

INSPECTION REPORT

OAKLEY SCHOOL

Tunbridge Wells

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 132148

Headteacher: Mr Martin Absolom

Reporting inspector: Alan Lemon
20165

Dates of inspection: 10th – 14th March 2003

Inspection number: 249441

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Special
Age range of pupils:	3 - 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Pembury Road Tunbridge Wells Kent
Postcode:	TN2 4NE
Telephone number:	01892 823096
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ron Pronger
Date of previous inspection:	This is the first inspection of Oakley School

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20165	Alan Lemon	Registered inspector	English Art Educational Inclusion	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
8937	Howard Allen	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
11239	Sue Flockton	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Post - 16	
17855	Gordon Gentry	Team inspector	Design and technology Physical education	
	Kiran Campbell-Platt	Team inspector	Religious education English as an additional language	
21397	Ingrid Bradbury	Team inspector	Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
31111	Caroline Jamison	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Modern foreign language Citizenship Personal, social and health education Special educational needs	

	Judith Charlesworth	Team inspector	Science	
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London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Oakley School was established in September 2000 as a new co-educational day special school. It is designed to cater for 165 pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs. The school is on two sites seven miles apart. The secondary school and provision for students over the age of 16 is in Tunbridge Wells and the primary school is in Tonbridge. The school has contended with a high turnover of teachers as well as contractors on site improving the accommodation. Both sites have undergone substantial refurbishment. The major work is finished at the primary school and is almost complete in the secondary school releasing much needed accommodation to replace several inadequate temporary buildings. There are 153 pupils currently on roll made up of 48 pupils in the primary school, 86 pupils in the secondary school and 19 students in the post-16 provision. Pupils have communication difficulties and associated learning difficulties including moderate or severe learning difficulties. Many have additional needs including speech and language delay, autism, challenging behaviour, hearing impairment and medical conditions. All of the provision for children under the age of 5 is made in the nursery of a special school neighbouring the primary school. There are two pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds who both speak English. One is Bangladeshi and the other is Chinese. The nature of pupils' special educational needs means when they enter the school their attainment ranges from very low to near the level expected for their age in some aspects of their learning.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Oakley School is a good school providing a good standard of education for its pupils and students. Pupils are achieving well and they have positive attitudes. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. It is well led and managed. Resources have been developed effectively and they are used well. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Good leadership and management have brought about the successful establishment of a new school.
- Year 7 pupils with additional needs are supported and taught very well and make very good progress.
- Students over the age of 16 have a very good range of learning opportunities, are taught very well and make very good progress.
- Pupils throughout the school achieve very well in design and technology.
- Very good lesson planning by most teachers supports effective teaching and learning.
- The strategies for teaching literacy skills throughout the school are good.

What could be improved

- The teaching of information and communication technology in the secondary school.
- The approaches to teaching and the match of work to pupils' needs and their attainment.
- The consistency with which pupils' behaviour is managed during lessons and around the school.

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

As Oakley School is a new school, it has not been inspected before.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year 2	By Year 6	by Year 9	by Year 11	by Year 13	Key
speaking and listening	B	B	B	B	B	very good A
reading	B	B	B	B	B	good B
writing	B	B	C	C	B	satisfactory C
mathematics	B	B	C	C	A	unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education	C	C	B	B	A	poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B	B	A	

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

National Curriculum attainment levels and special performance indicators for lower attaining pupils are used to set targets in English, mathematics and science for the Year 5, 8 and 10 groups. The good progress made by these pupils currently indicates they are on course to reach their targets and achieve the success targeted for examinations at the end of Year 11.

Pupils in Year 11 and students over the age of 16 take a wide range of examinations and achieved good results in 2002.

Pupils achieve well. They make good progress in English, particularly in speaking and listening and reading. Progress in writing is good in the primary school and satisfactory in the secondary school where redrafting and word processing are less strong. A few higher attaining pupils produce high quality writing. All pupils are keen to read and those just learning use picture clues and letter sounds to decipher difficult words. Many pupils read fluently and expressively. In the primary school, pupils make good progress in mathematics beginning with counting up to 10, telling the time and naming shapes. They go on to count to 100, add and subtract and recognise fractions. Progress is satisfactory in the secondary school. Pupils work with decimal numbers and algebra. Higher attaining pupils multiply number up to 1000 and calculate sums of money. Progress in science is good and pupils develop the skills of scientific enquiry and in the secondary school conduct experiments by themselves.

Pupils make good progress in most subjects and very good progress in design and technology. In French and citizenship progress is satisfactory. However, in information and communication technology in the secondary school it is unsatisfactory because the work is unchallenging. Students over the age of 16 achieve very well overall, especially in mathematics and personal development. Year 7 pupils grouped together because of their additional needs achieve very well because of high quality support and expert teaching.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils like the school and have positive opinions of what the school offers them. They very often enjoy their work and get thoroughly involved in discussions about it.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. It is often good during lessons but less so during breaks in the day. Some pupils express concern about being bullied at these times. Inappropriate behaviour happens occasionally in lessons when discipline is not managed effectively.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Pupils are willing and carry out small tasks that help the school's organisation. In lessons, pupils improve their social skills through listening carefully to others, taking turns and being helpful. Relationships are good. However, lessons are often heavily directed by teachers and there is too little room for pupils to use their initiative and learn independently. Students over the age of 16 have much better opportunities and achieve well as a consequence.
Attendance	Satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 1 – 6	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	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.

Teaching and learning are good overall. It is good throughout the school in English and science. In mathematics, teaching is good in the primary school and satisfactory in the secondary school. Personal, social and health education is taught satisfactorily in the primary school and well in the secondary school. Teaching is good in most subjects. It is very good in design and technology; also for students over the age of 16 and the Year 7 pupils grouped together because of their additional needs.

Nearly all lessons are planned very well and teachers set out clear learning objectives for their classes. They think out carefully the sorts of activities that would be effective and organise these in most cases to meet the needs of all pupils. This leads to good learning of new knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils enjoy learning and respond positively to the challenges their work provides. Tight planning sometimes produces heavily directed learning and too few opportunities for pupils to take more control and use their initiative. The few weaknesses found in teaching relate to less careful planning and unclear objectives for what pupils should learn. In a minority of lessons, affecting several subjects, some pupils are set work not matched to their needs, mainly because teachers fail to understand those needs fully. Very occasionally pupils' inappropriate behaviour disrupts learning. Teaching meets the needs of all pupils satisfactorily. In the class of Year 7 pupils grouped together because of their needs they are met very well. However, in some lessons throughout the school work is not varied effectively to match the wide differences in pupils' attainments.

Literacy is taught well throughout the school. Numeracy is taught well in the primary school and satisfactorily in the secondary school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good generally but very good in relation to students over the age of 16. The planning for what is taught in all subjects is at least satisfactory and good in English, mathematics and science. The literacy strategy is implemented well. Pupils have a wide choice of extra-curricular activities, good careers education and preparation for leaving school, especially in the range of accreditation on offer.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The pupils concerned make the same good progress as other pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school gives a satisfactory amount of attention to pupils' spiritual development but the provision for their moral, social and cultural development is more effective. Within the good range of learning opportunities pupils are taught right from wrong, they gain socially from working with each other, especially through drama and sports and learn about the diversity of culture in the world.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are cared for well, particularly in relation to their welfare and safety. They are supported satisfactorily. Good behaviour is promoted in most lessons but is not monitored sufficiently at break times when some bullying occurs. Good procedures to assess progress are in place or being developed but they are not used consistently.

The school is well focused on developing and maintaining a positive relationship with parents and the partnership that exists is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The principal, senior staff and all other staff have achieved a considerable amount in the short time the school has existed. There is a clear sense of direction leading the school to identifying the right priorities together with confident, efficient management in dealing with these effectively.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. The governors are fully behind the school, determined and committed to it achieving success. They are closely in touch with the work of the school and are kept well informed about its strengths and weaknesses. They conduct their business efficiently and effectively and meet all their statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Evaluating what works well or not is at the forefront of leadership and management. The evaluation of teaching has been significant in making it effective and ensuring the good standard of education for pupils.
The strategic use of	Good. Resources are well deployed. A good team of staff has been

resources	assembled and their expertise is being increased through effective training. Specialist rooms in the new accommodation are contributing well to pupils' progress. The school's expenditure is planned well and has achieved good educational provision. The school makes good use of principles of best value.
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The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. Accommodation is satisfactory but, when refurbishment is completed, will be good. Resources for learning are good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been a marked and positive difference to their children's attitudes to school and their progress. • Teachers and classroom assistants know how to support and encourage their children. • There is a good relationship and flow of information between school and parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The effectiveness with which the school deal with children's additional needs. • The amount of information about primary school matters reported in the school's newsletter. • That homework is regular, challenging and matches the needs of their children.

Inspectors agree with all of the points made by parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' and students' achievements

1. Pupils throughout the school are achieving well and while they have only been in this new school for two years the rapid development of the curriculum and teaching and learning results generally in a picture of pupils making good progress. Students over the age of 16 are achieving very well because of the very good range of relevant learning opportunities they have. They make very good progress in personal development, especially in their independence and use of initiative. Those pupils in Year 7, grouped together because of their additional special educational needs are achieving very well. They receive very good support and are taught very effectively. While they have considerable difficulty in concentrating for long, they listen and respond very well, giving careful consideration to answers and taking their turn to speak. Otherwise, pupils with additional needs make satisfactory progress and are not achieving as well as most pupils because teachers lack the expertise to plan effective approaches that would give more support to their learning. One or two parents made this point concerning their children's progress.

2. Pupils come into the school with a very wide range of attainment and this is judged by their results in National Curriculum tests and the school's own assessments. Among the minority of higher attaining pupils there are some at the level expected for their age in aspects of their learning and this is reflected largely in the good GCSE and Certificates of Educational Achievement results they achieve in mathematics, science and art. Seven Year 11 pupils entered for GCSE mathematics and five gained A* - G pass grades. All of these pupils gained the Certificate of Achievement in mathematics, seven with distinction and two with merit. All of those entered, gained a Certificate of Achievement in science, three with distinction and three with merit. All of the five entered for art in GCSE gained A* - G passes. Year 11 pupils also gained certificates for word-processing, work experience and the bronze award of the Youth Award Scheme. The very good provision for students over the age of 16 and the consequent very good progress they make is reflected in their results. In 2002, students achieved accreditation from the ASDAN 'Towards Independence' course. Six also qualified at Level 1 of the National Vocational Qualification in catering. Twenty-one students gained certificates for word-processing and of the three entered for GCSE art, one passed with Grade A and two passed with Grade E. By and large all of these results match those achieved in 2001.

3. It is not possible to extrapolate a picture of pupils' progress from the results of their National Curriculum tests, which are taken at the end of Years 2, 6 and 9. The school has not been in existence long enough to have information on groups as they get older. The school has begun using data to set performance targets aimed at increasing pupils' attainment. It has introduced specialised measures for pupils with more severe learning difficulties whose attainment will not register on the National Curriculum scales and is using these to set performance targets for them. All of the indicators, particularly pupils' good progress in lessons and the effectiveness of teaching, show the school is mostly on course to achieve its targets.

4. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls in the primary and secondary schools. This is equally so for male and female students over the age of 16. However, pupils and students, because of their widely different levels of attainment, do not make as good progress in a few aspects of their learning because of inconsistency in setting work that matches their attainments and is challenging. This holds them up in some lessons and is more a feature in the secondary school than in the primary school. In one Year 11

mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher introduced the task using language too complex for pupils, which limited their understanding of what to do. In some lessons involving mathematics, science and information and communication technology, higher attaining pupils were insufficiently challenged, which slowed the pace of their work and took away from how well they achieved. While pupils behave satisfactorily, overall, quite often distractive behaviour on the part of a small minority prevents them and others from achieving well.

5. Pupils and students make good progress in developing literacy skills. Their progress in English is good and this is a significant contribution to literacy. Pupils' and students' competence in literacy is promoted effectively in other subjects as well. They achieve well in improving their speaking and listening skills. Very good story reading by several English teachers gets pupils listening intently and joining in active discussion. Pupils love to read aloud and even the most hesitant are willing to have a go. Many pupils read fluently and those just learning use picture clues and the sounds of letters to decipher words they find difficult. There is good progress in writing from the earliest stage of controlling marks so they form letter shapes to constructing simple sentences. Higher attaining pupils are assured writers creating very imaginative or finely descriptive passages, illustrated and written in paragraphs and chapters. Some but not all use word-processing effectively for the final presentation of their work.

6. Pupils in the primary school make good progress in acquiring skill with number. The progress of secondary school pupils is satisfactory because the leadership behind promoting numeracy across the curriculum is not as effective in the secondary school. Pupils competence with number is developed satisfactorily in all of their subjects but mathematics lessons in the primary school help them progress well in counting to 10 and going on to do simple additions and subtractions. In the secondary school, pupils calculate measurements and tackle multiplication. They understand some fractions and use numbers containing decimal points. They apply their knowledge of number to calculate money sums and measure the perimeter of shapes.

7. Pupils throughout the school achieve well in most subjects. They achieve very well in design and technology where primary pupils work together with construction kits, building models with moving parts and evaluating the success of their projects. In the secondary school, pupils design and make more sophisticated motorised models. Progress is satisfactory in French and not better because pupils have limited opportunities to hear and speak French in lessons. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in personal, social and health education and, in citizenship, their progress is good between Years 7 and 9 and satisfactory thereafter largely because work is not match to the needs of lower attaining pupils. In information and communication technology, pupils in the secondary school make unsatisfactory progress because what pupils know, understand and can do is not fully appreciated. This leads to ineffective lesson planning in which learning objectives are not sharply focused and the work pupils are given to do is unchallenging.

Pupils' and students' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Most pupils arrive at school happy and eager to learn. Pupils get on well with teachers and classroom assistants. Most pupils confirm they like school and are happy to talk about what they particularly enjoy doing. Pupils begin lessons wanting to learn and determined to try to do well. Most respond very well to enthusiastic teachers and are usually eager to answer questions when asked. Pupils sustain their concentration even when the work is not sufficiently challenging. They usually work well in groups helping each other and showing consideration for others.

9. There are a few pupils who at times behave inappropriately. This is more marked in the secondary school. In discussions with pupils, it is obvious most have a clear understanding of right from wrong and they take account of the feelings of others. There is often very good behaviour in classrooms but behaviour is sometimes less good in the secondary school outside of classrooms. Some pupils report there are a few who are a threat at break times or when moving between lessons. While these times are being supervised by staff, until the refurbishment work is complete, the diversity of spaces around the school make full surveillance difficult to achieve at all times. The few incidents of inappropriate behaviour during lessons usually happen because some teachers are not effective in managing pupils.

10. From the time they start school, pupils take on small responsibilities and this serves to improve their personal and social skills satisfactorily. From a young age pupils collect and take registers to the office. In some lessons, pupils are encouraged to be responsible for their own work, for example, by ensuring it is correctly dated, has their name on it and is put away at the end of the lesson. However, in many lessons, work directed by the teacher predominates and the opportunities for pupils to learn independently are too few. In Year 10, pupils take part in a week of 'World of Work' activities. This includes working as a team and with unfamiliar adults, engaging in a range of activities, such as raft building, and becoming familiar with different working environments. This has a positive impact in widening pupils' experiences and developing their social and interpersonal skills. In Year 11, as part of careers education, pupils learn about and practice interviews techniques. Work experience interviews give them confidence and they are well prepared for their placements at different work venues in the area.

11. Relationships between pupils are generally good. Pupils in the secondary school carry out their duties as school guides very maturely. Two pupils in particular, as well as performing their guide duties very well, spoke very articulately about subjects they studied at school and the things they liked most.

12. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and in line with the national average for similar types of schools. Due to their physical health a few pupils need to be away from school from time to time. There are very few pupils for whom the school has any need for concern with regard to absence.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS AND STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. A key feature of effective teaching which results in pupils learning well is the quality of planning done by the large majority of teachers. Nearly all teachers write very detailed plans and in doing so they are very clear how the activities they use match and support pupils' learning. The only drawback is that lessons are so tightly directed by the teacher that the scope for pupils to learn independently is often reduced. Most teachers adhere to a format set by the school for written lesson plans and draft these using publishing facilities on computers. Planning meticulously leads to teachers having a sharp focus on learning objectives for their classes and for individual pupils where their needs differ from others. It means teachers give serious thought to the organisation of activities, the use of classroom assistants and learning resources and how all of this comes together to realise the learning objectives set. Lesson planning is a strong feature of effective teaching in nearly all subjects taught and where the quality of teaching falters, which is rarely, weaknesses in the planning process are usually one of the salient factors. Teaching and learning is unsatisfactory in information and communication technology in Years 7 to 11 because learning objectives are not sufficiently clear in planning and this leads to a lack of challenge for pupils, for example, the questions they are asked do not promote pupils' thinking effectively. Teaching is

ineffective when pupils are coached in ICT skills one at a time. This leaves other waiting which leads to behaviour problems and a generally slow pace to the work.

14. What goes into planning is based upon many teachers' good knowledge of the subject, their understanding of pupils' learning difficulties and, usually, any additional needs they might have that hinders their learning. Among the best examples such as in science lessons between Years 7 and 11, the two teachers involved have excellent subject knowledge and use this effectively to get pupils' thinking and speculation going. Pupils with additional needs are well supported. Consequently, pupils engage what knowledge they have and accumulate more from hearing the teacher and answering the good flow of open questions. The teachers' confidence with science combined with their knowledge of pupils mean also that they are given a lot of independence in carrying out their work. The sense of responsibility springing from this enhances their quality of learning. This is a strong feature in the learning of students over the age of 16. Teachers frame their questions carefully so that students are encouraged to take a decision making role and exert greater independence in their learning. In English, teachers very often enliven their lessons because of their expertise with language and literature. Their story reading and the discussions they stimulate around stories and plays thoroughly engage pupils' interest. The teacher's skilful use of voice to convey the meaning in the words, for example, the seriousness, sadness or hilarity of a situation allows pupils to comprehend things better. They are then well placed to contribute to discussions and gain the information they need to begin writing about what they know or think. The magic of stories is as well conveyed to the youngest pupils in the same manner and creates good conditions for them to link objects with words and begin well on the road to reading.

15. There is a mixed picture regarding the level of expertise and provision available across the school in catering for pupils with additional special educational needs. A significant strength is the support being given to the group of Year 7 pupils who have been put together because of their additional needs. Their transition from the primary to the secondary school is being handled gradually and gently. They have one teacher for most of their lessons and the quality of teaching and learning this brings is very good and occasionally excellent. Here, and in other lessons where pupils' needs are being well-met, it is because teachers use their knowledge of pupils to plan carefully the approaches and activities during lessons that best suit them. In English, for example, classes are often divided into smaller groups of pupils with matching abilities for parts of the lesson. This allows pupils to work at the level and pace that suits them best. It also provides a good way for teachers and classroom assistants to concentrate on pursuing the range of learning objectives necessary. Classroom assistants know pupils well and they are very aware of what are the aims of the lesson. They are given clear roles and this very often results in individual pupils and groups having good support in learning. The relationships between pupils and staff are very good and these are used effectively to boost pupils' confidence.

16. Occasionally, pupils are not given an appropriate level of work, it being either too difficult or too easy. This was the case in some mathematics lessons and in science there was too little challenge in the drawing and colouring work in one lesson. In citizenship, some topics taught are beyond the scope of lower attaining pupils understanding, for example, the examination of democracy. Consequently, these pupils did not get as involved in the discussion as others. In the case of a few pupils, disruptive behaviour interrupts learning. This is not managed effectively in one or two lessons in several subjects including mathematics and science. While the provision for homework is satisfactory, some parents have made the point that the homework set for their children has too little regard for what they know, understand and can do. It is either too difficult or too easy.

17. There is a clearly understood strategy in place for promoting pupils skills in literacy. It is established very well for pupils between Years 1 and 6 and is good otherwise. Every teacher, for example, identifies the key vocabulary in each of their lessons and ensures time is spent learning these words through discussions, questioning and writing. Key words are frequently written on the board or put on display. In one geography lesson, pupils learnt words like 'lava', 'crust' 'core' and 'mantel', which helped them understand and explain volcanic eruptions. A prominent approach to teaching is promoting discussion and questioning pupils. In science lessons, there is time for pupils to listen as others explain their work. In art, pupils write self-evaluations and the assured writers produce essays of a high standard. The teaching of numeracy across the school is satisfactory. The planning for this is not at as an advanced point as that for literacy. However, opportunities to use number skills arise in several lessons such as in science and design and technology where pupils carry out measurements. Pupils in the primary school have frequent opportunities in their songs and rhymes to practice counting.

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

18. Throughout the school the plans for what should be taught in nearly all subjects are developed satisfactorily. The plans for English, science, design and technology and religious education are good. The mathematics curriculum in the primary school is good. However, pupils have fewer opportunities for solving problems and handling data in mathematics. The planning for information and communication technology in the primary school is good. It is unsatisfactory in the secondary school where the newly appointed co-ordinator has yet to get to grips with what pupils know, understand and can do and relating this effectively to the planning for what should be taught. The school offers a good range of accredited courses for pupils in Years 10 and 11 as well as for students over the age of 16, although the opportunities in English are not nearly as good as in mathematics and science. The provision for religious education is good.

19. The strategy for teaching literacy skills is good. It is particularly well developed in the primary school where the training in literacy for teachers and their expertise ensure provision is effective. While who co-ordinates the literacy strategy in the secondary school is not fully resolved there is a clear direction in promoting pupils' literacy skills. Teachers have had training and the literacy strand of the Key Stage 3 Strategy is being implemented satisfactorily. Literacy is promoted effectively in English lessons and there is good attention in most subjects to improving pupils' skills. The strategies the school uses for teaching numeracy are satisfactory overall. It is well led and managed in the primary school where the opportunities for pupils to increase numeracy skills are better developed than in the secondary school. Here, the subject manager for mathematics is absent and the leadership on the numeracy strategy is less effective.

20. Overall, pupils with additional special needs are provided for satisfactorily. Good use is made of classroom assistants. They keep these pupils working steadily, write for them and develop their communication skills by making use of key words, symbols or computer programs specially designed to help writing. Sign language is also used with some pupils in the primary school. The Social Use of Language (SULP) programme has the potential to support pupils with speech and communication difficulties. However, it is not achieving all the desired outcomes at present. Not all the staff involved have sufficient skills to elicit language from the pupils and they are not fully aware of individual needs. For example, the SULP activity for a group of students over the age of 16 was to make a jigsaw. There were no individual communication targets at work and students were told to ask each other questions about where jigsaw pieces might fit. There was little challenge and students completed the jigsaw without saying very much.

