enough to encourage reading for pleasure by pupils at all levels of attainment.
66. Additional provision for Year 7 to 9 readers is mainly through a computer software programme. They are extracted from their English lessons for two 15-minute sessions per week with the learning support assistant who is solely responsible for its administration. There is very efficient management of this programme and scrupulous records of pupils' progress within it are kept. Pupils are motivated by the structured work it offers. For several reasons, however, the

unsatisfactory progress of lower attaining pupils in their reading can to a large extent be attributed to the school's reliance on this programme. Instead of being used to support the development of pupils' reading skills, it serves as the main means of intensive tuition in these skills. There is no link between the methodology, targets and assessment information it uses to what goes on in the classroom in English lessons. There is poor correlation between its assessments, those of the traditional reading tests used by the school and the subject's own scheme of assessment. There is no reliable system for the assistant to liaise with or report back to the class teachers on pupils' progress. All pupils in Year 7 to 9, whatever the level or specific nature of their individual needs, take part in the course when it is not necessary or appropriate for some of them. The departure for and arrival from these sessions disrupt the continuity of English lessons.

67. The programme functions in isolation from the other provision made in English. There is a literacy support teacher who has one day a week available to work with a limited number of individual pupils. Testing takes up a significant proportion of her time. She has a clear vision of the developments needed to address pupils' literacy needs based on the good quality assessment information she is building up. There is insufficient time, however, for her to work in partnership with class teachers.
68. Literacy targets in pupils' individual education plans often lack detail and clear strategies for learning. Class teaching spends insufficient time in teaching phonic skills and opportunities are lost to address these through the normal range of English teaching and learning activities. As a result, lower attaining readers who read to the inspector were unable to make progress with very simple texts. They lacked the most basic reading strategies, apart from some success in picking out the initial letters of words, although they have clearly increased their sight vocabulary, which enables them to cope, with support, with worksheets in other subjects. Science is particularly helpful in this respect.
69. As in reading, progress in writing by lower attaining pupils is slow but the use of word processing facilities provides good motivation for them to improve. By the end of Year 9, they are copying accurately and are able, with support, to complete simple worksheets. Other subjects, particularly science, make a strong contribution to the development of the writing skills of these and other pupils. Average and higher attaining pupils begin to acquire more independence during Year 7 to 9 and by Year 11 they are writing for a good range of purposes with more confidence and fluency. Teaching sets a good variety of interesting and relevant writing tasks to which pupils respond well. The quantity of what they write is limited, however, and their efforts at extended pieces of creative writing are often very short, except in the case of the highest attaining pupils. The quality of pupils' handwriting and their use of punctuation at all ages often lag behind their spelling and the grammatical structure of their writing. Much of the writing seen is completed in an immature, printed style but formal handwriting practice rarely appears in their books and folders. Their word processed work, however, shows the ability to check and edit to improve presentation.
70. Homework appears to be rarely, if ever, used to reinforce pupils' literacy work or to promote the reading habit. The course books used as the basis of the subject's scheme of work do not meet the needs of the lowest attaining pupils, for whom a structured reading scheme would be more appropriate in the first years in school.
71. The co-ordination of English has failed to promote a more effective approach to areas such as the needs of pupils with low levels of literacy, the use of individual literacy targets and the monitoring and evaluation of progress, particularly in reading, across the whole school. Improvement since the last inspection in provision to meet the needs of pupils with literacy difficulties has been unsatisfactory. There has, however, been satisfactory improvement in teaching overall, in the use of ICT, in the quality of resources and in the range of writing produced. In addition, GCSE results from 2002 indicate that drama has been very successfully introduced into the curriculum since the last inspection, but unfortunately, because of staff illness, it is not currently available.

