

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **RED LODGE SCHOOL**

Southampton

LEA area: Southampton

Unique reference number: 116621

Headteacher: Ms Sue Mackie

Lead inspector: Sue Aldridge

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> November 2003

Inspection number: 258980

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
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	115
School address:	Vermont Close Off Winchester Road Southampton
Postcode:	SO16 7LT
Telephone number:	023 8076 7660
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Gillian Wright
Date of previous inspection:	23 <sup>rd</sup> February 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Red Lodge is a community special school in Southampton. It caters for 115 boys and girls from 11 to 16 with a wide range of special educational needs, in particular moderate learning difficulties. Small numbers of pupils have autism or severe learning difficulties, although many experience additional difficulties such as ADHD, emotional and behavioural difficulties and medical needs. Since the school was last inspected, pupils with increasingly complex needs have been admitted. Most of the pupils are white; there are only four from ethnic minority groups, but none who speak English as an additional language. Almost half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is high, indicating unfavourable socio-economic circumstances. All but one of the pupils have a statement of special educational need. On entry, pupils' attainments are well below average; several who enter beyond Year 7 have had a history of poor attendance at previous schools. The school is subject to re-organisation proposals under which, by 2006, it will become the sole provider of special education for secondary aged pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties in Southampton. There are advanced plans to extend the school's accommodation by this date. It has links with its primary feeder school, with the City Psychological Service, Connexions, Trident and Southampton City College.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
8810	Sue Aldridge	<i>Lead inspector</i>	French; Music.
8991	Pamela Goldsack	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
32055	Glan Davies	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Art and Design; Design and Technology.
27054	Mary Geddes	<i>Team inspector</i>	Information and Communication Technology; Geography; History.
17855	Gordon Gentry	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Religious Education; Physical Education.
3731	Bill Robson	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

The school's overall effectiveness is **good**. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall. Although most pupils achieve well, a small number of pupils with speech and language difficulties do not achieve as well as they might because there is too little speech and language therapy, even though this is a need identified on their statements. This is outside the school's control. The majority of pupils are most enthusiastic about their school, and they have very good attitudes to learning. Relationships throughout the school community are very good; pupils behave well, and there is a wealth of opportunities for recognising and celebrating their achievements. Although the school has very good arrangements for encouraging attendance, a small number of pupils do not attend well, and parents condone this. This affects overall statistics, which are unsatisfactory. The school provides a most harmonious learning community. Overall, leadership is very good, and the school is well managed. It provides good value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils achieve very well in art, music and personal, social, health and citizenship education. In science and information and communication technology (ICT), achievement is good.
- There are very good arrangements to support and guide pupils, and to ensure their health and safety.
- The school's atmosphere is most conducive to learning.
- Pupils' personal development is encouraged very well by the rich variety of opportunities provided.
- The headteacher provides exceptional leadership, and senior staff are very effective in their roles.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy and writing skills, and to use ICT as a learning tool across the curriculum.
- Teachers do not involve pupils well enough in assessing what they have learned in lessons.
- The lack of speech therapy affects the achievements of a small number of pupils.

Despite now having an intake with more complex needs, the school has improved well since the last inspection. There are now better opportunities for homework, and opportunities for pupils to read across the curriculum are good. Assessment has improved dramatically, and there is now very good information on how well pupils are doing. Pupils are given specific targets to help them improve in the areas that they need to work on most, and individual education plans are reviewed regularly and frequently. Target setting is helping pupils to learn and to improve their personal and social skills. Arrangements for helping staff to improve their professional skills and expertise are now good, and performance management is well established in the school. Governors have developed their role in holding the school to account. Opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills across the curriculum are in need of further improvement, but the necessary resourcing is almost complete. As at the last inspection, not all needs identified on pupils' statements are met.

### 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	Very good
Year 11	Satisfactory	Very good

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

Achievement is **satisfactory** overall. Because there has been patchy provision of speech and language therapy, a small number of pupils do not make as much progress as they should, and a few have lost skills that they had acquired during periods when it was provided. Other pupils make

generally good progress, and achieve well. In design and technology, pupils do not reach the levels of which they are capable because the school was unable to recruit suitable teachers for a period of 18 months. Now that there are suitably qualified teachers, pupils are making good progress in the subject.

