

INSPECTION REPORT

MILLGATE SCHOOL

Leicester

LEA area: Leicester

Unique reference number: 120362

Head teacher: Mrs K Howells

Lead inspector: Mr D Smith

Dates of inspection: 15 - 17 September 2003

Inspection number: 258950

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Male
Number on roll:	41
School address:	18A Scott Street Leicester
Postcode:	LE2 6DW
Telephone number:	(0116) 2704922
Fax number:	(0116) 2708753
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Barwell
Date of previous inspection:	November 2000

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Millgate School is a community special school for up to 45 boys aged 11-16 who have significant emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. Some of the pupils have associated learning difficulties. The school has experienced a significant increase in the number of pupils and many of the 41 pupils on roll are new to the school. Many of the pupils have joined the school late and have a history of severely challenging behaviour and school failure. Pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory as it is 10 per cent below the average for similar schools nationally. Fixed term exclusions are high but there are no permanent exclusions. A distinct feature of the school is the fact that it offers a flexible pattern of provision including; an extended day for 10 pupils, a range of residential packages for another 10 pupils and a day setting for the remaining 25 pupils. Over 60 per cent, a very high percentage of the pupils in the school, are involved with the Youth Offenders Team. Also 25 per cent of the pupils are in public care. Five pupils are from an ethnic minority background and a small number of the pupils have English as an additional language. Some traveller children also attend the school.

The pupils come from the City of Leicester. The achievements of pupils are not compared with national standards for pupils in mainstream schools, due to the special educational needs of the pupils in this school.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
17323	Mr D Smith	Lead inspector	Science
			Art
			Citizenship
			Modern foreign language
			Physical education
19443	Mrs N Walker	Lay inspector	
1769	Mr M Holohan	Team inspector	English
			Geography
			History
			Music
			Religious education
			English as an additional language
15600	Mr C Richardson	Team inspector	Mathematics
			Information and communication technology
			Design and technology
			Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

A small special school on the outskirts of Leicester providing day, extended day and residential provision for boys with significant emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. The school was inspected on 15th to 17th September 2003 by an inspection team led by David Smith.

OVERALL EVALUATION

Despite the challenge of a significant increase in pupil numbers and their severe needs, the school is fairly effective and most pupils make at least satisfactory progress in all subjects and courses. The residential provision is very good value for money, the extended day provision good, while the day provision is expensive, and so overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The good quality of specialist teaching and pupils' learning in English, mathematics for the older pupils, information and communication technology and art.
- The residential provision is very good and this boosts pupils' all round development.
- The level of pupil attendance is unsatisfactory including too many fixed-term exclusions.
- Assessment systems are good and inform detailed and relevant planning.
- Management is good with effective day-to-day routines and very good policies and support.
- The school has a positive ethos with good support and guidance for the pupils.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to impact on school life or become independent individuals.
- Poor quality accommodation and limited resources for the teaching of science.
- There is insufficient time allocated for the teaching of mathematics to the younger pupils.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The school has continued to develop the curriculum, stabilising management and improving aspects, such as assessment, through very challenging times.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievements are satisfactory and the average points score at GCSE is close to that of similar schools nationally. The abilities of the pupils vary significantly each year and their needs are becoming increasingly challenging but they achieve well in English, mathematics for the older pupils, information and communication technology and art. Pupils' achievements in personal and social education are satisfactory and this helps to promote good relationships, although the pupils make insufficient progress in their independence skills. Achievements are best when the pupils are taught by enthusiastic subject specialists and benefit from the residential or extended day provision. The standards of achievement are unsatisfactory in some aspects of science, particularly when the opportunities for practical work and investigations are limited. **The pupils' moral and social development are satisfactory whilst their spiritual and cultural development are unsatisfactory.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with a significant percentage of good teaching and a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. The pupils are very challenging and difficult to motivate but teaching and learning are good in English, senior mathematics, information and communication technology and art. Pupils' learning is unsatisfactory when they have insufficient opportunity to be involved in practical work during their science lessons. The curriculum is satisfactory and the school has continued to be innovative in curriculum development to meet the changing needs of the pupils. The residential provision is very good and well supported by extended day packages. The day pupils have a satisfactory range of activities but due to their very challenging needs there is insufficient enrichment of their extra-curricular programme to captivate them. The good levels of care and guidance do make it possible, for the pupils, despite their very challenging needs, to make satisfactory progress in their learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and governance of the school is satisfactory and management is good.

The leadership of the school has made a determined effort and maintained fairly effective improvement, since coming out of special measures, despite the challenges of an increasingly difficult pupil population. The school has a positive ethos that promotes good relationships across the school. Development planning and financial management are good. Policies and procedures are well managed. The governing body is supportive of the school but provides insufficient challenge to the school to help maintain the urgency of continual improvement.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school works well in partnership with parents and carers and parents speak highly of the school. The parents appreciate the information, support and regular contact provided by the school. They also appreciate the good working relationship that many of them have with the staff at the school. Some parents place insufficient emphasis on their child's good attendance. The pupils have a mixed response regarding their attitude to school. The design of the building makes supervision of the pupils very difficult and for security reasons many of the doors are locked. As a result many of the pupils do not feel trusted, but do have the confidence that they all have someone in the school that they can talk to. They express a preference for practical activities and respond well to sporting and outdoor activities. Pupils in residence are usually relaxed and relate well to each other and adults.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that the pupils have at least satisfactory levels of attendance by;
 - Maximising the use of residential provision and ensure that all day pupils are able to access the extended education opportunities provided.
 - Increasing the inspiration and drive in the curriculum, building on the strengths currently in the school.
 - Increasing the enrichment of the curriculum, particularly by the planning and delivery of a more exciting range of cultural, sporting, residential, outdoor and adventurous activities.
 - Develop a culture of high expectations for pupils' achievements in their GCSE's.
 - The school using all the factors in their control to gain increased levels of support from parents to improve pupils' attendance.
 - Significantly decreasing the number of fixed term exclusion.
- Increase the amount of time that mathematics is taught to the younger pupils.
- Enhance the development of pupils' independence skills by providing improved opportunities for them to be actively involved in the life of the school and the local community.

