

INSPECTION REPORT

BRANDLES SCHOOL

Baldock

LEA area: Hertfordshire

Unique reference number: 131060

Headteacher: Mr Chris Mepham

Lead inspector: Mrs Jayne Clemence

Dates of inspection: 17 – 19 May 2004

Inspection number: 258874

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community for boys with emotional and behavioural difficulties
Age range of pupils:	11 – 16
Gender of pupils:	Boys
Number on roll:	50
School address:	Weston Way Baldock Hertfordshire
Postcode:	SG7 6EY
Telephone number:	01462 892189
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend A Ruffell
Date of previous inspection:	June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Brandles School caters for 50 boys between the ages of eleven and sixteen with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Every pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs and most have histories of long gaps in their school experience. A significant proportion of pupils are “looked after children” living away from their families. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is relatively high and many pupils have experienced significant social and economic disadvantages. The majority of pupils are from white British ethnic backgrounds and a small minority are from various Black or other heritages. None has English as an additional language. The pupils’ attainment on entry is well below average for their age and there are many gaps in their learning. The Brandles Vocational Education Centre (BVEC) is an innovative addition to the school’s provision and enables pupils in Years 10 – 11 to gain relevant work related practical skills.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22629	Jayne Clemence	Lead inspector	English, art and design, music personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship
9883	Brian Sylvester	Lay inspector	
18206	Liz Mildner	Team inspector	Mathematics, geography, history, physical education, religious education (RE)
1224	Graham Todd	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology (ICT), design and technology, special educational needs

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	11
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	19
SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Brandles School provides pupils with a **good** education and gives good value for money. The very effective leadership of the headteacher ensures high aspirations for further improvement. Pupils achieve well and gain a sense of purpose and direction to life. There are many strengths and the school is an ordered, thriving and disciplined community.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve well overall by the time they leave and many gain nationally recognised awards; they achieve very well in English, art and design and vocational studies because of the high quality teaching and learning.
- The headteacher and very strong senior management team give very effective leadership; there is a comprehensive overview of the school's relative strengths and weaknesses and high aspirations for continued improvement.
- Very good care, guidance and support for pupils enables them to gain a sense of purpose, confidence and self respect.
- Personal and social education is very good; strategies for managing behaviour are very effective in setting boundaries, and enabling pupils to focus on their learning.
- There is unsatisfactory achievement in science; subject leadership, teaching and learning are not sufficiently robust to raise standards further.
- There are very good links with parents; the strong partnership between home and school enables pupils to be supported more consistently.
- Achievement in ICT is satisfactory; pupils could achieve better with more consistent use of ICT across other subjects.
- Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory; teaching and learning are satisfactory, but there is scope for improvement in their quality.

Improvements since the previous inspection have been good and areas of weakness addressed systematically. The curriculum has been developed further and assessment procedures refined considerably. The governing body has a more strategic approach to its work and standards have been raised further.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 9	Good	Very good
Year 11	Good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.

Achievement is **good** overall throughout the school. Many pupils leave with a range of nationally recognised awards that ensure they are better equipped for the future. Pupils achieve very well in English, art and design, vocational studies, and personal and social skills. This is because of the strong teaching in those areas, and the clear emphasis placed on developing pupils to become mature and responsible citizens at the same time as making progress academically. Pupils who arrive very late in their school lives make rapid progress and gain much ground in a very short space of time. There is no difference in the achievement of pupils from different backgrounds. Pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory in science throughout the school because of weaknesses in the quality of teaching that hinder learning. Pupils' achievements in ICT, though satisfactory overall, could be higher with greater use of their ICT skills across other subjects of the curriculum. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in mathematics in Years 7 – 9, though could do better if teaching were more

consistently good. The pupils develop good attitudes and positive behaviour that mean they are more ready to learn. They understand from an early stage that effort and hard work is required in all aspects of school life. The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development helps prepare them more fully for life beyond school. Pupils' personal development is **very good** overall.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** overall and there are examples of very good teaching in key areas of school life such as literacy and personal and social education. Both these areas have an impact more widely, and enable pupils to access other subjects more readily by using their basic literacy skills and settling more swiftly to lessons. There are examples in science where expectations for the pupils are not high enough, and teaching hinders the quality of education and the rate of pupils' progress and learning.

The curriculum is good overall, and there are some very good features in Years 10 and 11. The Vocational Education Centre, for example, is very effective and successful in broadening the pupils' practical skills and preparing them more fully for the world of work in the process. There is very good care, guidance and support for pupils. The very good and extremely positive partnership with parents means that pupils are supported both at home and school more consistently.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership of the school is **very good** and the management is **very effective** in creating a disciplined, orderly and thriving community. The headteacher provides very good and decisive leadership and the senior managers make a very effective team. They have skills that complement one another and provide excellent role models in their own professional practice for others to follow. The governance of the school is good and all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents express a high level of satisfaction about the school and its work. They speak in glowing terms of the difference and positive impact the school has had on their children, and in turn, the quality of life at home. There is huge appreciation for the headteacher and senior managers, including the family liaison manager. Parents respect and appreciate the values taught to their children, and the structure and discipline embedded in school life. Pupils recognise the many benefits of school life, and reflect on their progress. Some find it more difficult to say they actually like school, though their actions and desire to attend so regularly suggest this is the case.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Raise standards in science and improve the quality of teaching and learning; ensuring effective leadership and direction in the subject and appropriate accommodation and resources.
- Establish more systematic use of ICT across other subjects of the curriculum.
- Ensure more consistently good teaching and learning in mathematics in order to raise standards further.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is good overall. Pupils achieve very well in their vocational studies and those who spend only a short time at the school make rapid gains academically and socially. There is no significant difference between the achievements of pupils from different backgrounds. The leadership sets high, yet realistic, expectations for them to do their best. The very effective management strategies enable these aspirations to become a reality for the pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many pupils gain a range of nationally recognised awards and achieve well in comparison to similar schools.
- Pupils achieve very well in their personal and social skills; they learn to develop positive work habits and gain a sense of purpose to life.
- Pupils achieve very well in English and art and design because of the high quality teaching, high standards and high expectations.
- Pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory in science because of weaknesses in the quality of teaching.
- Pupils could achieve higher standards in ICT if their skills were developed more systematically across other subjects of the curriculum.
- Pupils' achievements in mathematics in Years 7 – 9, though satisfactory, could be higher if teaching were more consistently good.
- Pupils achieve very well in their vocational education and develop a range of relevant skills that prepares them for future work and life.