Pupils' development of maturity and independence skills is **very good**. Overall, there is **good** provision for ensuring that pupils develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Although attendance is unsatisfactory, pupils' punctuality is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education provided is good.** Across the school, teaching is **good**. The quality of support, care and guidance is very good. There are good links with the community, and these enhance the curriculum, which is good. Links with parents are satisfactory, and there are good links with other schools and colleges.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Taken together, leadership and management are **very good**. Leadership is very good. The school is particularly successful in ensuring that all pupils, whatever their difficulties or personal circumstances, are included in all aspects of school life and have equal opportunities to learn and succeed. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership: she sets the tone for mutual respect that characterises relationships throughout the school, and she personally recognizes and celebrates pupils' achievements each day. Senior staff lead very effectively in their areas of responsibility, and several subject co-ordinators provide high quality leadership. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are skilled and supportive. They know the school well, and provide satisfactory challenge for the senior management team. Management is good; there are good arrangements for staff induction and training. This is a school that knows what it does well, and what it needs to do to develop in the light of reorganisation. Staff skills are used well, and team work between teachers and support staff is well developed. Financial management is satisfactory. The local education authority (LEA) has given the school permission to retain a large surplus in case the capital for building development does not cover interior decoration, fixtures and fittings.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents have positive views of the school. They particularly value the fact that children like coming to school, the high expectations that staff have, and the good teaching. Although they expressed concerns about bullying, inspectors found no evidence of this. Several parents would like more homework. The school has a clear and reasonable policy, which is implemented satisfactorily. Pupils have very positive views of the school, and they have good opportunities to become involved in school life through their Student Council.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Increase the opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy and writing skills, and use ICT as a learning tool across all subjects.
- Make sure that all pupils are involved in assessing what they have learned in each lesson.

**and, to meet statutory requirements:**

- Consult with the LEA, to ensure that when speech therapy is identified as a need on a pupil's statement, this is provided.



## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievements are **satisfactory**. Standards are well below those expected for pupils of this age, but are similar to those expected for pupils with complex learning difficulties. Pupils who require speech therapy do not achieve as well as others.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieve very well in art and design, music and in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). Achievement in science and ICT (ICT) is good.
- The lack of continuity in speech therapy provision means that a few pupils who require regular intervention from a speech and language therapist do not make enough progress.
- Although pupils do not achieve standards of which they are capable in design and technology, since qualified teachers have been recruited, pupils have made good progress in the subject.
- The most able pupils do not achieve suitably high standards in writing.

#### Commentary

1. Although pupils reach attainment levels well below those expected of pupils of the same age nationally, they generally achieve the levels expected for schools of this type.
2. In the subjects of art and design, music and PSHCE, high achievement is associated with very good teaching and a broad range of learning experiences provided. In art, for instance, pupils have rich opportunities to develop their skills, as well as their knowledge and understanding of art, and there are good opportunities for older pupils to achieve success in externally accredited courses. In music, there is a wealth of opportunities for pupils to perform alongside their peers and, in collaboration with mainstream pupils. They also have the chance to perform in front of audiences at top venues in the city, and to take part in three extra-curricular clubs. In PSHCE, there is a rich variety of well planned experiences provided for all pupils, as well as careful target setting that enables pupils to develop their personal and independence skills.
3. The school's results in Year 9 show that pupils reach the highest levels in science, with two fifths reaching Level 4 and above in national tests. This is good, as when they enter the school in Year 7, their attainment levels do not compare favourably with similar schools. A quarter of pupils reached Level 3 in music, a tenth reached Level 3 in art and design, and almost half reached Level 3 in ICT. However, in design and technology, no Year 9 pupils reached Level 3 when they were assessed by teachers last summer. In writing, none in Year 9 achieved above Level 1. The relatively low standards in design and technology are the result of the school's difficulties in recruiting design and technology teachers: the school was without a design and technology teacher for 18 months until a year ago. Now that they are having skilled teaching in design and technology, pupils are making good progress. In writing, teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to write across the curriculum, and the most able are not challenged to write at any length.
4. In Year 11, pupils have access to a range of externally accredited courses and results are shown below.

