

INSPECTION REPORT

THE BEECROFT HILL SCHOOL

Cannock

LEA area: Staffordshire

Unique reference number: 124514

Headteacher: Miss Judith Anderson

Reporting inspector: Adrian Simm
21138

Dates of inspection: 9th - 11th September 2002

Inspection number: 249411

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

© Crown copyright 2002

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Severe Learning Difficulties

School category: Community special

Age range of pupils: 2 - 19 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Brunswick Road
Cannock
Staffordshire

Postcode: WS11 2SF

Telephone number: 01543 510216

Fax number: 01543 510222

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr B Heighway

Date of previous inspection: 16.3.98 - 20.3.98

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
21138	Adrian Simm	Registered inspector
9348	Mary Le Mage	Lay inspector
27409	Sue Hunt	Team inspector
10782	Henry Moreton	Team inspector
7994	Pam Weston	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Chase Russell Ltd
85 Shores Green Drive
Wincham
Cheshire
CW9 6EJ

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
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	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	10
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	14
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	15
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	16

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Beecroft Hill School is a community special school for pupils aged between 2 and 19 years who have severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. A significant number of pupils have challenging behaviour including high-dependency autism. Only three Nursery and Reception age children are on roll and are taught with a class of pupils in Years 1 and 2. Pupils come from a wide catchment area including many areas that are socially disadvantaged. Forty one per cent of pupils on roll claim free school meals, which is similar to the last inspection. The school is approved for a maximum of 90 pupils. It is popular and has 91 pupils on roll; 51 boys and 40 girls. Twenty-seven of these pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties. Pupils' attainment on entry is very low in comparison to their chronological age. A very small number of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds or have English as an additional language. All pupils have statements of special educational needs. Around 25 per cent of teaching staff are new to the school in the last two years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is highly effective in everything it provides for all of its pupils. Very good teaching and learning throughout the school ensures that pupils do very well. This is because the leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and deputy headteacher are excellent. Very keen and knowledgeable staff, a highly effective governing body and very supportive parents are all part of the outstanding team. The school achieves these results with income that is less than the average received nationally in similar schools and in a small building that in many ways the school has outgrown. The school provides excellent value for money.

What the school does well

- The school provides very effective teaching that is very well matched to all pupils' individual learning needs. As a result, pupils learn and achieve very well.
- Pupils and teachers do very well because of the excellent leadership and management of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior staff. They are 'crystal clear' about the school's strengths, areas for development and how these can be achieved. Governors have an integral role in this, which is very effective.
- Pupils and their families are valued very highly in all ways. This leads to welfare provision that is outstanding, learning opportunities that are very good and pupils who are keen to try their best.

What could be improved

- The provision of specific accommodation for teaching and learning in science, design and technology and in art and design remains an issue from the last inspection.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in March 1998 and has made exceptional improvement since then. To build on what was already a strong picture, the school treated very seriously the issues for development highlighted at the last inspection. In line with its aim to 'provide an excellent learning environment' so that each pupil can achieve effectively, the school has been relentless with its developments. Pupils' achievement that was satisfactory is now very good. Teaching and learning that were good are now very good. Long term planning for teaching, some curriculum areas particularly for the 14 to 19 year olds and ways of assessing pupils' standards were all key areas for development. Overall, these are now very good. The only issue that remains outstanding is that of specialist accommodation for science, design and technology and art and design. The school has made great strides in the development of its accommodation such as the new unit for Years 12 to 14, renewing the sensory garden, introducing an information and communication technology (ICT) suite and the current building programme for a school library. The local education authority (LEA) has supported this financially. The school budget has not yet stretched to financing the science, technology and art and design facilities although the school

continues to seek support from the LEA for these. The school has made the right choices for development and at the right time. The school is very well placed to develop even further.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 6	by Year 11	By Year 13	Key
speaking and listening	A	A	A	A	very good A
Reading	B	B	B	B	good B
Writing	B	B	B	B	satisfactory C
Mathematics	B	B	B	B	unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education	A	A	A	A	poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A	A	