- Provide the pupils with full access to a wide range of investigative work, by acquiring good quality accommodation and resources, for the teaching of science.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievements are satisfactory and the average points score at GCSE is close to that of similar schools nationally. The abilities of the pupils vary significantly each year and their needs are becoming increasingly challenging but they achieve well in English, mathematics for the older pupils, information and communication technology and art.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve at GCSE close to the average points score for similar schools nationally.
- Pupils achieve well in English showing significant improvements in reading and spelling.
- The achievements of the older pupils in mathematics is good.
- Achievements are unsatisfactory in some science lessons.
- Pupils' achievement in art and information and communication technology are good.

Commentary

1 The school offers an appropriate range of GCSE's and the pupils' best achievements are in information and communication technology, English and mathematics.

2 Pupils achieve well in English and they show significant improvements in reading, writing and spelling. Provision in mathematics is good and the older pupils make good progress whilst the younger pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils' achievements in science are satisfactory, overall, with some unsatisfactory achievement when the pupils do not have access to practical work. Discussions with the staff and pupils confirm the fact that art is enjoyed in the school and the pupils' previous work and displays reflect the good quality of their work. Pupils make satisfactory progress in personal social and health education. The positive school ethos helps pupils to develop good relationships but their independence skills are not sufficiently developed. Pupils' absence combined with changes in the small number of pupils in each age group resulted in the 2003 targets for Years 9 and 11 not being achieved. The pupils have a positive attitude to information and communication technology and are pleased with the good progress that they achieve.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and values are satisfactory. Pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory. Pupils at the school have a history of severely challenging behaviour and disrupted education and the staff work hard to improve their attitudes and behaviour. The positive school ethos promotes good relationships but the pupils are often too dependent on adult support. The pupils' moral and social development is satisfactory. However despite the pupils' positive responses to well presented assemblies the pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory. The pupils' cultural development is also unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The residential and extended day provision supports the pupils to make good progress.
- When the teaching is well structured and interesting pupils are often well motivated and they achieve well.
- There is a sense of community and relationships are good.
- There continues to be a large number of exclusions and this contributes to the unsatisfactory level of pupil's attendance.
- Too few opportunities are provided for the pupils to develop their independence

skills.

- The staff place a high priority on racial equality but some negative comments, particularly by the younger pupils, are not managed well.

Commentary

3 Many of the pupils have joined the school late and have a history of severely challenging behaviour and school failure. They do respond well to the extended day and very well to the residential provision at the school. Pupils who experience this enriched provision have a noticeably better attitude towards school and improved social skills. The wide range of activities provided, gives pupils the opportunity to learn social skills and to develop improved confidence as well as experiencing success.

4 This positive attitude can be extended to lessons when they are well taught and use resources and methods that capture the pupils' interest. An example of this was the year 11 pupils' enjoyment of the teaching of Shakespeare, as it was supported by well chosen video material and well planned discussion. Pupils develop a sense of community and can be seen to enjoy each others company and work together. At meal and break times pupils mix together well. They take advantage of the opportunities to play sports or to use the computers as well as conversing with staff and with each other. Pupils are also seen to help each other in lessons. Higher attaining pupils will help with reading or performing in music.

5 Pupils' attendance is approx 10 per cent below the average for similar schools nationally. The school and other professionals work hard to get the pupils to school but some parents place insufficient emphasis on their child attending school.

6 There is a positive school ethos and this effectively promotes good relationships, but pupils' involvement in decision making and independence is unsatisfactory. Despite the good quality of the relationships between the staff and pupils the level of exclusions remains high. The attitudes of a significant proportion of the older pupils remain negative. The proportion of the pupils failing to complete their work experience or dropping out of college is high.

7 The school has a good behaviour management system but some of the pupils are unclear in their own beliefs and values and this does lead to confrontations at times. This fragility in the pupils' development is also evident in the fact that a small number of the pupils do not value race equality.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	13.8%
National data	11.7%

Unauthorised absence	
School data	16.36%
National data	7.3%

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

Exclusions

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	36	56	
White – Irish	1	2	
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	12	
Mixed – White and Asian	1	8	

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

8 Across the school there are occasions when the behaviour in lessons is such that learning is impeded. When this happens it is often in situations when pupils' attitudes are challenged by the subject, such as the teaching of other faiths in religious education. The school is working hard towards changing the attitudes of racism amongst a small number of pupils but negative comments made by some of the younger pupils are not tackled quickly enough by staff.

