

INSPECTION REPORT

ADELAIDE SCHOOL

Crewe

LEA area: Cheshire

Unique reference number: 131558

Head teacher: Mr L B Willday

Reporting inspector: Mr M H Whitaker
1424

Dates of inspection: 25th – 27th June 2003

Inspection number: 249431

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Adelaide Street Crewe
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Telephone number:	01270 255661
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Ollerhead
Date of previous inspection:	January 2001

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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1424	Mr M H Whitaker	Registered inspector	Physical education	What sort of School is it?
			Citizenship	The school's results and pupils achievements.
			Education inclusion	How well is the school led and managed?
				What should the school do to improve further?
9511	Mrs A Longfield	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
				How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
16722	Mrs N Buckingham	Team inspector	English	How well are pupils taught?
			Design and technology	
			Modern foreign language	
1769	Mr M Holohan	Team inspector	Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Science	
			Information and communication technology	
			Music	
			Religious education	
18932	Mrs H Jones	Team inspector	Mathematics	
			Art and design	
			Geography	
			History	
			English as an additional language	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Adelaide School is a day special school for boys and girls aged 11 – 16 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties. There are currently 37 boys and no girls on the roll of the school. All have statements of special educational needs. The degree of complexity of their needs has increased in recent years. Because of the timing of the inspection Year 11 pupils were not in school. No pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds attend the school. Most pupils join the school at the beginning of Year 7 although a number are referred later in their secondary careers. Whenever they join the school their attainment is below that expected for their age either because they have missed some time in education, because of their behaviour or because they have additional learning difficulties. More than a third of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. Pupils come from a wide geographical area and some have long journeys to school. Many pupils are from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Adelaide is an effective school with strong features. It is very well placed to develop further. Pupils of all ages make good progress and achieve well overall. This is because of the consistently good teaching and the very effective leadership and management throughout the school. Progress and achievement are particularly good in science and information and communication technology. Teamwork and relationships are key elements and they contribute to the positive attitudes, achievement and determination to improve evident amongst staff, governors and pupils. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• enables pupils to achieve very well in science and information and communication technology (ICT) and well in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics.• develops positive attitudes and enthusiasm towards school amongst pupils.• is very effectively led and managed by the head teacher and key staff.• governors take a very active role in developing the school.• teaching is consistently good with relationships and teamwork being key elements.

What could be improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• opportunities for extended writing throughout the curriculum.• the use of homework to support learning, particularly for students following nationally accredited courses.• pupils knowledge of their own learning and what they need to do to improve further.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvement since it was last inspected in January 2001 when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. The issues identified have been successfully tackled; leadership and management is very good, pupils in Key Stage 3 now make good progress and the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. The school provides a good curriculum; issues related to science and ICT have been tackled very well so that provision and progress in these areas are very good. Assessment is used effectively to raise standards although there is still a need to improve the quality of marking to help pupils to understand more fully what they need to do to improve further.

In addition to tackling the issues arising from the inspection the school has successfully developed other initiatives such as the Key Stage 3 strategy and the introduction of citizenship. The school is very well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year 9	by Year 11	Key	
speaking and listening	B	B	very good	A
reading	B	B	good	B
writing	C	C	satisfactory	C
mathematics	B	B	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	B	B	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B		

Pupils of all ages make good progress in speaking and listening and in reading; they achieve well, building on their learning, because of the good teaching they receive and the opportunities to develop these skills in other subjects. Progress in writing is satisfactory, but not as good as other areas of English because pupils do not get enough opportunities to develop their extended writing skills in other subjects, where, often, they are only required to write short answers to questions. Progress in mathematics is good throughout the school. Pupils benefit considerably from the expertise amongst the teachers and, as a result, they enjoy mathematics and achieve well. Achievement in science and ICT is very good with all pupils making very good progress. These subjects benefit from high quality teaching, very good resources and facilities and effective leadership and management. In the other subjects pupils achieve well and make good progress in art and design, design and technology, humanities, music, personal, social and health education and physical education. Achievement and progress are sound in religious education and French.

The school uses assessment information to set appropriate but challenging targets for individual pupils and for the whole school. These targets, although not always met, are effective in raising expectations and achievement.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have positive attitudes to school. They enjoy coming and join in lessons with enthusiasm.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They behave particularly well in the community. Any misbehaviour is handled well with little impact on the learning of others.
Personal development and	Good. Relationships between pupils are generally good. They are very

relationships	good with staff. Personal development is promoted well.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is higher than in similar schools.

The school has created a very positive attitude to learning amongst the pupils and, as a result, they are very enthusiastic about school. Because of their emotional and behavioural difficulties there are times when behaviour can be inappropriate but these are effectively managed using pupils increasing levels of maturity and the strong relationships between staff and pupils. Attendance is high compared with similar schools because pupils try very hard to attend, despite the long journeys some have to make. When outside school, for example at the local football club, swimming pool and college of further education pupils behave very well and are a credit to the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. In English, mathematics and personal, social and health education, including citizenship it is constantly good because of the knowledge of the teachers, their effective planning and the management of pupils. In science and information and communication technology teaching is consistently very good. Very detailed planning coupled with good facilities and the knowledge of teachers contribute significantly to the very good teaching. Literacy and numeracy are taught well throughout the school, although higher demands could be made in extended writing.

Planning ensures that the needs of pupils with different capabilities are met, and, as a result, all pupils learn effectively making good progress and achieving well.

Homework is not used as effectively as it could be to support pupils' learning, particularly in work concerned with nationally accredited courses. Marking does not always give pupils' enough information about what they should do to improve further.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a good curriculum which is enhanced through the use of the community facilities and the use of specialist visitors.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for the moral development of pupils is very good. Pupils are trusted to borrow expensive items of equipment to enhance their learning and they respond very well. Provision for cultural development is now good although more could be done to promote multi-cultural aspects.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Effective procedures have been established and these have a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and progress.

Parents regard the school very highly. They feel strongly that the school is very effective with their children and this, in turn, has had a very beneficial effect on their family life. The school has developed good procedures for monitoring pupils academic progress and personal development. Good

guidance and support is provided so that pupils develop confidence and positive attitudes to school. Procedures for promoting and monitoring good behaviour and good attendance are effective.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The senior management team has been very effective in developing the school. All staff share a common vision for the school and management systems are well-established.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Very well. Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have been very active in its development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has effective systems in place to monitor and evaluate its performance. The analysis has proved successful in raising standards and improving the quality of education provided.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Staff are very well deployed to meet the needs of pupils and the school has managed its resources very well to maintain good staffing levels.

The leadership and management of the school are very good and have been very effective in developing the school. All staff and governors have worked hard together to create a climate for learning where pupils, often from challenging backgrounds, are keen to come to school and want to learn. Management structures have been established to monitor and evaluate progress and to take effective action to improve the school. Accommodation is good with specialist facilities for science, information and communication technology and design and technology. Despite limited on-site facilities for physical education the school uses community resources very well to ensure pupils receive a balanced programme. Staffing levels are good with a broad range of expertise. Teamwork is very effective and resources are good.