MATHEMATICS

72. In mathematics pupils' achievements are satisfactory, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Higher attaining pupils achieve standards above pupils in similar schools. Year 10 and 11 pupils work hard on an appropriate range of accredited course work and most achieve well in GCSEs and the Certificate of Educational Achievement. A small number of pupils enter school with limited computational skills. Although some make satisfactory progress there is insufficient emphasis given to helping them catch up as quickly as possible. Insufficient opportunities are provided for them to use and improve their speed and accuracy in mental mathematics. Effective subject planning showing what each year group will learn provides teachers with a good base for their lesson planning. Pupils now build more effectively on earlier learned skills, knowledge and understanding. The introduction of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy and appropriate accreditation courses, plus effective planning, some good teaching and the very enthusiastic response of pupils to the subject are major factors in the improvements in pupils' attainments. The improved progress made by pupils is reflected by their attainments in accredited examinations, where there has been an increase in the number of higher grades achieved by Year 11 pupils.
73. Teaching and learning in mathematics are satisfactory. Where teaching is at its best teachers take care that pupils know what they will learn during the lesson, what activities they will undertake and what is expected of them. Expectations are high and pupils respond well to the challenges provided. Pupils are supported in using and building on previous learning and lessons are characterised by pupils working at a brisk pace. Effective monitoring and assessment allow teachers to plan very appropriate work for all pupils. These factors contribute significantly to the good and very good progress made by pupils in these lessons. In a very good Year 9 lesson the teacher started by reminding and checking pupils' understanding of previous work, so that they felt secure in taking their learning forwards. Lively discussions, a brisk pace and fun activities supported all in participating in considering how to divide irregular shapes to calculate the area. Through very good questioning the teacher constantly checked pupils' understanding and promoted learning by involving all pupils at an appropriate level and effectively challenging the thinking of higher attaining pupils. In this lesson, by being actively involved pupils saw the fascination of mathematics. Where teaching is satisfactory, lesson planning is often good and an appropriate range of activities planned for. However, the pace of learning is steady rather than brisk and often opportunities for making key learning points are not taken. Pupils learn in a mechanical way rather than with full understanding. In a Year 10 lesson the teacher successfully captured the pupils' interest and appropriately divided the class into two groups for the practical activity. However, there was insufficient explanation about the equipment the pupils were using for calculating the height of the tree and insufficient explanation on how to use the gathered information to make the calculations.
74. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use mathematics throughout the curriculum. For example, in history pupils apply their skills to working out dates and in science they measure and record their predictions and findings. Staff use questioning very effectively and seize opportunities to promote numeracy, for example when working out their points, what they can afford and the number of points they are left with when using the break tuck shop. Where teaching is very good and pupils learn very well, teachers ensure pupils have sufficient time to solve the problem themselves and provide good encouragement, so promoting effort and success.
75. In most lessons pupils are fully involved in their work. Following work for the examination course gives pupils additional motivation. Most continue to build upon their mental and written mathematical skills, for example in understanding the connection between multiplication and division. Most pupils are confident to use their numeracy knowledge and support each other well. In a Year 10 lesson pupils took turns and worked co-operatively, using their knowledge of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, making sums in a hundred square by only using each number once. Pupils are confident to work out problems for themselves and many show a wide and appropriate range of strategies when working through their course work. Where teaching is at its best pupils respond to the high expectations of the teacher, for example in using an appropriate technical vocabulary accurately. Pupils effectively gain new skills, knowledge and understanding through the challenges and targeted support given to them. Where teaching is good pupils find the work demanding, and as a result of the age appropriateness of the activities and the good pupil management by the teacher, pupils concentrate, persevere and enjoy their work. In all lessons

learning support assistants make valuable contributions to pupils' learning by providing individual and small group support very effectively.

76. The high focus given to mathematics by the school in the last two years has resulted in an improvement in the standards achieved by pupils. Good quality training for staff and support with planning and teaching have supported teachers in improving their teaching of, and confidence in, mathematics. Clear and appropriate targets for improvement are in place, pupils' attainments are monitored and the information collected is now used to set more appropriate targets to raise standards further. Resources are good and ICT resources are beginning to be more effectively used. The use of homework is limited, however, particularly for those pupils following accredited course work.