#### OCR Entry Level Certificate Science – Year 11: Summer 2003

	Entry Level 3	Entry Level 2	Entry Level 1
30 pupils entered	1	17	12

**WJEC Entry Level Certificate Mathematics– Year 11: Summer 2003**

	Entry Level 3	Entry Level 2	Entry Level 1
15 pupils entered	3	10	2

**WJEC Entry Level Certificate Art– Year 11: Summer 2003**

	Entry Level 3	Entry Level 2	Entry Level 1
21 pupils entered	3	12	6

**AQA Entry Level Certificate Geography– Year 11: Summer 2003**

	Entry Level 3	Entry Level 2	Entry Level 1
8 pupils entered	3	5	0

**AQA Entry Level Certificate Food Technology– Year 11: Summer 2003**

	Entry Level 3	Entry Level 2	Entry Level 1
13 pupils entered	2	11	0

5. Last summer, 16 Year 11 pupils also obtained unit awards in design and technology and food technology; 21 passed a Certificate of Competence in Word Processing, and nine passed a Food Hygiene Certificate.

6. Across the school, pupils make good progress against their personal targets, because they are reminded of these constantly throughout the day and their progress towards them is reviewed at the end of each day. Home-school diaries record their progress in this respect, and enable parents to help pupils to achieve relevant targets at home.

7. The school sets challenging targets to raise achievement in English, mathematics and science. Last year, targets for English and science were achieved; in mathematics, one target was achieved and two were almost achieved. As pupils in Year 9 attained high levels in science, the school is operating a pilot to assess pupils in Year 10 for both Entry Level and GCSE, so that they can be entered for the most challenging examination in Year 11.

8. Girls achieve as well as boys and there are no differences in the achievements of pupils of different ethnic groups, or those who are in public care. In some cases, pupils with speech and language difficulties lose skills when speech therapy provision is curtailed. This is not the school's fault; it does what it can to offset the lack of provision, but cannot on its own make up for this weakness. Not only does the lack of provision affect the development of pupils' communication skills, but it also affects their progress in other subjects.

**Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

9. Pupils have very good attitudes about all areas of school life. The school is most successful in helping pupils to become mature, tolerant and responsible. Behaviour is good. When viewed together, arrangements to encourage pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Attendance is unsatisfactory, and some parents condone absences.

**Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- Pupils have very good attitudes, and work hard in response to the high expectations of them.
- Behaviour is good, and pupils work with confidence in an environment free of bullying, racism and harassment.
- Social and moral development are very good and are promoted well by the very good relationships throughout the school.
- Pupils grow in confidence and are able to assume worthwhile responsibilities.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to learn more about foreign cultures and multi-cultural diversity.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory, although the school is working hard to improve this.

## Commentary

10. Pupils arrive promptly and eagerly each morning and are keen to work hard. They settle quickly in lessons and co-operate very well with their teachers, special support assistants and each other. Pupils' very good attitudes display improvement since the last inspection. Pupils who expressed their opinions all agree that they like school, and their parents confirm this. Pupils grow in confidence in the calm, orderly and friendly atmosphere.

11. Pupils' good behaviour is evident throughout the day. With few exceptions, pupils listen attentively, and willingly take part in learning activities within lessons. Pupils behave sociably during lunchtime and many participate in school clubs. To the best of their ability, pupils consider and discuss their conduct at the end of the day in tutor time and refer to their agreed Class Charter. Pupils are candid about what they have achieved and what needs to be improved. Pupils are also reminded of their personal targets throughout the day and this helps them to focus on behaving well. They work hard for award certificates and those named as pupil of the week are proud of this distinction. Pupils whose special needs include behavioural difficulties respond well to the expert and sensitive intervention of the staff that support them.

### 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	115	19	0

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

12. Good opportunities for spiritual development occur during assemblies, and pupils reflect upon relevant themes such as Remembrance Sunday, the importance of honesty, and friendship. The strong emphasis on developing pupils' social skills means that all know what is expected of them. Pupils show understanding and tolerance when they carry on with their learning even if a classmate is misbehaving or distracted during the lesson. Moral development is very good and pupils understand that others sometimes experience problems or difficulties and they respond with a generous spirit that values the individual. They frequently help one another, and are clearly pleased with the success of others.