9 Pupils play no part in the running of the school and the lack of systems, by which their views can be obtained, encourages them to be passive spectators rather than active participants in the school community. Even in minor tasks such as meal times or the replacing of sports equipment, pupils are given few opportunities to use their own initiative.

10 Pupils have mixed views about the school. Most of the pupils do not feel trusted but do have someone that they feel they can talk to in the school. They express a preference for practical activities and respond well to sporting and outdoor activities. Pupils in residence are usually relaxed and engage in conversation readily.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a satisfactory quality of provision.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but it is good in English, mathematics for the older pupils, information and communication technology and art. Pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory and are best when taught by subject specialists using the school's good assessment systems as the foundation for their planning and teaching. The school has continued to be innovative in curriculum development but there is a shortage of time allocated to the teaching of mathematics for the younger pupils. The school is well staffed and their positive ethos promotes effective support and guidance for the pupils. However, the pupils are not sufficiently involved in decision making or in the effective development of their independence skills. Leadership and governance of the school are satisfactory whilst the management is good.

Despite the challenge of meeting the needs of an increasing number of pupils with severe and complex needs, the school has continued to make satisfactory progress since its last inspection which brought them out of special measures. Attendance is unsatisfactory but the school works hard to promote good attendance and there are signs of some progress.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with a significant percentage of good teaching and a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. The pupils are very challenging and difficult to motivate. The assessment of pupils work is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Specialist teachers promote good progress in the pupils' learning in some subjects.
- Teachers use thorough and constructive assessment to directly inform lesson planning.
- Teachers use an efficient balance of teaching styles and stimulating resources to interest the pupils.
- The effective use of learning support assistants in practical lessons but in some lessons they spend too much time on behaviour management.
- The poor design of the science room limits the pupils' involvement in practical work.
- The effective use of homework to consolidate and develop pupils' learning, particularly for the pupils who are resident or are involved in the extended day package.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	1 (3 %)	13 (36%)	21 (58%)	1 (3%)		

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.

11 The pupils respond well to enthusiastic subject specialists who have the confidence and knowledge to challenge the pupils to make good progress in their learning and achieve well. The lessons are lively and the teaching is imaginative and extends the learning of the pupils. In English literature the effective study of Romeo and Juliet is brought alive for the pupils by the use of a well-chosen film that makes the story relevant to the present day. A particular strength in the teaching of mathematics for the older pupils, is the effective use of a good range of mental warm up activities at the beginning of a lesson. In information and communication technology lessons the specialist teaching uses the good accommodation and resources well and the pupils' are proud of their work. Good teaching in art effectively builds the pupils' confidence to the point where they are willing to try increasingly challenging tasks.

12 The teachers make good and appropriate use of assessment to inform planning and target setting to meet the pupils' needs. The school effectively meets the needs of the small number of pupils with English as an additional language by the good use of assessment, planning and support. The targets for literacy and numeracy are reviewed regularly and this helps to ensure that the pupils make good progress in their learning.

13 The best teaching provides an exciting range of teaching styles and the use of stimulating resources that promote learning. Work is broken down into manageable sections with an element of challenge and set time limits. The pupils' work is made relevant to them and their interest is maintained by the use of different activities, for instance investigation and decision making in design and technology. Importantly, the end of the lesson is used positively for the review of both learning and pupils' progress towards their behaviour targets.

14 Learning Support assistants are fully involved in promoting learning, particularly in subjects such as design and technology and art where they are well deployed in supporting pupils' practical work.

15 The layout of the science room limits the opportunities for the pupils to be involved in the full range of practical work and this leads to some unsatisfactory teaching that limits pupils' achievements.

16 Homework is set regularly and designed to consolidate and extend the pupils' learning in class. Most of the pupils expect to receive homework and will enquire about the content of the

homework for a specific evening. Homework is well supported by the staff for the extended day and residential pupils, whilst not all the day pupils have this additional support at home.

The curriculum

The curriculum provided by the school is satisfactory and boosted by the opportunities provided in the extended education and residential packages. The school is constantly striving to be innovative in developing the curriculum, in response to the increasing challenge, posed by the needs of the pupils. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good provision is made for English, mathematics for the older pupils, information and communication technology and art.
- The residential provision and the extended day package does effectively extend the pupils' curriculum opportunities.
- The development of the curriculum for the older pupils has been innovative but does not yet fully engage the interest of the pupils.
- Resources have been developed and provide better provision, especially in information and communication technology.
- There is an effective programme to meet pupils' needs in personal, social and health education.
- The science curriculum is affected by poorly designed accommodation.
- Insufficient time is allowed for the teaching of mathematics for the younger pupils.

Commentary

17 The curriculum offered fulfils national requirements and offers a satisfactory range of courses and learning opportunities. The provision of English is good and ensures that pupils with specific reading difficulties make good progress, as a result of well planned literacy provision. In mathematics there is good provision for the older pupils.

18 The curriculum for the residential pupils and for those who participate in the extended day is very good. Carefully planned homework provision and a wide range of sporting activities capture pupils' interest and make a significant contribution to their personal development. Similar provision centred on music and art are also useful contributions to their cultural development. However, pupils who only attend in the day miss out on these opportunities and this is reflected in their less positive attitude towards school.

