

INSPECTION REPORT

NOTTON HOUSE

NOTTON

LEA area: Bristol City Council

Unique reference number: 109394

Headteacher: Mr Gerry Gamble

Lead inspector: Mike Smith

Dates of inspection: 12th – 14th January 2004

Inspection number: 258958

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 residential
Age range of pupils: 9-16
Gender of pupils: Boys
Number on roll: 42

School address: 28 Notton
Lacock
Chippenham
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Mr M Leighton Fry

Date of previous inspection: 26 January 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Notton House School is a residential, maintained special school with places for 55 boys aged 9 - 16 years. Forty-two students are currently on roll. The school is situated in the village of Notton in Wiltshire and was established to educate boys with emotional and/or behavioural problems. Following the local government re-organisation and the transfer of administration of the school from the County of Avon to Bristol City Council, the school's catchment area reduced significantly, with students now being predominantly from Bristol. Students are generally of average or above average academic potential, but there are increasing numbers who also have more specific learning difficulties.

Currently, sixty per cent of the students on roll come from the City of Bristol and predominantly from areas which have high unemployment with many low-income families. The remaining 40 per cent of students come from counties such as Wiltshire, South Gloucester . Nine per cent of the students are from ethnic minority families and there are no families where English is not the first language. Thirty-nine students on roll have a Statement of Special Educational Need maintained by a local education authority and three are undergoing statutory assessment. Six students are in the care of a local authority.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
15303	Mr M.J. Smith	Lead inspector	Physical education
	Mr G Saltmarsh	Lay inspector	
22178	Mrs K Robinson	Team inspector	Mathematics, music, religious education, personal social and health education, citizenship and special educational needs
2512	Mr B Emery	Team inspector	Science, design technology, geography and history
22948	Mrs M Vallis	Team inspector	English, art and French
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very good school. It is very well led by the headteacher. Teaching is good and often very good and students make good progress in their learning. Students are very well cared for and learn to trust and respect the adults and each other. The school provides a safe, calm and purposeful environment. High expectations and access to a broad and balanced curriculum and additional activities, enable students to realise their full potential academically, socially, morally and emotionally. The school successfully delivers its Mission Statement, 'Providing Young People with a Future'. The school makes good use of its available resources and provides good value for money.

The main strengths and weaknesses of the school are:

- The effective leadership of the headteacher and the overall management of the school
- Students achieve well in all areas of the curriculum against the targets which they help set
- The very positive ethos of the school
- The very good and trusting relationships between adults and students, the quality of teaching and learning and staff's expectations of students' achievement
- The curriculum and additional activities successfully meet all students' needs
- The effective and supportive links between the teaching and care staff
- The excellent student care, welfare and very good support, advice and guidance
- The very good links with parents, other schools and colleges and the community
- Subject coordinators do not take a full enough role in curriculum monitoring, progression and development
- Literacy, numeracy and information technology are not fully planned for across all other subjects and students aged 11–14 do not have regular access to modern foreign language teaching
- The accommodation and resources for physical education and science are unsatisfactory
- There are not enough learning support assistants to effectively support student learning

The school has made very good progress in many areas of its work since the last inspection. As a result, the quality of education is now good and students get a very good deal.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	Personal and social education
Year 6	Good	Very good
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 against individual student targets which they help set. They achieve particularly well in physical education where standards are mainly in line with those seen nationally. Achievement is good for students of all ages in all other subjects except art, and religious education for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9, where it is satisfactory. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about religious education in Years 10 and 11. Despite often considerable gaps in education prior to admission, students reach or exceed their individual targets in statutory tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Years 6 and 9. Progress continues to be good in Years 10 and 11, with students motivated well by the wide range of national accreditations available to them and meeting or exceeding their targets. Students are achieving well in a broad range of G.C.S.E. and vocational examinations with results comparing favourably with those of students in similar schools. Student's attitudes are very good and they make very good progress in their personal development.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. The quality of teaching is good overall and is often very good. Teachers plan to teach a broad range of subjects and cover the requirements of the National Curriculum, other than offering a regular opportunity for students aged 11 to 14 to study a modern foreign language. They have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and deliver lessons with enthusiasm. Students positively respond and they learn something new in each lesson. When learning support assistants (LSAs) are effectively deployed they make a good contribution to students' learning, although their support is inconsistent and their deployment needs to be carefully planned. There are not enough of them to cover all lessons.

Learning opportunities are **good**. Students benefit from regular and purposeful daily gatherings where respect and understanding for each other are constantly reinforced and where effort and achievement is recognised and applauded. Provision for students' personal, social and health education is very good and is effectively supported by the teaching of emotional literacy. Citizenship is in the early stages of development as part of the PSHE curriculum and has yet to make an impact. Students are prepared effectively for the next stage of their learning. There are very good links with the local community and the partnership and communication with parents is very good. Parents are very supportive of the school, and students enjoy attending and appreciate the wide range of opportunities they receive.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher's leadership is **very good** and he manages the school very well. The governors, particularly the chair, have a good understanding of the work of the school and are well informed about its strengths and weaknesses. Performance management is well established for all staff and the school has effective self-evaluation strategies in place. The deputy headteacher ably supports the headteacher and effectively manages the school curriculum and daily routines. Subject co-ordinators have yet to fully contribute to the monitoring and development of their subjects across all age groups. The school is successful at ensuring there is a positive learning environment for students to achieve academically and personally.

PARENTS' AND STUDENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents who expressed a view are **very satisfied** with the quality of provision and some identified the good progress their child had made and the very good support they had received. Although there are incidences of inappropriate behaviour, inspectors confirm the students' views that such events are dealt with quickly and well. Students are very positive about their school and their experiences in it. They particularly appreciate the curriculum and additional opportunities they get and the quality of support and care they receive from all adults.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school's own self-evaluation clearly identifies a range of developmental areas for action. This should form the basis of the post OFSTED action plan and should be revised to include:

- Ensure the role of subject leaders is further developed to allow them to effectively monitor, evaluate and develop their subject across all age groups
- Ensure that literacy, numeracy and information technology are effectively planned for and delivered, across all subject areas to enhance student learning
- Ensure students aged 11-14 years have regular access to modern foreign language teaching
- Improve the accommodation and resources for physical education and science
- Increase the number of learning support assistants. Ensure that they receive appropriate professional development opportunities and that their deployment in classes is clearly planned.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Students **achieve well** in all areas of the curriculum against the targets which they help set. Students **achieve particularly well** in physical education where standards are in line with those seen nationally. Achievement is **good** for students of all ages in all other subjects except art and religious education for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9, where it is satisfactory. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about religious education in Years 10 and 11.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students are achieving well in a broad range of G.C.S.E. and vocational examinations with results comparing favourably with those of students in similar schools.
- Achievement in physical education is a strength of the school despite limited school accommodation. It is above national expectations in swimming.
- Students are consistently reaching and exceeding their targets year on year, including those from minority ethnic groups
- Achievement in art is restricted by some limitations in the curriculum and in religious education and citizenship by a current lack of emphasis on the subjects.