The school compares its performance, structure and costs with similar schools and applies the principles of best value 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"> • the progress their children make • the quality of teaching • the leadership and management of the school • the school's approachability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the amount of homework provided • behaviour • pupils becoming more mature

The inspection team agrees with the positive views of the parents. They are rightly pleased with the progress pupils made, the quality of teaching and the leadership and management of the school. The school is very approachable and supports parents well. Although some parents would like to see pupils becoming more mature, others felt that this was a strength of the school. Inspectors agreed that pupils do become more responsible as they move through the school. Behaviour was found to be good by inspectors. Parents are right to want to see more homework provided.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 Pupils of all ages and levels of ability achieve well, building on their earlier attainment and making good progress, overall. This is an improvement from the last inspection, for pupils aged 14 to 16 years and a good improvement for those aged 11 to 14 years where achievement was judged to be unsatisfactory.

2 When pupils join the school either in Year 7 or later during their secondary school careers all are reaching standards below those normally expected for their age. This is because of their emotional and behavioural difficulties which have caused them to miss parts of their education and, in addition, some pupils also have learning difficulties as well as their emotional and behavioural difficulties. Although attainment remains below that expected or seen nationally the work of the school enables pupils to make good progress and close the gap.

3 Because of the size of the school, numbers remain small but an increasing number of pupils are succeeding in nationally accredited courses, including GCSE, at the end of Year 11 and the school is continuing to set challenging targets to raise this further. In addition, more vocational opportunities have been provided for pupils, including very good links with the Connexions Service and this is raising the self-esteem and achievement of older pupils.

4 Younger pupils are also making good progress, and achieving well. Teachers' planning, which was criticised at the last inspection as a significant factor in achievement, clearly identifies the things pupils are expected to learn. These are carefully modified to allow pupils of different abilities to build on their earlier learning. Although pupils can misbehave, work usually keeps them interested and motivated because it is matched to their needs. This is an important element of the good teaching which leads to better behaviour, higher motivation and, consequently, better achievement.

5 Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well throughout the school and, as a result achievements and progress are good. The national strategy for Key Stage 3 is being successfully developed and this is having a positive impact on standards.

6 In English pupils of all ages make good progress and achieve well in speaking and listening and in reading. Pupils' ability to discuss things and listen to the opinions of others develops noticeably as they move through the school. Lots of opportunities are provided for this in a wide range of subjects, for example in humanities when discussing the causes of war where pupils benefit from careful planning and structured support. Similarly, reading is encouraged throughout the curriculum and effective additional support is provided where necessary. As a result good progress is made. Achievement and progress in writing, although satisfactory are less marked. Fewer opportunities are provided for extended writing and the use of worksheets, requiring short answers restricts opportunities for pupils to write at length.

7 Pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the school, in mathematics because of the good teaching and strong relationships between staff and pupils. They build on their learning as they move through the school, with all pupils following nationally accredited courses and increasingly developing their problem-solving skills.

8 Achievement and progress in science and ICT are very good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. In science, pupils achieve very well in developing their

investigative and experimental skills. The very good teaching encourages pupils to learn through practical activities, and this, coupled with the development of specialist facilities has improved standards. This is reflected in improved results in nationally accredited courses for older pupils and higher standards by the end of Year 9. Very good teaching and improved facilities have contributed to better standards in ICT. Achievement and progress for all pupils are now very good. All pupils are now involved in externally assessed work.

9 In the other subjects of the curriculum all pupils make good progress and achieve well in art and design, design and technology, humanities, music, physical education and personal, social and health education, including citizenship. In French and religious education pupils' achievements are satisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10 This aspect is a strength of the school and creates a good atmosphere for learning. Pupils are enthusiastic about school life. They arrive at school cheerful and quickly settle to the school's activities. They clearly respect the environment they work in, because displays are undamaged and there is no evidence of graffiti or litter.

11 Pupils are polite and courteous and always have a "thank you" and smile for anyone who helps them. Movement around the school is civilised, pupils move around sensibly. They treat visitors with a degree of confidence and well-mannered respect. Some pupils have continuing difficulties with behaviour but this is handled well and managed skilfully by the staff, and the number of exclusions is low, given the previous problems experienced by the pupils. Occasionally, usually when they are bored or find the task difficult, behaviour in lessons lapses and pupils become unco-operative but this is well managed. In a Year 8 mathematics lesson one pupil became frustrated with the task, 'cos I can't do anything right'. This slows their own learning and could interfere with that of others, if not well managed. Particularly good behaviour and attitudes are evident in lessons where pupils are actively involved. This was observed when the Year 10 pupils were keen to improve their football skills and when they were learning bricklaying at the local college and one student managed to control his frustration when his partner took longer to complete his section of their wall. The Year 8 pupils enjoyed being able to chatter quietly during their food technology lesson as they prepared their cheese and bacon quiches. No incidents of intimidation or bullying were observed during the inspection.

12 Pupils and staff get on very well together. Pupils recognise that staff will listen to them and will always try to help them. This has a positive impact on their learning and personal development throughout their stay in the school.

13 Although attendance figures are below those set for all schools nationally, they are well above other schools of the same type and have improved since the last inspection. Punctuality is not a problem. Pupils move quickly and efficiently between lessons and lessons start and finish on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14 Teaching across the school is good with some very good features and as a result pupils learn well and make good progress. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching in English and mathematics is good and in science and ICT it is consistently very good where the teacher has very good subject knowledge and uses it very effectively to maintain pupils' interest with challenging activities and as a result they learn very well. Teachers know the pupils and their individual abilities very well and so can match work to enable pupils to achieve well and make progress.

15 Teachers plan their lessons very well, indicating the learning objectives and how the lesson will develop. Planning clearly identifies the knowledge and skills pupils will acquire and the level of support some pupils will need to enable them to complete the task. Most teachers use a number of ways to help pupils learn, including a combination of whole class teaching, pair work and individual tasks. An interesting and brisk starter activity at the beginning of lessons gains pupils' interest and establishes a positive atmosphere which is generally maintained throughout the lesson. This was evident in an English lesson when a rhyming game related to their work on ballads and poems caught pupils' attention and engaged them in such a way that the teacher was able to assess what they had remembered from a previous lesson.

16 Secure subject knowledge is another feature of the good and very good teaching. Teachers are confident in their approach, they are clear about what pupils need to learn and prepare activities which enable pupils to succeed. An example of this was in an excellent physical education lesson when a qualified coach was teaching football skills to pupils who were very keen to learn, respected the expertise of the coach and performed very well using the skills successfully within a short space of time. Another example was in an excellent humanities lesson when pupils were learning about aspects of life in Bangladesh in which the very good resources, good pace of the lesson, good subject knowledge and active involvement of pupils ensured that their interest was maintained throughout. Pupils were encouraged to find out more by using their research skills. In science pupils find experimental and investigative work exciting and they work hard concentrating very well on tasks. High expectations and challenging work sets the tone in these lessons and pupils respond very positively and sensibly.