Commentary

1. A high proportion of pupils leave the school with a range of certificates that prepare them for future life and employment. In 2003, pupils in Year 11 gained GCSE passes in English, mathematics, science, art and design and music. Pupils achieve very well in their vocational studies as the activities are very relevant in preparing them for future life and the world of college and future employment. Many pupils also gain awards through the National Proficiency Test Council and Vocational Foundation Certificate Scheme, for example in construction, painting and decorating, and "Skills for working life". Pupils who arrive at the school very late in their school lives achieve very well and manage to gain much lost ground, despite the many significant gaps in their learning.
2. Pupils throughout the school make rapid progress in their personal and social skills. Many start from a very low point in this area and have long histories of failure at school. They are helped very effectively to gain a sense of respect for themselves and others, and begin to recognise the values of citizenship and responsibility, many for the first time. The emphasis on becoming a good "Brandles School citizen" enables pupils to focus regularly on the impact of their behaviour on others and what it means to make a more positive contribution to the wider community. This in turn has a direct impact on their behaviour, level of concentration and ability to learn more readily in lessons.
3. The pupils' very good achievements in English ensure they make rapid progress in reading and acquire relevant literacy skills for life. Although this aspect of school work remains a challenge for many pupils, there is a genuine enjoyment and appreciation, for example in literature and a range of fiction, that develops over time. Standards in art and design are on course to be the highest ever achieved by pupils in their GCSEs this year. Pupils learn very effectively and gain

great satisfaction from their work in the process. Their achievements demonstrate perseverance, effort and commitment in order to produce high quality portfolios of art work.

4. Although some pupils achieve nationally recognised awards in science, they could realistically do better. There are weaknesses in the quality of teaching that restrict the pupils' learning. The management of pupils' behaviour is ineffective and not sufficiently robust in maintaining order and discipline, for the majority of pupils, and much valuable learning time is lost as a result. Pupils lose interest and relationships between staff and pupils are not strong enough to influence their attitudes or behaviour for the better.
5. Although pupils' achievements in ICT are satisfactory overall, there is scope for pupils to do better with more systematic use of ICT across other subjects of the curriculum. There are missed opportunities to use ICT as an integral part to learning. Pupils' achievements in mathematics in Years 7 – 9 though satisfactory overall, could realistically be higher if the challenge were greater in terms of the quality of teaching and learning.
6. Many pupils do very well in their vocational education and feel the activities are more adult and relevant to them. This in turn has a positive impact on their attendance and learning, as they want to take part and be involved in the work. The BVEC provides a high quality learning environment in a more adult setting whereby pupils learn a range of vocational and practical skills using appropriate tools and equipment.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour (including the incidence of exclusions) are good. The pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Attendance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop good attitudes and behaviour because the school sets high, yet realistic goals for them to achieve.
- Parents are strongly of the view that their children make huge improvements in their behaviour and attitudes over time.
- The school is having a direct and positive impact on improving otherwise disaffected pupils, enabling them to succeed academically and become functioning citizens.
- The provision for moral and social education is very good and this is reflected in the good behaviour and relationships in the school.
- Exclusions have fallen dramatically over time. 'Internal exclusions' allow pupils to stay within the school system and return more quickly to their group than otherwise would be the case.
- The level of attendance is good compared with other similar schools because of the strong focus on helping pupils to come to school regularly and excellent procedures to promote attendance.

Commentary

7. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour improve rapidly, often from a very low base. They learn to acquire values that impact on their personal and social outlook very effectively. The structure and strategies promoted by the school have a direct and positive impact on improving otherwise disaffected pupils, thus enabling them to succeed academically and to become acceptable and functioning citizens, who are able to look towards a positive future. Parents strongly support the view that boys at the school make huge improvements in their behaviour and attitudes over time. The school is very effective in helping pupils, who arrive very late in their education, to achieve, gain a sense of purpose and direction in their lives and establish confidence and self-respect.

8. The pupils' good behaviour is greatly assisted by the strong emphasis on establishing social skills and high expectations set by all adults. Behavioural expectations are written down, explained and reinforced. Behaviour management strategies are very effective in setting boundaries for the pupils and enabling them to focus on their learning. Pupils learn quickly that there are expectations for their behaviour and consequences to their actions. They begin to recognise that there are responsibilities in life, and that their choices have an impact on themselves and others. The number of exclusions has fallen dramatically over time. The system of 'internal exclusions', where pupils stay in school but away from their group for a specified time, helps many pupils to stay within the system and return more quickly to the group than might otherwise be the case.
9. The pupils are keen to attend the school. The level of attendance, compared with other similar schools nationally, is good. Many pupils, with long histories of poor attendance, have improved dramatically in a relatively short space of time and trends show steady, but significant improvements by individuals. If a pupil is absent without a known reason, parents or carers are rung up on the first day. The school has good contacts with the educational welfare officer and the local youth inclusion unit. Pupils have relevant incentives to encourage good attendance. Most pupils arrive punctually enabling the school to have a prompt and purposeful start to the day that helps set a very positive atmosphere for learning.
10. The provision for moral and social education is very good and this is reflected in the good behaviour and relationships in the school. Pupils can distinguish right from wrong and are beginning to become reasonable social beings. Pupils who have established a consistent level of positive attitudes and behaviour are appointed to the school council. The school successfully meets its aim to provide structured opportunities that enable every pupil to develop his educational, social, moral and physical potential.
11. The provision for spiritual development is good. The daily assembly is important to the school. It follows a set of agreed themes and promotes high values and ethics. Success of the pupils is celebrated in the assemblies. For many pupils this is the first experience of success, being valued and gaining a sense of self-worth and respect. The provision for cultural development is satisfactory. It is taught through the PSHE programme, assemblies, visits out and residential trips. Pupils have a range of opportunities to visit places of cultural interest, and some are taken to cities such as Glasgow and Newquay to experience the cultural diversity and make comparisons between very different environments. In addition, some pupils visit other countries, gaining first hand insight into European culture.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.5%	School data	6.8%
National data	11.9%	National data	7.6%