SCIENCE

77. Pupils' achievements in science are good. They increase their knowledge, understanding and skills from a low level of prior attainment on entry to the school. Standards have risen since the last inspection and all pupils have the opportunity to acquire accreditation at the end of Year 11. The majority of higher attaining pupils achieve good grades in GCSE work and lower attaining pupils perform consistently well at the foundation level. Prior to entry to the school few pupils have had much experience of lessons in a science laboratory or have had the opportunity to carry out practical scientific activities. Pupils make good progress as a result of good planning and teaching in science.
78. As a result of good teaching pupils are interested in the activities and try hard to work carefully and precisely. Pupils in Year 7 enjoyed measuring accurately in seconds, centimetres, metres, grams and degrees Celsius. They used a stopwatch and scales and because of the teacher's insistence on precision when measuring, made accurate comparisons. They were careful using a thermometer and held it at the correct angle, so their results were accurate. Year 8 pupils found working out a formula to determine speed by measuring time and distance challenging. Clear explanations and skilful questioning by the teacher kept them motivated and by the end of the lesson they successfully produced their own bar graphs to record their findings. By getting them to explain the test and their conclusions the teacher effectively checked their understanding of what they had learned.
79. Many pupils have limited experience of working in a science laboratory and a few are sometimes apprehensive about what they will be doing. As a result of well planned and relevant activities and good teaching and support from the learning support assistant, pupils become interested and involved. In a Year 9 lesson pupils plotted a magnetic field using a magnet and small compass hesitantly at first, but they quickly realised the pattern that was being formed. From an initial unwillingness to be involved one pupil commented "Oh no, this is good," when told it was time to move on to another activity. Pupils were amazed when they saw iron filings moving into a pattern when scattered on paper over magnets. They enjoyed using their initiative to try different arrangements of the magnets to see if this changed the pattern and were pleased when it did.
80. Accredited course work is effectively planned for all pupils to participate at an appropriate level. Lower attaining pupils develop their understanding at a slower rate but are involved in the same topics because of the skill of the teacher. In one Year 10 lesson the sensitive emphasis on looking into a daffodil head and at a very good poster about the parts of a flower before drawing their diagram effectively supported lower attaining pupils in completing the task. As a result, they drew very good diagrams and completed sentences with missing words accurately. Higher attaining pupils recalled the scientific vocabulary well and read from the textbook further details about plants so that they were able, in a lively manner, to discuss photosynthesis and fertilisation.
81. Pupils in Year 11 continue to effectively build on their scientific knowledge and understanding. With good support from the teacher they worked hard in planning an investigation into pollution, considering biodegradable and non-biodegradable items that could, or could not, be recycled. The teacher has high expectations of pupils' presentation of work and these are consistently followed

and maintained by all pupils. Pupils try hard to present their work neatly and accurately and are rightly proud of their course folders.

82. Pupils' good achievement and progress in science are the result of good teaching. Lessons are well prepared and organised, with opportunities for lower attaining pupils to consolidate their learning and have written work at a suitable level, but still with appropriate challenge. Higher attaining pupils have challenging work and there are regular, purposeful opportunities for them to practise and use skills learned in English and mathematics. Many pupils are enthusiastic about science and are keen to read extracts from relevant textbooks or worksheets.
83. The teacher's subject knowledge and understanding of pupils' needs are good and, because of this, work is matched well to the wide range of abilities within the groups. Dry humour often helps to diffuse potentially difficult situations. The teacher and learning support assistant work very well together to provide support and encouragement for all pupils. This ensures that pupils maintain their participation in lessons very well and enables them to make good gains in learning. The consistent use of assessment information ensures that pupils build on their learning systematically and make good progress in all areas of work.
84. The co-ordinator, who teaches all groups, is enthusiastic and has worked hard to develop the curriculum and resources for science. There has been an increase in the use of ICT in science since the last inspection, but the co-ordinator has clear plans to increase this further now that pupils' skills and interest in ICT have improved. Facilities for teaching science have improved significantly since the last inspection. There is careful attention to health and safety in the laboratory area and for particular tasks. The management of the curriculum and motivation for pupils to achieve some certification in science make a significant impact upon the high standards of work and enjoyment achieved. The school has made good progress in many aspects of the subject since the last inspection and science makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.