17 Additional support is used well and is effective because learning support assistants are attached to specific subjects enabling them to become familiar with the curriculum which increases their confidence. They are skilled at supporting pupils without doing the work for them and the support is well targeted so that pupils receive the maximum benefit and understand what they are learning. Teachers and learning support assistants provide a very calm atmosphere and value pupil's contributions giving them encouragement and praise which boosts their confidence and this has a positive impact on pupils' ability to learn. Sometimes pupils do try to negotiate to do less work but they are kindly but firmly encouraged to finish the set task.

18 Literacy and numeracy skills are generally well promoted across the curriculum, for example, weighing and measuring in food technology, counting in French, writing up experiments in science, word processing in ICT and reading newspaper reports in humanities. In most lessons key words are displayed that give pupils good reminders of what the lesson is about and supports their learning.

19 There are a number of reasons why teaching in some lessons is not as effective as in the majority of lessons. Whilst there is an expectation that pupils will behave well sometimes lessons are interrupted by inappropriate behaviour and time has to be taken to settle pupils down or allow them to leave the classroom for a while. At other times the teaching methods used do not inspire pupils, they lose interest and opportunities for learning are lost. In a few lessons not enough opportunities are given for pupils to actively participate and they become restless and lie over desks to gain attention until they renew their interest and begin to learn.

20 Day to day assessment is good. Teachers use verbal feedback well during lessons and good use of questioning allows them to gauge how much pupils have understood of the lesson. The quality of the recap sessions at the end of lessons is generally good but can depend on how much time is left at the end of the lesson even though it is planned for. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and doesn't always give pupils an indication of how they can improve their work nor does it help teachers assess pupils' progress over time in lessons. Formal homework tasks are not set regularly, if at all, which does not help those pupils working towards examinations.

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

21 The school provides a curriculum, which effectively meets the needs of the National Curriculum and religious education for all pupils. This marks a significant improvement since the previous inspection when it was judged that there were problems with the balance of subjects offered and the school failed to meet its statutory obligations in the provision of religious education and music. Shortcomings in the time allocated to science and the teaching of ICT have all been effectively addressed. The curriculum now benefits from long term planning that clearly identifies what each class will be learning each term. Planning in each subject ensures that pupils are adequately challenged as they move through the school. The National Literacy and Numeracy programmes have been implemented and are responsible for the improvements in standards in those subjects. The provision of specialist facilities and teachers in subjects such as science, ICT and design and technology are also responsible for raising standards in those subjects.

22 Particular strengths are the curriculum for science and ICT. These subjects provide a rich programme of experiences which successfully develop pupils' independent learning skills as well as their knowledge. Provision for external accreditation is now available in a range of subjects.

23 Personal, social and health education is well taught throughout the school and is based on good planning which effectively prepares pupils for adult life. Information about sex and drugs education is based on a well planned curriculum and is sensitively taught. However, whilst provision for pupils to have work experience and attend local colleges is well developed, advice on careers and college courses is less effective. The lack of a regular careers advisor for the school hampers the provision that can be made.

24 Provision for out of school activities is good. Good use is made of the lunch time and the time before lessons start with a range of activities as diverse as a cookery club, use of computers, music composition and private reading. Pupils' social needs are also well addressed through the provision of a social area and, for older pupils, daily newspapers.

25 The school has strong links with colleges in the local area. Short certificate courses in a wide range of curriculum areas such as brick laying or horticulture at the local agricultural college are important elements in providing pupils with experiences that prepare them for work and study after school.

26 The curriculum is enhanced through the use of external visitors or experts, who add breadth to it through their expertise, for example in gymnastics and football.

27 Satisfactory provision is made for pupils' spiritual development. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when this was unsatisfactory. Assemblies provide a calm, ordered start to the school day but contain no planned opportunities for quiet reflection. These are also missing from most subjects of the curriculum. However, music and art and design do make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual sense both through the curriculum and through additional activities such as visits from the Manchester Camerata. Staff and pupils have recently cooperated to make a memorial garden for a pupil who died tragically. This garden is a calm, tranquil area and pupils and staff take the opportunity it provides for quiet reflection about the death of their friend and other issues.

28 Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop a moral sense. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. Moral lessons form the planned focus for assemblies for example instant custard, OXO and coffee were used to prompt pupils to consider that everything in life

is not instant and that it is often better to wait to achieve the best results. Pupils respond well to opportunities to borrow expensive items of school equipment such as digital cameras and laptops, always taking good care of them and returning them safely. The school also has a deliberate policy of leaving stock cupboards unlocked and pupils rarely take advantage of this. Moral ideas are also promoted across the curriculum. In a regular link course at a local college, for example, pupils are encouraged to have a positive attitude to, and take a pride in, their brick laying and other practical work. In history lessons pupils are encouraged to consider the moral features of the Declaration of the Rights of Man. They do this very well.

29 Opportunities for pupils to develop social skills are good. This is also an improvement on the previous inspection. These opportunities are provided across the curriculum and in the day-to-day relationships and interactions between staff and pupils. All lunchtimes are good social occasions and staff take the opportunity for informal focused discussions with pupils about their work and life outside school. After lunch pupils choose a variety of leisure activities including pool and enjoy and respond well to these chances. Pupils generally show good manners to each other, staff and visitors. They hold open doors, often share sweets and chat in a friendly straight forward way. One younger pupil demonstrated good social skills at the swimming baths when he politely and effectively asked for information at the pool reception about opening times and special events.

30 In many lessons very good relationships between staff and pupils are evident including lessons outside school at the swimming baths and at college. Lesson plans also provides opportunities for pupils to work together. A good example of this is art and design where the staff plan for a piece of work to be completed jointly. Pupils are also able to comment on and accept comments from each other about their swimming technique. This is an exceptional opportunity for pupils whose self esteem is often fragile. However, these opportunities do not exist in all lessons and pupils can sometimes work in a very isolated individual way.

31 Pupils have good opportunities to develop their awareness of a range of cultures. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when these opportunities were judged satisfactory. The pupils have opportunity within and outside the formal curriculum to find out about other cultures. These include the employment of a French assistant who shared many aspects of her culture with the pupils and opportunities in religious education to find out about many world faiths. Music and art and design also contain opportunities for learning about culture including a visit from a busker and a brass band. In art and design pupils considered aboriginal dream stories before creating a dream serpent and also used specialist materials to make Egyptian art. Pupils also take advantage of opportunities to join in local cultural events such as the Commonwealth Games baton relay and visits to the theatre locally and further afield in Stoke. Despite good positive relations with local members of the Asian community who have effectively challenged some pupils' stereotypes, the school does not yet provide pupils with enough opportunities to consider the multi-cultural society in which they live. The range of books in the library giving straight forward positive images of multi-cultural Britain is limited.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32 The school's procedures for child protection and for promoting the wellbeing, health and safety of all pupils are good and this continues the good practice noted in the previous inspection. The head teacher takes the lead in setting the ethos of care, order and structure through his expectations for behaviour and attitude. Teachers and non-teaching staff provide a high standard of care.