Commentary

1. Despite often considerable gaps in their education prior to admission, students reached or exceeded their individual targets in statutory tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Years 6 and 9. Students achieve similar levels in these core subjects although in Year 9 a few are still at the early stages of acquiring reading and writing skills. Progress continues to be good in Years 10 and 11, with students motivated well by the wide range of national accreditations available to them and meeting or exceeding their targets. The school's analyses of results show that students from ethnic minorities achieve in line with their peers. Comparison year by year is difficult because of small ever-changing cohorts, but currently students are achieving 1 or more G.C.S.E. passes in English, mathematics, science, art and physical education. Some Year 10 students are attaining Foundation Level in agricultural studies and motor vehicle studies whilst other Year 11 students are achieving NVQ level 1 in motor vehicle studies. Students achieve well in information and communication technology. They enter the school with low levels of ability and quickly make good progress, showing particular strengths in display and presentation. Achievement in religious education is satisfactory by the end of Year 9, but there is too little evidence to judge achievement for older students.

2. Students achieve particularly well in speaking and listening throughout the school. This is because of a strong focus on appropriate speech for the occasion, the very good development of social skills and the introduction of emotional literacy. This has helped give boys the language to express feelings and to enable them to discuss issues from a personal point of view. Standards of achievement in reading and writing are good, but below those of speaking and listening. Students achieve well against their individual targets, but often struggle to meet the requirements of subjects throughout the curriculum. In English and in mathematics the lack of a common approach across the curriculum is restricting levels of achievement because there is too little planning to reinforce reading and writing. All pupils achieve well in science and although scientific enquiry is good, achievement is limited by the lack of suitable accommodation.

3. The school's very successful approach to behaviour management is a strong contributory factor to the good standards students achieve across the curriculum. This means that concentration in lessons can usually be on learning with a subsequent raising of self-esteem as students begin to succeed. This can be seen in their involvement in target setting, for example, a

self-awareness that handwriting skills needed to improve. Better behaviour also means that students can benefit from making use of community facilities and college placements, broadening opportunities for raising achievement across a range of courses and areas of the curriculum.

4. Students of all ages and previous abilities achieve well in all of the foundation subjects such as design and technology, geography and history. There is no regular opportunity for students to experience or learn a modern foreign language and achievement in art is restricted because of lack of opportunities for 3D work and computer-aided design.

5. Additional help is available to ensure that students with special educational needs achieve in line with their peers. They receive additional one to one help to raise levels of literacy when necessary and benefit from some input from the speech and language therapist. The school is aware that the entry of students with increasingly complex needs such as autism demands further training of staff to ensure that their standards of achievement are maintained. Students in the care of a local authority make similar progress as other boys with their individual targets and in their academic and personal development. Students are making very good progress in their social and moral development and good progress in their cultural and spiritual development.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

6. Students' attitudes are **very good** and their behaviour is **good**. The opportunities taken to promote their moral development are excellent and those taken to promote their social development are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong sense of community
- Students' positive interest in school life and the activities offered to them.
- Students' willingness to show enterprise and responsibility.
- The freedom from any form of harassment
- Relationships are very positive
- Emotional literacy is used well to promote boys' moral and social development
- Effective systems of support to promote good attendance

Commentary

7. Students' attitudes are very good. They behave well because of the highly effective support given by the school through its promotion, use and regular review of a points system that gives visible reward for positive attitudes. The school provides well-tailored opportunities and experiences where students can flourish and develop confidence and self-esteem. Behaviour is good, both in and out of lessons as any instances of unacceptable behaviour are not made worse by the actions of others, who might have joined in. Older boys learn to exercise a high degree of self-control because of the attention that is paid by all staff to helping boys consider the impact of their actions. The boys have very positive views of their school and the impact it makes upon their lives. They are keen to participate in the many activities on offer.

8. The boys thrive on the very positive relationships throughout the school and their personal development is nurtured in all aspects of school life. They enjoy lessons and show great interest in the activities provided for them. High expectations of behaviour are set throughout the school. All adults in the school are very good role models; they show care and respect for students and it is clear the students like and respect them. Throughout the work of the school there is a clear emphasis on right and wrong and what constitutes unacceptable behaviour.

9. Teachers organise their classrooms so they can manage students with challenging behaviour. They work both to minimise distractions, and teach the boys to ignore distractions. This allows for a calm and purposeful working environment. On visits out of school to the local

agricultural college for lessons, for example, behaviour was equally good and the boys gained maximum benefit from the visit.

10. The school makes excellent use of the opportunities to promote moral development and very good use of the opportunities to promote social development in class and in other parts of school life, particularly the school meetings. The boys learn to explore their values and to develop respect for others. They are also guided to consider the impact and consequences of their actions through the developments in emotional literacy.

11. Students reported that they feel free to report any form of harassment knowing it will be dealt with openly, effectively and swiftly. The school undertakes regular monitoring with the students and takes this area of student care very seriously.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	8.4
National data	N/A

Unauthorised absence	
School data	1.8
National data	N/A

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

12. The school works hard to promote and improve the attendance of its students and has clear targets for improvement. Compared with other similar schools, attendance is good. Staff quickly contact parents when a student is absent and awards are given to recognise good attendance. The school has clear procedures for the exclusion of students, which they follow and only exclude when students became a danger to themselves or others. Permanent exclusions are low when compared with other special schools.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Asian or Asian British-Pakistani
Black or Black-British-Caribbean

No of pupils on roll
38
2
1
1

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
32	2
2	0
1	0
1	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

13. The overall educational provision of the school is **good**. The school thinks carefully about how the personal and academic needs of individual students can be met. The quality of teaching and learning and student progress is good overall. The level of care and welfare provided is very good.