ART AND DESIGN

85. Pupils achieve very well in art and design as a result of very good teaching and planning and the provision of a rich range of learning opportunities that enables them to systematically develop their skills from the time they enter the school. Achievements have significantly improved since the last inspection. All pupils achieve at a high level because activities are planned to help them develop their own skills, techniques and ideas. As a result of this significant improvement, pupils attain very good results in relation to their previous attainments in their GCSE art examinations and last year one pupil attained a Grade A.
86. Pupils use a wide range of media and techniques to create imaginative work of high quality. Much of this is linked well to first and second hand observations and the selection of images from their experiences or their imagination. Year 7 pupils enjoyed experimenting to see what happened when different colours were added to each other and, very thoughtfully, mixed and selected appropriate shades of grey for their images based on Guernica by Picasso. Pupils made very effective use of sketches, and produced very good charcoal sketches of different objects and portraits that indicated high level skills of observing people and details. Year 9 pupils organised and presented work in different ways to show a good exploration of ideas. Delightful seasonal landscapes emphasising tones, light and colour clearly showed pupils' increasing confidence in their work. There was a subtle and delicate touch for some paintings of trees and foliage and the very skilful use of colours and washes added considerably to the mood and atmosphere of the paintings. Everyone produced work of high quality because they learned effective skills and techniques and developed their ideas well.
87. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 experienced a rich appreciation of art form and they interpreted and used the styles and techniques of a wide range of famous artists very skilfully. There was liveliness, confidence and enthusiasm in their work. They showed a very good knowledge and understanding of the range of media available for them to use. They discussed the uses of acrylic paints, expressed a preference for pastels or watercolours and produced pictures that convey very

expressively their moods and feelings. Pupils enjoyed interpreting and being influenced by other's work as could be seen by their very expressive Warhol-style self-portraits. Skilful questioning and discussions between the teacher and pupils extended pupils' thinking as well as providing encouragement for their efforts. Although pupils take responsibility for their own decisions they listen carefully to suggestions and ideas. Pupils work very productively to produce high quality portfolios of work ready for their examinations.

88. Teaching and learning are very good because staff have particular expertise, enthusiasm and interest in the subject. Planning is of exceptionally high quality and all topics begin with time spent on researching what they are to do and finding appropriate source material. Pupils use the Internet, books, natural materials, and occasionally visits as a source of inspiration and are clear about what they are to learn. Teachers help pupils to celebrate what they have achieved in lessons and encourage them to respond well to time targets within lessons. Pupils learn how to organise their work. Preparation and clearing away are important aspects of lessons. Pupils are encouraged to bring a personal response to their work and express their feelings about what they have achieved. Learning support staff work very well with teachers and pupils to ensure that everyone gains confidence and improves their skills. Pupils look forward to their art lessons and are proud to talk about their work, which is displayed so attractively and effectively around the school. They concentrate very well in lessons and work extremely hard because they know their achievements are valued.
89. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The teacher is skilled and enthusiastic and works hard to provide a rich experience of artistic activities for pupils, including three-dimensional work, models and fabric work. Work is monitored and assessed and this information is used well in subsequent planning, enabling pupils to make very good progress in their work. Art and design makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

90. Teaching and learning are very good in design and technology. As a result, pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. The subject co-ordinator takes all classes for design and technology and units of work are very well planned to enable pupils to build upon their skills, knowledge and understanding in the subject. The purpose-built room is very well organised and equipped and pupils are highly motivated in their work and take great pride in their finished work, which is of high quality.
91. During Years 7 to 9, all pupils have lessons involving resistant materials and food technology, each of which are taught by a specialist teacher. They learn a suitable range of skills that are taught progressively and assessed well. As a result, pupils grow in competence and confidence and greatly enjoy the subject. For example, in a very good food technology lesson, pupils in Year 9 cooked their own lunch (roast chicken pieces with vegetables and Queen of Puddings), laid the table and later ate the meal showing very good social skills. The teacher's planning suitably identified academic and social learning points, and the effective organisation of the lesson, involving very good support from the learning support assistant, enabled all the learning objectives to be successfully met. Although the lesson moved at a brisk pace staff were careful to allow pupils opportunity to make choices and to use their initiative. Several pupils expressed a keen interest in the subject with one stating "I want to be a chef in my village" and another saying, "I sometimes cook at home".
92. In Years 10 and 11, pupils continue to be taught design and technology and food technology and the very good teaching in the latter is complemented by stimulating work at college, which this term includes constructing garden furniture for the school. In a very good lesson involving project work for their GCSE examination, pupils worked diligently on a variety of projects including music speaker boxes and a cycle trailer. Previously, they had made design drawings and plastic scale models and had learnt from these so that the final design and construction of items was well thought out and very well made. Because the lesson started immediately the pupils entered, the pace was brisk, and the teacher encouraged pupils by the use of approval and skilful questioning,

pupils were effectively helped to make very good progress. The work of pupils covers an excellent range of objects made with resistant materials, including a three-dimensional figure creating movement using fulcra, cranks and levers, 'Roman' catapults (linking with work in history), electronic dice, flat pack furniture, kites, form board jigsaw designs for young children and a ferret house.