33 The school ensures that pupils are safe and well looked after. There is a designated member of staff for child protection and all child protection procedures are correctly observed. All the staff have received training and are kept well informed about any changes. Necessary health and safety

measures are in place and regular risk assessments are undertaken. There are regular fire drills and fire notices are displayed around the school. First aid procedures are in place.

34 There are good procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour. Staff, pupils and parents are very clear about the behaviour policy, which provides a framework to support good behaviour and underpins the caring atmosphere in the school. The school has good strategies for dealing with any issues of inappropriate behaviour and these are helping to improve behaviour and reduce exclusions. As a result, pupils are learning more because classrooms are settled. Individuals are given effective support and helped to develop strategies for avoiding conflict. Good attention is paid to getting rid of bullying. Pupils and parents know that any incidents will be dealt with promptly.

35 There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance, with certificates and rewards presented termly for improved attendance. Parents are contacted in all cases of unauthorised absence. These strategies are successful in promoting good levels of attendance compared with similar schools and for surpassing the targets set by the local education authority for unauthorised absence.

36 The monitoring of the pupils' personal development is well managed. All the staff have a good understanding of the needs of the pupils.

37 The procedures for assessing pupils' learning are good and have improved in both quality and organisation since the previous inspection. Pupils are thoroughly assessed in literacy, reading and mathematics on their arrival in the school. Assessments of their behaviour and their response to school are also reviewed. This information is then used to establish individual targets for the pupils. These are well structured and contain information necessary for effective teaching. Pupils' progress is reviewed regularly and the information gathered leads to targets being updated regularly.

38 Pupils' work and achievements are monitored well in both their gains in knowledge and their improvements in behaviour. The use of ICT to provide a common format makes the information readily available to teachers. Consequently, the information is used well to plan teaching and to aid pupils' access to the curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39 The geographical location of pupils' homes make regular face-to-face contact with parents difficult on occasions. Nevertheless, staff work very hard and very effectively to overcome these problems. Parents responding to the questionnaire and those attending the meeting prior to the inspection were very supportive of the school. The inspection team agrees with the positive views of the parents. They are rightly pleased with the progress pupils made, the quality of teaching and the leadership and management of the school. The school is very approachable and supports parents well. Although some parents would like to see pupils becoming more mature, others felt that this was a strength of the school. Inspectors agreed that pupils do become more responsible as they move through the school. A small number of parents expressed concern regarding pupils' behaviour and the provision of homework. Behaviour was found to be good by inspectors. Parents are right to want to see more homework provided.

40 Appropriate information is given to parents about the work of the school. The prospectus contains all the important information for pupils joining the school and regular newsletters provide a full account of activities and details of forthcoming events. The Governors Annual Report gives a clear picture of school life during the academic year. Parents receive information about their son's progress through the two consultation evenings and the very good academic progress reports which give clear information about what their sons' know, understand and can do.

41 Parents make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning and the life of the school. They know that they can make contact or visit the school at any time if they have a concern about their child. They, rightly, feel that the school is very approachable.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42 The leadership and management have been very effective in developing and improving the school. They have responded very well to the criticisms levelled at them at the time of the last inspection, despite not being in full agreement with them. As a result the school is good. It does not have serious weaknesses.

43 A strong feature of the leadership of the school is the shared philosophy of all staff and governors which has influenced its working practice and is evident throughout. Everyone is concerned with the development of the whole child enabling them to fulfil their potential. Despite the challenges pupils bring to the school there is not an over-emphasis on managing their behaviour, rather everyone is concerned with creating an atmosphere and culture where pupils can succeed and grow. The success of this is evident in the high levels of attendance, low incidence of highly disruptive behaviour and improved achievement and progress.

44 Effective management systems have been established to achieve the improvements. Clear systems are in place for analysing the school's performance with similar schools and effective action is taken to address areas for development. Retaining and recruiting good quality staff is a key area for the head teacher and governors and the budget has been managed well to achieve this. Very good links exist with a local higher education provider and this has helped the school, for example in science and ICT.

45 Subject managers carry out audits of their areas, leading to development plans which inform whole school planning. As a result, everyone is clear about immediate and medium and long-term priorities. The improvement plan has proved an effective vehicle in moving the school forward. Financial planning is appropriately linked to the priorities and controls are effective. The administrative assistant provides very good support to the head teacher and governors in these, and other areas.

46 The governing body fulfils its role very well. It has a good range of expertise within it and this is well-deployed to support the school. All governors have a very clear understanding of the strengths of the school and the challenges it faces. Relationships are very good and governors work very closely with staff to achieve the school's objectives.

47 The school has a good number of well-qualified staff to meet the needs of the pupils and the curriculum. Teachers' specialist subject knowledge is used very well across the school and this has led to an improvement in the quality of teaching overall. Teaching staff are supported well by a small number of learning support assistants who make a significant contribution to the work of the school. All staff are involved in professional development which is linked to their performance management targets, new initiatives and personal interests. This extends their knowledge and understanding and enables them to undertake their roles more effectively and support pupils well in lessons. The expertise of learning support staff is used well and each has a specific role within the curriculum. They are involved in planning and curriculum development which makes them feel valued and increases their confidence when dealing with pupils in and out of the classrooms. All staff work well together which adds to the positive ethos within the school. Although induction procedures are informal they are effective and new staff feel very well supported by colleagues. The most recent appointment is nearing the end of his first year of teaching and feels that his skills have improved and that his expertise has been valued enabling him to make a good contribution to the work of the school.

48 The school's accommodation is good and provides a positive learning environment for the pupils. All available space is used effectively and pupils' work is visually celebrated by well arranged displays. The good specialist facilities for design and technology, art and design, food technology, science and ICT have a direct impact on pupils' learning and the progress they make. However, the small library is used for teaching which somewhat limits its use as a library. Classrooms are bright and roomy with enough space for pupils to work on their own if they wish. A pleasant social area with pool tables is used well outside lessons to enable pupils to relax and play with each other or with staff which promotes their personal and social development. Another area is used for some physical education activities, such as gymnastics or trampoline activities and the small dining area doubles up as an assembly hall ensuring that all available space is very well used. Although there is insufficient space for games such as football, the school makes good use of local facilities.

49 Outside areas are limited but a small yard is used for 5-a-side football and pupils have constructed a science garden which supports elements of the science curriculum. Pupils have made a bench within a small courtyard in remembrance of a former pupil which adds to the community ethos of the school.