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – White and Black African

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
46	10	1
4	2	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality education for its pupils. The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior staff ensure there is a clear and sharp focus on raising standards further.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good overall and as a result, pupils achieve well over time. Good assessment ensures that work is well matched to the pupils' wide ranging needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching in English and art and design enables pupils to learn very effectively and achieve very well over time.
- Very good teaching in PSHE enables pupils to gain a sense of order and self discipline, and focus more effectively on their learning.
- Unsatisfactory teaching in science hinders the pupils' learning.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall in mathematics in Years 7 - 9; there is scope for its quality to improve and thus have more impact on pupils' learning and achievements.
- Teaching assistants make a very effective contribution to the pupils' learning.
- Good assessment ensures that pupils' achievements are tracked systematically, and work is more closely matched to their individual needs as a result.
- Very effective teaching and learning in vocational education enables pupils to be prepared more fully for life and work.

Commentary

12. There is very good teaching in English that is having a direct and positive impact on pupils' learning and achievements in literacy. Many pupils come to the school with experience of failure in the subject, but the swift assessment of their reading levels, and straightforward approach to developing basic literacy skills, build confidence and self esteem from the start. Pupils make rapid gains in their literacy skills, and this in turn affects many other areas of learning and school life. English teaching sets high expectations for the pupils and enables learning to take place throughout lessons, even when pupils have been challenging and restless at the start.
13. The very good teaching in art and design is characterised by very strong subject knowledge and expertise in the subject. The very effective organisation of the art room and high quality resources enable pupils to learn independently and gain much satisfaction and pride in their work at the same time. Pupils are, for the most part, totally absorbed in their learning and achieve very well in relation to their starting points.
14. Teaching is very effective in developing the pupils' personal and social skills and makes a significant impact on their outlook and attitudes to life, themselves and others. PSHE teaching underpins all aspects of school activities and there are many incidental opportunities where pupils are helped to develop maturity, discipline and self control. Most teachers are consistent in the implementation of the behaviour management strategy and pupils know what they must do in order to improve their attitudes and personal skills in lessons and throughout the school day.
15. Teaching is unsatisfactory in science and pupils' learning is hindered as a result. Expectations of what the pupils could realistically achieve are too low, and management of their behaviour ineffective. Pupils gain little sense of purpose or pride in their work. Although some pupils manage to achieve GCSE results, many pupils, particularly in Years 7-9, do not develop a sense of respect for the subject. Teaching and learning is often fragmented and science lessons sometimes disintegrate, requiring additional support from senior staff to regain order and discipline.

16. The satisfactory teaching in mathematics enables sound learning overall, but there is scope for greater use of practical equipment and resources to assist pupils' learning, and to ensure the pace of lessons remains brisk and lively throughout.
17. Teaching assistants are thoroughly involved and focused on the pupils' learning. They are flexible and responsive in the use of their time. They move quickly to situations where they are most needed and support pupils not only in lessons, but at other times of the day. They play a key role in supervising break and lunchtimes and the use of rewards and sanctions is seamless between teachers and support staff as a result. They show considerable initiative and have very positive relationships with the pupils. There is a strong sense of team and they have regular supervision of their work that develops and supports them systematically.
18. The good assessment procedures ensure that pupils have targets that are known and understood by them. Their achievements are tracked systematically both in their academic work and in their personal and social development. Pupils are included regularly in the identification of new targets, and they know precisely what is expected of them in order to achieve those targets. This is particularly well refined in the personal, social and behaviour development targets. In mathematics, science and ICT, assessment is satisfactory and improving as targets are becoming refined further.
19. Vocational education teaching is knowledgeable and enables pupils to learn a wide range of practical skills that equips them more readily for work and life as a result. Pupils are taught by teachers who have relevant professional expertise in bricklaying, plastering and plumbing, for example, and the learning environment is very well organised and professional in its appearance and lay out. As a result, pupils rise to the challenge, use the equipment with care and maturity and grow in confidence and self esteem. They achieve very well over time in gaining relevant and practical skills that prepare them more fully for college and future employment.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 28 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6 (21%)	13 (47 %)	7 (25%)	2 (7%)	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

The curriculum

The curriculum is good overall with strong features in Years 10 – 11. The curriculum is enriched well and accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The BVEC is very successful in giving pupils an awareness of working life.
- The curriculum in Years 10-11 successfully prepares pupils for nationally recognised qualifications.
- Provision for PSHE and for careers is very effective in helping the pupils mature.
- Provision for pupils with additional special needs is good and enables them to progress well.
- The curriculum for ICT does not plan systematically for the development and use of ICT skills across other subjects.

Commentary

20. The curriculum for pupils in Years 7 - 9 gives those pupils a secure foundation for further learning and an appropriate breadth of educational experiences. All National Curriculum

subjects are taught as is religious education and PSHE. There is a daily whole school act of worship hence all statutory requirements are met. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and the deputy headteacher has worked extensively to build a coherent and comprehensive curriculum for the pupils. For the younger pupils, priority has been given on the timetable for literacy and numeracy, both of which are planned within the guidance of the national numeracy and literacy strategies giving progression to their learning. There is suitable balance with other subjects and an increasing focus on designated ICT lessons.