93. Design and technology is very well led and managed. Since the previous inspection, when the subject was unsatisfactory, there has been excellent progress. The co-ordinator ensures pupils' achievements are recognised through accreditation in GCSE for resistant materials work and by City and Guilds accreditation, which will accredit food technology beginning this year. The specialist room for work on resistant materials and another room for food technology are well equipped and learning resources are very good, including ICT which is very well used in work on resistant materials. Appropriately, the co-ordinator is considering the further development of opportunities for textile work.

GEOGRAPHY

94. Provision in geography is unsatisfactory. At the time of the inspection the subject coordinator was away and other teachers taught geography lessons where the teaching observed was good. A good start has been made by producing a motivating and carefully thought out 'crash programme' in the subject. However, there is no overarching plan of work throughout the school, no formal monitoring and assessment of geography and no planned allocation of resources in the subject. Insufficient evidence was available to judge pupils' achievements in the subject.
95. All pupils in Years 7 to 9 have lessons in geography, although these have been only recently devised. Work planned is relevant and interesting to pupils. In one excellent lesson, for example, pupils collected and analysed information on different crimes in order later to create a map of crime in different geographical areas. Learning was effectively encouraged and developed through the teacher asking searching questions such as, "What do you mean exactly?" and "How do you do that?" Because of the excellent ethos and impressive level of trust, pupils spoke freely about their fears of different crimes and listened to others with great attention. The excellent organisation of the lesson and the variety of stimulating activities including class discussion, pupils carrying out surveys in the group, individual work, and the teacher with a pupil creating a data grid on the computer, captured and sustained the attention of pupils throughout. The eagerness of the pupils to learn was infectious and led to comments like "Can we do the survey now?"
96. In Years 10 and 11 lower attaining pupils work on an appropriately adapted version of the programme followed by younger pupils. Higher attaining pupils follow a course which, it is anticipated, will lead to accreditation at GCSE entry level for present Year 10 pupils next year. The better lessons are characterised by suitably flexible adaptations to teaching and assessment. For example, in a good lesson on global warming for pupils in Year 11, a pupil was becoming anxious about having to write down responses. The teacher suggested that he, the teacher, should write down the response on that occasion, as the lesson focus was on what the pupils knew. The pace of the lesson was brisk and the teacher had designed his own hypertext programme involving text, diagrams and illustrations to help the pupils experience geographical research.
97. The leadership and management of geography are unsatisfactory. There is no scheme of work or formal assessment procedures and resources are inadequate. Progress since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory.

HISTORY

98. Pupils make satisfactory progress in history. Work is planned for each year group although there are no external accreditation opportunities for Year 11 pupils. At the time of the inspection the history teacher was away and other teachers taught the subject. The teaching observed was good.
99. Years 7 to 9 pupils learn a suitable range of skills and make steady progress, becoming gradually more competent and confident. For example, in a Year 8 lesson which introduced the topic of

indigenous people of North America, several pupils named tribes such as Apache and one pupil, when the geographical context was being set, knew where the Bering Straits were. Pupils are interested and attentive because of the use of stimulating resources, and pupils contributed as well as listening carefully to what others have to say. The learning support assistant provides effective encouragement and support to individual pupils. Although pupils were appropriately challenged by the lesson content, however, there was insufficient opportunity for individual work and initiative.