50 The maintenance officer and his staff work hard to maintain a high standard of cleanliness and as a result pupils respect their school and there is no graffiti or damage.

51 The school has a good range of learning resources. The improvement in the number and quality of computers has led to a significant improvement in pupils' standards in ICT. Similarly, the purchase of electronic instruments in music has significantly broadened pupils' access to the curriculum and extended their range of learning opportunities.

52 The school has a well-stocked library although there is a need to develop the range of books that deal with other cultures. This issue is addressed through the use of artefacts and images in religious education. Pupils make extensive use of digital cameras, computers and musical instruments to undertake work after school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53 In order to improve the school further, the head teacher, staff and governors should;

- (1) improve standards in writing by providing more opportunities for extended writing throughout the subjects of the curriculum.

(Paragraphs 6, 58)

- (2) develop a more structured approach to homework, particularly in relation to nationally accredited courses.

(Paragraphs 20, 61)

- (3) improve pupils' understanding of their own learning and how they might develop further by adopting a more structured approach to marking.

(Paragraphs 20, 60, 62)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	33
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	6	18	7	0	0	0
Percentage	6	18	55	21	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents 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	37
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	13

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

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	6.6

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	37	13	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	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)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5
Average class size	7

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	127

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	2002 - 2003
	£
Total income	516,266
Total expenditure	486,724
Expenditure per pupil	13,520
Balance brought forward from previous year	32,605
Balance carried forward to next year	62,147

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
<hr/>	
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	37
Number of questionnaires returned	18

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	39	0	0	6
My child is making good progress in school.	44	44	0	6	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	44	11	6	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	39	22	17	6
The teaching is good.	61	39	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	67	22	6	0	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	28	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	33	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	67	28	6	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	72	28	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	44	11	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	50	0	0	0

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

ENGLISH

54 Pupils make good progress in their speaking and listening skills and in reading and satisfactory progress in writing. This is because teaching is generally good, lessons are well planned and additional support is available for pupils who need it to improve their reading skills in particular. The curriculum is good and has some challenging aspects which make pupils consider how they see other people. Although the standard of pupils' work is below what would be normally expected for pupils of their age when they enter school by the time they leave, most pupils gain a Certificate of Achievement in English and higher attainers gain a grade in GCSE examinations. The Key Stage 3 Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented and most lessons begin with a well paced introductory activity which engages pupils from the start. Literacy development is consolidated in other subjects, for example, in science, geography, food technology and ICT. In some lessons key vocabulary is displayed and used both orally and in written work and so pupils' understanding and their confidence in discussions improves. Assessment and record keeping are good and information is used well to set literacy targets in pupils' individual education plans.

55 Pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. Some pupils come to the school with limited and often inappropriate speaking skills but their ability to discuss and listen to others opinions develops as they move through the school, as does their attitude to learning. The youngest pupils sometimes forget to put up their hand to answer a question and shout out but by Year 9 they begin to appreciate that others have views which may be different to their own. Most of the oldest pupils ask questions sensibly, express their ideas and begin to develop a point of view through discussions. The majority of pupils are willing to talk with visitors and discuss their interests in an appropriate manner.

56 Pupils' progress in reading is good across the school. Reading ages are assessed at least annually and many pupils make significant gains. Pupils have many opportunities to read and those who need additional help are withdrawn for individual support and have the opportunity to read with a learning support assistant at some time every day whenever this is possible which increase their confidence. There are some opportunities for pupils to read aloud and younger pupils in particular are very willing to do this and read with expression and a good degree of fluency.

57 By the end of Year 9 pupils have been introduced to a good, wide range of texts including Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" and "Macbeth", ballads and poems and Dickens "A Christmas Carol", Stevenson's "Treasure Island" and a more modern text, "Kes". Pupils could remember parts of the ballad "The Highwayman" which they liked and could also sequence events in the ballad "The sad story of Lefty and Ned". They know the difference between a ballad and a poem. Often the texts pupils are reading are used to show their understanding of significant events and characters and looking at different forms of writing, for instance, persuasive, diary, reporting and imaginative but they are not given sufficient opportunities to carry this over into their own writing. By the end of Year 11 pupils follow an examination course and study British Black poetry, poems by Ted Hughes and Fiona Farrell, Shakespeare and compare the work of Dickens and Swindells. They study a comprehensive range of fiction which gives them a good understanding of different styles of writing and use of language to convey meaning and imagery.

58 In writing, pupils' progress is satisfactory. This is because they have few opportunities to develop their writing skills and there is an overuse of worksheets which only require one or two word answers. Many pupils are reluctant to write but the use of "mind maps" helps them organise their thoughts. By the end of Year 9 pupils have produced short pieces of writing relating to texts they are

studying. Handwriting styles are variable and while some use cursive script neatly others use a mixture of print. Evidence in pupils' files shows that they learn basic grammar rules, such as full stops, capital letters and the use of correct punctuation in sentences is developing. Most pupils can spell accurately and are reminded to use dictionaries when they are not sure. Writing does show more structure and pupils use paragraphs appropriately as they get older. As they move through the school pupils build on previous learning extending their ability to undertake critical analysis of texts they are studying for examinations. They learn to differentiate between fact and opinion and select examples from texts to demonstrate this. However there is little evidence of any extended writing or of pupils drafting their work and whilst they look at different forms of writing they have few opportunities themselves for writing for different purposes.

59 Pupils achieve well and make good progress because teaching is generally good. Pupils are challenged to think about what they read and how it influences the way they act. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and the good quality support provided by learning support assistants makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Secure subject knowledge and the good use of questions means that teachers extend pupils' thinking and learn well. In the majority of lessons there is a clear expectation that pupils will behave well and work hard. Sometimes disruptive behaviour can impinge on the smooth running of the lesson but it is well managed and pupils usually return to work quickly. Lessons are very well planned and have clearly identified learning objectives which are explained to pupils at the start of the lesson. Teachers are not afraid to introduce topics which challenge pupils thinking, for example, images from black poets. Analysing words and phrases from these poems confronts stereotypical images and pupils respond well, coming up with lively and unusual answers. Interesting starter activities gain pupils' attention and usually set the tone for the lesson but occasionally they lose concentration and staff have to work hard to regain their interest.

60 The curriculum is well planned, effectively led and managed, and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and needs of the pupils through externally accredited courses. The co-ordinator is one of two teachers who teaches English and they are supported by another who provides individual support and a learning support assistant. Targets in pupils' individual education plans are monitored effectively and used well to focus where support is needed most. Resources are good and include a well-stocked library, however, pupils rarely use it as a means of finding information and there are very few books that would enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding about our multi-cultural society. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in pupils' speaking and listening skills and in their reading but writing remains satisfactory mainly because of the limited opportunities pupils have to develop their skills. Marking is not as effective as it could be in enabling pupils to know what they could do to improve further.