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

Since the last inspection, the school has improved significantly its assessment and ways of evaluating pupils' achievement. It is building a very good track record of setting targets that are usually met or exceeded. The school sets targets for each pupil in their individual education plans (IEPs) and is successful in expecting at least 65 per cent of these targets to be met. Also, the school has targets for groups of pupils in Years 2, 6, 9 and 11 in July 2003. These are in English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education (PSHE). The targets are sensitive to individual pupils' progress. Achievement by all pupils is very good in speaking and listening skills. They are particularly good in the listening element, in PSHE and in personal targets in IEPs. Achievement is good in reading, writing and mathematics. Those pupils with English as an additional language achieve well as do pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, more complex behavioural difficulties or speech and language needs. The school's provision and staff development in ICT has moved on significantly since the last inspection. It has paid off in improved pupils' standards and achievement is now very good. Pupils use their ICT skills in a range of lessons such as electronic books in English, information finding in geography, exploring shapes in mathematics and taking and printing digital photographs in support of design and technology work. Literacy and numeracy skills are good and used by pupils in a broad range of lessons and situations including lunchtimes and assemblies.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good. They really enjoy their lessons and are enthusiastically involved with the life of the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour of all pupils is very good in the classrooms. Those pupils who move around the school and playgrounds independently, do so in a sensible and polite manner.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships with each other and with staff are very good. Pupils' initiative and personal responsibility are developing very well.
Attendance	Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and close to the average found

	nationally for similar schools.
--	---------------------------------

The extremely caring environment that the school provides ensures that pupils, including those with more complex difficulties, respond and learn very well. The very good relationships that exist between staff and pupils contribute to an atmosphere within the school, which is pleasant and calm. Staff encourage pupils to respect the opinions of each other and to co-operate in their work whether in class groups, smaller groups or individually. This works very well and as a result pupils respond extremely positively. Personal development of pupils is very good. Some pupils carry out tasks independently including as monitors for various aspects of daily school life. Whilst some pupils are helped in eating, dressing, undressing and toileting, they are encouraged successfully to be as independent as possible. All students work in collaboration, whatever the level of task. The overall result is very good and in terms of independent living skills, pupils achieve very well.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 - 6	Years 7 - 11	Years 12 - 13
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

Overall, teaching and learning are very good. Teaching is characterised by very good knowledge of the subjects being taught and a very clear idea of what the lesson is going to help the pupils to learn. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the pupils' individual needs which helps the teaching to be adjusted accordingly. Consequently, pupils are as clear as they can be what is expected of them. As the difficulty of work is matched to their needs, they thrive on the challenge and put everything into their learning. Changes of focus by staff at just the right times maintains very good levels of concentration and effort in pupils, including those pupils with more complex needs. Teachers present new tasks in small steps of increasing difficulty, which helps learning to build on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. This is where the improved assessment techniques and their use in planning are really paying off. Teachers and classroom assistants work 'as one', providing very good individual and small group support and this contributes significantly to the pupils' learning and progress. Literacy, numeracy and personal development skills have a high profile in subjects across the curriculum where they are practised and reinforced very well in a range of subjects. The school has prioritised improving pupils' communication and this has been very well supported by staff development. Special teaching techniques developed by staff are not restricted to lessons but are used consistently. For example, in the dining hall at meal times. Very effective staff training in ICT has been carried out using the 'new opportunities fund' national strategy. On just two occasions during the inspection that teaching and learning were less than good, some pupils were not as fully involved in lessons as they might have been.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum provided by the school is very good. Planning for teaching and learning is consistent between teachers and ensures pupils' new learning builds carefully on what they know already.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	This is very good. The school takes this a step further in the high level of support given to parents who also have English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural	Overall provision is very good. In lessons, pupils learn to co-operate, to consider the needs of others and to work in groups. The school has very good routines for this and tremendously high expectations. These ensure a very positive response from pupils. Especially commendable at the

development	start of the school year with a small number of new pupils.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is excellent. The school has worked extremely hard in securing a safe environment in which everyone can work. The teachers know the pupils very well and give them very good encouragement in their activities.