21. The curriculum is good overall. The school has taken full advantage of the opportunities for flexibility in curriculum for pupils in Years 10-11. Pupils can study towards GCSE exams at Foundation level in English, mathematics, science, music and art. A further accreditation, ASDAN, is currently being developed at Bronze level giving pupils further possibilities for life skills and work related study. The school has also developed the BVEC where pupils in 2003 successfully worked towards the National Proficiency Test Council (NPTC) skills for working certificates in construction. This year, 2004, pupils can also gain this accreditation in painting and decorating.
22. Provision for PSHE and for careers education is very effective. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Personal development of pupils is at the heart of the work of the school hence suitable priority is given to PSHE. This ensures that all pupils receive sex education and drugs awareness sessions. Visitors come into school to support teachers in this work. Health Fair days have been successful in raising health awareness in the school community. Careers work is well established with designated lessons for pupils from Year 9 upwards (to be extended to all pupils next year). The school has strong links with the Connexions careers service that assists pupils in preparation for future opportunities beyond school. Lessons are well prepared and resourced to give pupils a realistic understanding and insight of the world of work they will meet after school. Work shadowing and then work experience is extensively used, and for older pupils, sessions in the local further education college, so that all pupils have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of their possible career choice. The effect of this good provision is that all those leaving school in the near future have either secured employment or a college place.
23. Provision for pupils with an additional special educational need is good. Staff make good use of a local training and resource centre for dyslexia. The school is pro-active in identifying pupils who have a specific need as soon as they come into Brandles. For the majority, these are weaknesses in reading or other areas of literacy. Additional support arranged through one to one teaching sessions and the reading mentors is successful in giving pupils back their confidence so that they begin to make progress.
24. Currently the curriculum does not plan consistently enough to develop the pupils' ICT skills across other subjects. This leads to missed opportunities for reinforcing their ICT knowledge, for example in science, where scientific investigations could be recorded, and in PE for example where the pupils' achievements could be charted and tracked individually using their ICT skills.
25. Since the majority of pupils live a considerable distance from the school it is difficult to arrange activities out of school hours. However, the school has successfully participated in a range of inter school sporting events including cross country, athletics, football, basketball and swimming galas. Some visits out of school have taken place including short residential visits to Suffolk and France. Activities are also arranged during lunch times that are interesting and help pupils develop appropriate social skills in the process.
26. The qualifications and experience of the teachers and teaching assistants is sufficient to meet the demands of the school curriculum. The school has been able to appoint skilled and experienced staff for vocational subjects. The accommodation for science and the current resources are inadequate to deliver the science curriculum. In all other subjects the accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

BRANDLES VOCATIONAL EDUCATION CENTRE (BVEC)

- BVEC is an innovative development combining academic and vocational courses.
 - Accreditations gained can be extended through further education, thus providing helpful continuity for pupils beyond school and on to college.
 - Teachers share their industrial experience very effectively and broaden the pupils' skills more widely.
 - Pupils are well prepared for work or further education on leaving school.
27. BVEC is an innovative development for the school and now in its second year. It has been established by the school, in conjunction with local and wider business, and is designed to be a resource for pupils at Brandles, and others from local mainstream secondary schools. The Centre is very successful in giving relevant and supportive opportunities for pupils in Years 10 – 11 to develop their understanding and experience of real work situations and skills. All pupils in Year 10 spend a significant proportion of their week on practical and theory activities preparing them for work or further education after school. Older pupils have at least this but they may have a more personalized timetable to take account of their particular needs for extended college or work placements. In this way all pupils leave the school with accurate and relevant experience to support them in the transition from school.
28. Pupils study for GCSEs in the main school and for NPTC Skills for Working Life certificates in the Centre. The school is accredited to award certificates which link with courses and qualifications which the pupils can extend in further education colleges. The integration of good quality careers work and citizenship classes by Centre staff makes these subjects truly relevant to the pupils' current and future situations. The Centre has developed good partnerships with colleges, employers and the Connexions service. Personnel from commerce, for instance, come into the Centre to coach the pupils in job application and interview procedures and skills. Pupils are well supported on their industrial experiences.
29. Teaching and support staff in the Centre have experience both in teaching specific vocational skills but also in maintaining the pupils' motivation and perseverance. They have established a realistic working environment where pupils have to consider health and safety, efficient working practice and production of good quality work. In sessions observed the quality of teaching was overall good. Teachers showed secure knowledge in how to teach vocational skills such as bricklaying and painting. But their real skill was in giving pupils independence whilst observing carefully so that they could give timely and sensitive support to improve pupils' efforts. The teacher's insistence on 'getting it right' meant that pupils were rightly proud of their final results.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. The support, advice and guidance that pupils receive is a very strong feature of the school's work to address their social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school seeks actively and very effectively to include and involve the pupils in decision making and school developments.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very high priority is given to pupils' care, welfare, health and safety.
- New pupils receive excellent induction into the school and settle quickly to their learning.
- The special support assistants know the pupils well and support them very effectively.
- Systems for monitoring and supporting pupils' learning are very good and their achievements are tracked closely.