13. The Student Council enables each elected representative to relay the views of their class on changes and improvements. The school values pupils' ideas and, with the help of the headteacher, pupils decide on practical and realistic changes. Pupils' suggestions recently resulted in repairs to steps, tiling, and the planting of a memorial tree. Personal development progresses very well as pupils move up through the school. Preparation for work experience begins in Year 10 with pupils carrying out a range of practical skills, such as food preparation and travelling on public transport. Year 11 pupils develop their preferences for work experience, and the Connexions officer works diligently to ensure they have suitable placements. Employers that offer work experience placements are fulsome in their praise of pupils' maturity, hard work and dependability.

14. Arrangements for encouraging pupils' cultural development are satisfactory. The subjects of English, music, and art and design are particularly successful in contributing to pupils' awareness of a wide range of world cultures. There have been some activities organised by the Southampton Ethnic Minority Advisory Support Service to promote pupils' awareness of different ethnic groups. However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to appreciate foreign cultures and the diversity of contemporary British society.

## Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	9.3%
National data	N/A

Unauthorised absence	
School data	2.3%
National data	N/A

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

15. The school's action to promote attendance is good, but despite this the rate of attendance is unsatisfactory. Attendance is monitored rigorously, the education welfare officer visits regularly, pupils are rewarded for good attendance, and parents are reminded of their responsibilities. The school's own statistics for the current term show an improving picture. A number of pupils who were poor attenders elsewhere are now more positive about school and attend fairly regularly. The school has successfully achieved the targets it set for improving attendance last year, and has set further targets for the next two years. While most parents work successfully with the school to encourage attendance, a few allow their children to stay home for no valid reason.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is **good**, with some very good features.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**, with some very good features.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers are skilled in managing pupils' behaviour and have very good relationships with pupils. These features help to ensure that pupils are engaged most productively throughout lessons.
- Support staff make a very strong contribution to pupils' learning.
- Teachers record a wealth of accurate information about pupils' attainment levels.
- Teachers rarely set different learning outcomes for pupils of different abilities, or review general learning outcomes at the ends of lessons. As a result pupils are not involved in assessing their learning, and do not have a thorough understanding of what they need to do to improve.
- Teachers do not make wide enough use of ICT as a learning resource.

### Commentary

16. The management of pupils' behaviour is a particularly strong feature in the school. An effective team of teachers that have specialist skills is deployed well to support teachers and classroom staff in managing those pupils who experience difficulties in maintaining good behaviour. This means that lessons are not interrupted, and learning continues at a very good pace. When pupils need time out of class to cool off, members of the behaviour support team supervise them well, and sensitively return pupils to class. Staff discreetly monitor the 'settling in' period through windows in classroom doors.

17. Because adults have such good relationships with pupils, the latter are well motivated, apply themselves well to tasks, and are keen to succeed. Pupils work well in pairs and small groups, learning from one another as well as from adults. They are willing to help one another, and genuinely pleased to see others doing well and being rewarded for their efforts and achievements. In music, for instance, pupils spontaneously applauded a classmate who, unusually for him, worked unsupported in a task.

18. Support staff are skilled, well briefed, and show initiative when unexpected circumstances arise. For example, when one saw that the pupil she was supporting was able to carry out the task unaided, she diverted her attention to a pupil who was feeling out of sorts, and needed some encouragement. Support is finely judged: necessary help is given, but pupils are challenged to do as much as they possibly can on their own. As a result, pupils are not demanding or over-reliant on adult support.

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 47 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	14 (30%)	19 (40%)	14 (30%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

19. Assessment is good overall. Pupils are thoroughly assessed on entry to the school, and staff make good use of this information to identify suitable targets. Staff record a wealth of information about the levels that pupils reach, and this is efficiently recorded on a single sheet, providing an accessible profile of pupils' progress. The school has used assessment information well to create sets for science and mathematics in Year 10, and the setting arrangements are working well but it is not good at sharing information with pupils so that they can become involved in their own learning.