21. A wide range of therapy is provided by the school's two speech and language therapists, a visiting physiotherapist and an art therapist. The school is developing a multi-disciplinary approach to meet pupils' additional needs although at the present time this is not fully integrated. However, art therapy is effective in providing very individual support to address aggressive behaviour. Pupils, whose needs demand it, are seen regularly by speech therapists and others are given a more general oversight. Speech therapy programmes are also carried out by teachers and classroom assistants. While teachers' plans for lessons generally allow for the needs of these pupils, for example, by changing the work or resources to better match their needs, in a few lessons this is not effective. In these instances specific learning objectives are not set out clearly and, consequently, the best approaches to teaching are not thought through in enough detail.

22. A good range of extra-curricular activities, including clubs and visits, enriches the curriculum. There are opportunities at lunchtimes for pupils in the secondary school to use computers. There is a successful after school club each Wednesday, for both the primary and secondary pupils, which is financed with a New Opportunities Fund grant. This offers a range of activities for the primary school pupils, such as, visits to local places of interest and taking part in an egg hunt at Easter, contributing positively to their geographical, historical and cultural knowledge and understanding. For the secondary school pupils, activities have included bowling, rock climbing. There is also a football club held by a visiting coach each week.

23. The school makes satisfactory provision in the curriculum for personal, social and health education (PSHE). In the primary school, teachers are exploring a new scheme, which is a nurture programme using structured discussion. This is proving to be very effective with pupils in Year 6 who are mature and confident enough to express their feelings and they understand the idea of working together. In the secondary school, PSHE is taught by a dedicated team of teachers who have good knowledge of the subject and are able to engender a good understanding of the issues involved in health education and promote a sense of self-worth and care and understanding of others. Sex education is well planned throughout the curriculum. It enables the pupils to learn the correct names of different parts of the body, explore relationships and how to deal with appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. Girls and boys receive the same curriculum but girls are taught separately in relation to the issues specific to them.

24. The provision to prepare pupils for leaving school is good. In particular, the quality of careers education and guidance. The careers advisor attends pupils' transition reviews and is familiar with the needs of each pupil concerned. There is a well developed programme of work experience and pupils are carefully prepared for their placements. The local community makes an effective contribution to pupils' learning. Visits in the locality support the curriculum, for example, to Battle Abbey in relation to work in history, which enriches pupils' experiences well. The local supermarkets, garages and shops are helpful in giving work experience places to the older pupils. The primary school pupils visit local farms, the library, the high street and museums to support their understanding of different curriculum areas. The links with West Kent and Hadlow College are good and support the pupils learning experiences well. Relationships are developing with local secondary schools, for example, two grammar schools who are participating in developing programmes of social events to include students over the age of 16 from Oakley School.

25. The spiritual development of pupils is satisfactory. In religious education pupils make good progress in learning about and from a range of faiths and beliefs. In assemblies, pupils have sound opportunities for reflection, prayer and to appreciate spirituality of music, for example, through listening to the lyrics of a song by Stevie Wonder. They take part in church

visits and have a range of visitors contributing to assemblies. Pupils participate in charity events, for example, Red Nose Day and the Lord Mayor's Toy Appeal. Although some subjects make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development, for example, English, music, design and technology and physical education, opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual development are not being fully exploited in all subjects.

26. The opportunities for pupils' moral development are good. The curriculum, ethos and extra curricular activities provide a sound context for supporting pupils' understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Work in religious education helps pupils to be aware of the links between religious beliefs and rules pertaining to classroom, school and the community. They learn about the qualities of good neighbours and are encouraged to evaluate good and bad behaviour.

27. Pupils' social development is promoted well. They take part in activities which support the development of their self esteem and confidence, for example, through drama and performances in school, work experience in Year 11 and through activities with neighbouring schools. For example, through sporting links for girls with a local school and the inclusion of Year 11 pupils in GCSE mathematics lessons at a neighbouring school. Pupils also actively participate in a range of after school clubs.

28. Pupils' cultural development is promoted well. The school organises book weeks and pupils have opportunities to develop their artistic skills through work with the local museum creating collages, landscapes and cards on specific themes. School trips, for example, to the proms at the Albert Hall, for secondary pupils support their understanding of the musical genres. Primary pupils visit the local farm as a part of their science topic. They also celebrated the Jubilee and participated in coronation dances and traditional games.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

29. The school provides effectively for pupils' welfare, health and safety. An inclusive ethos is reflected in teachers' and classroom assistants' efforts to make all pupils feel secure and motivated. The school is a good environment for learning. The refurbished parts of the secondary school are bright and well designed areas that pupils enjoy being in. Both schools have adequate areas where pupils can be cared for if they are feeling unwell and there is a good number of staff trained in first aid on both sites. Child Protection procedures are secure. The heads of education and the principal work effectively as a team in this respect and staff have a clear understanding of the need to report any concerns about pupils' welfare. Health and safety is kept well under review. Teachers are involved in checking their classrooms and risk assessments have been carried out. Inter agency relationships are good such as with speech and language therapists, physiotherapists, art therapist and the nurse. They all work well along side staff providing both support and training.

30. Teachers and classroom assistants often provide very good role models and frequently demonstrate to pupils they have high expectations with regard to them behaving well. This is supported soundly by the school's code of conduct, which is displayed in classes throughout the school and understood by most pupils. Class rules are discussed and agreed by pupils. The points rewards system, the "orange" behaviour sheets and incident monitoring forms in the secondary school ensure individual pupils' behaviour is tracked. However, these measures have not eliminated the inappropriate behaviour of a minority in the secondary school. This occasionally affects lessons in several subjects and is attributed largely to these pupils' behaviour not being managed effectively. In mathematics and science lessons, for example, the few instances of misbehaviour interrupted learning because they were not dealt with. Some of this misbehaviour is the result of the work planned for lessons not being appropriately paced or challenging. A discussion group in the

primary school, for example, went on too long. Related to this is the fact that the number of exclusions from the secondary school has increased this year due, on the one hand, to a few pupils ignoring the risks associated with the building works and on the other, the revision and reinforcement of expectations in the school's code of conduct. In discussion, a few pupils expressed concerns about the bullying behaviour of a few pupils, particularly at break times. They report this to staff who investigate incidents and take appropriate action.

31. The school monitors and follows up any concerns over pupils' absence satisfactorily.

32. The school uses individual targets well to promote pupils' personal development. Activities such as structured discussions supplemented by other lessons and whole school events such as assemblies also help promote pupils' personal development as they focus on themes such as friendships. The school council gives pupils the opportunity to represent their peers and they make suggestions about how the school might improve. All pupils are encouraged to work together in class and this helps most pupils develop their social skills by providing them with opportunities of helping and encouraging others. The senior school has trained pupils as school guides who very capably show visitors around their school.

33. The procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good. The school has a comprehensive assessment policy and, overall, good progress has been made in putting assessment systems into place. Teachers regularly review pupils' progress toward the targets of their individual education plans. The targets pupils are given largely concern learning objectives they would be working on in the course of lessons anyway and are not additional to these objectives as recommended in the Code of Practice. However, the effective use of these varies between subjects and between the primary and secondary schools. There is inconsistency in the way teachers in the secondary school record learning that has taken place in lessons and, while some teachers clearly record the changes in what pupils know, understand and can do, others do not provide this essential detail. Consequently, the information in the annual reports of pupils' progress, in the secondary school, is not consistent in saying what pupils have learnt, what improvement this represents and how it points the way forward. Reports are sometimes too descriptive and lack evaluation of pupils' progress. An additional record of progress is in pupils' progress books. These comprise a sample of pupils' work in each subject taken in two "focus weeks" in the year. Samples are annotated with information about progress. As an accurate record they are of high quality in the primary school. Their use in the secondary school is inconsistent, for example, there is much less annotation by teachers and in some samples evidence of progress on one or more subjects is missing.

34. A commercial scheme for gauging pupils' attainment levels in relation to the National Curriculum and to a specially devised performance scale for pupils not reaching National Curriculum levels has been introduced in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and personal, social and health education. In both the primary and secondary schools, pupils' levels of attainment are being logged in a computer program, which will enable teachers to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress. It is beginning to have a positive effect on planning especially for those pupils with additional special educational needs and the approach is being developed in the secondary school. However, in a few lessons in several subjects the activities planned were not varied sufficiently to suit the wide range of pupils' attainment and assessments are not used effectively to give a sharper focus. In some lessons, for example, the challenge of the work suited pupils in the middle of the range of attainment; was too easy for higher attaining pupils and too difficult for others.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

35. The effective partnership with parents has led to them developing very positive views of the school's work and the benefits this is having for their children.

36. Parents confirm they are happy that they know what is going on in school and are comfortable in contacting the school to discuss any problems. They also confirm the school contacts them if they have any concerns. Because most parents live some way away from school and most children arrive by coach or taxi most parents do not have the opportunity to regularly speak to teachers. However, the home/school books are consistently well used across the school and this ensures parents receive and send regular messages about their children. In addition, the school organises parents meetings each term that are well attended and where their children's school targets are discussed and agreed. Parents know they can arrange to see a teacher or a senior member of staff at any time if they have any particular concern.

37. The information the school provides for parents is generally of good quality. The prospectus and governors' report to parents comply with statutory requirements and provide parents with useful information about the routines of the school. Colourful and easy to read newsletters are regularly sent home. The quality of the annual reports of each pupil's progress is sometimes good but not consistently so. They are best in the primary school where reports describe well what children can do and in most cases give some indication about progress, particularly in English, mathematics and in their personal development. However, the annual reports for parents of children who attend the secondary school provide too little information on progress.

38. The school is actively encouraging parents' involvement in the life of the school, particularly their attendance at school functions. Parents are consulted regularly through a questionnaire. All parents are automatically members of "The Friends Association" and are able to attend social events. Parents also have the opportunity of attending school events such as assemblies, drama productions and Record of Achievement presentation evenings. Both school sites have meeting rooms available to parents that can be used for workshops. Parents of children new to the school have the opportunity to attend a review meeting after six weeks.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

39. The leadership and management of the principal and heads of the primary and secondary departments is good. They have had a challenging two years setting up a large school for its type on two distant sites and catering for pupils with a wider range and more complex special educational needs than had been previously experienced. The principal, with close support from governors and staff, has resolutely tackled the problems in acquiring necessary resources for the school alongside dealing with the difficulties thrown up by the refurbishment programme happening simultaneously. With regard to the school's resources, much has been achieved in particular building up a group of effective staff who have had the will to create the good standard of education that presently exists. The aims and values for the whole school are clear and well communicated. This has produced a positive ethos and a common outlook on both sites. While the effect is good, the shape of senior management roles is still being developed. The recent appointment to the assistant headteacher post now allows a wider spread of senior manager's responsibilities and greater focus by each on fewer areas of the school's work.