Teaching and learning

14. **Teaching and learning is good overall and quite often it is very good.** Lessons make a good contribution to students' personal development, which is very good. Teachers are aware of what progress students are making but they often do not record or use this assessment information systematically. The way that teachers check what students know, understand and can do is satisfactory and is an area the school has identified for improvement.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons

Excellent	Very good	good	satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	poor	Very poor
2 (6%)	10 (29%)	19 (54%)	4 (11%)			

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

Main Strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and there is a high proportion that is very good or excellent
- There is a direct and consistent link between the quality of teaching and students' learning, behaviour and achievement
- Good use is made of oral feedback and reinforcement in small groups which makes a positive contribution to students' learning
- Teachers manage students extremely well and expect high standards of behaviour.
- There are very good relationships between students and the adults who teach and support them
- Teaching and learning in science and physical education is particularly strong. In PE, digital photography is used well to illustrate activities and progress over time
- On occasions, the use of support staff, whilst adequate, is not as effective as it might be
- The planned use of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology across all subjects is insufficient

Commentary

15. Teaching and learning has improved well since the last inspection and there is much effective teaching that is well established across the school. No teaching is unsatisfactory and a commendable proportion is very good throughout the school. In about a third of the lessons seen teaching was very good or excellent.

16. Good use is made of the LEA curriculum consultants, particularly in mathematics and ICT. In science, maths, English and physical education, GCSE courses adopted allow students to be productive, focused and engage in acquiring new knowledge and skills in their work.

17. Teaching is particularly strong in both science and physical education. In physical education, as a result of the teacher's very good subject knowledge and organisation, a great deal of enthusiasm is generated adding to the students' enjoyment and progress in lessons. Higher attaining students in Years 7 to 9 sometimes achieve at the level for their age, as a result and are highly motivated by the activities in which they participate. Questioning is a prominent and very effective approach to encouraging deep thought and drawing out from all students well considered answers. For instance, in a lower school assembly a great deal of discussion was generated when considering

18. 'Creation'. In the best lessons students' sense of purpose is greatly enhanced by the clear direction in learning for as in the Year 10 lesson on percentages where students were learning to calculate Value Added Tax on items. Those students with exceptional needs are always well included in learning and teachers apply appropriate strategies to meet their needs, and individual learning programmes and targets support all aspects of their development. Support assistants are usually used well, however, more precise planning would better ensure their active involvement and targeted use in lessons. Although literacy, numeracy and information technology is in evidence across the curriculum it appears incidental rather than planned.

19. Assessment of students' progress is satisfactory overall. Teachers have a good informal knowledge of how students are learning and this enables them to plan suitable work so that they usually make good progress in lessons. A strength of teaching and a feature of most lessons is the very good guidance for students to behave and the encouragement to develop a very positive attitude to learning. Consequently, students habitually work hard in lessons to complete the tasks that are set for them. This ongoing feedback reinforces understanding and enables students to take their learning forward. However, a more consistent approach to determine the stage students are at in their learning would enable teachers to collect and use this information. This, together with their good informal knowledge of students' needs, would help them to plan more strategically for students to learn more and so make increased progress. The school has identified this shortfall and is already planning to introduce new systems to check students' learning.

20. The senior management team monitors the quality of teaching systematically, identifying strengths and areas for further development. They understand first hand some of the challenges posed by individual students, and the strategies required to assist their learning. This approach is highly supportive of staff and ensures that students' needs are addressed well. All teachers set and evaluate curriculum targets on an annual basis.

The location, size and condition of some classrooms remains a difficulty, but imaginative use of the poor school accommodation is a significant factor in ensuring students' learning is good. This was evident in an excellent example of the teacher planning to overcome the limitations of the poor hall and create an effective learning environment. The science room and the gymnasium are unsatisfactory and do not support student learning and achievement.

The curriculum

21. Apart from the lack of provision for modern languages, the curriculum is generally broad and balanced. However, its particular relevance and innovation in meeting the needs of students with emotional and behavioural difficulties make it **very good** overall,

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is particularly effective in engaging the interest of students and meeting their academic, emotional, social and behavioural needs.
- Additional activities out of school hours, including weekends and holidays, motivate students and help raise self-esteem.
- Provision for physical education and other worthwhile sporting activities is very good despite some unsatisfactory accommodation and restricting outdoor facilities.
- Older students are prepared very well for life beyond school and college opportunities are maximised
- The good opportunities older students have to gain accreditation
- The personal, social and health education and emotional literacy programme greatly contribute to students' overall development
- More support staff are needed to support teachers and students in the classroom

Commentary

22. Notton House is successful in delivering a curriculum, which is meeting the needs of individual students. Apart from a modern foreign language for students in Years 7, 8 and 9, all students receive full access to the National Curriculum, including religious education and a wide range of additional activities. It has many strengths, which successfully help to raise the self esteem of students and modify their behaviour, contributing significantly to making the school an orderly community where students achieve well. The school has rightly adopted and adapted a primary curriculum for the youngest students, which means that they benefit from the security of being taught mainly by one teacher. Other students are taught largely by subject specialists so that by the time they reach Year 11 they are ready to be entered for a wide range of G.C.S.E. and vocational qualifications making employment or further education easier to access. Lack of time means that

subject co-ordinators do not always have time to meet together to plan for continuity across the key stages of the curriculum.

23. The school has quickly seized upon the flexibility now available within the curriculum for students in Years 10 and 11. They have provided well-considered individual timetables for students, which balance academic, vocational and behavioural needs. Careers education and advice is very good, with students establishing a very good relationship with the Connexions adviser attached to the school. Courses tailored to individual preferences such as agricultural studies at a neighbouring College or motor vehicle courses at a College in Bristol are not only challenging physically and academically, but prepare students socially and emotionally for life beyond school as does the siting of work experience placements near students' home areas.

24. Linking some out of school activities to the behaviour policy has proved effective and positive and is an example of the very good links between teaching and care staff. Students on the highest level have the first choice of activities such as canoeing, motor cross, badminton or visits to the cinema. Parents and students appreciate the additional activities available not only during some weekends, but also during school holidays. Good liaison between teachers and care staff also ensures that students regularly complete their homework. The annual activities week is a shared highlight enjoyed by the whole school community and includes, for example, camping, surfing and sea fishing. Links with the 'Kandu' charity enable pupils to experience the performing arts and successfully combines drama, music and film.

25. The match of teachers to the curriculum is satisfactory overall, although it is very good in some areas such as physical education. The school has no music specialist and has been unable to find a teacher of modern foreign languages, so provision is currently through a French based week with planning for a visit to France by some students. This is unsatisfactory, as it means that there is no progression of learning across the years. Learning support staff generally assist teachers well although there is room for training for both teachers and support staff to maximise their joint effectiveness. The school is aware that additional support staff are needed to enable more consistent assistance across all lessons.