MATHEMATICS

61 Pupils achieve well and make good progress in mathematics through the school. This is a result of good teaching and good relationships between staff and pupils. By the time they are 14, pupils can draw three-dimensional cubes on squared paper and number vertices and parallel lines and look for patterns. They can use a graph to gain information and suggest why sales of specific items would be higher in summer than in winter. They are also able to find six ways of making £1 from a given range of coins. Analysis of pupils' work shows that some pupils make more progress than others as a result of the effort that they make. For the higher achieving pupils their attainments are within the range normally expected for pupils of their age. By the time they are 15, pupils can use rulers, calculators and a variety of shapes to solve a complex practical problem, tiling and pricing a new floor. Analysis of the work of pupils who have recently left shows that they continue to develop problem solving mathematical skills and the use of simple algebraic formulae. More able students achieve low GCSE grades at 16 whilst all work at GCSE level. As at Key Stage 3 there is evidence of some pupils progressing faster than others as a result of lack of confidence in their ability and poor enthusiasm for

the subject. Attainment at GCSE is also restricted by limited homework, which reduces pupils' opportunities to practise skills and allow teachers to check pupils' independent understanding.

62 Teaching is most often good. Good teaching was seen in a lesson for pupils aged 12 where pupils were breaking down large numbers. Good relationships with pupils and teamwork among classroom staff ensured that the pupils stayed on task. Good use of questions checked pupils' understanding and helped create an enthusiastic learning environment. The teacher shows good subject knowledge and use of mathematical language that develops pupils' own confident use of terms such as 'factors', 'prime' and 'squared' numbers. Teaching is also informed by IEP's and clear individual National Curriculum targets which focus pupils' work. Formal assessment is also used to target teaching if necessary. However, marking of pupils' work is limited and does not indicate to pupils what they need to do to improve further.

63 Pupils are enthusiastic about mathematics but find it hard to work without adult support. Some find immediate lack of success hard to cope with getting easily disheartened 'I can't do anything right'. On the other hand some pupils were able to ask for help and try again if they made a mistake. Pupils' work in mathematics sometimes shows a lack of pride in their achievements, is often not dated and neatness could be much improved in their final presentation. Whilst lessons were seen in which new interactive boards were used, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their work.

64 Mathematics benefits from a detailed policy that positively suggests a wide range of teaching and learning styles for the subject and a scheme of work which, whilst brief, ensures an appropriate curriculum. The subject leader has also developed detailed medium-term plans linked to daily lesson plans that are well used.

65 The subject leader now teaches almost all mathematics in the school. This is a change since the previous inspection and has had a positive effect on standards across the school. This is because of increased teacher subject knowledge, and consistency of approach. The Numeracy Strategy has also had a positive impact on standards. The subject leader is developing a good bank of resources for mathematics and is used by the Local Education Authority to provide special needs resources for other schools in Cheshire.

66 Although there are some examples of numeracy across the curriculum this could be further developed in most subjects. Examples seen include work in French, adding up in 10's in French and a statistical comparison of two sets of bar graphs linking the number of babies who died at birth to the percentage of adults who smoked. In science there were strong links to numeracy with calculation and recording and the use of tables and charts.

SCIENCE

67 The school makes very good provision for the teaching and learning of science. This represents significant progress since the previous inspection when the subject was judged to be satisfactory and attention was drawn to the lack of time devoted to science, which was having a negative impact on pupils' standards. These issues have been effectively addressed. The development of specialist accommodation and teaching, combined with efficient and imaginative management, have all improved standards. Pupils' achievements in GCSE examinations reflect the improvement in provision.

68 A significant strength of the teaching and learning is the development of pupils' investigative and experimental skills which encourage pupils to learn through practical experiments. This approach was exemplified through a lesson for Year 7 pupils in which they were building and testing a bridge

structure. Through careful observation and repeated experimentation pupils independently amended their designs and achieved success. Such imaginative and challenging teaching results in pupils achieving very well. By Year 9 pupils are developing the skills necessary to carry out their own experiments, draw conclusions and record the results in graphs and tables. This was illustrated in a lesson on healthy eating where pupils carried out an experiment to calculate the amount of starch in bread and pasta. Pupils are able to conduct their own experiments and use the data to predict outcomes. This represents significant progress from their low level of skill on entry to the school.

69 By Year 11 pupils build on this strong beginning and continue to make very good progress. The very good provision of practical work enables pupils to develop a strong understanding of scientific principles combined with an effective specialist vocabulary, which enables them to explain their work. The challenges presented to older pupils not only require them to undertake practical work of a high standard but also to consider the role of science in the world. In a very interesting lesson on how science is reported in the media, Year 10 pupils drew upon their scientific knowledge and correctly identified media bias in the reporting of science.

70 During his short time in the school the science co-ordinator has had a significant impact on the subject. His clear vision has made very good use of specialist staff and resources to produce lessons that are both challenging and interesting. Work is adapted well for the needs of individual pupils and is supported well through the effective work of the classroom assistants. Effective though this is, however, there is a need to ensure that higher attaining pupils undertake more extended pieces of writing rather than the brief recording they undertake at the moment. Pupils' behaviour is managed very effectively and the calm and business-like atmosphere of lessons is an important element in pupils' achievements.

71 Good and developing use is made of computers for the recording of results. Strong links are established with literacy, through the display of key words, and with numeracy through calculation and the drawing of graphs.

ART AND DESIGN

72 It was not possible during the inspection to observe any teaching in art and design. However, pupils achieve well and make good progress at all ages. By the time they are 14, pupils have made good progress in using a wide range of media, including charcoal, pastels, paint and clay. They use these well to produce work in a variety of styles and for a variety of purposes, for example, a Year 7 project of self portraits following an examination of a Van Gogh self portrait. A large exhibition at a local theatre gave pupils the chance to create work in a wide range of styles including Pointillism, Cubism, Expressionism and Fauvism. This work also gave pupils the chance to celebrate their skills in a public forum.

73 By the time they are 16, all pupils have made progress and some attain the lower grades of GCSE. Pupils can do detailed pencil and paper observational drawings of onions and animal forms. They produce a range of work for GCSE assessments including work on 'conflict', which included the use of ICT, pastels, pencil and paper work. However, some pupils' attainment at GCSE is hampered by the limited amount of time available for art and design, which affects their portfolios. All students at Key Stage 4 take art and design and whilst most respond very well and produce work of GCSE standard, others do not want to study the subject and this affects those who do.