40. Good leadership and management permeate the work of the school. Efficient communications throughout the school has been a major priority well addressed, especially

through the reorganisation of the administrative team and also in the development of information and communication technology systems. Most subject managers fulfil their roles effectively and in doing so have overcome, largely, the difficulties of the separation of the primary and secondary schools. This has necessitated two managers for each subject and the good communications developed between the sites contributes much to the success in establishing most subjects. In the short time of the school's existence, its strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy have been formulated and put into place. This is more marked in the primary department because there is a stronger lead on both these strategies. The leadership on developing the literacy strategy on both sites is good, although as the mathematics co-ordinator has been absent for some time, this has slowed progress on numeracy. A few co-ordinators in the primary department are newly appointed and have not got fully to grips with their roles. The provision for students over the age of 16 is very well led and managed by a co-ordinator with a very clear vision for developing a wide range of relevant learning opportunities. All of the team that provides for students work together very effectively. However, leadership and management of information and communication technology in the secondary school is unsatisfactory.

41. The work of governors is good. They are a strong and committed group who have played an active part alongside the principal in overseeing the development of the new school. They have given a great deal of support to getting the school off on the right footing. Their combined experience and expertise has played an important part in decisions on the refurbishment of school buildings and in clarifying the appropriate financial basis for a school of this type. Governors conduct their business with rigour and efficiency. They stay closely in touch with the daily life of the school by speaking to staff and to pupils. They are kept regularly well-informed of its work and speak knowledgeably about the school, showing a good grasp of its strengths and weaknesses.

42. Monitoring and evaluating the school's work is good. The value and necessity of this activity to leadership and management is fully understood. Checking what is done well and needs improvement is carried out as a priority. The mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the school are delivering a clear picture of its strengths and weaknesses. The observation of teaching and the support emanating from this for teachers is good. This work has played a significant part in building an effective team of teachers and achieving a good standard of education for pupils. The comprehensive cycle of staff meetings provides an effective vehicle for discussing and deciding appropriate actions and there is a clear route for major issues to be included in the school improvement plan.

43. The school is actively developing resources and is making good use of what it has. Staffing, as its major resource, has been assembled and developed into an effective team despite the high turnover of teachers and difficulties in recruiting staff with sought after expertise. The on-going training for staff provides the expertise to address the particular needs of some pupils, for example, autism and difficulties with speech. The problems of creating a school from two distant units have not interfered to any significant extent. The use of accommodation is constrained, particularly at the secondary school by major ongoing refurbishment to a large part of the building. However, the specialist rooms for science, design and technology and art each have a contribution to pupils' positive progress. What is emerging from the improvements to the accommodation is a picture of good facilities that will add to the standards already achieved, especially for students over the age of 16, who, with their teachers and classroom assistants, use their temporary buildings effectively.

44. The use of the school's finances is planned carefully. In as far as they are able at this stage of the school's development, the principal and governors achieve best value effectively. Comparisons are made using the limited information available for this type of school. The means to challenge the school's performance is being developed, particularly around the

measurement of pupils' performance. Parents are consulted formally each year on their views of the school and clear procedures are followed to decide on the most competitive prices in relation to major items of expenditure. The principal and governors agree a realistic annual budget so a minimal surplus of funds is generated. While there is not much spare money, by careful management of the budget, sums are found for the purchase of new resources, for example, classroom furniture and new books for the libraries. The additional funds the school gets are used effectively. Each teacher is equipped with a notebook computer by this means, and this is addressing the improvement of their competence in the use of information and communication technology. It also addresses the aim of improving communications throughout the school by, for example, staff using the school Intranet to exchange electronic mail with each other.

45. The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. Teachers are well qualified and most are experienced in working in special schools. While there has been a high turnover of teachers since the school opened this has not adversely affected progress towards achieving good quality provision. There are a good number of high quality classroom assistants contributing effectively to teaching and learning. The range of therapists adds a further strong dimension to the staff team. The therapists share very good relationships with the rest of the staff team and together they contribute to thorough planning for each pupil and student. Ancillary staff are valued for their contribution to the well being of the pupils, are very much part of the team and relate well to pupils and students. The good teamwork of teachers and support staff is a major factor in pupils and students making good progress.

46. The induction of new staff to the school is good. The senior management team is strongly committed to this and to professional development. A good performance management policy is implemented. Senior staff oversee the performance management cycle and act as mentors to new staff. A good programme of professional development is focusing well on improving expertise such as in using information and communication technology and filling crucial gaps such as meeting the needs of those pupils with more complex learning difficulties now being admitted. Teachers and support staff are aware they need more training in specialist approaches. Some training is already taking place for example, in providing for pupils with autism and augmentative communication using the Picture Exchange Communication System although the benefits of this are not yet embedded fully.

47. Learning resources are good overall. They are very good in science, design and technology and information and communication technology. They are good in English and mathematics in the primary school. The use the loan service, visiting speakers is good and out of school visits is good in physical education, history, geography and in provision for students over the age of 16. In religious education there is a lack of visual resources to illustrate the diversity of faiths studied.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

48. To continue to build upon how well pupils' achieve and the good provision available to them, the principal and governors should:

- (1) Improve the leadership and eliminate unsatisfactory teaching in information and communication technology in the secondary school by:
 - i. Ensuring there are clear objectives for what pupils should learn in each lesson building coherently on what pupils already know, understand and can do.
 - ii. Making sure that approaches to teaching sustain a good pace in lessons and pupils active involvement.

See paragraphs: 7, 13, 40, 92 and 94.

- (2) Ensure teachers develop sufficient knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to where pupils have additional special educational needs so that they are effective in using the information on these pupils to plan lessons and match the work to their levels of attainment.

See paragraphs: 15, 20, 59, 92, 111 and 116.

- (3) Bring greater consistency to managing pupils' behaviour in lessons and ensure pupils in the secondary school are managed effectively at all break times to eliminate incidences of bullying behaviour.

See paragraphs: 16, 30, 59, 69, 83, 89, 92, 97 and 99.

The principal and governors should also consider:

- i. Improving the quality of the annual reports to parents where necessary by describing clearly what pupils' have learnt in terms of the increases in their knowledge, understanding and skills in each subject and the progress this represents.

See paragraphs: 33 and 61.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	94
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	62

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	31	23	28	5	0	0
Percentage	5.4	33.4	24.8	30.0	5.4	0.0	0.0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	153
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	40

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.0

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.45

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	150	12	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	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	1	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: Y1 – Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.83
Average class size	9

Education support staff: Y1 – Y13

Total number of education support staff	28
Total aggregate hours worked per week	780

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	1418583
Total expenditure	1447509
Expenditure per pupil	9460
Balance brought forward from previous year	35925
Balance carried forward to next year	6999

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	13.8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9.9
<hr/>	
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1.0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1.0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	153
Number of questionnaires returned	59

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	31	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	32	8	2	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	37	7	3	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	46	7	5	0
The teaching is good.	70	26	2	2	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	64	29	3	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	76	20	0	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	19	7	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	64	27	3	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	67	28	0	3	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	32	5	3	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	65	25	4	5	2

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

ENGLISH

48. Pupils' throughout the school achieve well in all aspects of English. English is taught effectively and pupils' literacy skills are being developed well in English and other subjects. Drama lessons and school productions have made a significant contribution to the confidence and skill with which many pupils speak, listen and read. A good library exists at the primary school and there are moves to re-establish one at the secondary school when the building renovations are completed. The book stock has been also improved with new reading schemes and non-fiction books. However, the good progress made by the end of Year 11 is not reflected in pupils gaining qualifications, especially those who attain more highly. This is to do with opportunities for a range of accredited courses not yet having been developed.

49. By the end of Year 2, pupils listen intently and with interest to stories when expertly read by their teachers. The Year 1 class thoroughly enjoyed '*Three Little Pigs*' as its plot unfolded and excitedly contributed the right sound effects on cue or made gestures showing they were following the story. By the end of Year 6, pupils participate in discussions, which are effective in helping them listen attentively and respond thoughtfully. By the end of Year 9 and Year 11, there has been a strong emphasis in lessons on pupils listening and speaking. By the end of Year 9, pupils follow closely the thread of what their teachers are saying. They are confident contributors and articulate their answers and views clearly, often speaking in well formed and linked sentences. Pupils show respect and sensitivity when listening to less fluent speakers. When they read aloud, they pace their speech carefully so others hear it clearly. By the end of Year 11, higher attaining pupils find the words to express their empathy with the sad circumstances of Pip's beginnings in Dicken's *Great Expectations*. Students over the age of 16, work collaboratively relying on their initiative. They give frequent feedback on the progress of their projects and are engaged thoroughly in discussions, explanations and descriptions of their work, for example, in how they are going about researching and writing their autobiographies.

50. By the end of Year 2, pupils make good progress in recognising words and reading from books. Pupils are well read and day-to-day assessment is used well to make sure pupils progress at a good rate. Pupils use picture cues to follow a story and sequence pictures in the correct order of the storyline. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils read from books and extract the information they need. They read the simple text of *Animal Crackers* with accuracy and fluency, following words with their fingers. With prompting, pupils make the words sound, for example, cheerful or serious to suit the mood of the story. They know what poetry is and identify and find rhyming words. By the end of Year 9, higher attaining pupils read with confidence and accuracy. They put expression into their words to emphasise their full meaning to listeners. They analyse the text of stories and plays and make accurate inferences about characters and plots. Lower attaining pupils make the same progress and, while their words are hesitant, confidence is strong and encouragement from other pupils and teachers means they strive earnestly to achieve. By the end of Year 11, these pupils have greater skill in using the sounds of letters making up words and in recognising more familiar words. Higher attaining Year 11 pupils read critically and in their discussion of the opening chapter of *Great Expectations* showed a good grasp of themes, plot and events. Students over the age of 16 tackle successfully a wide variety of reading included in their course.

51. By the end of Year 2, higher attaining pupils write their name and improve handwriting skills by copying over the tops of letters or below them. Lower attaining pupils progress from

controlling marks on paper to forming recognisable letters. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils write in simple sentences and set these out in the proper order of a story. Their writing is short in length and uses basic punctuation. Pupils write lists, for example, the steps of a recipe and write rhyming sentences such as “*When I was three I was stung by a bee.*” By the end of Year 9, pupils apply a structured approach to writing. They initially set out their ideas and themes for writing about Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* as a diagram of key words and rewrite the main events in the story *Misery Guts* into diary form. There are a few assured writers working at the level expected for their age. One Year 9 pupil produced a well written story organised into paragraphs and chapters in word-processed form. His opening sentences read: “*It was a dark, stormy night in the forest of Hellvernam. Lightning streaked across the sky, illuminating the trees and revealing the soldiers battling below...*” More widely, the re-drafting and polishing of writing is not sufficiently widespread at this stage and later on. It is sufficiently high as an expectation, for example, word-processing is used minimally by pupils. By the end of Year 11, higher attaining pupils write for a range of purposes such as making descriptions, hypotheses and arguments. One pupil wrote: “*My summer holiday was both fun and interesting. We stayed in a brilliant lodge in Derbyshire, which was set in beautiful woodlands.*” Lower attaining pupils improve handwriting skills, spelling and the structure of their sentences. Students over the age of 16 are involved in much writing, for example, of records of visits and produce extended writing in their autobiographies. Much of their work they re-draft and refine using word processing.