The school has made significant improvements in its assessment of pupils' academic progress and personal development. This is now linked seamlessly with pupils' individual education plans. This means that the school can now evaluate just how well pupils are achieving in the areas of the curriculum that are real strengths such as speaking and listening and others that need a little extra focus such as shape and sorting in mathematics. All pupils, whatever their needs or diversity of culture are valued equally. The school uses the local and wider community very well and has strong links with other schools and colleges. This widens pupils' experiences including for those pupils who are able to join in with classes in mainstream schools. It also identifies strengths of pupils with more profound and complex learning difficulties and where appropriate, they join in with other classes in school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior staff have their fingers on the 'pulse' of the school. Their leadership and management are excellent. Their vision and methods of ensuring that the school sets out to improve continually. They are particularly effective in providing excellent help for pupils and their families. The school has developed an atmosphere and way of working in which all staff build skills, which results in them leading their areas of responsibility very well.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities. Governors know the school very well both informally and from planned visits as part of their evaluation procedures. They are very effective in their role.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has developed an excellent range of techniques to monitor, analyse and use data to further improve pupils' achievement. Standards data is available now in many subjects and already feeds into measuring pupils' achievement against their individual education plan targets. The school is working hard on how to take this even further in school planning, self-evaluation and comparing how well it is doing against similar schools.
The strategic use of resources	Exceptionally careful financial planning supports the school's day-to-day priorities. Governors have improved the school's accommodation in many ways. They have continuously and successfully balanced the need between building improvements and staffing levels in a school where, in many ways, pupil-numbers have outgrown the accommodation.

The governing body and every member of staff, whatever their area of responsibility, consistently 'step back' and ask themselves just how well the school is doing and what else needs to be done. Staff are consulted about developments, parents are asked for their views from time-to-time and the whole process is supported efficiently by the school's use of its budget. The school is working hard to find ways in which it can compare itself against similar schools; non-more-so than in its current development of assessment procedures. The school applies the principles of best value very well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How much the children like the school;• How comfortable parents feel about discussing issues with the school;• How well the school is led and managed;• The teaching is good;• Children make good progress.	There were no points that a significant number of parents would like to see improved.

Inspectors consider the parents to be very perceptive and agree with their views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The school provides very effective teaching that is very well matched to all pupils' individual learning needs. As a result, pupils learn and achieve very well.

1. Overall, teaching and learning are very good for all of the pupils in the school. This is because teachers know exactly at what level to 'pitch' their teaching for each pupil in their class. This information comes from a set of detailed assessments of what pupils already know, understand and do and knowing what their next steps of development are. This works for all pupils regardless of age, complexity of learning difficulty and language level. Together with very good subject knowledge, all of this ensures that teachers know realistically where they want the pupils to get to by the end of each lesson. Consequently, pupils are as clear as they can be about what is expected of them. The difficulty of work is carefully matched to their needs. As a result they thrive on the challenge and put everything into their learning.

2. During the inspection, nearly all teaching and learning were at least good with around half, very good or excellent. All staff understand and address the schools' drive to improve pupils' individual communication skills. For some pupils this is done through normal literacy lessons and by including the teaching and learning of literacy skills in other subjects of the curriculum. Some children who started at the school in the reception year used just gesture or sound and gesture to show what they wanted. They are now joining in with songs or building a range of early vocabulary skills and expressing themselves independently. This shows very good achievement. For other pupils such as those younger ones with English as an additional language and for pupils with more complex and profound learning difficulties, something extra is needed and provided. This is exemplified by the staffs' very good use of signing and other specific communication techniques. Where new techniques or additional staff training are required, these are immediately scheduled.

3. In parts of the school, for example in Years 9 to 13, pupils work in ability sets for English and mathematics. This means the teacher focuses even more on teaching points appropriate to a particular level of pupils' understanding. In an English lesson to develop pupils' independent writing skills, higher attaining pupils used word-books and simple dictionaries to complete their work. This ability set was further divided into smaller ability groups that matched pupils' knowledge and understanding. All pupils made good attempts to write an account to go closely with a picture chosen by them from a range of photographs of their classroom. Some dictated their thoughts to the teacher and then wrote under the teacher's writing for themselves. Others made good attempts to spell more commonly used words with clear and independent script. With support, the most advanced pupils took photographs of each other for their diaries and made very good independent attempts at writing their personal details such as their name and address. Given that many of these

pupils, when they first started school in the reception year, found difficulty in holding a pencil or talking about illustrations they liked in books, they have achieved well.