19 Effective opportunities are provided for pupils to gain external accreditation. A significant number of pupils achieve a grade in the GCSE entry level examination in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. There is an attempt to make the curriculum more relevant to the needs of the pupils and so improve their attendance and attitude to school. Good quality links with colleges and work experience have been developed together with support for pupils' transition to the world of work. Despite the quality of these links further development is required, with higher expectations for the pupils' level of achievements. Teachers have not yet succeeded in fully engaging the interest of the pupils in Year 11 where there are still high levels of absenteeism and a failure to complete college courses or work experience.

20 A good programme of personal, social and health education provides pupils with a well planned course which includes provision for drugs awareness, sex education and knowledge of healthy living. The school provides well for pupils who have additional needs beyond those of the majority of pupils. These needs, identified by feeder school documentation and base line assessment on entry to the school, are mainly specific learning and moderate learning difficulties. Good 1:1 support in lessons, enable these pupils to undertake the same curriculum as their peers.

21 The use of specialist teachers in subjects such as English, mathematics for the older pupils, art, design and technology and science has extended the range of curriculum opportunities available

to pupils. Similarly, the improvement in resources, such as the increase in the number and range of computers available, enables pupils to undertake a wider range of challenges.

22 However, insufficient time is devoted to the teaching of mathematics for the younger pupils and they only make satisfactory progress in their learning. The science curriculum is affected by poor design of the accommodation that limits the amount of practical work that can be taught.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils are well cared for and receive good and well-informed support, advice and guidance throughout their time at the school. The high standards in this aspect of the school's work have been maintained since the school was last inspected. The care arrangements in the residential provision are very good. The support systems do not yet enable pupils, other than those who have residential placements, to effectively develop their independence or sense of responsibility. Systems to take account of pupils views are unsatisfactory. Pupils and parents are pleased with the level of care and support, especially the induction procedures.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Well-informed, skilled and sensitive staff.
- Good partnership with other professionals, particularly youth support organisations such as the Youth Offenders Team.
- The residential provision is very good.
- Unsatisfactory procedures to promote independence and personal responsibility in pupils.
- Underdeveloped systems to consult pupils wherever possible on aspects of school life.

Commentary

23 The head teacher and the staff, know the strengths and weaknesses of each and every pupil well. This knowledge, together with very detailed monitoring systems and records, assists staff in building good and often very good relationships with pupils and tailoring support to specific individual pupil need. Consequently, despite severe and complex emotional and social difficulties, pupils respond satisfactorily and are able to learn. The school follows the locally agreed child protection procedures and the head teacher is diligent in ensuring appropriate action is taken to help pupils. When a pupil's behaviour puts themselves or others in danger, staff are particularly skilled at intervening with physical restraint. They are equally skilled at comforting and calming pupils when they need it.

24 The school works very closely with a range of other professionals, for example, the Youth Offenders Team and educational psychologists, to try to find the best possible solution to pupils' problems. Similarly impressive is the flexibility in the school's induction procedures to best meet the personal and emotional needs of each individual pupil.

25 The residential provision is very good and all involved deserve the recent accolade of the very positive findings by the National Care Standards inspection. It is kept immaculately clean, as are other key areas in the school, and pupils are given plenty of opportunity to be independent. Relationships are very good and pupils are happy here. As a result of what is on offer, the small number of residential pupils achieve markedly improved attendance, and considerably better progress, academically and personally, than in their previous placements.

26 Although pupils have ample opportunity to talk to staff, the school has not yet developed a system for regularly surveying pupils' views of the school and its work and there are no forums such as a pupil school council, or an eco committee, whereby pupils can contribute to the school's longer term development. In addition, there is no whole school approach to promoting independence and personal responsibility in pupils. Consequently, pupils play virtually no part in the basic running of the school or even in organising their own belongings or equipment for lessons.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school works well in partnership with parents and carers and parents speak highly of the school. Links with the community and with colleges are satisfactorily in place to facilitate work experience placements and vocational courses to suit the needs and choice of pupils. However, the school does not provide an extended service through educational and support programmes either to the community as a whole or to colleagues in mainstream schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good and regular information for parents about the school and pupils' progress.
- Relationships between staff and parents/carers are good.
- The lack of support of some parents for their child's attendance at school.
- The limited sharing of the school's considerable expertise and strategies with others.

Commentary

27 When their child starts at the school parents are given very clear information about the school and its expectations in the form of a good quality handbook. They receive adequate information on how their child is progressing through the annual review report and this is well supplemented by an additional end of year report. A particular strength is the very regular telephone contact staff make with parents/carers, although these focus almost entirely on pupils' attitude and behaviour and rarely include information on a pupil's academic standards and progress.

28 Good relationships are established right from the start and so subsequently parents and carers feel at ease in voicing any concerns they might have. The school welcomes parents and carers to the school and is always willing to find the time to talk to them and find solutions to problems. Nevertheless, the school does not systematically seek the views of all parents and some parents have expressed dissatisfaction with this.

29 Unfortunately, a significant proportion of parents do not do all they can to help their children to achieve regular and punctual attendance. This significantly hinders the progress those pupils are able to make and has a negative effect on the school's overall attendance figures.