52. The contribution of other subjects to pupils’ competence in literacy is good. There is an effective strategy in all subjects to identify and promote key vocabulary. Discussion and questioning are strong features in teaching supporting pupils speaking and listening skills. In design and technology, pupils write neat and detailed evaluations of projects. In science they set out the rationale for the predicted outcomes of experiments and in art write critical studies for GCSE. One pupil has written extensively on environmental art. The research is detailed and strongly evaluative.

53. Teaching is good overall. Most lessons are handled expertly by teachers using their good subject knowledge and a well developed grasp of the school’s literacy strategy. The framework for teaching in the National Literacy Strategy is used to good effect in addressing all of the aspects of English, providing a well timed variety of activities and the opportunity for pupils to go over what has been achieved at the end of each lesson. Story reading is carried out with skill and the drama and pace of the plots are conveyed convincingly. Year 1 pupils were enthralled by the reading of the *Three Little Pigs* as it built up to the finale. Fixated on the plight of the pigs, they absorbed new words like *straw*, saying it when shown straw or saying *big bad wolf* when they saw his picture. In order to reach a deeper understanding of *Macbeth* with Year 9 pupils, the teacher planned a very focused and successful discussion on the character of Lady Macbeth that allowed pupils to use what they had learnt about the play to make their inferences about her actions and motives. This refinement of pupils knowledge prepared them very well for the writing a character study of Lady Macbeth. Most teachers, knowing their pupils well, adjust the volume of work, its content and pace effectively so that each is challenged appropriately. Often classes are divided into smaller groups with matching abilities to allow pupils to work at the level and pace that best suits them. Classroom assistants take good charge of some small groups. They are well-briefed on the learning objectives of the lesson and pursue these effectively. In one instance the assistant was very effectively coaching Year 6 pupils to use expression when reading aloud. The annotation of pupils work in Years 1 to 6 is regular and detailed, which supplies teachers with a good knowledge of their pupils’ progress. In these years, the sample books of pupils’ progress which the school compiles are assiduously assembled and give a good record of the development of the changes in what pupils have learnt. These sample books or annotation of pupils’ work are not carried out with the same good attention in Years 7 to 11 and so teachers’ understanding of pupils’ progress, for example in writing, is not complete.

54. The leadership and management of English is good overall. This is despite the fact that the role of co-ordinating the subject in the secondary school is not fully delegated, although there is a new appointment, which is yet to take effect. The major achievement has been the successful establishment of a literacy strategy, which is being followed currently by the implementation of the literacy strand of the Key Stage 3 Strategy. This has given focus to the development of the subject across the whole school especially the effective way literacy is promoted in all subjects. In addition, it has led to the development of good resources for English. However, the opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 to pursue accredited courses are not as far on as in other subjects.

MATHEMATICS

55. Pupils are taught effectively and achieve well in Years 1 to 6. In Years 7 to 11, pupils are taught soundly and achieve satisfactorily as a consequence. However, of the seven Year 11 pupils entered for GCSE mathematics in 2002, five gained A* - G pass grades. Twelve Year 11 pupils also gained the Certificate of Achievement in mathematics, seven with distinction and two with merit. For this group of pupils their results represent good progress.

56. Year 1 pupils admitted to the school have limited mathematical skills and gaps in their mathematical language. They become progressively more confident with number work and in their use of mathematical language. By the end of Year 2, pupils sort objects by shape and colour. They count to 10, and begin to recognise and write the numbers. More able pupils count to 20 and know the names of some two-dimensional shapes such as a square and a triangle. They tell the time in hours and half hours. By the end of Year 6, pupils add numbers to 10 independently, and subtract them using a number line. More able pupils can subtract to 20, while the most able count to 100. They understand tens and units and use appropriate mathematical language. All pupils have been introduced to fractions, which most work out with the help of cubes, while the more able calculate them with no support.

57. By the end of Year 9, less able pupils use a lot of practical mathematics, and measure, identify fractions and multiply, with the help of practical activities. Others extend their ability to do basic calculations and use decimal points. They work out simple number patterns, and the more able undertake patterns of increasing complexity, including the use of negative numbers. They use rotational symmetry accurately, and have been introduced to the use of algebra, understanding that letters can represent numbers. By the end of Year 11, pupils work with numbers of different levels of difficulty, according to their levels of ability. The least able continue to work with numbers to 20, while others work to 50, and the most able confidently use four digit numbers. Pupils transfer this knowledge to different aspects of the subject, using their knowledge, for example, to calculate money, or the perimeter of a rectangle. More able pupils multiply using 4 digits, they name different types of triangle and know how to translate and rotate shapes.

58. Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is good overall, with some very good features. For pupils in Years 7 to 11, it is satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good there is clear planning which identifies what pupils will learn in the lessons. Introductory sessions focus pupils' attention and develop their skills in mental mathematics, as when pupils in Year 6 began a lesson by counting on in steps of two. Pupils were challenged to use larger and smaller numbers, depending on their ability. A variety of strategies is used to help pupils to understand new topics. For example, in a very good Year 2 lesson, pupils were introduced to the idea of the days of the week by the use of a story which focused on these. Pupils respond well to questions, being eager to respond, and are enthusiastic about the different activities. Good management of pupils' behaviour, linked to high expectations, means that pupils concentrate on their work. Good relationships with pupils gives them confidence to try, even when they

find a topic difficult. Useful time is spent at the ends of lessons to review together the work done and pupils are reminded by this of what they have learnt. Pupils try hard for much of the time, generally behave well and, in these lessons, learn well. Less effective learning takes place when teachers do not provide work which is appropriate to the individual needs of the pupils and, therefore, some pupils find the work too difficult or too easy. On some occasions inappropriate behaviour is not consistently dealt with and pupils' progress is limited because they find it difficult to concentrate under these circumstances.

59. However, while pupils have many opportunities for working with numbers, doing calculations and learning about shape, space and measure, they have fewer opportunities for solving problems and handling data. This imbalance is, in part, linked to pupils' limited mathematical experience on entry to the school, and there is recent evidence of pupils attempting investigations. The development of mathematical concepts and language is reinforced in other subjects. For example, in ICT Year 2 pupils produce pictograms showing the transport pupils use to reach school, while in history they produce a time line of trains. In food technology there are many reminders about measurements and temperatures. Younger pupils sing songs which involve counting forwards and backwards. A policy for the development of numeracy across the curriculum has yet to be developed, so some opportunities are missed.

60. The mathematics co-ordinator in the primary part of the school has worked hard to introduce the National Numeracy Strategy, and provides good support to colleagues by advising on planning, giving advice and monitoring teaching. The co-ordinator in the secondary part of the school has been absent for some months, and this has delayed the implementation of the national strategy for pupils in Years 7 to 9, although many lessons reflect the format of this initiative. A new system of recording pupils' achievement has recently been introduced into the school. The information obtained is used satisfactorily to indicate the levels at which pupils are working, and to plan the next steps in their learning. However, the use made of assessment is not consistent across the school. One result is that the quality of pupils' progress reports is variable, with some giving a clear indication of pupils' achievements, while others tend to concentrate on pupils' attitudes to the work. Resources, including information and communication technology have been well developed in the primary part of the school and now provide a good support for pupils' learning, enabling them to engage in many practical activities which help them to learn.

SCIENCE

61. Pupils achieve well in science. Results in the 2002 national tests, taken by pupils at the end of Years 2, 6 and 9 indicate they attain increasingly higher levels as they grow older. By the end of Year 11, pupils gain accreditation for their work. Some pupils with more complex needs, understandably, do not reach these levels, but nevertheless, they too achieve well. The new science laboratory and very good resources are a great asset to the secondary school. The primary site also benefits, and their own resources are well organised into topic boxes related to each module of the scheme of work. This supports the smooth running of the lessons.

62. Pupils develop their skills in scientific enquiry well. In Years 1 and 2, pupils use everyday materials such as play dough in their investigations and become used to recording findings on pre-prepared worksheets. Between Years 3 and 6, pupils become familiar with using specific scientific items, such as the components of simple electrical circuits. They make simple predictions about the outcomes of investigations and record their work in more detail. By the end of Year 9, pupils select and set up their own equipment for investigations, for example into the relative efficiency of flames produced by a candle and a bunsen burner. They work safely and well with potentially dangerous resources such as flames and weak

solutions of hydrochloric acid safely. Pupils record their work in writing, tables and graphs drawing well on their literacy and numeracy skills. By the end of Year 11, pupils apply their knowledge and understanding to give explanations for what they observe, such as why a prism alters white light. They take readings from equipment, and interpret graphs and tables. From Year 7 through to Year 11, pupils use the Internet independently to research topics to add to their own work.

63. By the end of Year 2, most pupils understand that forces such as *pushes* and *pulls* can change the shape of some materials. They name parts of the body and recognise and name a variety of animals, such as snail and slug, making good representations of them out of play dough. By the end of Year 6, most pupils understand simple physical phenomena, such as why sound varies in different circumstances, for example footsteps on carpet or wooden floors. Higher attaining pupils know that different surfaces *absorb* sound to different degrees. Pupils understand the dangers of electricity, for example that electrical devices should not be run near water.

64. By the end of Year 9, pupils understand how electrical circuits work and select resources to make them. They know what happens to the electrical current if the circuit is broken, for example by a switch. Higher attaining pupils use this information to identify faults in equipment, such as a reversed battery in a torch. Pupils know that water and oxygen make iron go rusty, and that acid rain is damaging. Pupils use some scientific vocabulary in their everyday speech, such as *clamp*, *stand*, and *acid*. They understand that most materials change *state* and that sometimes this is irreversible, for example bread into toast. Pupils understand the basic principles of the structure of solids, liquids and gases. By the end of Year 11, pupils name the components of food, such as *protein* and *fat*, and know that food is used for energy. Most understand the difference between *elements*, *compounds* and *mixtures*, and how to separate mixtures. Pupils understand the basics of magnetism – that like poles repel and unlike poles attract – and the effect of different forces such as friction.

65. Teaching is good overall, which helps pupils develop and maintain an interest in science. In Years 7 to 11, pupils benefit from the excellent subject knowledge, teaching methods and behaviour management of the two subject managers. As a result, they learn well. Two factors in particular contribute to very good teaching in Years 7 to 11. Firstly, the teacher keeps up a continuous dialogue with pupils, asking them open questions such as “*Why do you think that...*” and “*What evidence have you got*” whilst at the same time adding information and supporting their practical work. Pupils are “bathed” in information, and absorb it almost without realising. The second factor is the degree of independence given to the pupils which is very good for their personal development. Whilst keeping safe is reinforced throughout the lesson, pupils are given the freedom to get out and put away their own equipment, use ICT under their own initiative and complete work at their own pace. There are always extra tasks if pupils finish before time, and once practical work is underway, the teacher draws the class together from time to time to check on their progress. Together with the calm, courteous approach to pupils’ behaviour management, this almost always results in lively investigations and good behaviour.

66. Characteristics of the most effective lessons in both the primary and secondary schools include very good opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT through their science activities. Time is given for pupils to *listen* to one another as they *explain* their work, which gives very good support to their English skills. In the science laboratory, the three computers are always in use as pupils independently draft their written work, add appropriate illustrations to it or research topics on the internet. Taking readings and tabulating them, or representing findings in graph-form, supports pupils’ numeracy skills well.