4. In mathematics, speaking and listening skills feature equally as highly. Pupils in Years 9 to 13 accept and discuss advice from staff on how to use a balance to find out which of two items is the heavier. Higher attaining pupils measure quantities accurately to the nearest 100 grams. Given that many of these pupils on entry to the school in the reception year needed much support initially to count or even show interest in number or measuring activities, this is good achievement.

5. Similar success was clear in a geography lesson with Year 8 pupils. Activities within the lesson were appropriate to pupils' individual needs. Again, speaking and listening skills were a high priority with higher attaining pupils responding very well to the use of a Literacy Strategy style 'big book' and beginning to know and discuss the types of wildlife found in 'rain forests'. Two pupils worked well on the computer to find relevant pictures from a software programme that could be used to help record their understanding of their work.

6. Throughout school, very good lessons are characterised by changes of focus by staff at just the right time. This strategy maintains a very good level of concentration and effort, including those pupils with more complex needs. These changes can be quite rapid for pupils with high dependency needs. It demands very close teamwork from all staff especially where more than one member of staff are employed to work with just one pupil. Nevertheless, this works very well and good improvements in concentration and the pupils' ability to relate to others is the outcome. For all pupils, teachers present new tasks in small steps of increasing difficulty and this helps pupils' learning to build on previous knowledge and understanding. This is where the improved assessment techniques and their use in planning are really paying off. Teachers and classroom assistants work 'as one', providing very good individual and small group support and this contributes significantly to the pupils' learning and progress.

7. The 'glue' that holds all of this together are the excellent IEPs for the pupils. These are clear and include each pupils' strengths as well as the next important areas for development in literacy, numeracy and personal development needs. Targets are precise, incorporate timescales and success expectations and are linked very closely to the school's performance and assessment methods. Not only do the IEPs set out exactly what is to be taught but are also a very good measure of success. Put together as an assessment package, teachers are clear how well individual pupils are achieving, how well the school is achieving as a whole and where they need to concentrate to improve even more. This immediately feeds back into teaching and learning.

Pupils and teachers do very well because of the excellent leadership and management of the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior staff. They are 'crystal clear' about the school's strengths, areas for development and how these can be achieved. Governors have an integral role in this, which is very effective.

8. The headteacher provides excellent leadership that creates a very clear educational direction for the school. She ensures that all staff work very hard to successfully implement the overall aim of the school in 'providing an excellent learning environment that addresses each individual's needs and enables them to achieve'. This she monitors in a range of ways including seeing just how well teachers' lesson planning is put into practice in the classrooms. Everyone has worked hard to improve the school significantly since the last inspection. There is a very positive school atmosphere, which reflects the commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils. The school reflects this clear stance in the very positive attitude that it promotes. The headteacher motivates staff extremely well within a caring and supportive atmosphere.

9. The governing body takes a very effective role in supporting the staff and pupils. They gain first hand knowledge of what is happening in the school from visits to school during the school-day, regular meetings and making best use of governors' individual skills and the time they have available. The governors have gained for themselves a very good working knowledge of the school's strengths and areas to target for development. This has been part of the success in how the school has moved on so well. The school improvement plan has provided a very strong framework within which the school has progressed. There is a good perspective on raising standards, addressing the issues from the last inspection and the needs of the school. Because levels of funding are slightly below the national average for similar schools, exceptionally careful financial planning has been necessary to support the school's day-to-day priorities. Governors have continuously and successfully balanced the need between building improvements and staffing levels. This resulted in a carry forward in budget from 2001/2002 of just over £118,000. However, this was planned and budgeted for very well in support of the current library building project and other accommodation improvements. The review of subjects, schemes of work and the more precise use of assessment information to raise standards more have been at the forefront of development. The most impressive part of the governors' work in the school is their total involvement in self-evaluation. The headteacher has put excellent procedures into place through which the governors focus on areas of school life. The school's accuracy in self-evaluation shows that the governors are building a very clear idea for themselves on what makes an effective school and what they need to do to improve further.