74 Art and design is taught by the subject manager, aided by an enthusiastic and hard working classroom assistant. They have worked hard and are rightly proud of what pupils achieve. However, they recognise their lack of specific training for some artist methods and feel this hampers their work. Art and design benefits from a detailed policy and although the scheme of work is limited, pupils

portfolios show coverage and progression. It also provides good opportunities to study art from other cultures such as Islamic patterns in the Environment topic and African masks in work on self- image. Another positive feature of this scheme of work is the opportunity it provides for pupils to work together, cooperatively on one piece of work. For example, in animated art, where one pupil creates the head and another the body and so on. This ensures that art and design plays a part in developing pupils' social skills. Nevertheless, despite a new kiln and some recent developments in this area, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities for three-dimensional work and the use of photography as a stimulus is under-developed.

75 Art and design benefits from a large specialist room and storing facilities as well as the new kiln. Resources are also good and allow pupils extensive opportunities to work in a variety of ways.

CITIZENSHIP

76 During the inspection no citizenship lessons were observed. However, a number of personal, social and health education lessons were seen and samples of work were analysed. The school is currently reviewing the curriculum in these areas and a thorough audit has been undertaken to identify where aspects are taught throughout the curriculum. Additional staff have been employed to develop this important area of the curriculum. As a result the subject is well-placed to develop further. Notwithstanding the on-going development of the subject, pupils of all ages make good progress and achieve well in the current programme. They respond sensibly and join in discussions well in relation to a wide range of social issues including sex and drugs education. They develop mature attitudes to areas they have found difficult, for example in developing and sustaining relationships. This is reflected in the way in which they relate to staff and have a greater degree of maturity in working with external agencies, such as the Connexions Service and, as a result, the school has an effective work experience programme, leading to successful placements for a number of pupils when they leave school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

77 Provision for the subject is good and pupils make good progress in all aspects of design and technology. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The workshop and the food technology rooms are well equipped and good use is made of all resources, which can be seen in the items pupils produce. The good progress pupils make is due to the good teaching which uses teachers' specialist subject knowledge well, and to a well-organised curriculum which progressively builds up pupils' skills and their confidence.

78 By the end of Year 9 pupils use a range of tools and machines appropriately and are aware of health and safety procedures and use goggles, masks and earmuffs when they need to in the workshop. They have made wooden aeroplanes, pen-holders and fridge magnets showing that they can select the correct tools for each process and can combine materials and components in different ways. Older pupils have made decorative wall tiles by firstly making a template from MDF and then produce PVC tiles using a vacuum former. They can also use a lathe, router, sander and scroll saw to produce various items and finish them off using varnishes and dyes. Most pupils can measure and cut accurately. By Year 11 pupils are working towards GCSE and by using a range of materials, tools and machines they make various products of their choice. They learn to plan their work and begin to use their initiative, with support, to solve any design problems. Currently Year 10 pupils are involved in making a variety of objects of their own choice such as, a doll's house, an inset jigsaw and a truck with a trailer. They have been introduced to Computer Aided Design (CAD) and enjoy the challenges this creates. They are interested in their projects and work hard showing a quiet pride in their work. The increased complexity of their work demonstrates how much progress they have made and how well they have learned.

79 Pupils enjoy food technology and they listen and observe carefully in lessons, and, because teaching is well planned and the teacher has secure subject knowledge, pupils learn well and make good progress. When making a cheesecake they understand each step and measure liquids and other ingredients accurately. They mix them together with spoons and use a whisk carefully to thicken their topping. Others make a cheese and bacon quiche using the skills of mixing, rolling and cutting at different points in its manufacture. Pupils remember how to make shortcut pastry needing only to be reminded how to fill their pastry case carefully and crimp the edging. They use a grater and microwave appropriately and choose other ingredients which they like for their quiche. In Year 9 pupils make a pizza and learn about the properties of yeast. At this stage pupils are confident in their ability to use a range of kitchen equipment and most work quite independently but seek advice when they want and are given good support and individual explanations from the teacher about how to improve their work. Older pupils continue to use and develop their skills and produce whole meals that involve a higher level of planning and range of processes.

80 Teaching is consistently good and lessons are well planned which results in a good structure and pace to pupils' learning. Pupils work hard in these lessons because they enjoy the activities and gain success. Teachers' good subject knowledge means that they can guide pupils learning and improve their skills through supporting each step of the way. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and encourage them to have a sense of responsibility in these practical areas. Pupils are reminded of health and safety and hygiene rules at the beginning of each lesson and they adhere to them without question. Good preparation of resources prior to the lesson starting has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour because it reduces the delay in starting the practical element of the lessons, which is the part pupils enjoy most. The very good relationships between adults and pupils develop their personal and social skills while chatting and working.

81 Issues identified in the last inspection relating to leadership and management have been successfully addressed and these are now good. Recording and assessment procedures are good and teachers have secure knowledge of what pupils have achieved and how much progress they have made over time. Their progress is matched against National Curriculum levels and pupils record how well they think they have achieved. Resources are good and used well to enable pupils to acquire new skills. Action plans show how the subject will be further developed over the next year.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

82 History and geography are taught until pupils are 14 as part of a modular Humanities curriculum. Until they are 16 pupils study occasional history based topics. Pupils achieve well and make good, and on occasion very good progress in humanities. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when pupils made unsatisfactory progress. By the time they are 12 pupils can read maps and know that different colours denote different heights of land. They can make links between work on Bangladesh and previous work on and visits to flood prone areas locally. They are also able to draw inferences from a well-chosen, suitably brief, TV sequence and outstanding attainment was seen when one pupil began to discuss complex ideas about relative poverty. Pupils also develop research skills and can use atlases and topic books with reference to the index. By the time they are 14 pupils can discuss and establish the meaning of 'alliance' and 'entente'. They make links between the First World War and the war in Iraq and are able to discuss the differences between the long term and short term causes of war.

83 Very good progress was a result of excellent teaching in a lesson about floods in Bangladesh for pupils aged 12. The pupils were kept busy and attentive by a range of strategies including very good use of the classroom assistant, excellent preparation and use of resources and the calm, relaxed, positive style of the teacher. This gives pupils the confidence to make mistakes and join in the lesson.

As a result one pupil, who in other lessons was quiet and did not take part, volunteered to read aloud to the class. The teacher was calmly insistent on 'manners' and determined that all pupils, even those who rarely take part, will join in.

84 In the lesson on the First World War, the quality of questions enabled pupils to reach complex definitions, for example, alliance was where 'they were friends and co-operated together'. Analysis of pupils work shows a range of teaching and learning styles in use across Humanities including very good use of appropriate curriculum visits. However, pupils' work is not always dated, annotated or positively marked although the youngest pupils do have the opportunity to record their responses to their learning for example 'this unit has been fun'.

85 Humanities benefits from a clear modular long-term plan and policy, which helps the different teachers and ensures continuity in pupils' learning. The subject manager co-ordinates the subject well through regular meetings and recent training on teaching and learning styles has helped raise standards. However, the use of ICT is under-developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

86 Due to timetabling restrictions only limited teaching was observed during the inspection but analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning shows that the school's provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is very good. A significant improvement in computer resources combined with effective curriculum planning has resulted in much-improved pupils' achievements. The previous report judged pupils' achievements to be unsatisfactory. The impact of the changes is reflected in pupils' achievements now being very good. External accreditation has been introduced and all pupils undertake externally assessed work.