67. In almost all lessons throughout the school, proper emphasis is given to investigation and recording results, and teachers have high expectations of pupils to work sensibly and independently. In the best lessons, tasks are challenging and pitched to maintain pupils' interest and meet their individual needs. In one excellent lesson on electrical circuits, the teacher had taught pupils about circuits using standard scientific resources - battery, crocodile clips, light bulb and switch. She then extended this to enable the pupils to make their own switches using paper and tin foil, and to understand the purpose of simple circuits by making a matching game where a bulb lit when the correct connection was made. This was with the Group of Year 7 pupils with additional needs. High quality resources and worksheets based on writing with symbols are used very effectively to support these pupils. Similar resources are found in the primary school but do not yet extend into the other secondary class groups. Support staff are deployed very well to accelerate pupils' learning, for example, pupils with more limited writing skills have their work *scribed* for them so that the focus remains on science, and they do not get bogged down in the writing. Questions are carefully matched to pupils' skills.

68. In the occasional lesson where pupils do not learn as much as they could, it tends to be because teachers do not manage pupils' challenging behaviour well enough, and too much time is wasted on regaining pupils' attention. On one other occasion, the work did not have a sufficiently scientific focus, and too long was spent on drawing and colouring.

69. Subject management is good and the curriculum is good. The curriculum includes *assessment criteria* for each lesson, for example *to name a seed*. However, not all staff formally assesses pupils against these, although there are some excellent examples of very careful assessment and annotated work to describe what exactly pupils know, understand and can do. This inconsistent use limits the effectiveness of the information for informing curriculum planning, and the *assessment criteria* are not tied in with the target setting criteria. In practice, therefore, two systems are operating which limits their efficiency.

ART AND DESIGN

70. Overall, pupils throughout the school achieve well. While it was not possible to see lessons in Years 1 and 2, pupils' records and samples of their work show they achieve well. This is because there are clear learning objectives securely embedded in the plans for what is taught and work is challenging. Pupils explore the shapes, colours and textures of seeds and pastas through which words such as line, circle, hard and soft are introduced. Most pupils explore pattern-making using these materials and higher attaining pupils select particular shapes that create repeating patterns. By the end of Year 6, pupils draw shoes and vases of flowers from observation and higher attaining pupils capture the shape and proportions of these well. They experiment with paint and colour effects to make pleasing, expressive images.

71. By the end of Year 9, higher attaining pupils have good analytical and technical skills in drawing and using paints. They, for example, copy Picasso's figure paintings from his Blue and Cubist periods gaining a good understanding of the compositions, colours and designs in these works. By the end of Year 11, pupils pursue a GCSE course or the less demanding GCSE Entry Level Certificate. They all take a good deal of responsibility for their coursework projects, using research to help stimulate and refine their ideas. One pupil started out by studying a Rubens landscape painting and another used an Art Deco poster on which to base a cover design for a brochure. Pupils have good access to and use information and communication technology. One pupil, for example, pursued his coursework research and experimentation using the Internet and a computer art program. All of the five Year 11 pupils entered for GCSE in 2002 passed with grade D, which is a good result for them and the art department. One of the highest attaining pupils has written a very detailed

research on environmental art in his locality that is impressively descriptive and evaluative. The presentation in word processed text accompanied with illustrations is very high quality and in relation to GCSE standards commands a high grade. There are other good examples of research, for example, the visual essay by a student, over the age of 16, on The World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001. Three students enter for GCSE art in 2002 one of whom passed with a grade A.

72. Teaching is good overall. The general plan for what is taught in art is used to draw up good individual lessons plans and, consequently, the teachers of Years 1 to 6, whose expertise in the subject is not strong, manage to have successful lessons. Expertise is mostly good in teaching Year 7 through to students over the age of 16. Teachers' plans set out clearly what pupils should learn and these are adjusted so that work matches their different abilities. A lower attaining pupil in Year 6, for example, was taken through a useful exercise of finding the front of her sketchbook and then the next clean page where she would begin her drawing, which with prompting she learned to do. Equally, a student with autism was persuaded away from his preoccupation with cartoon characters to tackle abstract imagery, which was produced, with the gentle encouragement of the teacher, from segments of the pupils' cartoon drawings, hugely enlarged so that there was no immediate recognition of cartoon characters.

73. Good planning also supports the quality of explanation and demonstration for pupils and this ensures lessons get off to a good start. Pupils gain the sense of purpose this expresses. It captures their interest and encourages them to concentrate and make a good effort. The technique of creating a stippled paint effect using pieces of sponge was shown to pupils and by the end of the lesson that had learned the correct 'touch' to achieve good stippling. Similarly, in a lower attaining Year 8 group, pupils were shown a good approach for creating a tessellated pattern by drawing and cutting out a card template. This meant they worked more quickly. From drafting out the template shape in a series nearly all had learnt about repeating patterns and saw the particular way tessellations worked. With the clear direction of most lessons, classroom support assistants are well-briefed and effective in supporting pupils. The teachers and they know that increasingly up to Year 11, pupils need to take charge of the direction of their work and this is encouraged well. In line with the school's policy, key vocabulary is identified in planning and promoted throughout lessons. Writing and evaluation skills are developed effectively in the self-assessment exercises carried out by pupils. By Year 11, some higher attaining pupils write at length about art and several pupils at all stages use computers to design work and search the Internet for information or ideas.

74. Art is well led and managed. There are good supportive links between the subject co-ordinators on at both schools, which has done much to allay the lack of specialist art expertise among the primary class teachers. There is good consultation on effective ways of teaching art based on the detailed planning for the subject. This consultation has also extended to examining the range and quality of art resources and plans to further develop the book stock, artefacts and illustrations of art work in the primary school in particular. The art department in the secondary has acquired good quality 'big books' on art, which fits well with its good promotion of literacy. Overall, the range of art books is limited, for example, in a Year 7 lesson on tonal colour, references were made in the planning to Paul Klee's paintings as good exemplars but no information on the artist or illustrations of his work was available.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

75. Pupils throughout the school make very good progress. By the end of Year 2, pupils know some basics in the use of design and technology, using this to evaluate their work. They create shapes and models that illustrate their ideas and make simple choices of materials. Pupils design and assemble a winding mechanism using components from a

construction kit. By the end of Year 6, pupils use design and technology in their topic work. For instance, pupils design and make a range of simple vehicles finishing up by adding a simple motor. They start from basics, designing a model vehicle and listing equipment they are likely to need. They build their vehicle, evaluate their work and think of modifications which might improve it. Pupils finish the project by comparing the success of each others work.

76. By the end of Year 9, pupils have a grasp of the criteria for approaching design. They develop specifications and have a wider knowledge of a range of materials. Pupils understand simple design and making concepts and their self-evaluation is more critical than in earlier years. Pupils refine and modify a design for a mask, which they make and finalise with a very good evaluation. By the end of Year 11, pupils design, develop, refine, modify and construct a range of containers. They record their work thoroughly. In food technology, pupils prepared a meal which involved planning the courses and shopping to buy the ingredients. Higher attaining pupils take an Entry Level course and they are progressing well.

77. Teaching is very good, overall. Lessons are carefully planned. Teachers know the individual pupils very well and find ways of accommodating their needs in planning their lessons. Regular checks are made in the course of lessons on what pupils are learning. The teacher assesses their work weekly and writes informative records both about pupil achievement and attitudes. This is achieved largely by the skilful use of classroom assistants. Teachers and classroom assistants work effectively as a team and follow consistently the clear objectives stated in lesson plans. Pupils work with considerable enthusiasm, which illustrates the enjoyment they find in the subject. Very good resources, particularly in the secondary school where they are coupled with very good specialist facilities make a significant impact on learning. Pupils make good use of information and communication technology to design artefacts.

78. Leadership of the subject is very good and all aspects are managed very well. The subject manager for the primary school has been responsible for the subject for only a few months. She has made a very good development plan and works in close liaison with the secondary school subject manager.

GEOGRAPHY

79. Overall, pupils make good progress. However, pupils with additional special educational needs only make good progress when teachers plan specifically to support them such as using symbols for communicating or the individual support of a classroom assistant. This provision is not consistent in all lessons and, overall, these pupils make satisfactory progress.

80. By the end of Year 2, the majority of the pupils find their way around the school using a simple map. They compare and contrast Tonbridge with the countryside and mark the roads on a large-scale map. Pupils collect data and show different types of weather on a graph supporting work in mathematics. They develop an understanding of space and position and different geographical features. By the end of Year 6, pupils make a survey of litter in the playground, sort it into different materials, and understand that location is significant to the amount and type of litter found. Higher attaining pupils locate both England and Kenya on a world map, are aware of the crops grown in each of these places and talk about the differences. They know that the language spoken in Kenya is different to English and understand the difference between our shops and a Kenyan market. Lower attaining pupils talk about how a Kenyan child would spend the day and how different it is to their day. Pupils develop a wider understanding of different areas of the world and begin to compare and contrast with more confidence.

81. By the end of Year 9, pupils use geographical vocabulary with increasing confidence. They understand different types of erosion, such as, coastal erosion and the action of the sea on the seashore. Higher attaining pupils show the difference between physical and chemical weathering, such as acid rain. Lower attaining pupils understand the difference between the coast and Tunbridge Wells and this has been supported by visits to the coast to compare and contrast buildings and leisure activities. Map work is more accurate than that seen in earlier years as is demonstrated in their work on exploring France, linked to French lessons. They accurately mark various major features, for example, the Central Massif, the Pyrenees and the course of the River Seine.

82. It was not possible to observe teaching in the primary school but an analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning shows that teachers mark the pupils' work well and their planning of what is taught is good, covering all aspects of geography. Pupils learn to identify different places well and to record their work in a variety of ways. Teachers make good use of the local environment to give the pupils first hand experience of different geographical locations. Pupils take pride in their work and it is carefully completed. Teaching and learning in the secondary school are good. The good pace of the lessons keeps pupils involved and interested, for example, the teachers' good questioning helped pupils to talk about what happens when a volcano erupts. They learned to use the correct vocabulary, such as, lava and fumes, crust, core and mantle in their descriptions. Good use of information communication technology helps pupils' writing and they are also given dictionaries to support correct spelling. Good use is made of subject vocabulary lists for each topic and this helps the pupils to use the correct words consistently when describing a geographical feature or event. Pupils work in pairs and they support each other, which helps their concentration. They listen well to each other and have a positive attitude to work. Where teaching is less successful, pupils are not encouraged enough to give more than single word answers. Occasionally, a few pupils disrupt the lesson, making it difficult for others to concentrate.

HISTORY

83. Pupils make good progress in their historical knowledge, skills and understanding because of good teaching, assessment and planning. Where there is planned support by additional staff and work is individualised, pupils with additional educational needs make good progress and all pupils are fully included in the lessons. Assessment procedures for the subject are satisfactory in the primary department and very good in the secondary department. The secondary department's assessment procedure shows the pupils' good progress during the three years, covers the whole range of topics studied, and notes the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. The evaluations guide planning and secure planning for pupils' learning very well. Pupils up to the end of Year 9 are taught history.