10. The deputy headteacher clearly understands her role and fulfils it exceptionally well. The school's main priorities are the drive to raise standards by monitoring the achievements of pupils'. This includes their success on personal targets, and by inducting and training new teachers and monitoring the quality of teaching. This involves checks on pupils' work and teachers' planning, and visits to lessons. Training to develop staff's skills is integral to the school's success and this is very effectively included in the schools' development planning. Staff's continuing professional development is very carefully costed and managed by the deputy headteacher who keeps the governors clearly informed about the success of the programme.

11. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff and governors, in relation to their responsibilities, step back and assess how well they are doing. This they do exceptionally well. Where possible, this is compared with other schools. In this respect, the work of a senior member of staff in her role as assessment co-ordinator, has been and continues to be paramount. She continues to lead a group of staff from schools across the LEA in improving ways of assessing pupils' standards and comparing how well pupils and schools are doing. She has also led the drive to successfully link the use of the school's improved assessment strategies with pupils' IEPs. The school's improvement cycle is drawn together in a very clear, manageable and effective development plan, which is a 'working document'. It pulls together the threads of 'what do we need to achieve this year', 'how will we make this happen', 'what will it cost', 'how well did we do' and 'what next needs to be done'. The headteacher and deputy headteacher ensure that individual staff's needs, highlighted through their performance management, link seamlessly with the school's needs as a whole. The sole aim is to offer excellent provision and achieve the highest standards for both the pupils and their families. Recognition of the quality of the school's provision came by way of achievement in Investors in People status. The school also gained a government School Achievement Award in recognition of high standards. Senior staff played a vital role at the forefront of these initiatives.

12. All staff contribute to the effectiveness of the school and ensure that pupils, teachers and governors are fully supported. School assistants, administrative and resource staff,

domestic and catering staff, site staff and coach escorts all fulfil their responsibilities with great commitment and energy. They are all part of the team and have appropriate access to training and development where a need is recognised. This team approach clearly shows the school's capacity to retain its strengths and develop even further.

Pupils and their families are valued very highly in all ways. This leads to welfare provision that is outstanding, learning opportunities that are very good and pupils who are keen to try their best.

13. Parents have very good views of the school and have confidence in the teachers. Those parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting or met with inspectors during the inspection, spoke with some affection about the school and the improvements it has made since the last inspection. Parents are very appreciative of the support they and their families receive in their everyday lives and of the efforts made by the teachers to help their children to develop. The reports parents receive about their children's progress are very clear and cover all aspects of the curriculum. The children's individual progress is set clearly within the context of the class as a whole. Where necessary, translation is made available to families who do not understand English. Frequently, families are surveyed about their views about school and these are followed up. The school generates a sense of community very well because it attaches high importance to the creation of a school where every child is valued. Part of this is in ensuring that all staff are alert to the need to protect children from harm. Examples of this are

- all staff including coach escorts and lunch time staff are included in child protection training
- a high percentage of staff have first aid qualifications
- very comprehensive risk assessments are carried out for all activities both in school and for trips out of school
- staff have very clearly identified responsibilities in the school's health and safety plan
- individual dietary needs are indicated at all meal times
- all staff are police checked
- individual medical needs are clearly known to all staff
- much effort has been put into INTERNET protection for the pupils as the ICT provision in school has become more advanced.
- arrangements to deal with medical conditions are well managed and the school has been successful, recently, in appointing a school nurse.

14. The school provides very good learning opportunities for the pupils. The classroom curriculum is good and has developed well since the last inspection. This is particularly so in PSHE, ICT and in careers work, work experience and college links for pupils in Years 9 to 13. These were some of the key issues from the last inspection that have seen excellent improvement. Extra-curricular activities are very good even though they are difficult to arrange because many pupils travel a good distance to the school. Some pupils use the school buses, which leave soon after the end of the afternoon session. The school offers study support activities at lunch times that include drama and ICT sessions. In addition, residential visits, sports events with other schools, music, drama and theatre visits are all organised. All pupils, regardless of the complexity of their needs join in, such as the ice-skating trip for those with profound and multiple learning difficulties and the visit to the local fast-food restaurant

that included pupils with tube-feeding needs. Very strong links with other schools and colleges offers yet more opportunities to match the school's provision to the pupils' needs. Those pupils, regardless of age, who are able to benefit from working with their mainstream school peers for part of their work, do so. The pupils in school who in general work within the classes for pupils with more profound difficulties experience other classes when the activity is something they enjoy or will benefit from, such as music. Pupils nearing the end of their time at the school are offered opportunities at a local college to experience courses, which may be of benefit to them after they leave school. All of these activities promote language development and social skills.