100. Planned topics in history capture the interest of pupils in Years 10 and 11 and skilful teaching personalises history to their own experiences. For example, in a good lesson for pupils in Year 10, medical developments in the twentieth century were introduced. The teacher asked the pupils about their experiences in visiting the doctor and being in hospital, before explaining that in the early twentieth century there was no National Health Service. Historical information is gradually built up from what the pupils already know and from well illustrated books and other resources.
101. History is satisfactorily led and managed. Since the previous inspection, when the subject was unsatisfactory, there has been satisfactory progress. There is a dedicated history room with stimulating displays and a well illustrated time line which is referred to in lessons. A wide range of resources including posters, three-dimensional models and well illustrated books, which are further supplemented by resources from local museums, effectively support pupils' learning. However, pupils are not given enough planned opportunities to use computers to help them learn and research history. Appropriately, the school is considering developing an accredited course for Year 10 and 11 pupils. Assessment information, while it is carefully gathered, is not sufficiently used to guide curricular planning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

102. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve at a satisfactory level as the result of appropriately planned work for each year group, appropriate staff training and a new computer suite. Over the last three years pupils' achievements in accredited course work (CLAIT) have steadily improved.
103. Teaching in ICT is satisfactory. Year 7 to 9 pupils learn an appropriate range of skills which are taught and monitored systematically. Consequently, pupils gradually become more competent and aware, for example, of what different software can do. However, not all pupils are sufficiently challenged in their work. For example, in one lesson, pupils in Year 8 used a program to design, colour print and laminate a page showing an image of their choice, and the author and title of a book they are reading in English lessons. Both the teacher and learning support assistant gave appropriate support to pupils as they worked. Pupils behaved well and were interested in what they were doing and all completed the task. However, because pupils knew that once they had completed the task they could do as they wished on the computer, this led to some pupils rushing their work, finishing quickly and spending too much time playing Internet games. Extension work for higher attaining pupils was not planned for.
104. Most Year 10 and 11 pupils work towards an accreditation produced by the school. Higher attaining pupils work towards an externally validated accreditation, Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT). Although pupils progress satisfactorily, time is not always as well used as it should be. The teacher has a good knowledge of the subject but planning and organisation do not ensure lessons go at a brisk pace or that time is used as effectively as possible. In one lesson for lower attaining pupils in Year 10, pupils were effectively introduced to an image editing programme. They understood what they were to do and how they were to do it: to decorate images of themselves, which was a motivating and innovative task. Once the images were available pupils became absorbed and worked hard. However, too much time was spent taking digital photographs that then had to be downloaded by the teacher to the pupils' computers before they could work on them. Although pupils behaved well, time was wasted as they played computer games while waiting for this.
105. ICT is led and managed satisfactorily. Since the previous inspection, the subject has remained satisfactory. There is a very good dedicated ICT suite with sufficient computers for each pupil to

use. The room also has an interactive white-board. Sufficient computers and other ICT equipment are available in most classrooms. Learning resources are very good and are reviewed and systematically updated. However, they are not consistently used because ICT use is not sufficiently planned for in all subjects. Although all staff, including learning support assistants, have received appropriate training, a number of staff are not sufficiently confident to fully use ICT to support pupils' learning.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

106. Pupils make good progress in French lessons. However, because the current course has only recently been introduced, overall achievement in French is satisfactory. No pupils are working towards external accreditation in the current year. The good improvements in learning since the last inspection are the result of good teaching and the introduction of a good policy and scheme of work, supported by high quality resources made by the co-ordinator.
107. Teaching is consistently good and the teacher and learning support assistant work well together. They manage pupils' behaviour well so that all pupils participate in lessons and join in discussions. As a result, pupils try hard to read, speak and write French words accurately. Lessons are effectively taught in a mixture of French and English, which encourages pupils to carefully copy the intonation and speech of the teacher and listen well. They concentrate and rise to the challenge of using simple phrases and trying to work out new words. At the end of an effective lesson Year 7 pupils, with very little difficulty, matched the French words to the English ones on an attractive worksheet and confidently read through the completed sentences.
108. Pupils in Year 8 develop their vocabulary well, know the words for a range of clothing and speak these with a good accent. As part of the well planned work on European awareness, Year 9 pupils showed an interest in the Euro currency and were keen to know the value of the notes and coins shown to them. Because the work is made relevant and interesting pupils in Year 10 concentrated well as they looked at travel brochures and discussed with increasing interest the places to which people go for skiing and winter holidays.
109. Pupils know the format of lessons well because the teacher has established routines and is skilled in focusing pupils' attention on the vocabulary they are learning. The teacher uses questions and answers effectively to reinforce learning through the repetition of phrases. An opportunity for writing, reading, speaking and listening is effectively included in each lesson. The teacher provides a good model for learning the language because she speaks clearly and not too quickly. Pupils look forward to the games that are a feature of many lessons and, as a result of the good range of activities in each lesson, they have positive attitudes towards learning French. They take a pride in their work, are pleased with their achievements and are keen to display good pieces of work they produce to show what they have learned.
110. The planned scheme of work has been adapted well to meet the needs of each group and practical activities are an integral part of most lessons. Assessment is effectively used to amend future lesson planning. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge of the subject and an infectious enthusiasm for the French language and culture that she communicates effectively to the pupils.