Commentary

30. There are very good procedures for child protection that are clearly understood by all staff. The family liaison manager is the responsible person and she has established an excellent rapport with pupils, parents and carers. She is also the designated person in the school for 'looked after' children and has formed strong links with the various children's homes. Throughout the school there is a very well co-ordinated approach to pupils' care, welfare, support and guidance. The school has made very close links between different agencies such as social services and the youth offending team. Pupils starting the school for the first time are visited at home, given information about the school and encouraged to attend before being inducted carefully into the school. Induction arrangements are excellent and enable most pupils to make a smooth transition into the school. Where there is a family crisis affecting a boy's attendance the family liaison officer is quick to step in and offer help and advice.
31. The care of the pupils, their personal development and the management of their behaviour are inextricably linked. Weekly meetings of the senior management team, of which the family liaison manager is part, address any serious issues that might be barriers to pupils' learning. The special support assistants are of a very good quality. They are very well trained, they know the pupils well and are very familiar with their targets, and throughout the day follow up on these during breaks, lunchtimes and in lessons. Overall, pupils are very closely monitored and are required to earn any rewards they receive.
32. Adults are very good role models and there is a high level of consistency in the way they apply the criteria to measure pupils' social and academic development. The pupils value the system and take pride in acknowledgement of their achievements during assemblies. Pupils receive good feedback on their learning and have a good understanding of what they need to do in order to improve. Annual reviews and reports to parents are very good; they show what pupils have achieved and set out clearly what they need to do to improve.
33. The pupils are well prepared for leaving school. They receive a good input from Connexions who attend the annual reviews in addition to providing further education and careers advice. The very good vocational education facility at the school gives pupils experience about the world of work. However, a priority for the school is to increase the opportunities of work experience in the community. The vocational education facility is used regularly to support pupils in nearby mainstream and special schools who would otherwise not have such opportunities. This in turn enhances the school's standing and status in the community as local pupils recognise the quality of facilities and benefit from them systematically. The opportunities for pupils to be included in mainstream schools are fostered and in turn Brandles enables other pupils to be supported in their vocational education.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is **very good**. The links with the local community are **very good**. The school's links with other schools and colleges are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The work of the family liaison manager is excellent and enables a very positive partnership to be built with parents; the role is a model of good practice.
- Links with local industry and Connexions are a strength; they bring sponsorship and opportunities for work related links for the boys.
- The quality of links with the local mainstream schools is very good; these links enhance the educational opportunities of the pupils.
- Information to parents is very good and ensures they gain a realistic picture of their child's progress.

- The views of parents are sought, valued and acted upon; parents take a more active role as a result.
- The very good links with parents have a very positive impact on the pupils' learning and behaviour.

Commentary

34. The family liaison manager has a very strong and strategic role in developing genuine partnerships with parents and carers. Every effort is made to contact families before pupils start at the school and visits to their homes are seen as supportive and not threatening. The role builds many bridges between home and school that help raise attendance and defuse potential conflict that may arise. The manager plays a key role in links with parents and is valued enormously by them. The excellent work of the family liaison manager has a very beneficial impact on the pupils' attendance, learning, behaviour and overall well being.

Example of outstanding practice

The excellent work of the family liaison manager

The family liaison manager, as part of the senior management team, has wide ranging and relevant expertise that assists pupils, parents and carers to make the most of Brandles School. The very strong network established with parents and professional agencies means there is a genuine and strong partnership between home and school. Pupils and their families are visited at home and when necessary contacted swiftly should pupils not be attending school. The excellent relationships established from the start of pupils' school life at Brandles means that this is seen as positive and supportive, rather than threatening and negative. The attendance rates of many pupils improve rapidly from a very low base. The manager has a breadth of knowledge and understanding of the pupils' most up to date challenges and changing circumstances. This ensures that practical, educational and emotional support can be organised and in many examples, potential crises averted. The role includes liaising with other agencies including social services, health and community links. In practice this means that otherwise lengthy procedures to secure resources or decisions can be made more efficiently, as one person has a clear overview and overlap with school, other agencies and pupils' families. The pupils make much use of the family liaison manager and establish excellent relationships. There is an obvious place of refuge and sanctuary provided by the family liaison manager, whilst pupils are being supported to focus on learning and achievement.

35. The very good links with parents have a very positive impact on the pupils' learning and behaviour. There is an overwhelming sense of satisfaction expressed by parents. They are proud of the school and the pupils' achievement. The structure and discipline are greatly appreciated. Some parents report that for the first time they have appropriate support that makes a significant impact on home life because their child is better able to cope and control themselves. There is regular contact between school and home. The weekly 'positives' letter ensures that parents know what is going well about their child's education. The headteacher is always available to parents and viewed by them as highly approachable, yet at the same time hugely respected.
36. The provision of information to parents is very good. The pupils' annual reports tell parents what their child knows, understands and can do. They give clear targets for continued improvement that ensure everyone knows what is required. Around half of the parents and carers participate in the opportunities given to discuss their child's progress with the teachers.
37. The views of parents are sought regularly and valued highly. In the parents' questionnaire, for this inspection, a significant minority of parents expressed the view that their child does not like the school and that pupils do not behave well. These views are not supported by the inspection evidence.
38. The school has the confidence of everyone who has some vested interest in it. The quality of links with the local community is very good. Links with industry and Connexions are a strength; they bring sponsorship and work related links for the pupils. These links have developed over time and the very effective support and organisation between them and the school means that

they provide calculated opportunities for including pupils in other settings that might not otherwise be available.

39. The school nurses talk to the pupils about health matters and hold drop-in sessions. Brandles has worked with local councils on recycling matters. The chair of governors is an industrial chaplain. He leads assemblies and contributes to the PSHCE lessons. Years 10 and 11 pupils produced a display in the local church for the Baldock Festival. The local community uses the school's facilities regularly, including the gym, hall and playing fields.
40. There are very good links with other schools for inclusion and coverage for link courses. These links enhance the educational opportunities of the pupils. Batchwood (EBD) and Marriots (mainstream secondary) schools have an arrangement where pupils in Years 10 – 11 visit Brandles for vocational education courses. Brandles also has links with Knights Templar School. Two teacher training university colleges use Brandles as training and development experiences.
41. Brandles is a member of the Hertfordshire EBD/MLD Special Schools' Sports Association. Pupils compete in annual tournaments and championships. Social work college students come into Brandles School as part of their coursework. These links ensure that the school is more widely known and understood.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **very good**. The headteacher's very good leadership provides a clear agenda for raising standards further and governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a sharp and realistic overview of the school's relative strengths and weaknesses and high aspirations for the pupils to achieve.
- The senior managers, including the deputy headteacher and family liaison manager, have strong and complementary skills.
- Governors are ably led and have broad and relevant experience that helps the school; they both support and challenge its work effectively.
- Subject leadership in science is unsatisfactory and restricting the pupils' progress and achievements.