30 The school makes satisfactory use of the local community for example when using the local sporting and activity facilities. The use of the community is best developed for the residential pupils to enhance their evening activities. Leicester College provides a good range of courses for the pupils including engineering, photography and catering. A number of local people visit the school, for instance the vicar and they make a satisfactory contribution to the school's curriculum. The school has not yet developed an outreach service to effectively share their expertise with staff in mainstream education. The school is however in the early stages of helping parents, and particularly care home staff, to establish expectations and strategies of pupils' attitudes and behaviour that are consistent with those of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and governance of the school is satisfactory and management is good. The leadership of the school has made a determined effort and maintained fairly effective improvement since coming out of special measures despite the challenges of an increasingly difficult pupil population

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The management and ethos of all aspects of the school is good.
- The school provides very good induction and continuing professional development for the staff.

- The school and subject improvement plan provides a clear set of priorities for the future development of the school.
- Careful financial management has facilitated significant improvements in the school.
- Monitoring of all aspects of the school's work is thorough and used well.
- The governing body supports the school but does not as yet sufficiently challenge the senior managers.

Commentary

31 Permanent appointments to the senior management team have been made since the last inspection and all staff have clear lines of responsibility. The staff team contributes to a positive ethos that has been effectively established by the senior management team. Members of staff have a shared sense of purpose and determination that, despite considerable adversity, promotes positive relationships. The staff works hard in the best interest of the pupils. The school is well organised.

32 The induction of new staff is thorough and they appreciate this high level of support to help them become established in this very challenging school. The information and policies provided to the staff are of a high standard and contribute well to the ethos of the school. Staff are provided with valuable support as they become familiar with the use of the school's good assessment and planning procedures. Induction and ongoing training in relation to the school's approach to behaviour management is of a high standard and encourages a full understanding and the consistent use of the systems. Members of staff are consulted on their training needs as part of their performance management, and a range of relevant professional opportunities is offered.

33 The school's system for compiling and evaluating the individual subject development plans is very good and well managed. It is clear that this process is well established but is continually improving. In particular the link between expenditure and its impact on the pupils' learning makes a valuable contribution to quality and standards in the school. The co-ordinators share in the leadership of the school, they plan effectively and are accountable for finance to improve standards.

34 Budget planning is very good and links clearly with school improvement plan. The governing body is fully involved and aware of the financial planning in the school and the governors' finance committee monitor and evaluate expenditure effectively. The school's business manager is very efficient and makes a valuable contribution to the school's commitment to Best Value principles. Historic funding has allowed the opportunity for the school to spend wisely on improvements to the school and the grounds that have enhanced the pupils' living and learning environment. Plans are well advanced to carry out the essential replacement of the science room and the school has managed a substantial carry forward to finance this project.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April [year] to March [year]

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	£1,092,156	Balance from previous year	£85,276
Total expenditure	£1,025,556	Balance carried forward to the next	£151,876
Expenditure per pupil	£23,850		

The small governing body are supportive but need to develop the nature of their role as a critical friend of the school and help provide an increased momentum for continual improvement.

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

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

The provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Specialist teaching is of good quality and makes imaginative use of resources.
- The teaching of literacy skills is well planned and effective.
- Assessment procedures are effective and used well.
- A large proportion of Year 11 pupils achieve grades in the entry level GCSE.
- Well planned and relevant homework is given regularly.
- There is a need to improve the presentation of pupils' written work.
- The teaching of English through other curriculum subjects needs further development.
- Pupils are not sufficiently involved in the assessment of their work.

Commentary

35 The population of the school has changed, both in number of pupils and the severity of learning difficulties, since the last inspection. Pupils on entry to the school have very low literacy skills and a history of interrupted education. The significant improvement during their time in school, in their literacy skills, is a consequence of good quality teaching and the well-managed provision of English. This improvement can be seen in two areas; firstly, the improvement in pupils' reading skills and secondly, pupils' achievements in acquiring a grade in GCSE entry examinations.

36 Imaginative use is made of resources to capture and maintain the interest of what can be a difficult group of pupils. When teaching *Romeo and Juliet* for example, well selected use of modern film makes the subject real and relevant to the pupils' own lives and ensures their attention and participation in good levels of discussion. The teaching also involves pupils in writing in a range of styles. These can be as varied as the description of the aftermath of a nuclear accident or the diary of an explorer. This wide range of written challenges is successful, developing pupils' imagination and vocabulary.

37 The teaching of English is well supported by an effective programme of phonics that improves pupils' reading skills. Efficient use is made of support staff to provide individual teaching. Similarly, good use is made of computer programs to enable pupils to work individually to improve their reading. Good use is made of homework to reinforce and develop the work done in lessons. All of this work is supported well by effective assessment systems. This gives a clear picture of pupils' achievements and is used well to monitor progress and develop pupils' learning targets.

38 Although marking of pupils' work is regular and makes good use of positive comments, there is a need to develop it further. Currently, marking does not provide sufficient guidance to pupils as to how their work could be improved. It also lacks a clear and consistent focus on errors of spelling. Insufficient attention is given to ensuring pupils' neat and consistent presentation of their work. Pupils are not sufficiently involved in the assessment of their work.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

39 The provision for the development of pupils' skills through other subjects of the curriculum is variable in quality. In some subjects, such as mathematics and information and communication

technology, good efforts are made to develop pupils' vocabulary and to provide opportunities for extended writing.

Modern foreign language

It is not possible to make a judgement on quality and standards in this subject. French is taught to the younger pupils but French lessons were not seen during the period of the inspection as they are timetabled for the end of the week. It was however possible to look at some of the pupil's previous work and discuss their views about learning French.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils enjoy the opportunity to learn and speak basic French
- The pupils do not have the opportunity to meet French speaking people.