MUSIC

111. In music, all pupils achieve well and a few older pupils gain accreditation through the Associated Board of the Royal School for Music. Pupils, who are taught by a teacher who has a good knowledge and understanding of the subject, achieve particularly well in performing and listening and applying knowledge and understanding. Because teaching is consistently good pupils achieve well and make good progress. All pupils are confident to perform in front of others, in front of their class and in front of adults, for example in concerts.
112. As a result of good teaching, Year 7 pupils listen well, try very hard and show good control of beat and pulse. They are effectively introduced to rhythms, for example by saying a poem then by tapping in time with the teacher to achieve three beats to the bar. Most recognise a tune by

listening to the introduction being played and are keen and eager to join in. One pupil recognised the music he was listening to as being from 2001, A Space Odyssey. All participate fully and are pleased with their own achievements. Great fun was had by all when pupils danced the waltz with members of staff, counting carefully 123,123. Year 8 pupils use sheet music to help them clap rhythm patterns while keeping the pulse and enjoy playing a variety of percussion instruments. Very firm but also warm and encouraging management of pupils and the teacher's high expectations of their achievements are known and understood by pupils, who give great effort to rise to them and achieve of their best. Pupils use the appropriate technical vocabulary well and remember, for example, what a semi-breve and a minim are. At the end of one lesson that finished with pupils accompanying the teacher playing the piano, when asked what an accompaniment was one pupil enthusiastically replied "Me". Lessons are well planned to enable all to participate at an appropriate level and music plays an important part in the development of pupils' listening, language and communication skills.

113. Older pupils delight in working with electronic keyboards, reading musical notation and exploring the effect, for example, of using crotchets and quavers. The series of lessons are well planned to enable all to participate and build on and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. The teacher has high expectations of pupils and pupils rise to these. The teacher provides very good opportunities for pupils to experiment and compose. Using correct notation, they record their compositions and all are eager to play them for other pupils. Pupils are fully involved in their activities and very responsive to the teacher, and at the end of the lesson they reflect on what they have achieved and how their compositions could be improved. Throughout all activities pupils show very good attention and listening. All pupils use the keyboard confidently, make a very good attempt to play the phrases of music and throughout show very good effort and concentration. Excellent relationships support pupils' participation and confidence, and learning support assistants play an important role in supporting individual pupils.
114. The curriculum for music is very well planned and organised with all aspects well covered. The teacher who takes all classes for music has a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and of the pupils' learning needs. Work is planned to enable pupils to participate at an appropriately high and challenging level. Great enthusiasm and fun, that pupils respond to, pervade all musical activities. A well qualified and skilful instructor very ably provides individual music tuition which successfully builds on from the work achieved in lessons. Resources are good and well used, although there are few instruments from other cultures for pupils to experience and few ICT programs in use. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in the progress pupils make in music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

115. Pupils' achievements are good in games. They also make good progress in basic fitness training. Accreditation in the subject has been introduced at GCSE level and results have improved steadily over the last three years to a level well above the average for schools of this type. The significant improvement in pupils' learning since the last inspection is due to consistently good teaching. The range of activities available through the subject's curriculum, however, is very narrow. Although gymnastics and athletics do appear, albeit very infrequently, on the long term plan for the subject, swimming and dance do not and outdoor pursuits are limited to activities on an annual residential trip for one group. As a result, pupils are unable to make the progress of which they are capable in any of these activities.
116. This situation is particularly regrettable because pupils develop very positive attitudes to sport and physical exercise. There has clearly been a transformation in these attitudes since the last inspection. Good teaching, with significant strengths in a broad range of games and in general fitness training, achieves an enthusiastic response from pupils. In their football skills sessions, for example, pupils tried hard to improve their performance, listened well to the teacher and were very co-operative. There are good levels of individual skills among pupils at all ages and their progress is also very noticeable in teamwork and tactics. Teaching demonstrates very good organisation and control. Lessons are busy and purposeful and maintain a lively pace. The contribution of the subject's learning support assistant is very effective.