84. By the end of Year 2, pupils identify differences between modern things and those from the past. They put pictures in sequence from old to new, for example George Stephenson's Rocket to a modern train. By using a computer program that combines symbols with text, they write about the first aeroplane. They identify which pictures are old, such as Amy Johnson and her plane, and give possible explanations about why it was a long time ago, saying, "*its old because the photo looks dirty*". They talk about the Wright Brothers and the first flight and use a time related vocabulary. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils recognise John Lennon and talk about the time he was born. Given help, they use the Internet to find out about the 1950's and record the results. Lower attaining pupils find explaining the differences between the past and the present difficult. Others have a better understanding of long ago, and give reasons why, for example, the Tudors wanted to travel to other countries and how they would get there.

85. By the end of Year 9, pupils have developed their historical knowledge and have a good understanding of time and different ways of life in the past. Higher attaining pupils produce well-structured writing describing village life between 1750 and 1900. They extend their knowledge and understanding about the development of industry and its links with the transport system, including the need for roads and railways. They describe some twentieth century inventions, sequence dates and know about chronological order. Pupils understand the contrast between the ways a monk would have spent his day around 1066 in comparison with today.

86. Teaching and learning in history is good overall, with some examples of excellent and very good teaching across the school. In the primary school, where teaching is good overall, good questioning extends pupils' learning. For example, in a lesson on Amy Johnson the use of *'what'* and *'how'* questions, when looking photographs, helped pupils explain what they could see and identify how things were different. Teachers use the introduction to the lessons well to remind pupils of work previously done then move learning forward by clear explanations of the learning objectives for the lesson. The very good relationships between the teachers and pupils encourage them to listen carefully and they are enthusiastic in responding to questions. A very good teaching approach, using role-playing, helped the pupils to understand how uncomfortable life was for sailors and merchants in Tudor times. The pupils pretended to be in a boat, with two large sheep, going to trade the wool and learned that it was cold, smelly and crowded like *"a baked bean tin"* according to one pupil. Pupils listened attentively because the teacher made the lesson interesting and helped the pupils to understand different experiences. The pupils also learned to work together to fit into the boat which made a positive contribution to their personal and social development. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory very occasionally because what pupils should learn is not made sufficiently clear, pupils' behaviour is not controlled effectively and the distraction takes away from the quality of learning.

87. The pace of lessons in the secondary school is good. Pupils listen to each other carefully and behave well. In one lesson, pupils shared the work they had done at home on life since 1900 and their presentations had a clear historical perspective. The teachers' very good use of artefacts helped them understand life before the microchip, for example, an old-fashioned telephone, a reel-to-reel tape recorder and a box camera. Teachers' plan lessons well, building on pupils' previous learning. Where teaching and learning are excellent, the use of resources is even better, giving pupils a range of evidence to explore and this supports their writing. The teacher constantly reminds pupils of their writing targets while they are recording their work. Excellent relationships give pupils the confidence to answer questions and solve problems. Information and worksheets using symbols as well as text ensure pupils take part and complete their work. Teachers use the final part of the lesson very well to check pupils' understanding and learning. For example, at the end of a lesson on the monasteries in the middle ages, pupils recalled what they had learned, using the correct words to describe different parts of the monastery, such as, refectory.

88. The leadership and management of history are good and the two co-ordinators work well together. The curriculum for history is satisfactory, closely linked to the National Curriculum and national guidance for the subject, which ensures that all areas of learning are included. The resources for teaching and learning in history are satisfactory and very good use is made of the Local Education Authority's loan service. Very good use is made of the loaned artefacts to broaden the pupils understanding of the past. Visits to places of historical importance, for instance Battle Abbey and the Imperial War Museum, that are arranged throughout the school, have a positive impact on extending the pupils' knowledge and understanding of history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

89. Pupils' achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is good in Years 1 to 6. Here teaching is good and it is based on good ICT skills. Teachers also make good use of their knowledge of pupils to plan lessons and set well targeted learning objectives. They make good use of programs intended for pupils with learning difficulties and effectively support them learning to write, for example. Consequently, lessons are relevant to the pupils' skills and understanding and challenge them appropriately. Good use is made of classroom assistants to support pupils completing their work.

90. By the end of Year 2, pupils develop the manipulative skills needed to use information and communication technology tools. They touch pictures accurately on the SMART board and drag items such as bees to flowers, dressing teddy using the mouse and selecting items to make a picture on screen. The screen also aids lower attaining pupils to focus on items and begin to show interest in moving things. All pupils use appropriate vocabulary such as 'click', 'drag', 'press'. By the end of Year 6, pupils' familiarity with ICT programs has progressed well. They use different a range of computer programs, for example, desk top publishing to improve the presentation of their work. In a lesson about gathering data pupils explained what information a pie chart contained and they discussed the design of a questionnaire. Higher attaining pupils demonstrated good knowledge of the keyboard and text manipulation, using the numbering keys, for example, in writing questions. Lower attaining pupils need considerable support to use the keyboard or manipulate text even using specially designed programs.

91. In Years 7 to 11, achievement is unsatisfactory because teaching and learning are ineffective. Learning objectives are not made sufficiently clear in lesson plans. Questions do not challenge pupils to think sufficiently and, as a result, they do not learning effectively. Work is not planned well in relation to pupils' different needs and abilities, most particularly in relation to higher attaining pupils. They often mark time while they wait for the other pupils to catch up. Pace is especially slow when the teacher approaches the lesson by providing individual tuition, which causes pupils to wait for attention and not work independently. This leads occasionally to frustrations and inappropriate behaviour. Teaching was more successful when a clear demonstration was given to the group of desk top publishing features. Pupils were asked to explain how certain graphic effects were achieved before they explored these independently and when the lesson was summed up at the end they explained what they had learnt.

92. By the end of Year 9 and Year 11, pupils are all working at a similar level on word processing and formatting tasks. Their standards are similar to those of higher attaining pupils in Year 6. In discussions about ICT, many of these pupils demonstrated more advanced knowledge and skills than was apparent in their work in lessons. Their past work also shows insufficient progress. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are working on a course leading to accreditation in word processing, which presents more challenge. Higher attaining pupils explain the function of different keys. They work on individual projects using skills mainly acquired away from the classroom. Lower attaining pupils work on the same text formatting tasks using the keyboard under the guidance of classroom assistants. Pupils are unable to use spreadsheets to analyse information or use databases to store and retrieve information.

93. Leadership and management of ICT is good in the primary school and unsatisfactory in the secondary school. The plan for what is taught in ICT is well laid out the primary school. However, this is not the case in the secondary school and learning activities are planned only on a lesson by lesson basis. What learning opportunities are available have not been reviewed and there are aspects of the subject such as information handling and presentation not adequately provided for.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

94. French is taught to all pupils between Years 7 and 9 in accordance with the statutory requirements for teaching a modern foreign language. However, pupils in Years 10 and 11 are disapplied, as is permissible, from studying a modern foreign language. This is unfortunate in some respects, especially from the point of view of Year 9 pupils who might be interested in continuing their study of French.

95. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily. By the end of Year 9, pupils have positive attitudes towards learning French. They pick out key words and phrases in subjects of everyday interest such as pets and hobbies from French spoken at near normal speed and match them to pictures symbols or words. Some recall and write individual words such as *la natation*. Higher attaining pupils sustain simple short dialogues. They chose the correct French terms and use these to write sentences or select phrases and put them into the correct order to make sentences, for example, “*Tu veux aller au MacDo?*” However, some of this work lacks challenge for higher attaining pupils and they do not use French sufficiently to ask or answer questions.

96. The quality of the teaching is satisfactory overall. Pupils take an active part in lessons and respond enthusiastically when listening and reading because the teacher boosts their confidence. All pupils are included well by targeting individual needs and using a good range of resources including the computer, CD-ROM and high quality video materials. However, an effective approach to teaching is constrained by pupils not being given opportunities in lessons to practice listening and speaking in French. Too much is expected of them by way of recalling French words when they have not had sufficient time for practice. A French awareness week is planned for later in the year, which should promote opportunities to include culture and information about France in the curriculum and to raise awareness of the pupils’ achievements. Cross-curricular work is already happening, in geography for example, pupils are comparing ways to travel to France.

MUSIC

97. Pupils, throughout the school, are achieving well. Music is taught up to the end of Year 9, which is the extent of statutory requirements for the subject. By the end of Year 2, pupils respond well to action songs like ‘*Heads, shoulders, knees and toes*’ singing the words and copying the actions. They know a little about different instruments and how these are played, for example, by tapping or shaking. More able pupils select an instrument by the way it can be played. They know that symbols represent music and follow these when playing their instrument. Pupils take turns in playing their chosen instruments, for example, in accompanying ‘*The Big Bass Drum*’. They repeat rhythms of increasing complexity, for example, clapping their hands to rhythms shown by letters on the board. More able pupils recognise which rhythm is being clapped. By the end of Year 6, pupils identify mood in music and know music can express fear or joy. They listen to excerpts from Holst’s ‘*The Planets*’ and contribute very good ideas about the meanings, one pupil suggesting that Mars reminded him of Star Wars, while Venus reminded another of floating. Pupils select instruments which make sounds representative of fear or joy. By the end of Year 9, pupils listen carefully to music and identify the instruments being played. For example, when starting a topic on the music of the North American Indians, they listen to music, describe the types of sounds they hear, and then select percussion instruments which they think will make the same sounds. They sing enthusiastically and some are able to sustain the pitch accurately.

98. Teaching is good overall, as a result of which pupils generally learn well. The best lessons are well planned. They get all pupils involved and teachers use their good knowledge of the pupils to ensure that the work is appropriate to each of them. Good use is made of a range of un-tuned percussion instruments and pupils have good opportunities for playing

these. They are given choices of the instruments they would like to play. Lively presentations catch pupils' interest and they respond enthusiastically to the different activities. Lessons are broken down into a series of activities, which helps to sustain pupils' interest. Understanding and skills are gradually developed, giving pupils confidence to attempt increasingly complex tasks. For example, in a Year 8 lesson, pupils first sang a song, then accompanied it with instruments, and finally sang it as a round. Pupils receive encouragement and praise for their efforts, and respond by trying hard. They take great pleasure in success. Good team work between teachers and classroom assistants ensures that all pupils can take part in singing and playing. When teaching is less successful the behaviour of one or two pupils is not well managed, and this disrupts the learning of the rest of the class.

99. There are opportunities for music throughout the day, particularly in the primary school. For example, rhymes are used to help pupils to develop number skills, and many respond to these with enjoyment. Some use is made of singing in assemblies. In a very effective session at the end of a day, Year 5 pupils were given the opportunity to handle and listen to a violin, which they were able to identify as a stringed instrument, and with which they were fascinated. Pupils take part in services for Christmas and at the end of the school year, and contribute by singing and playing. Groups of pupils participate in the local special schools music festival. These activities both encourage pupils to try hard with their music, and raise their self esteem as they perform for others. The curriculum has been enhanced by visitors to the school, for example, from an Irish and Caribbean duo, giving pupils an immediate experience of different styles of music.