26. Well-advanced plans for re-building make it clear that the deficiencies in some of the school's accommodation will soon be remedied. These include the urgent need for better accommodation for physical education and for science. However, the external grounds will be reduced as a consequence of the essential new build and it will further reduce the accessible space for physical education and evening activities. The school is pursuing a purchase of additional grounds, which would go some way in solving this problem and considerably enhance student opportunities during and after school hours. Residential accommodation is of a very high order and very well maintained. There are a satisfactory number of resources of good quality to enable the curriculum to be delivered, although resources for music are unsatisfactory.

27. There has been good improvement in the curriculum since the previous inspection. Religious education and personal, social and health education are fully in place and requirements of other subjects are now met with the exception of modern foreign languages. The good, well-planned programme of personal, social and health education achieves a good balance between all areas and although it contains elements of citizenship, this is not yet reflected in students' work. In addition to the discrete lessons in the subject, throughout the school day personal and social development is effectively promoted.

Care, guidance and support

28. The school's care, guidance and support for all students is **very good**. A very caring and supportive environment for learning is well established. This is the result of the very good relationships developed between the students and adults throughout the school. Students feel very confident that they can discuss any concerns with an adult in the school and that appropriate action will be taken. The arrangements for inducting new students are very good. Planning and support for transition to post-16 and beyond is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has an immediate welcoming, friendly ethos and atmosphere
- All staff know the students well and relationships are very good across the entire school community.
- Students are confident and trusting of all adults and are able to immediately draw any concerns or worries to their attention.
- Students are sensitively integrated into the school and are closely monitored and supported for their individual needs.
- A strong sense of community is evident within the school where respect and care for each other (students & staff) is demonstrated daily

Commentary

29. The school is very successful in fulfilling its own charter *“we seek to achieve our broad aims by providing a secure, homely and understanding environment in which each boy has the opportunity to realise his full capabilities, socially, emotionally, personally and academically”*

30. The school’s very friendly, sensitive and supportive induction procedures enable students to rapidly settle into the routine of the school, to make friends and develop positive relationships with the entire staff. This helps them to learn and achieve. There is a clear discernable ethos of community and mutual support at the heart of this school. Boys, parents, staff and governors rightly see this as a core strength of Notton House School. Students feel so confident in this environment that they are able to approach and discuss issues, concerns and worries with staff at all levels within the school. There are clear procedures in place for health, safety and child protection that support the very caring environment in which students can learn and develop into mature adults

31. There is a tangible sense of positive unity and support. Mutual care between the students themselves is widely apparent, all contributing to an atmosphere of absolute safety. Of particular note were the highly developed social skills and courtesy of the students, which was consistently commented upon by adults and other professionals from outside the school. All of this contributes to marking a clear path for students to follow in becoming rounded, educated and responsible adults.

32. At the same time the school is very sensitive and attuned to the needs of individual students and works hard to ensure that these needs are fully met. The process of key-workers for all students positively supports the student-centred approach of the school. Students are particularly well supported and prepared for the future either by further education or employment. The link with ‘Connexions West of England’ is especially strong and very positive, with a case-worker in school two days a week as a resource and advocate for the boys both in and out of school.

33. Students’ time at the school is supported by appropriate assessment and monitoring of their daily work and behaviour, which is communicated weekly to parents and carers. Students’ individual education plans are used well to target academic and behavioural problems. Teachers remind the boys about their targets and how they should work towards them. Appropriate records are kept, and good liaison takes place when writing and reviewing individual education plans and targets.

34. The headteacher has enthusiasm, good humour, and a deep knowledge of his school and all who live within it, which has helped develop the highly tuned ethos of care and support across the school community.

Partnership with parents, other schools, and the community

35. Links between the school and parents are **very good**. Parents are supportive of the school and the work it does. Links with the community and other schools are **very good**. Senior staff at a college in Bristol where several boys attend specialist courses were particularly complimentary about their overall standards, behaviour and courtesy.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very effective communication with parents
- There are good sporting links with other special schools
- There are well developed links with local colleges that provide students with access to vocational courses
- The Connexions case-worker is based at the school for two days a week

Commentary

36. The weekly points sheet summaries for parents and carers provide a good mechanism for keeping families updated on how the students are responding to school each week. Very often additional weekly contact is made by phone to celebrate student achievement. This is a genuine reflection of the efforts made by all staff and particularly the key-workers to engage all parents fully in their children's learning and school activities. The targets the students are trying to achieve are fully shared with parents

37. The school makes very good use of its links with other institutions. Sporting links with other special schools are tailored to meet the students' needs and give them access to an environment in which they can compete and find success.

38. Links with colleges in the local area provide for the development of independence for older boys. They are given access to vocational courses in Years 10 and 11. For example, boys seen at a local college, attending an agricultural science course, were seen to show both independence and significant collaborative working skills. To take part in these studies the students show considerable progress from the high degree of support they receive to access the curriculum in Years 6 to 9. To help develop this independence a programme of visits to the college begins in Year 9. Vocational courses and work experience are particularly well used and effective in developing the students' social skills.

39. Links with the local community are strong and are used to provide boys with work experience, some with extended work experience. This builds on discussions and work done in conjunction with the Connexions, which is a great strength in terms of ensuring students' effective transfer on to their next stage or learning, training or employment. The adviser is actively engaged in a range of activities, knows students very well and provides a valuable link to community projects.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

40. **The leadership of the headteacher is very good.** Together with an effective and supportive senior management team they continue to further improve the school. A positive learning and caring ethos has been created through very good management, which also contributes to the governance of the school, which is good overall. Governors, particularly the chair, offer appropriate challenge, based upon knowledge and endorse decisions after debate. There is good financial management.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision, a sense of purpose and high aspirations for the school
- Good quality staff have been recruited and retained and a positive learning environment has been established
- A committed and supportive teaching and care staff
- The school improvement plan has clear priorities for development
- The schools' own self-evaluation processes effectively support improvement
- The school is well organised and efficiently run.

- Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and are fully involved in strategic planning.
- The positive support and contribution made by the administrative staff and site manager.
- Performance management is well established and makes a positive contribution to school development and student achievement. However, opportunities for the further professional development of staff could be extended.
- The role of the subject leaders is not fully developed in terms of monitoring, evaluating and developing the subject across all age groups to ensure clear progression

Commentary

41. The headteacher is experienced and dedicated to ensuring that all students get a good deal, in terms of opportunities that will support their overall personal, social, emotional, behavioural and academic development. He leads by example, as does his able deputy and between them the school day runs smoothly.

42. All staff present positive role models for the students and reinforce the school aims and belief that, teaching, learning, care, support and mutual respect is at the heart of everything the school does. These aims, together with the mission statement of the school, are clear and they are successfully demonstrated within its community on a daily basis.