Commentary

42. The headteacher's very good leadership means that the school is an orderly, disciplined and thriving community. In key areas, the headteacher is an exemplary role model in managing the pupils' behaviour, supporting staff and building teams. The school has a clear vision for the future and continues to strive for further improvements. The areas for improvement discussed during the inspection had already been identified by senior managers and were being addressed actively. The headteacher has many very positive professional links with nearby schools and colleagues that assists pupils to be included in mainstream settings and for some pupils from mainstream schools to benefit from the specialist provision at Brandles School. This is a very positive feature of the outreach from Brandles School to local secondary schools. The headteacher takes meticulous care over the induction procedures for new staff. They have an exceptionally thorough induction programme, and very high levels of support when first teaching at the school. This, in turn, enables them to settle more swiftly and provide consistency in teaching the pupils.
43. The deputy headteacher's role is very effective and complementary to that of the headteacher. There has been much useful work accomplished in developing the curriculum, improving assessment and establishing structures and policies to strengthen the school's work further. Together with the family liaison manager, the senior managers make a strong and very effective team, and provide very strong role models in their own professional practice for other

adults to follow. Senior managers have a sharp overview of the school and monitor the quality of teaching, learning and pupils' achievements systematically. They evaluate and reflect regularly, both formally and informally, what is working well. This information is used appropriately to modify and refine actions.

44. Governors have a wide range of relevant expertise that assists the school in its work. There are governors with expertise in fostering looked after children, social services and those with local community links that make a valued contribution to school life. Governors have made significant improvements in their role since the previous inspection, and achieve a good balance between supporting the school and challenging its work. They visit and monitor the school regularly, putting them in a good position to probe more deeply and objectively at formal meetings. The chair of governors has a clear and comprehensive understanding of the issues currently facing the school.
45. Subject leadership in science is unsatisfactory and is not making the necessary impact on raising standards or ensuring that pupils achieve what could be realistically expected. The management of pupils, resources and the learning environment is not sufficiently robust and pupils' learning is hindered as a result.
46. The very effective senior management team are central to the school's effectiveness.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	640,954	Balance from previous year	-13,731
Total expenditure	652,275	Balance carried forward to the next	-25, 052*
Expenditure per pupil	13,045		

**The deficit has been approved and will be eradicated when outstanding payments to the school are made.*

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very effective teaching in English enables pupils to make rapid progress in their literacy skills.
- There is a strong emphasis upon developing the pupils' speaking and listening skills that helps them express their views and feelings more appropriately.
- Pupils' achievements in writing are a relative weakness in comparison to those in reading, speaking and listening.
- Very good subject leadership sets clear direction and high expectations for raising standards further.

Commentary

47. English teaching is very effective in helping pupils develop basic literacy skills. This in turn enables pupils to access other subjects more effectively. There are very effective assessment strategies used to assess their reading levels on arrival at the school ensures that work is matched closely to individual needs. Resources are carefully chosen to ensure pupils maintain interest, whilst also ensuring that the text in books is not too difficult to discourage pupils' efforts. Many pupils gain nationally recognised awards in English that puts them in a stronger position for future life and employment. Pupils achieve very well by the end of Year 9 and 11, due to the very good teaching and learning.
48. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are developed very effectively in a variety of contexts, both socially and academically. In PSHE for example, pupils are helped to express their views and in drama, assisted further in working through a range of feelings about themselves and others. In the school council, pupils express their opinions openly and honestly, and articulate clearly what they like and dislike about school life. In citizenship activities, pupils learn to argue their ideas from different perspectives and learn the importance of considering others' ideas at the same time. These opportunities add much to the pupils' skills in speaking, listening and communicating to others in everyday life.
49. Pupils' achievements in writing are slower to develop than other areas of the English curriculum. They are helped to form ideas and construct coherent writing, though they do not find this straightforward to accomplish. Many pupils have negative attitudes towards writing from previous experiences and much time is taken helping them to overcome such barriers and gain a level of confidence at the same time. Pupils write for a range of purposes and teaching very sensibly emphasises writing tasks that are relevant and useful in everyday life.
50. The subject is led very effectively and there are high expectations for the pupils to achieve in English. There is a clear and coherent curriculum that builds systematically on the pupils' skills. Assessment procedures in English are very effective in identifying the pupils' levels of attainment and tracking their achievements closely. They gain confidence and pride in their work and develop skills that are key to many other areas of life.
51. There have been very good improvements since the previous inspection when English was judged to have many areas of weakness.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

52. Provision for developing pupils' language and literacy skills across the curriculum are good. Pupils are encouraged to record their findings and focus on key vocabulary in certain subjects thus assisting their reading skills further.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do well to achieve GCSE passes at the end of Year 11, but achievement in Years 7 to 9, though satisfactory, is not as strong.
- Current assessment and planning systems are not specific enough to identify and address gaps in pupils' mathematical skills on entry to the school.
- ICT is not sufficiently integrated into pupils' mathematical experience.