87 On entry to the school, pupils have very limited ICT skills and rely on a significant degree of adult support. However, the quality of the teaching is such that by the end of their first year pupils are able to undertake exercises such as producing a PowerPoint presentation about themselves and establish e-mail links. This very good progress is further reflected in the achievements of Year 9 pupils, whose understanding of ICT is such that they can devise and operate systems to control a slide in the water park, analyse the sequence of traffic lights or devise a control system for a lighthouse. The use of the Internet is well established and pupils are also able to use the computers for the design of a range of posters for events such as musical concerts. By Year 11 pupils have completed a range of units of work that include databases and control systems.

88 From the limited teaching observed it is clear that pupils enjoy their ICT lessons and work hard. A notable feature is that Year 7 pupils are willing and confident enough to attempt to solve their own problems without teacher assistance. High expectations of behaviour, combined with interesting work and effective support, are major factors in ensuring pupils' learning.

89 Staff training has resulted in greater use of computers in other subjects of the curriculum although this is an area that still requires further development. In foreign language lessons, for example, the Internet is used to find the weather in different parts of the world and imaginative use is made of ICT in music to enable pupils to compose, amend and record music.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

FRENCH

90 Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 are now taught French for 50 minutes each week and they make satisfactory progress over time. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Nearly all pupils are confident in counting to 20 and some know how to count to 100 using their numeracy skills to calculate

the larger numbers. They use “bonjour” and “au revoir” appropriately and during an activity about favourite sports use ‘j’aime” or” j’adore” and “je n’aime pas” or “je deteste” correctly in addition to the right French name for a good number of sports, for example, “le ping-pong” or “le golf”. Listening skills are emphasised as they hear a tape but many find the accent hard to understand and there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop this skill effectively. Older pupils use previously learned phrases when playing an imaginative counting game made by the teacher, which means that they have to understand questions and commands before moving on. During this game they also responded appropriately to commands such as, “Attention!”, “ Ecoutez!” and “Silence!” because they were so excited. Older pupils are introduced to phrases about different types of weather and the names of the seasons and, with some reminders, most can link a season to the appropriate weather conditions, for example, “en hiver–il neige” and en automne–il y a du brouillard”.

91 Teaching is satisfactory with some good features and lessons are planned well. The good humoured approach of teachers along with the good relationships means that pupils are willing to have a go at words they find difficult and participate with interest. They learn well in these situations and concentration is good. The youngest pupils do work with some enthusiasm when the task is fun and is presented as a game and although they may shout out the answers they respond well to this type of activity. In some activities pupils are encouraged and reminded to use previously learned vocabulary in different situations, especially greetings and numbers. Good use is made of pupils’ ICT skills when they find out about weather conditions in other French cities. There are occasions when pupils are praised for mediocre responses when they could do better and this doesn’t help their learning.

92 Two teachers co-ordinate the subject and they work well together. Neither is a subject specialist but both seek help and support to enable them to develop the subject appropriately for the abilities of the pupils. External accreditation is via AQA units which gives pupils an aim and encourages them to work hard. Resources are satisfactory and could be enhanced by more audio-visual aids to improve pupils’ listening and speaking skills, especially pronunciation.

MUSIC

93 The provision for music is good. At the time of the previous inspection music was not part of the curriculum but is now well -established. The acquisition of modern electronic resources and strong links with visiting musical performers means that music plays an important role in the life of the school.

94 Due to timetable factors very little teaching was seen during the inspection. However, discussion with pupils, review of teachers' records and listening to pupils' work show standards to be good. By Year 9 pupils can compose tunes using a range of background themes, such as percussion or techno music and record the results. They have a clear understanding of rhythm and tempo and can apply this knowledge effectively in their compositions. Pupils are clearly enthused by music. Interesting and imaginative music has successfully broadened the pupils' horizons. They take an active interest in local musical productions. It is noteworthy that the lunchtime music club is a favourite activity in which pupils gather to perform and to compose.

95 Links with visiting musicians, such as the Manchester Camarata and a brass band, play an important role in developing pupils' cultural knowledge. Similarly, the extensive use of computer equipment to compose, perform and record music is a significant factor in developing pupils' creativity.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

96 Pupils of all ages achieve well and make good progress in physical education. In the aspects observed during the inspection, football, gymnastics and swimming, the standards reached were at least in line with those expected nationally for their age. This reflects an improvement since the last inspection.

97 Despite inadequate on-site facilities, the school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which, in fact, benefits from the use of external resources, for example, in football or orienteering.

98 Pupils achieve very well in football when they visit the coaching facilities of the local football club. They benefit considerably from the experience of football coaches. Expectations are very high and pupils respond accordingly. Planning is very thorough with skills being progressively developed. For example, pupils learn a wide variety of turning techniques designed to 'lose' an opponent, which they very quickly apply in a game situation. Pupils watch high quality demonstrations attentively, listen carefully and ask appropriate questions.

99 In gymnastics, despite the limitations of the hall and a lack of fully adequate resources, pupils make good progress in developing skills. There is a strong emphasis on quality and what needs to be done to improve movements. When developing somersaults off trampets carefully graded steps were introduced, enabling all pupils to experience success. Pupils were involved in analysing each others' performance and exploring ways of how it might be improved.

100 The co-ordinator for physical education has worked hard to provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils and has been successful in ensuring that pupils benefit from very good teaching. This has had a positive effect on the standards achieved. Pupils enjoy their lessons and respond well because they are able to join in and experience success.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

101 The school's provision for religious education is satisfactory. The issues identified in the previous inspection have been effectively tackled and religious education is now taught regularly to all

pupils. Review of pupils' work shows that the criticism of an over reliance on work sheets has been addressed and effective use is now made of a range of artefacts and computer generated work. Although no lessons were observed, the progress pupils now make indicate that teaching is satisfactory 102

By Year 9 pupils have made satisfactory progress and achieve sound standards. They have developed an understanding of the main faiths, such as Islam and Christianity. This understanding is aided by wall displays of very good quality. Good use is also made of a range of artefacts to help pupils understand the symbols of different religions. The interesting use of discussion was illustrated in one lesson by the teacher using questions effectively and wearing a sari to help set the correct tone. By Year 11, pupils have made further progress through exploring wider issues. Consideration is given to the effects of social exclusion, pollution and racism and they achieve satisfactory standards. Computer generated resources are used effectively to enhance pupils' understanding of these, and broader, issues.

103

Whilst the school now has the locally Agreed Syllabus in place, there is a need for further development in some areas of the planning to develop the curriculum further. The opportunity for pupils to gain external accreditation needs to be addressed. Also, links with the local faiths and visits to places of interest needs further development.