Commentary

40 Pupils like talking to each other in basic French and they understand short statements and questions. The teacher reinforces the use of the language by using French terms when marking their work. The pupils can remember and recall the French names for the main items in a classroom. The attractive classroom display helps to consolidate the pupils' learning of common French phrases. The school does not fully meet their aim to familiarise the pupils with the language and culture of France, by for instance, taking the pupils on educational visits to the country.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and pupils' learning for the older pupils is good but there is insufficient taught time for the younger pupils and they make only satisfactory progress.
- Lessons are well planned and appropriately based upon the National Numeracy Strategy.
- Good assessment procedures are used including pupil self-assessment.
- Appropriate external accreditation is available for the older pupils.
- The use of information and communication technology in mathematics is underdeveloped.

Commentary

41 Mathematics is well managed by a subject specialist and as a result pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall for the younger pupils and good for the older pupils. There is insufficient taught time for mathematics for the younger pupils, this is reducing their time for learning and undermines their achievements. This is further compounded by the low achievements of the pupils when they start at the school due to their previous erratic school experiences. Although the older pupils have the same amount of allocated taught time, they have further opportunities to develop their mathematical skills through the introduction of vocational projects such as the Work Related Achievement Programme. In addition, the fact that they are taught by the subject specialist who is an experienced and highly capable teacher reduces the effects of absences.

42 Teaching and learning for the younger pupils is satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and the teacher is both confident and competent. However pupil behaviour on occasion is unsatisfactory. In several observed lessons pupils either become bored due to the lack of challenging tasks, with resultant behaviour outbursts, or enter the lesson exhibiting challenging behaviour, both of which disrupt lessons. However good handling of these situations by the teacher, and directed support staff, shorten the period of the disruptions.

43 The older pupils are taught by the subject specialist who has a good relationship with them. This, together with appropriate individual learning objectives and skilled presentation of tasks, enables pupils' good learning. A particular strength is the way that lessons are started with a variety of mental exercises. For example, in one session on recognition of hundreds, tens and units, pupils have to stamp for each 100, clap for each 10 and click their fingers for each unit. Although several pupils are self-conscious regarding the task, all the pupils enjoy joining in. This provided a good start to the main lesson on approximation of numbers.

44 Teaching follows the guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy with lessons being divided into three parts. Assessment procedures and practice are good, with each unit of work being assessed thoroughly and pupil self-assessment is undertaken each half term. Teachers' clear knowledge of pupils' learning and attainment is reflected well in their lesson plans. Additionally, the targets in pupils' individual education and care plans help to remind pupils what they need to focus on, to improve their learning and behaviour.

45 The GCSE course provides good motivation for pupils to demonstrate their achievements and their level of entry, to this external accreditation, is clearly linked to their capability. Pupils' previous work showed, by the absence of charts and graphs for example, that the use of information and communication technology to support the teaching and pupils' learning, requires further development.

Mathematics across the curriculum

46 Although the National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well, the identification of what pupils are likely to know in mathematics, and what teachers may have to remind them, is underdeveloped in subject schemes of work. However, several instances of pupils using their learning in mathematics in other curricular areas were observed. For example, in information communication technology where mathematical skills are used in data handling and a screen logo is used to construct mathematical shapes. In design and technology, too, pupils draw on their mathematical skills for measurement of angles and areas.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils enjoy the opportunities provided to be involved in investigations that are purposeful and they then make satisfactory progress in their learning.
- Assessment systems are good and directly inform lesson planning.
- The teacher's good subject knowledge contributes well to the quality of teaching and lesson planning.
- The science classroom is poorly designed and unsuited to the organisation of practical work.
- Some teaching, particularly for the older pupils, fails to motivate the pupils when there is an over-reliance on commercial worksheets and their learning is unsatisfactory

Commentary

47 When opportunities are provided for the pupils to be fully involved in practical work they respond with interest and enthusiasm. In these situations the Learning Support assistants provide good support for the pupils' learning. The younger pupils enjoy learning about the safe use of basic science equipment and quickly learn to identify and name Bunsen burners, tripods and beakers. The pupils make good progress in their practical work and understand that when the water is boiling, some of the water evaporates. The younger pupils complete detailed and accurate recordings of their readings of the variations in the strength of an electro-magnet and take pride in their work.

48 The teacher has good subject knowledge and this helps to provide full coverage of the science curriculum and the correct use of scientific language. As a result of valuable support and guidance for the teacher as part of his recent induction, good assessment systems are used to inform planning and there is an effective structure to the lessons. The teacher has attended appropriate courses, in particular the use of the Key Stage 3 Strategy and these have helped to develop his teaching strategies to meet the challenging needs of the pupils.

49 Analysis of the pupils' previous work and from the observation of lessons it is clear that, at times, there is an over-reliance on commercial worksheets and these fail to motivate the pupils. This disinterest is clear when the pupils' work is untidy and unfinished. When combined with the fact that the teacher is in the early stages of developing his behaviour management skills with pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties this leads to unsatisfactory progress by some pupils. The lessons are well staffed and the learning support assistants make a positive contribution to behaviour management and support learning well during practical work.