100. The subject managers for both the primary and secondary schools are specialist music teachers and do all of the teaching and pupils benefit from their expertise. Good progress has been made in planning what should be taught and this gives pupils a good variety of musical experiences. Resources for music are satisfactory, but the narrow range of instruments limits pupils' opportunities for playing a wider variety. The range of recorded music is also limited and insufficient use is made of information and communication technology for performing and composing. Teachers are aware of these needs, and they are clearly identified in the subject development plans. In the primary school, all lessons have to be held in classrooms, which entail carrying resources around the school. In the secondary part of the school, the music teacher shares a room with the modern foreign language department, and storage is very limited. In both settings the space available to pupils is limited and restricts the range of activities which could be offered.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

101. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. They make good gains in their confidence and self-esteem. By the end of Year 2, pupils understand health and safety issues in relation to physical education. They have good attitudes towards the subject, listening carefully to instructions. Some know sign language and its use helps them to participate fully. Pupils used the story *'Penguin Small'* to imaginatively explore movement to music. This enabled pupils to make good progress in dance and develop control of their body. Dance is popular and pupils express themselves well in moving to music. By the end of Year 6, pupils explore animal and bird movement by creating contrasting movements for each bird or animal. They begin with a gentle warm up session and understand the reason for this explaining, for example "so you don't pull a muscle". Gains in pupils' self esteem are very noticeable and a swimming lesson illustrated the growth in confidence of the pupils in the water. Pupils are improving their arm and leg movements for the breaststroke. Their gains are enhanced considerably by the presence of support staff in the pool.

102. By the end of Year 9, pupils have greatly developed their range of skills and experiences. They articulate reasons for activities and evaluate their performance. This is

because teachers, in rounding off lessons, expect pupils to discuss what they have learnt and how well they have done. The growth in their confidence makes a powerful contribution to their personal development. Gymnastic skills have developed very well and the ability to effectively play indoor games is growing. Year 10 and 11 pupils continue to progress well. They extend the skills learnt earlier. Pupils develop their soccer skills with some first class heading of the ball. This age group participates fully in an inter-schools sports programme, which has an added social dimension. They also use out of school facilities more, for example karting, high ropes course, abseiling and outdoor pursuits. Physical education provides good learning experiences for this group, helps further development of self-esteem and growth towards maturity. Teachers and support staff are adept at transferring responsibility to the pupils as they move towards independence.

103. Teaching is good. This leads to good learning taking place both in the hall and on the playing fields. All of the lessons are characterised by very good warm up sessions, pauses for evaluation and attention to health and safety. Pupils come to lessons with considerable enthusiasm anticipating good learning experiences and enjoyment. In Years 1 and 2, for example, the very good planning of a dance lesson enabled the teacher and support staff to keep the full attention of pupils throughout. Pupils' behaviour was good and they kept up a good pace, with staff ensuring that they did not become exhausted. Teachers plan lessons well to suit the needs of each pupil and all are helped effectively to progress towards their best performance. In all lessons the needs of each pupil are well known and are taken into account in planning. Teachers and classroom assistants provide very good teamwork. Their management of pupils' behaviour is very good and comes largely from positive relationships.

104. The leadership and management of physical education are good. There are separate subject managers for the primary and secondary schools and they plan in close liaison. The facilities for physical education, indoors and outdoors, are satisfactory at the primary and secondary schools. There are no facilities for pupils to shower after lessons and provision is not part of refurbishment plan. Resources are good overall, taking into account the use of three local swimming pools and other sports facilities. The subject is greatly enhanced by a very wide range of extra-curricular activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

105. Pupils' achievement in religious education is good, overall. It is good in Years 1 to 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11.

106. By the end of Year 2, pupils make good progress in learning about some of major religions of the world. Their progress is supported by the wide range of activities used by teachers. They listen to stories from the Bible and understand the story of Moses through drawings about the plagues. Most pupils recognise some of the symbols which are important in Islam. Less able pupils know the meaning of celebrations such as Christmas through sequencing of illustrated stories.

107. By the end of Year 6, pupils show good knowledge and understanding of key aspects of Christianity, for example, they show good awareness of the meaning of some of the commandments and their relevance for Christians. They have good opportunities to discuss universal concepts, for example, what it means to be a good neighbour, and to illustrate their understanding of through drawing. In the lesson observed for Year 3 to 5 pupils, pupils demonstrated, in a whole class discussion, a good grasp of the different kinds of families in society. The progress made by pupils is supported by the good range of learning activities used by teachers to involve all pupils in tasks involving recording and discussion.

108. By the end of Year 9, pupils know about moral and spiritual issues in greater depth, building consistently on their previous knowledge and understanding. They know different celebrations reflect the beliefs and values of different faiths. In a Year 8 lesson, for example, pupils were given interesting and interactive opportunities to explore customs and symbols of Easter through egg-rolling and sharing food related to Easter. In some lessons the range of activities to involve and motivate pupils through active learning is limited.

109. By the end of Year 11, progress is satisfactory. Pupils understand a range of current moral, spiritual, cultural and social issues. For example, they discuss the environment and the way in which different religious traditions support its stewardship. Pupils express their opinions in discussions and recognise the diversity of views people hold.

110. Teaching is good overall and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Where teaching and learning are good, activities are well-paced and teachers establish a good learning environment through very good management of behaviour. They plan well and provide clearly structured and well sequenced lessons which help pupils reinforce and consolidate their learning. Pupils contribute willingly to discussions. The consistent promotion of key words and support to help pupils with writing assists most pupils' full participation in activities. Consequently, pupils' written work shows good standards of presentation and care. However, the learning of some pupils with additional special needs and those who are more able is limited by the lack of attention to matching resources and activities to these pupils' abilities. In Years 10 and 11, in particular, this leads to some pupils with additional special needs finding it hard to concentrate and take part in discussions. More able pupils are not consistently challenged by the writing tasks they are given to do.

111. The leadership and management of religious education are satisfactory. The two subject managers for the primary and secondary schools liaise too little on sharing resources, expertise and securing the links between what is taught in the primary and secondary schools. Audits of resources have been carried out on both sites in relation to the policy for racial equality, which show the sound contribution made by the subject to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a satisfactory range of resources and religious artefacts and good plans to extend the range of visual resources for the major religions.

CITIZENSHIP

112. Pupils' are achieving satisfactorily overall although their progress in lessons in Years 7, 8 and 9 is good because teaching and learning is most effective here. Citizenship is taught mainly within the curriculum for personal, social and health education. In addition, aspects of citizenship are also taught in other subjects. Experience of citizenship in action within the school day is provided for well through the work of the pupils' school council. This is valued by the pupils and enables them to take part responsibly in decision-making activities.

113. By the end of Year 9, pupils understand the concept of being a good citizen and are aware of human rights and responsibilities. For example, they list various types of anti-social behaviour such as vandalism, graffiti, damage to property and stealing and explain how this affects people. Lower attaining pupils name types of vandalism or theft and have progressed from considering only the consequences for the perpetrator to beginning to consider how such acts might affect the victim. Higher attaining pupils empathise well with the victims and consider how anti-social behaviour affects people's lives, justifying their opinions with good reasons.

114. By the end of Year 11, pupils have a sound knowledge of rights and responsibilities. For example, in one very good lesson for Year 10 pupils on consumer rights, pupils analysed how salesmen can pressurise and influence customers. They performed a role-play involving a salesman talking to an elderly lady. Other pupils listened with interest and understood the theme more easily because of the role-playing approach. All pupils made sensible suggestions as to how to manage being put under that pressure. However, in Year 11, higher attaining pupils have a limited understanding of the work of parliament, the government and the leaders of political parties. Lower attaining pupils have some understanding of the idea of voting but not the concept of voting nor the right to vote.

115. Teaching is good overall, but satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Lessons are generally well planned with clear lesson objectives. In Years 7, 8 and 9, where the teaching is good, the work is appropriate to all levels of ability. The learning objectives identify what individuals' pupils with more complex learning difficulties will learn and how classroom assistants will support their learning. Pupil ideas are challenged with open questions and answers are further developed and explored. They are given the opportunity to contribute to the lesson according to their ability. This is not as consistent in Years 10 and 11, for example, in the topic dealing with becoming a member of parliament, the lesson objectives set were beyond the scope of less able pupils. Consequently, the pace of the lesson was slowed, pupil contributions were limited and some behaviour problems arose. Overall, pupils' behaviour is managed well, relationships are positive and pupils remain focused on the work and achieve a good level of understanding. Lessons are rounded off effectively by summarising what pupils have learnt and by setting homework.

116. Leadership on citizenship is good. The subject leader for personal, social and health education in the secondary school has the overall responsibility and has worked hard to develop the citizenship curriculum. The secondary school teachers are working well towards getting citizenship established. However, the planning of what should be taught to pupils with more complex learning difficulties lacks detail.

PROVISION FOR STUDENTS OVER THE AGE OF 16

117. Overall, students achieve very well, both in different subjects and against their individual targets. They make good progress in acquiring literacy skills, for example, they are confident in discussing matters and putting forward suggestions. Tutorials at the start of the week provide a good opportunity for students to discuss the successes and difficulties of the previous week, and to set targets for the coming week. Their reading and writing is good. Students are writing autobiographies based on their research into a range of information about their past life. They redraft their work and produce a finished copy in word processed text. Students also use the Internet for research, for example, they worked out routes to Cornwall in preparing for a visit to the Eden Project. Students achieve very well in mathematics. They have practical skills such as using and counting money and higher attaining students work out the travel costs of a journey. They keep a weekly account of money coming in and going out, gaining experience of money handling and recording receipts and payments. Higher attaining students add and subtract figures, work out percentages and simple fractions. They know times tables and use numbers expressed as decimals. Lower attaining students are familiar with and handle money, for example in exchanges for goods.

118. Students' personal development is very good and it is promoted very effectively. The curriculum offers many useful opportunities of visits within the local area. Students have a residential experience at a local outdoor pursuits centre, and by staying together and participating in the activities build up relationships and self confidence. Good use is made of a local allotment for students to learn about horticulture, an activity which is enthusiastically pursued by them. Preparation for moving on from school is very good. This is well supported

with advice about future training and careers options by the local Connexions adviser. Students and parents have regular opportunities to discuss the range of experiences open to them. The difference between being a pupil and a student is given strong emphasis, in particular the need to be more independent. Students make their own decisions on the development of their work. They are very good at working together and helping each other, showing their pleasure when someone succeeds. When they do their week's work experience, they are expected to travel independently. They also manage a "Team Enterprise" company for two terms each year, producing goods for sale at the school's Christmas and Summer Fairs. They make decisions about the items to be produced and the ways in which the profits should be spent.

119. Teaching is very good overall. The best lessons are very well planned and meet effectively the different needs of students. The aims of each session are explained clearly and students know what is required of them. Lessons begin in a lively fashion particularly by very good questioning of students and this ensures they all get involved. A good knowledge of the students means that the difficulty of questions is adjusted for each student. Being lively and involving, lessons are very well paced, ensuring that students' interest is sustained. The curriculum is very good. Students gain nationally recognised qualifications by, for example, completing the ASDAN 'Towards Independence' course. In addition, they have many opportunities for learning in the local college of further education and the leisure centre. Students attending the college can obtain college accreditation or national awards, for example, a National Vocational Qualification in catering. Their leisure activities lead to the ASDAN sports studies award. Two higher attaining students took GCSE Art in 2002, one of whom passed with a grade A.

120. The teacher with responsibility for provision for students provides very good leadership. Management is of high quality, and she has a clear vision of the ways in which the curriculum should be developed. She is well supported by another teacher, who acts as tutor for some of the students, and by two learning support assistants. All work together as a strong team to meet the needs of the students. At present, the students are based in temporary accommodation and will move into a new building when it is shortly completed. Resources are good overall, but access to computers is sometimes difficult in the temporary buildings.