43. The deputy headteacher has a good grasp of curriculum development, which he leads and manages very well. Subject co-ordinators have clear responsibilities and understand their subjects well. However, their role is not fully developed in terms of monitoring, evaluating and developing the subject across all age groups to ensure clear progression. The processes for school self-evaluation are well established and there is increasing analysis of useful recorded data that helps formulate strategies for improvement. The senior management team undertake effective whole school monitoring of teaching, learning and student behaviour and useful feedback is given to staff for improvement.

44. The school is well organised and efficiently run. Day to day organisation and management is smooth and teaching and care-staff communicate effectively. There are clear procedures and documentation provided for staff is helpfully focused on what the school is about and how it operates. Induction procedures for new staff are good, and performance management is an established part of school practice. Outcomes of performance management need to focus more on individual need, school and student centred issues and these should then effectively inform the professional development programme.

45. Management of resources including staffing and learning resources is good. There are clear policies to guide the work of the school, which are successfully implemented ensuring the school's focus remains on students' learning and achievement. There is good support for the school from LEA officers both in terms of curriculum development and student support.

46. The governing body fulfils all its statutory duties, bar one. Students aged 11-14 do not get regular opportunities to be taught a modern foreign language, which is their statutory right. Governors take an active part in strategic planning and decision-making and relationships between them and the school are very good. The governors receive and respond to regular monitoring reports. The chair of governors and the headteacher have a supportive and helpful relationship and school strengths and development areas are clearly understood. Governor organisation is effective, policies are regularly reviewed and there is a clear corporate view of the direction in which the school is developing.

47. The school is committed to ensuring that all students are fully included and the needs of each are met and school policies promote this. The leadership and management of special needs provision is effective and students make good progress. Policies, procedures and practices related to all aspects of special needs provision are in place. The school's procedures for monitoring and

recording students' progress are good. There are constructive links with outside agencies and with specialists who work with the school to support students. All statutory requirements are fully met.

48. The headteacher, senior management team, governors and administrative staff work closely to ensure that best value principles are adopted. The administrative staff and site manager provide an effective and positive 'wrap around' service to the school and contribute positively to the overall ethos of the school, its public face and the care and support for the students.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1258650
Total expenditure	1217979
Expenditure per pupil	22145

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	49752
Balance carried forward to the next	40670

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING

SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

49. Provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Achievement in speaking and listening is very good and good in reading and writing.
- Students usually show positive attitudes to their work and try hard to improve.
- The curriculum contributes well to students' moral, social and cultural development
- There are insufficient planned opportunities for reading and writing across the curriculum.
- The lack of a library at present restricts students' access to a wide range of reading materials.

Commentary

50. Standards of achievement in English are good. Students achieve well against their individual targets, which they help to set. The addition of emotional literacy to the curriculum has helped to raise achievement in speaking and listening and given students a much needed vocabulary with which to discuss feelings. Achievement in reading and writing is good, but is constrained because of fewer planned opportunities to develop these skills.

51. Students' achievement in speaking and listening is a strength throughout the school. The high expectations of all members of staff and the excellent role models that they provide contribute significantly to this achievement. Listening actively is a particular strength. This was demonstrated during an assembly when students showed considerable empathy as a visiting speaker showed them photographs of Rumanian children receiving the Christmas boxes students had assembled. The wide range of social contacts and use of community facilities contributes positively to good social skills, which help students adapt their speech to fit the occasion. Almost no inappropriate language was heard during the inspection. The use of correct subject language by all teachers develops students' vocabulary and helps them express their views more clearly. By the end of Year 9 students are confident communicators, usually able to express their opinion in class or group discussions and listening carefully to the views of others. The moral development of all students is enhanced by teachers' careful selection of texts, which encourage discussion, for example events in 'An Inspector Calls' by students in Years 10 and 11. Students in these years broaden their experiences applying language skills in ever widening contexts, for example, at college or on work experience.

52. Achievement in reading is good. Students often enter the school with very low levels of literacy, which contribute to low self-esteem and cause frustration. With teaching well focussed on individual needs most students achieve well within a short time and are rightly proud of themselves. However, levels of literacy and understanding are low and impede some learning in other areas of the curriculum. Younger students benefit from regular opportunities for reading to an adult. They know the difference between fiction and information books and name authors they enjoy. By the end of Year 9 students usually have the confidence to read aloud in class and use advanced reading skills such as scanning for information. Students in Years 10 and 11 continue to achieve well but could do even better with more opportunities to read aloud. Almost all students are able to extract relevant information from a text or from environmental print such as timetables or instructions. All students are disadvantaged by the lack of a central area where they can sit comfortably and read a variety of print including magazines or newspapers or refer to information. Planned for new accommodation should remedy this situation. However, there is a wide range of interesting reading books and texts easily accessible for the boys.

53. Achievement in writing is good. The very poor presentation skills of many students on entry to school are improved by the teaching of cursive handwriting, rightly linked to spelling. The use of computers for word processing helps raise students' self esteem, although there is scope for more opportunities to draft work. Sometimes the use of a scribe helps students who find writing difficult express their thoughts successfully, allowing all students to achieve well against their own targets. Students in Years 7 and 8 write a synopsis of their class story 'In those days there was no questioning or cheeking the teachers.' By the end of Year 9 more able students show good organisational skills and write a considerable amount, for example, when researching and writing the biography of Benjamin Zephaniah. Older students persevere with writing so that by the end of Year 11 they have sufficient coursework for their G.C.S.E entry, but some clearly find this a struggle and might benefit from work broken down into smaller units of writing.

54. Teaching and learning are never less than satisfactory and the majority of lessons are good and occasionally very good. Teachers know the students well, relationships are strong and they plan work that will stimulate and capture the imagination. For example, in a very good Year 9 lesson students retrieved information quickly from a text, working collaboratively to watch each other's eyes to ensure that their partner was scanning correctly. In a later part of the lesson students volunteered to read parts of Macbeth, benefiting from good support for reading which ensured inclusion for all. A lesson 'starter' on commas proved less stimulating for pupils in Years 7 and 8 whose unusually restless behaviour was already restricting their learning. Assessment overall is satisfactory and is often good within lessons where well directed questioning enables teachers to assess what students have understood. The use of support staff is satisfactory, especially to ensure all students achieve equally, but on occasion their tasks could be more clearly defined. The regular setting and marking of homework is good and reports to parents helpful.