50 The science classroom is poorly designed for the safe organisation of practical work with pupils that have very challenging behaviour and this limits the opportunities for practical work across the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good throughout the school and as a result pupils' achievements are good.
- The management of information and communication technology is good
- The good resources and accommodation contribute to the good teaching and learning.
- The pupils are well motivated, are proud of their achievements and consequently they behave well.
- The use of information and communication in other subjects requires further development.

Commentary

51 The good and at times very good teaching, and support from the support assistants, results in pupils of all abilities learning and achieving well. The continuing improvement is a result of strong curriculum leadership and management, improvement in resources and the fact that the subject is taught by an enthusiastic and knowledgeable teacher. The older pupils make good progress to achieve well in information and communication technology in their GCSE's. Tasks are presented at a level and style that enables and motivates the pupils' learning and as a result incidences of challenging behaviour during lessons are reduced. Members of staff have good working relationships with the pupils and consequently the pupils listen to and follow instructions well. Pupils are proud of their achievements and respond well to challenging tasks. What prevents good lessons becoming very good is the lack of an appropriate conclusion to the lesson and therefore the opportunity is lost to review pupils' work.

52 Good teaching enables the younger pupils to combine text and graphics using word processing and they are beginning to be confident and competent users of Powerpoint. It is clear that the pupils are enjoying the lessons and engrossed in their work. The teacher's lesson planning, management and support results in the pupils receiving help as and whenever required. The pupils are well supported by support assistants who take digital photographs of the pupils for insertion in their presentation. Pupils also demonstrate their Internet skills, using it to search for and access information.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

53 The use of information and communication technology to support subject teaching and learning in other subjects is underdeveloped. General work on the computers, such as word processors, and Internet resources are used to some extent, mainly in English and mathematics. However, planning for the use of information and communication technology in subjects is under developed.

HUMANITIES

The provision of religious education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils have the opportunity to learn about the major faiths.
- Interesting tasks that challenge the more able pupils
- Pupils' attitudes to some aspects of the work are unsatisfactory which results in unsatisfactory achievement.

Commentary

54 The teaching is satisfactory. There is an appropriate emphasis on the use of visual resources to assist learning, in one lesson for example the lesson on Islam was well illustrated by the use of a handsome copy of the Koran. Interesting topics are provided for discussion and the teacher proposes some interesting ideas. However, the attitude of some of the pupils can be extremely challenging and they do not react well to some of the topics as they feel it challenges their inherent prejudices.

55 Younger pupils' written work shows an understanding of the major faiths of the world and discussion of the meaning and role of rules in society. The tasks presented are interesting and challenging for the pupils and some of the written work, especially those of the higher attaining pupils show some interesting ideas with an insight into the morality of rules. However, pupils' attitudes are frequently unsatisfactory which results in written work of poor quality and the use of inappropriate language in their books.

56 An assembly, based on the story of the Prodigal Son, presented by the local vicar who is also a member of governing body, was well considered and pupils spoke with interest about the topic.

57 Older pupils' previous work shows interesting work on moral choices. The higher attaining pupils have introduced some interesting ideas on moral choices that are obviously the result of lively discussion. However, despite this content, the presentation of written work is often untidy and there is a lack of clear rules on the presentation of pupils' work.

History and geography

No secure judgement is possible on quality and standards in geography and history. One lesson of geography was seen but none in history. A scrutiny of pupils' work was undertaken in both subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In history the pupils are developing an understanding of cause and effect.
- In geography the pupils make good use of their numeracy skills to extend their learning.
- The lower attaining pupils are not provided with work to match their needs.

Commentary

58 In history the younger pupils are developing an understanding of sequences of events such as inflation in Weimar Germany and are beginning to understand the concept of cause and effect. Higher attaining pupils are able to compare the lives of people in different periods and to make

appropriate comparisons. The achievements of lower attaining pupils are hampered by the lack of work that is appropriately tailored to their needs. Insufficient evidence is available to make a judgement on teaching.

59 In geography pupils make good use of mathematics and statistics to display and analyse data on a range of topics, such as an in depth study of the car industry. The treatment of these large scale topics is appropriate for the ability of the pupils and enables them to develop an understanding of how people live in other parts of the world. A comparison with Brazil, for example, produced some interesting work.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good resources and accommodation make it possible for the pupils to be involved in practical work.
- The teacher has good subject knowledge and is able to motivate the pupils by the careful choice of activities.
- Good assessment systems are used directly to plan and meet the pupils' needs.
- The learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to the lessons.
- The positive aspects of this subject are not enough to motivate some of the older disaffected pupils.

Commentary

60 The school has a well resourced workshop that gives pupils opportunities to work on machines such as lathes, sanding and drilling machines and heating and bending equipment for acrylics, using a vacuum forming machine to produce models that the pupils have designed. The majority of pupils enjoy the practical emphasis of the subject especially as their projects are interesting.

61 Assessment procedures during and at the end of projects are good and this keeps the pupils fully informed about their progress. The pupils are keen to know at what stage they are at in the design and making process and this helps them to understand the need for progressive steps in their work rather than rushing to finish.