117. The fitness levels and stamina of lower attaining pupils are below average for their age in many cases but they participated well in the fitness session seen for one of the Year 11 classes. They were clearly familiar with the routine and were able to identify and name the specific muscles involved in each exercise in response to the teacher's questions. In discussion with the inspector after the session, they demonstrated a sound knowledge of the benefits of regular exercise and a healthy life style, although this did not extend to their implementing them in practice. They engage in no sport out of school, for example, but they did indicate an interest in swimming and the use of a multi-gym if they were to become available in the school. Other higher attaining pupils do take part in competitive fixtures on behalf of the school, in football, basketball and a very successful school cricket team.
118. The subject's co-ordinator has only recently been confirmed in the post. He has a clear vision of what must be done to improve the opportunities available for pupils and also the subject's planning and scheme of assessment. The major factor working against the development of the subject is the poor quality of its accommodation and resources. The space for indoor activities is very restricted and contains inadequate facilities for activities such as gymnastics. Outside there is one heavily used football pitch and a hard play area which is currently out of use because of problems with the surface. Resources are sufficient for a good number of games but totally inadequate for other activities.
119. There have clearly been some significant improvements in physical education since the last inspection, in teaching, in pupils' attainments and attitudes and in the leadership of the subject. The lack of progress in the subject's accommodation and resources, however, and the limited use of other facilities in the locality means that pupils continue to receive a programme which is unacceptably narrow.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

120. Pupils' achievement and progress in religious education are satisfactory as a result of satisfactory teaching and planning. Standards are similar to the last inspection. The plan of what is to be taught each year is good and based on the comprehensive locally agreed syllabus. The work appropriately promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and fits in well with personal and social education.
121. As a result of excellent relationships and interesting activities pupils attend well to what is being taught. Pupils in Year 7 gained an immediate sense of what makes something 'special' when the teacher showed them a model very precious to her. They listened attentively as they took turns in describing something precious to them and effectively expressed their own feelings about it. Following a clear explanation about Lent by the teacher pupils quietly reflected on a target for Lent they could set for themselves. Through appropriately linking pupils' experiences to religious occasions, by the end of a Year 8 lesson pupils could explain the meaning of 'Shrove Tuesday' and 'Ash Wednesday' and the reason people made pancakes to use up their food.
122. As a result of knowing their ideas are valued pupils are confident to contribute to discussions. In an interesting discussion Year 10 pupils had several ideas about life after death. They listened attentively as one pupil explained that there are many ideas from other religions and that some people believe in spirits and ghosts. When talking about reincarnation pupils showed a mature and responsible attitude. Pupils' personal and social development is effectively supported when they consider right and wrong behaviour in our society. A lively discussion took place about someone's dilemma when they were asked to look after stolen property and pupils enjoyed talking about what makes a good citizen or a good friend.
123. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There is no specialist teacher and most pupils are taught religious education by their class teacher. Not all teachers have a good knowledge of the subject so the co-ordinator, to support teaching, plans all lessons. Teachers use questions well to help pupils extend their thinking and answers. They effectively encourage them to join in discussions and listen to each other's contributions and point of view. Practical activities, such as

the making of pancakes, are valuable in reinforcing new ideas and in maintaining pupils' interest. Teaching by the experienced co-ordinator is very good because of the emphasis on learning from the teachings of religion as well as learning facts and information about religion.

124. Leadership and management of the subject are good. There is no external accreditation, but an internal accreditation system is planned for this year. Stimulating and moving assemblies make a strong contribution to religious education and pupils show great respect when they visit local churches. Religious education enhances pupils' personal development through the discussions and increased understanding and knowledge of several religions.