55. Leadership and management are good. However, the co-ordinators have insufficient time to meet and plan for continuity and progression across the school and have had little recent training. However, they lead by example and are well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. Visits to the cinema, theatre, T.V studios, poetry days and working with a local charity group to produce a film enrich the curriculum significantly and contribute very positively to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There has been consolidation of good practice and student achievement since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. Language and literacy across the curriculum are satisfactory. Some of the strands of the KS3 literacy strategy have been incorporated in other curriculum areas, such as the good use of subject specific vocabulary. However, more training for all staff is needed to ensure that other elements such as planned opportunities for reading and writing helps raise students' achievement even more.

FRENCH

57. The school has been unable to find a teacher of modern foreign languages so provision is currently through a French based week with planning for a visit to France by some students. This is unsatisfactory, as it means that there is no continuity or progression of learning across the years

MATHEMATICS

58. Provision in mathematics is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Appropriate external accreditation is available for the older students
- The effect of implementing the National Numeracy Strategy is seen in the good quality of teaching and learning
- Students' behaviour is very good and their attitude towards mathematics is very positive.

- There are insufficient opportunities for students to use their number skills across other subjects of the curriculum
- Teachers do not always link planning and assessment adequately and this reduces the progress that students make.

Commentary

59. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning are good and achievement has improved since the last inspection. For example 5 students gained passes at GCSE level in 2003 and the current Year 7 group have progressed well during their comparatively short time at the school. For instance, a Year 7 group showed a good understanding of graphs and data collection using vocabulary such as *horizontal and vertical axis* to describe what they were doing. In the best lessons a wide range of resources are used well to motivate students. In a Year 11 lesson *bearings* were well demonstrated using a laser level and this practical approach meant that students could estimate relative bearings well by the end of the lesson. In a Year 9 lesson, a variety of coloured cubes were used well to demonstrate probability and as a result students were able to 'bet' on outcomes at the end of the lesson.

60. Teaching for students up to Year 9 follows the guidance of the National Numeracy Strategy with lessons being divided into three parts. This, together with the clear planning of the curriculum, results in good learning by most students. Students behave well in lessons reacting positively to the encouraging and positive approach of their teachers. They learn less effectively when teachers do not plan lessons in a structured way. At these times, the activities provided do not always recognise individual students' needs. Consequently, the highest attaining students are not always sufficiently extended and lower attaining students do not always get opportunities to consolidate their learning.

61. The use of information and communication technology is satisfactory and improves students' understanding of mathematical concepts and processes; for example, they use computers to analyse data by means of bar graphs. However the use of information and communication technology is not used sufficiently well as tool to assist less able students or those who are reluctant to record their work. The targets in students' individual education and care plans help to remind boys what they need to focus on, to improve their learning and behaviour.

Mathematics across the curriculum

62. Although the National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well, students' are not always given structured and planned opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in other subjects of the curriculum. This is an area for development.

SCIENCE

63. Provision in Science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students achieve well in the various elements of science including gaining accreditations
- Students are interested in the subject and this has a positive impact on their learning
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good
- Information and communication technology is used effectively to promote learning in the subject
- The subject is very well led
- The current accommodation does not promote high expectations

Commentary

64. Students achieve well and make good progress, due to the consistently high quality of the teaching and learning which has been maintained since the last inspection. Students' achievements at the end of Key Stage 4 are good and include accreditations in, for example, GCSE and GNVQ.

65. Students in Year 7 investigate the properties of materials. They are able to describe a range of properties attributable for example to a plastic tube, describing it as smooth, flexible, hard and non magnetic. They are able to record their findings on graphs and good teaching reminded them to use their cross curricular mathematical skills. In Year 9, students carried out investigations and experiments to discover how various metals react with acids. After a good demonstration by the teacher students were able to use their knowledge of investigations to set up a series of experiments with different acids and metals. Very good teaching enabled the boys to complete an experiment and describe accurately in scientific terms what happened, for example 'the copper is not effected' and 'the magnesium is becoming hot and giving off gas.' The high quality of the teaching impacted very strongly on students' learning and they were highly engaged with the task, asked meaningful questions, made pertinent observations and behaved well. Despite the blasé manner which the students affect, they were nevertheless all very impressed when the teacher demonstrated the 'squeaky pop' test for hydrogen. Skilled teaching, good relationships and a high level of subject knowledge ensured students' interest and enjoyment of the lesson.

66. In Year 11 students are working successfully towards a range of accredited awards including GCSE and GNVQ. In a Year 10 lesson at the local college of further education, students studying for the Agricultural Studies award were engaged in practical work with alpacas. They worked in teams with college staff and their teacher to round up, collar and lead the animals in the correct manner. They showed empathy for the animals and each other and due to the very good teaching achieved excellent results. Students not only demonstrated a high level of achievement in their work but also mature and caring attitudes and increased confidence.

67. Lessons in science are carefully planned and proceed at a brisk pace, which capture the boys' interest, and promotes good behaviour. Information and communication technology is used effectively to promote learning, for example in a Year 10 lesson, students were testing soils from different localities for acid content. They have good understanding of the pH scale and using a data logging programme were able to record the results of their testing as it took place. This good cross-curricular activity is a strong feature of the science teaching within the school.

68. The subject co-ordinator is a science specialist and he uses his knowledge and experience very successfully. Resources are adequate for the work undertaken although the accommodation is unsatisfactory. A lack of large sinks, fume cupboards and storage space mean that some areas of the curriculum are not addressed in the depth required. Areas for improvement though are very clearly identified including the accommodation and the assessment of students' work through for example, moderation of work and improved assessment techniques which will inform planning and assist teaching and learning.

Example of outstanding practice

Y10 Science Lesson (linked to personal health & care) School Nurse and Teacher Contraception/sexually transmitted infections/body awareness and self- examination.

An exceptional lesson delivered by the School Nurse supported by a Teacher. Fortright and direct yet with careful and respectful humour at times. Challenging questions to students who answered with sensible mature responses coupled with further questions, which were pertinent and reflected their own concerns. A dialogue immediately established which brought the lesson and the participation of students to an extremely high level. Lesson ranged from use and application of a condom through to risky sexual behaviour, personal health and hygiene. The trust and rapport in this lesson was extraordinary in that this was not just an interchange between staff and students, but between the boys themselves who felt trusting and confident enough to ask deeply personal questions in the presence of their peers without fear of ridicule.

An extremely sensitive range of issues to present to adolescent boys from any background, but conducted with a directness and concern which exemplified the trust and care present throughout the school as a whole.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

69. Provision for Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All boys develop keyboard skills early in their school career.
- Boys make particularly good progress in using ICT as a presentation tool.
- All boys have the opportunity to achieve accreditation in the subject
- Learning objectives and assessment of work are not related to National Curriculum level descriptors.
- ICT used in subjects is not assessed for ICT capability

Commentary

70. ICT is taught as a discreet subject throughout Years 7 to 11 to all boys. This is supported by the use of ICT within subjects. Boys in Key Stage 2 use ICT within their curriculum. There is only one computer available in this primary classroom. Lessons in years 7 to 11 are taught in computer rooms. These have enough computer stations for the boys to have access to one computer each.