62 Teaching and learning is satisfactory, and at times good, throughout the school. The specialist teacher is experienced and confident in the teaching of the subject. Projects are chosen well to interest the pupils. Relationships with pupils are good and are used to motivate them to undertake the given tasks. On the few occasions when there were pupil outbursts the teacher dealt with these effectively but sympathetically. The recent appointment of a subject instructor to support the part time teacher has a positive effect on pupils' learning through the informed support given in lessons. Learning Support assistants support the low achieving pupils well. Although there is generally a good pace to lessons, sometimes too little time is left for an effective plenary session to consolidate pupils' new learning. Despite the many good features in the teaching of design and technology, it, at times, fails to capture the interest of some of the older pupils.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

The provision for art and design is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The enthusiasm of the staff and pupils during art lessons and evening activities.
- The expert knowledge that informs good planning for the art lessons and evening activities promotes the pupils' good achievements.
- Insufficient opportunities are provided for the pupils to take part in visits to places of artistic significance.

Commentary

63 The teaching of art and related activities is full of energy and enthusiasm and as a result the pupils give art a high status in the school. The pupils are generally relaxed and positive in their art and design lessons.

64 Pupils easily engage in conversations with staff about their work and this helps them to achieve well in art. The positive ethos of the school is promoted well in this subject. The pupils are becoming more confident in their abilities and are willing to tackle challenging tasks. They are increasingly willing to share ideas about their work or accept advice on how to improve their work. The pupils enjoy art with a genuine interest in the subject and this is reflected in the good standard of their work, the good range of art displays and the pupils' positive behaviour. The lessons are well planned and imaginative. The pupils have good opportunities to make effective progress when working with a wide range of materials and processes. Appropriate reference is made to the work of other artists to stimulate the interest of the pupils and extend the pupils' work. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to make visits to art galleries or exhibitions.

Music

Visiting musicians were observed working with pupils during the inspection. Because of time limitations it was not possible to make a judgement on either provision, standards or teaching.

Commentary

65 The pupils are given opportunities when they can perform and play a range of musical instruments however the time allocated to music is limited. The study of music plays a limited role in the day time curriculum, although the resident pupils enjoy listening to music in their free time.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is led by an experienced specialist with the skills to provide a wide range of stimulating and exciting activities.
- The school has a very good range of resources
- There are insufficient activities provided to enrich and extend the day pupils' extra-curricular package.

Commentary

66 The teaching of physical education is at least satisfactory. When teaching is good the younger pupils carry out appropriate warming up exercises and are beginning to understand the need to warm up. They can describe some of the major effects of exercise on their body. The coaching of the pupils' football skills is well planned. It is taught in small sections and this approach maintains the pupils' interest and as a result they improve their basic ball control. There is a good balance of instruction, demonstration and practice in the teaching. Both the teacher and the Learning Support assistant are enthusiastic and effectively challenge the pupils to work as a team. The teacher has good subject knowledge and uses skilful demonstrations to teach the pupils some basic badminton skills. The sports barn and good quality resources provide the pupils with a good opportunity to develop their badminton skills. However, the pace of the lesson is too slow and the pupils are not involved in evaluating each other's performance and as a result they only make satisfactory progress in the development of their skills.

67 The school has a good range of resources to support outdoor and adventurous activities. Pupils do clearly enjoy the opportunity to participate in climbing, mountain biking, swimming and canoeing. The activities tend to take place on a Thursday afternoon as part of the teaching day or during the evening for the resident and extended day pupils. These opportunities enrich the pupils' curriculum and the physical education co-ordinator sees the value of increasing and extending these activities to include residential trips. The physical education department has the expertise and resources to take a major lead in the provision of increased extra-curricular enrichment.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The provision for personal, social and health education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal, social and health education is given high priority in the school offering a wide range of relevant courses.
- The residential provision is very good and the pupils' personal and social development is enhanced by their time in residence.
- The opportunities provided for the pupils to develop their independence skills are underdeveloped.
- A well considered range of citizenship activities are provided.

Commentary

68 Due to the severity of the pupils' needs, the school has responded by providing an extensive personal, social and health education curriculum. The older pupils are following a work related programme and on completion, the course will be assessed externally. This work is well planned and in lessons the pupils are involved in sensible discussions about their career opportunities. They make good progress and become more confident in the use of the telephone to request an interview. Good college and work experience placements are provided by the school but the attendance of some of the Year 11 pupils on these occasions is unsatisfactory. The school's concentration on an extended literacy curriculum does make a positive contribution to the pupils' good achievements in English. The pupils' progress in their personal development is evident in whole school settings, such as assemblies and meal times, where they usually are able to co-operate and behave together. Pupils are able to join in with the staff and their friends to play a competitive yet friendly game of football. However, due to the pupils' very challenging emotional and behavioural needs, despite the hard work of the staff, some pupils relate negatively to each other.

69 The opportunities provided in the residential provision do significantly enhance the pupils' personal development. The resident pupils show respect for others and thrive in a very good living environment. This is a strength of the school.

70 There is good planning for activities such as swimming, food technology and independent travel. Pupils make some progress in decision making when choosing their activities but there is an over-reliance on the staff carrying out many basic tasks, for example, clearing the table after a meal. Consequently the pupils make unsatisfactory progress in the development of their independence skills and this is evident in their unsatisfactory attendance at college and work placements.

71 The pupils have a satisfactory range of activities designed to promote citizenship. These teach that all aspects of school life are important and the pupils in residence do understand the need to resolve conflict fairly. They are effectively taught to negotiate, decide and take part in school and community based activities. The day pupils, although they do have good support and guidance, do not have sufficient quality time with the staff to make the same progress as the pupils in residence.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	8
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	5
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	5
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

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