Commentary

53. Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory overall. Pupils in their final two years in school do well to gain passes in GCSE at Foundation level. In 2003 four pupils achieved grades F and G. This year, 2004, eight pupils have completed course work for GCSE and are predicted to achieve passes if exams are completed. These achievements are above expectations for pupils at similar schools. In 2003 four pupils gained level four in the end of Key Stage 3 SATs tests. Other pupils who did not take the test were assessed by teachers to be at levels 2 and 3.
54. Pupils throughout the school cover a wide range of topics in maths. The youngest group in Year 7 considering the concept of probability for the first time were able to establish the correct vocabulary and make realistic judgements on how to use a probability scale. Older pupils successfully found their way around bus and train timetables in planning a journey.
55. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good elements in Years 10 - 11. Pupils' learning follows the same pattern. Teaching demonstrates secure subject knowledge and the skills to present work in an encouraging and enabling way. Hence pupils have the motivation and confidence to persist. In a lesson with the eldest pupils measuring the area of a triangle pupils were encouraged to use independent thinking and experimentation to find the rule for this measurement for themselves. In other lessons judged to be satisfactory there was insufficient consideration in lesson planning of the individual needs of pupils based on their personal level of mathematical understanding or their preferred learning style. All lessons had a plenary session at the end of lessons but these were too short to take full advantage of sharing the learning and discoveries of the lesson.
56. Pupils behaved well in the majority of mathematics lessons with most working diligently and sensibly. There were too few examples of pupils being encouraged and supported to work collaboratively. Notebooks show neat and careful presentation and most pupils persevere to complete their work.
57. Assessments are recorded regularly but the system used does not give a sufficiently useful measure of progress over the broad front of mathematical knowledge and understanding nor does it assist teachers in planning for future achievement. Pupils are not made sufficiently aware of how they can improve their standard of work. Whilst much of the pupils' work is planned based on the pupil's potential the majority of pupils enter the school after periods of disrupted education and hence have considerable and hidden gaps in their mathematical learning. Currently there is no system to identify those gaps and address them through prioritised personal short term targets so that pupils' achievement levels can be raised to give them a secure foundation for later work.

58. The mathematics room has a good number of computers with suitable software. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils work individually with the computers using programs to develop specific mathematical skills. ICT is not yet used to its full advantage by integrating the use of ICT into lesson planning to enable pupils and teachers to be more innovative, particularly in areas such as data handling, shape and space and problem solving.
59. The leadership and management of this subject are satisfactory. The subject leader has established a secure planning foundation for coverage of the Key Stage 3 National Numeracy Strategy. The subject leader does well to encourage pupils to persevere in completing course work and exams for GCSE and SATs. He is establishing a tradition for mathematical thinking for pupils through the continuity of learning and pupils are beginning to respond with interest and transfer their skills to other activities. The good teamwork between teachers and the designated mathematics teacher assistant is of very real benefit to pupils' progress in their learning.
60. There has been a satisfactory level of improvement since the previous inspection. Standards have been maintained, GCSE as an accreditation is now securely established and facilities for the use of ICT improved.

Numeracy across the curriculum

61. The use of numeracy in other subject areas is satisfactory. Examples were seen of measurement in PE and use of ratio in mixing mortar for brick laying in the vocational education department. The whole school has been involved in a project to ensure that all can tell the time accurately. Closer liaison between subject leaders is needed to identify more opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in all subjects.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many pupils are capable of achieving higher standards.
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory overall and pupils do not establish positive work habits.
- Special support assistants provide a high level of care and support for pupils.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory and limits the activities that pupils can do.

Commentary

62. Pupils' achievement in science is unsatisfactory throughout the school. Although there are a small number of pupils who achieve sound standards in accredited examinations, there are too many pupils who are not achieving the standards they could. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low and the majority of pupils are not challenged by the work.
63. The teaching of science is unsatisfactory in Years 7-9 and Years 10 – 11. A great deal of time is lost because the pupils' behaviour is not managed effectively enough. In one lesson when carrying out an experiment about acids and alkalis the pupils showed little interest in learning. They were disrespectful to the teacher, talked over her continuously and failed to conform to her instructions about the investigation. The pupils' books indicate that in most classes the curriculum is not adapted and modified effectively enough for the higher and lower attaining pupils. Far too many worksheets are used; these place few demands on the pupils in terms of developing some independence when learning to predict and record the results of their investigations. Much of the work is undated, presentation is weak and marking does not explain to pupils how they can improve their work. There is little evidence of ICT being used for things such as research, data logging or recording.

64. The management of science is unsatisfactory. Although assessment is in place, insufficient use is made of the data available to plan work for individual pupils. The pupils are well supported by the special support assistants. There is no technician to help with the preparatory work for experiments. The accommodation and resources provided for science are unsatisfactory and make experimental work difficult: the room is more a classroom than laboratory and it is also too small to accommodate the larger classes.
65. Since the last inspection, there has been insufficient improvement in teaching, learning and the accommodation.

Information and communication technology (ICT)

The provision for ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is improving and accreditation has been introduced.
- Specialist teaching is good and ensures pupils learn technical skills more effectively.
- ICT is not used enough to support learning in different subjects of the curriculum.

Commentary

66. Pupils are achieving satisfactorily overall. Good developments have taken place recently to improve the curriculum and pupils' achievement. An accredited course, Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT), has been introduced for pupils in Years 10 and 11. This is helping to prepare pupils to be more familiar with the new technology when they leave school and enter further education or the world of work.
67. The teaching of ICT is satisfactory overall. However, in the discrete lessons in the computer suite teaching is consistently good and pupils enjoy their lessons and are learning a good range of skills. This good teaching is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, the pupils are not getting enough opportunities to develop these skills in other lessons. During the inspection, pupils in Year 7 learning about control technology discovered it was essential to give accurate instructions to open and close a car park barrier. In Year 11, pupils concentrated well and worked hard on their multimedia presentation about a travel agency. Lower attaining pupils sometimes become frustrated because of their weak reading skills and are reliant upon staff to help them follow written instructions. They receive sound help from the special support assistant.
68. The management of ICT is satisfactory. Since the appointment of the subject leader last September, she has quickly come to grips with what needs to be improved and a real effort has been made to improve the quality of the provision. However, there is still much to do. Areas correctly identified by the school for improvement are assessment, further staff training and better use of the Internet and email now that broadband has been installed.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. ICT is not used enough in other subjects and this is the main weakness in the provision. Although teachers are making satisfactory use of digital pictures to record achievement, most have not given sufficient thought to the planning of ICT and how it can be used more effectively to improve pupils' learning.