71. The boys achieve well in ICT and the courses are designed to ensure the development of keyboard skills as soon as they arrive in school. This ensures they can access all aspects of the ICT courses on offer. Boys make particularly good progress with the use of ICT as an aid to presentation in discreet ICT lessons.

72. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Some is good. In discreet ICT lessons in Years 7 to 9 the work is well planned and maintains the boys' interest. The teacher displays good subject knowledge and has high expectations of the boys' work. The boys respond well, especially when there is a good pace to the learning, and display good attitudes to their work and develop the capacity to work independently, follow written instructions and avoid distraction. The assessment of the work relates more to skills than capabilities and desired outcomes are not clearly related to national curriculum level descriptors.

73. The courses offered in discreet ICT lessons now cover all National Curriculum requirements and are supported by the use of ICT in other subject areas: mathematics, science and technology make strong contributions to the development of the boys' ICT capabilities, and ICT tools are used well in physical education. However the use of this ICT is not assessed for ICT capability and does not make a contribution to a co-ordinated, overall assessment of their capability. The number of computer terminals available in classes limits access to ICT in other curriculum areas.

74. In Years 10 and 11 all boys follow a course leading to entry-level certification. This ensures all boys have a qualification in the subject. The work they produce for this course is mundane compared to what they have produced in Years 8 and 9, and gives no recognition of what they do, using ICT, in their other subjects.

75. Since the last inspection there have been improvements. The content requirements for national curriculum are now met.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

76. ICT equipment is used to support and enhance learning in other subjects. For example, data loggers are used in science, control technology is used in technology and teachers of physical education make good use of digital photography to assist in and illustrate assessment. Appropriate use is also made of subject specific software, for example in mathematics. In other areas the availability of computers limits the use made to enhance learning. The use of ICT within subjects does not contribute to the assessment of boys' capability. This use of computers is not planned to assist in the boys' overall development of ICT capability.

HUMANITIES

History and Geography

77. Only one humanities lesson could be observed during the course of the inspection, a history lesson with Year 8 students. This lesson along with scrutiny of students' work and teachers' planning indicates that provision for History and Geography is good. Students study interesting topics directly related to the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and their work in Geography, for example, indicated good understanding of maps, plans and directions. In History, in the lesson observed students were studying the Tudor explorers with particular emphasis on John Cabot, his voyages and connections with nearby Bristol, the home of many of the students. Resources for the subject are good and include ICT, maps and good the use of field work.

Religious education

78. The provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A broad curriculum ensures that students learn about Christianity and other major world religions.
- The subject makes a good contribution to all aspects of students' personal development

Commentary

79. Since the previous inspection there has been a satisfactory development of the curriculum based on *Being and Believing* - the Bristol Agreed Syllabus. This ensures that over their time all students will have been able to experience and think about a wide range of issues. The policy is now in place and the subject is beginning to be taught more systematically.

80. It was not possible to observe any lessons in religious education during the course of the inspection. There is therefore insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on how well students achieve or the standards of teaching. From an analysis of documentation and students' work from Years 7 to 9 they are making satisfactory progress in their understanding and experience of Christian beliefs. Although the subject is taught in Years 10 and 11 no work was seen from students in these age groups. There are good opportunities for learning religious teachings and the distinctiveness of world religions. In one very thought provoking assembly led by the local Canon, open questioning and discussion was used very well allowing Lower School students to articulate their points of view and ask a range of questions about the source of life and the Universe. The religious education curriculum is suitably broad in promoting students' awareness and understanding about values and beliefs.

81. Religious education makes a sound contribution to the school's substantial provision for developing the moral and social dimensions to students' education. The richness of these experiences and the skilful way difficult ideas such as the 'Creation' are introduced underpin the very good student attitudes of tolerance and concern for others. Following the *Shoe Box* appeal at Christmas, an excellent whole school assembly provided an opportunity for students' to recognise the impact their gifts had 'had on Rumanian children. Students' listened with rapt attention and were clearly moved. This session visibly demonstrated the empathy and understanding students were developing and made a significant contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

ART

82. Provision for art and design is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Students enjoy their lessons and usually try hard.
- Good displays throughout the school brighten the environment and raise self-esteem.
- Insufficient provision for 3D work and for computer aided design limit the achievement of students especially those taking external examinations.
- There are too few opportunities for students to visit museums or galleries or to work with artists from the community.

Commentary

83. Art and design work is concentrated mainly on the good use of two-dimensional media. There are good opportunities for students to look closely at the work of a wide range of artists and use this stimulus as a starting point for their own work.

84. The achievement of students of all ages is satisfactory. Students usually concentrate well and persevere, often overcoming initial reluctance to working creatively. They are proud of their achievements, especially when examples of their work are put on display. Students in Years 7, 8 and 9 compose still life pictures using pastels, ink, chalk or charcoal. They look closely at self-portraits, for example of Kirchner, and make effective copies. Their experience of cubism and impressionism is evident in work displaying the bold use of line and colour. Students' ability to explore ideas and techniques is evident from sketchbooks, but these are under used. The teacher's effective display and use of vocabulary that is relevant to art helps students discuss their own work and that of their peers.

85. Achievement continues to be satisfactory and sometimes good in Years 10 and 11, where students are motivated by entry for G.C.S.E. The constraints of a narrow curriculum however, restrict their achievement. Students continue to achieve well in 2D aspects of the curriculum, but

have too few opportunities to experience working in 3D or on a large scale. They make good use of limited occasions to experiment with digital photography, but have too few opportunities for using information and communication technology.

86. Teaching and learning are never less than satisfactory and are sometimes good. All lessons are characterised by good relationships, lively discussion and opportunities to broaden students' art vocabulary. In a good lesson with Year 10 boys, the ready accessibility of resources helped ensure time was used well and minimised frustration. The teacher's good use of a portrait by Picasso engaged the students' interests and teacher's use of their work to demonstrate techniques spurred on those less confident. In a less effective lesson too much had been planned and the pressure this caused led to some frustration and work of lower quality.

87. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader works in isolation in accommodation that is barely satisfactory, but is due to be upgraded. He has correctly identified areas for improvement as being visits to galleries, the use of information and communication technology and provision of resources for 3D work. All but the use of information and communication technology were highlighted as weaknesses in the previous report. There has been some improvement in teaching and resources, so improvement overall in art and design is satisfactory.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

88. Provision for Design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good
- Students are interested and enthusiastic for the subject
- There are good resources and accommodation
- Lessons sometimes lack pace and do not always achieve planned objectives

Commentary

89. Students achieve well and make good progress in a wide range of activities within Design and Technology including working with resistant materials, control technology and food technology.

90. Year 7 students are able to construct a battery powered wheeled vehicle using construction kits and pulleys for propulsion. They tested their designs on a flat surface and attempted to arrive at conclusions about the relationship between the size of the pulley and wheels and the speed of the vehicle. Although this was a clear objective of the lesson the students were insufficiently challenged by the teacher to ensure they undertook a fair test of their design and learn the key relationship between pulleys, wheels and speed and an otherwise very good lesson lost much of its impact.

91. In Year 9 students are building a circuit board using soldering techniques. Good teaching meant that the circuits were accurately and neatly assembled and students were able to describe the important features of the soldering process, for example ensuring the soldered sections do not touch and the connection is secure. Scrutiny of students' work in Years 10 and 11 indicate that they build on their knowledge, skills and understanding to produce work of good quality including games, furniture and model boats. Many of their projects include the use of learning from other subjects, for example, games with moving parts including cams and levers.

92. In food technology, students in Years 8 and 9 made products of good quality which addressed issues of diet, and hygiene as well as the techniques required to prepare food correctly. They were able to chop and slice vegetables efficiently and use the top of the cooker to prepare soup for example, other students know how to make pastry, they understand the importance of the correct amount of ingredients and use the rubbing in process effectively. In all Design and Technology

lessons the teaching is skilled, well organised and conducted in a relaxed, pleasant environment, which encourages students to work purposefully and behave sensibly.

93. The subject is well led and managed and the various strands of activity are co-ordinated well so that pupils undertake a wide range of work in designing, making and evaluating. The resources and accommodation for the subject are very good.

Physical education

94. The provision for physical education is **very good**. Students achieve well and make **good** individual progress in the variety of activities offered. Many students are performing in line with National expectations. Opportunities to study GCSE gives additional challenge for older students.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching and very good subject knowledge
- Very good planning and evaluation processes
- High expectations of students
- Excellent relationships between teacher and students
- Student enthusiasm for participation and learning
- Opportunities for extra-curricular activities supports students' progress
- Unsatisfactory indoor accommodation and restricting outdoor activity space

Commentary

95. Teaching is very good and is directly responsible for the very good quality of student learning. The statutory provision for the subject is secure and in addition the GCSE examination course offered to older students provides an additional challenge and motivation. There are high expectations of student achievement. All students are fully included in lessons and are encouraged to try their very best, which invariably they do.

96. Very good subject knowledge supports the teaching, which is delivered with enthusiasm. Relationships are excellent and form the foundation of a positive learning ethos that encourages students to achieve. Students are encouraged to evaluate their own and others' performances in a sensible way and they enjoy each others progress. Students show enthusiasm in their lessons and they have fun.

97. Planning is very good and teaching methods are well selected and time is used productively for independent and collaborative work. The subject is well led and makes an important contribution the whole school ethos and to student's overall personal development, particularly to their moral and social development. Health and safety factors are carefully considered and trips to community venues extend the curriculum options and make good use of external resources. In particular, the use of the community swimming pool provides an exceptional opportunity for students to make progress. Indoor accommodation is unsatisfactory and the gymnasium does not support high standards. The school maximises its current provision and a new sports hall is to built this year. Outdoor facilities are restrictive and do not allow for the full range of athletic activities.

98. After school evening activities offer additional opportunities for students to opt for a range of physical pursuits including football, badminton and table tennis. Football is very popular and is played with commitment and enthusiasm, regardless of the weather conditions.

99. Physical education plays an important part in the life of the school and it successfully demonstrates all that is good in terms of teaching, learning, achievement and overall student personal development and maturity.

Example of outstanding practice

Swimming

The use of the local community swimming pool offers students of all abilities excellent teaching and tuition, which enables them to excel in their personal achievement. Most students are performing in line with National Expectations and a number are performing above.

The working relationship between the teacher/instructor/learning support assistant and students is outstanding and undoubtedly contributes to their progress and achievement in this subject. Mutual respect and understanding is clearly evident, enabling staff to motivate and challenge all individuals to achieve their best.

Students clearly demonstrate their enthusiasm to learn and their behaviour before, during and afterwards is impeccable. There could be no better exercise in public relations. At the end of the lesson, within 10 seconds of a whistle being blown signalling pool exit, the pool was empty. Brilliant.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

100. Provision for pupils personal, social and health education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school uses an effective mix of specific PSHE and citizenship lessons and day-to-day activities to enhance students' personal development
- The school is in the early stages of introducing Citizenship as part of the PSHE curriculum and this has yet to make an impact
- Students receive frequent opportunities to extend their personal skills throughout the school day and in residential time.
- The use of visiting speakers and other initiatives strengthens the curriculum
- There are very good links and excellent relationships with the Connexions case worker

Commentary

101. There is a good, well-planned programme of personal, social and health education which achieves a good balance between all areas. Although it contains elements of citizenship, this is not yet reflected in students' work. In addition to the discrete lessons in the subject, throughout the school day personal and social development is promoted. There are very effective links with individual education plans and target setting to create targets for students and to measure their progress in these areas. Sex education and awareness of drug misuse are provided mainly through science, but also through the newly introduced programme for *Emotional Literacy*. In one exemplary lesson involving the school nurse, pupils in Years 10 learned about sexually transmitted diseases. This potentially difficult area was handled with sensitivity and candour and as a result students reacted with exceptional maturity.

102. The school places great emphasis on students' personal development and this is evident in all the work that it does. Lessons in PSHE build on this well to promote personal development in a formal and planned way. The school is anxious to extend the quality of the work that it does and is therefore very willing to explore and participate in initiatives. These include linking with such projects as *Kandu*, which dovetails with the newly introduced emotional literacy very effectively to address the needs of this group of students. Through the examination of issues such as conflict, relationships and families, students learn to contribute and listen to others. They learn to feel good about themselves and recognize the many positive aspects of their lives. They continue making progress

when they are in residence where staff ensure that students gain valuable experience of group living, sharing and caring for themselves.

103. A high quality careers programme also contributes significantly to preparing students for leaving school. Careers education and guidance in lessons is well supported through links with the school's Connexions personal adviser, which makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. The provision is led and managed effectively and the good teaching ensures that students learn well as they move through the school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
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	3
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).