15. Not only does the school offer provision that is very well matched to pupils' individual needs but it is exciting. Pupils enjoy school and this is confirmed by parents. The school was only in its first full week back after the summer holidays, when the inspection took place; some children were new to the school. All had settled very quickly into the excellent routines of school life. As a result, the vast majority of pupils, including those with significant physical or emotional difficulties, responded and learned very well. Pupils display much enthusiasm in lessons and around the school. The very good relationships that exist between staff and pupils, contribute to an atmosphere within the school which is pleasant and calm. The staff encourage pupils to respect the opinions of each other and work and co-operate in small groups, and as a result their response is extremely positive. This includes social times such as at the dining tables at lunch time. Pupils' behaviour in classrooms and on the playground and lunchtime periods is very good. During the inspection week no bullying was observed. When pupils who display challenging or unacceptable behaviour commence to disrupt lessons, staff immediately react and manage the situation in a sensitive and appropriate manner. For example, in one numeracy lesson, a pupil who was not joining in as expected was swiftly withdrawn from the lesson but quickly returned after a period of quiet reflection and was then able to join in with the rest of the lesson. Whilst at times, some pupils are later arriving at school in the morning than others due to transport difficulties, the keenness of those pupils' present to work hard and enjoy lessons means that lessons usually start on time for them. Very nearly all parents responding to the questionnaire for the inspection, agreed that their children enjoy school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

The provision of specific accommodation for teaching and learning in science/design and technology and in art and design remains an issue from the last inspection.

16. At the last inspection in March 1998, a key issue for action was to

- provide specialist subject facilities in science ,design and technology and art

Following this, in November 1998, a building survey was carried out with many additional shortcomings of the accommodation noted. The summary of this report concluded that

- this school is too small for the number and age range of children it is currently accommodating.

In response to the last inspection and the building survey, the governing body has made considerable progress in addressing many of the issues under their control with a budget that is less than average in comparison with other similar schools nationally. The school has balanced exceptionally well

- the costs of meeting the day-to-day educational needs of the pupils

- the ratio of staff to pupils that could be afforded and how they could be effectively employed within such a small building, and
- planned and prioritised improvements to the building during a time when the LEA was reviewing special needs provision throughout all of its schools

17. The school has improved vastly the accommodation for pupils in Years 12 and 13; purpose built to ensure the teaching and learning in life skills. It has linked effectively the training of staff in ICT skills with the development of the new ICT suite. The sensory garden has been re-designed and improved and much work has been carried out in making the premises more secure. A major building project is currently under way to provide pupils with a library. The LEA has contributed to some of these developments. All staff work extremely hard, in crowded classrooms and with more pupils per member of staff, than in many similar schools. In many ways, the staff overcome the drawbacks of the accommodation but this does not take away the fact that the school is still short of specialist accommodation for science, design and technology and art and design.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To build on its obvious strengths in leadership, teaching and learning and the pupils' very good achievement, the school should

- (1) Improve the school accommodation as set out in the last inspection in introducing specialist facilities for science, design and technology and art and design. (Paragraphs 16 and 17)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	31
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	13

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	12	14	1	1		
Percentage	10	39	45	3	3		

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 three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	91
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	37

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8
Average class size	10.1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: YN – Y14

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	585

	£
Total income	895,818
Total expenditure	863,614
Expenditure per pupil	9490
Balance brought forward from previous year	86,410
Balance carried forward to next year	118,613

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	91
Number of questionnaires returned	46

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	81	17			2
My child is making good progress in school.	70	26	2	2	
Behaviour in the school is good.	67	31	2		
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	47	7		7
The teaching is good.	81	17	2		
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	75	16	7	2	
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	20			
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	30	2		
The school works closely with parents.	81	15	2	2	
The school is well led and managed.	85	11	2		2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	82	14	6		
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	63	25	5	2	5