HUMANITIES

Due to timetable arrangements only one lesson was seen in religious education, so the subject is reported as a sample. History and geography were not inspected.

Religious education

70. Religious education is now taught to all classes. Statutory requirements are now met and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Planning for the subject is based on the locally agreed syllabus. The school development plan has identified the need to revisit medium term planning and the mode of teaching and learning in order to make the subject more relevant to the pupils' interests and needs.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design was inspected in full and design and technology, PE and music were sampled.

Design and technology

71. In the one lesson sampled, teaching was satisfactory and pupils were being encouraged to develop design ideas for a hand held game.

Music

72. Although no discrete music lessons were observed, pupils were seen during assemblies. It is obvious from these events that music plays a central part to school life, as pupils are very used to singing and appreciating music. They sing most impressively, for example in two part harmony, and know the words of some songs with little reference to the song books. Pupils listen and sing with sensitivity, and at times there is a tangible atmosphere of spirituality that adds to the school's atmosphere for learning. Adults make a strong contribution in taking the lead and the headteacher's own strengths musically are a clear asset in helping the pupils gain confidence. The harmony that is encouraged through pupils joining together in singing is an important start to the school day, helping them become more outward looking and aware of others.

Physical education

73. Physical education has been a strength of the school in the past. The school has had difficulties in appointing a permanent specialist teacher, but there is a newly appointed PE specialist recently appointed who has clear ideas for the subject and its future development. The current temporary teacher is a specialist and lessons seen showed that he had good subject knowledge and expertise as well as the enthusiasm and skills to encourage pupils to extend their potential in outdoor sports. Despite lack of general fitness, Year 10 pupils were beginning to gain understanding of how to improve their long jump. Younger pupils in Year 8, having had sessions on batting and bowling skills, were able to put a short cricket game together. The swimming session was very well planned with a good range of activities including safety procedures and swimming stroke technique. Good subject expertise by teachers meant that they could make effective interventions which improved technique and assisted pupils in making very good progress. Over the past year teams from the school have participated in athletics, football and basketball events as well as an inter-school swimming gala.

Art and design

The provision in art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in a short space of time due to the very effective teaching and learning.
- Pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning in the subject; they gain pride and self confidence in their achievements.
- The art and design room is an inspiring atmosphere for learning; resources and equipment are very well organised and help pupils further in their work.
- The subject leader has wide ranging knowledge and expertise in art and design; there are high expectations for the pupils.

Commentary

74. Pupils this year are on course to achieve the highest results ever achieved in art and design in the school's history. Those pupils arriving very late on in their school lives, for example in Years 10 and 11, are assisted to make rapid progress and produce a wide range of high quality work that contributes to their art portfolios. The very good teaching inspires pupils and enables them to learn new artistic skills, and recognise precisely what they must do in order to develop and improve their own style and techniques further.
75. Pupils are thoroughly absorbed and involved in their art work. They often want to continue with an activity beyond the end of the lesson as they find the work so satisfying. The high quality work around the art and design room is a tribute to the effort, determination and perseverance of pupils in the subject. They are keen to show their work and gain much confidence in the process.
76. The learning environment is very high quality and the surrounding objects, books and artefacts provoke the pupils to think more creatively. The careful and efficient organisation of equipment and resources enables pupils to access materials quickly and make the most of their learning opportunities in lessons.
77. The subject leader is very skilled as an artist and pupils are assisted greatly by her wide ranging expertise. The activities are accessible to all pupils and matched carefully to individual needs. This means that even the most reticent of pupils gain confidence in their artistic skills and learn to appreciate art more fully as a result. There have been good improvements since the previous inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Inspectors saw lessons in all Year groups, as well as looking at pupils' work.

Provision in PSHE and citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- PSHE underpins all aspects of school life and its emphasis is having a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes, learning and achievement.
- There is a very effective emphasis on the principles of good citizenship; pupils work hard to reflect those values in daily life.
- Pupils understand clearly their individual personal and social targets; they are referred to daily and many work very hard to reach and surpass their personal goals.
- PSHE is led very effectively and there is a clear sense of direction for further improvements.

Commentary

78. PSHE is an integral part of life at Brandles School. Pupils learn quickly that there are consequences to all their actions, and they soon realise that there are responsibilities as well as rights in everyday life. The very well established strategies for managing the pupils' behaviour work in harmony with the PSHE and citizenship programme. Pupils are helped to focus on improving their behaviour and in the process, their personal and social skills develop significantly. Many parents speak very highly of the structured programme that has helped transform their child's outlook on life and had a huge impact on family life for the better in the process. Pupils are encouraged to establish appropriate personal skills in lessons and develop a growing respect for themselves and authority.
79. There is a strong focus on becoming "Brandles citizens" and with this come privileges and responsibilities in equal measure. Pupils are helped systematically to understand the qualities of good citizenship and assisted to demonstrate them throughout the school day. There are high expectations for the pupils to sustain those principles, so that many establish a more outward looking attitude to life and others around them.
80. All pupils have individual personal and social targets that are assessed on a daily basis. Their targets are reviewed weekly and updated very regularly. The school's rigorous tracking of the pupils' progress and achievements in this area has been developed and refined very effectively.
81. The PSHE subject leader has developed the curriculum systematically. Pupils learn from the start that their personal and social skills are central to the school's expectations for improvement. Many pupils rise to this challenge, and in the process find themselves better equipped to learn, sustain concentration, and achieve more effectively in lessons, whilst also being more fully prepared for life. The subject has gone from strength to strength since the previous inspection.
82. Pupils, many for the first time in their school life, experience success, establish self discipline and gain confidence, purpose and direction for their futures as a result of attending Brandles School.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).