20. The school has made a start in implementing the Key Stage 3 Strategy: lessons are in three parts, broad learning outcomes are identified at the start, and these are usually reviewed. Teachers know pupils and their abilities well, and they challenge them accordingly – usually by asking the more able to answer more difficult questions, or by setting them more challenging tasks. However, in their lesson plans, few teachers identify different outcomes for pupils of different abilities; the majority identify the same outcome for a whole class. As a result, differences in attainment are not shared with pupils, and pupils do not have the opportunity to recognise their own learning, or establish what they need to do to improve.

### The curriculum

Overall the curriculum is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good.
- The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 prepares pupils very well for further education.
- Access to the curriculum for some pupils with speech and language difficulties is limited by the lack of consistent support from a qualified speech and language therapist.

### Commentary

21. The school provides a good curriculum which mirrors that of mainstream schools but which is suitably adapted to meet pupils' specific needs. There is a clear written rationale for the allocation of time for different subjects in each year. For example, literacy is given more emphasis in Year 7, rather than French, which pupils do not begin to learn until Year 8. In Years 10 and 11, the school continues to teach art and music courses because they motivate pupils well. Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is also given suitable emphasis in all years and the programme meets pupils' needs very well. In all subjects, teachers refer to pupils' targets for personal and social development and help them to achieve these. As a result of careful evaluation of the need to provide for Citizenship and careers education, more PSHCE lessons are taught in Years 10 and 11. This enables the school to prepare pupils very well for further education in local colleges and to take part in a very well planned work experience programme. Since the last

inspection, the school has provided more opportunities for pupils to gain credit for their work through entry-level certificates in eight subjects in Year 11. Curriculum planning is good overall, with detailed schemes of work in all subjects. However, opportunities for teaching numeracy and ICT across the curriculum are not identified clearly enough in plans.

22. The school provides well for most pupils with additional special needs, especially through the effective use of support assistants and good liaison with several outside agencies. However, despite the school's best efforts, it is unable to meet the needs of some pupils with speech and language difficulties well enough. These pupils require specific programmes from a speech and language therapist; teachers are not qualified to provide such programmes, and provision for these pupils is therefore unsatisfactory.

23. The school provides a satisfactory range of enrichment activities. It organises educational visits to several places of local and national interest, including Southampton art gallery, rugby and football clubs. However, there are no opportunities for pupils to experience any residential visits, other than a brief stay for some in Year 11 when they are exploring college options. Pupils are able to participate in a good variety of sporting and creative activities. For example, they visit a local outdoor pursuits centre and, during the inspection week, 16 girls and boys took part enthusiastically in a tag rugby training session after school. Members of the cross-country running club enter the county championships. An art club is well attended. All pupils have opportunities to attend three lunchtime music clubs, and to perform in musical productions, such as the annual Christmas concert.

24. The number of support staff has increased since the last inspection, when the level of support was unsatisfactory. There is now a good match of well-qualified teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum. Resources are satisfactory overall. The number of computers is satisfactory but, in several subjects, pupils do not have access to computers as learning tools. Accommodation is satisfactory in most areas, but still unsatisfactory for physical education, both outdoors and indoors, where the hall has to be used as a gym. There is still no library or central resources area. Plans for a new building are set to remedy these deficiencies.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The care, guidance and support provided for the pupils are **very good**. The pupils have very good access to a range of staff who give them the support and guidance which they need as they progress through the school. Pupils are encouraged well to become involved in the day-to-day work of the school and its future development.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- Health and safety procedures are very good. There is a high level of awareness amongst staff and pupils of the importance of these procedures.
- There are very good arrangements for child protection and the general welfare of pupils.
- Pastoral care is very good, based on trusting and caring relationships between pupils and all staff.
- Support, advice and guidance for pupils is very well informed and of a high quality.
- Arrangements for the induction of new pupils are very good.
- Very good advice is given on career and further study opportunities.
- Staff value the opinions of pupils and take these into account in planning and development.

### **Commentary**

25. Pupils willingly and sincerely tell visitors how happy they are in the school and parents confirm this. This arises from the fact that the school is a very caring community where staff have a shared vision of meeting the individual needs of the pupils. A most successful mentoring system, based on tutor groups, secures high quality guidance and support for pupils. Staff are very well

aware of the needs of individuals. They familiarize themselves with individual education plans and know the specific targets of individual pupils. Staff speak caringly about their pupils and any difficulties which they might be facing. It is clear that child protection concerns are well embedded in staff thinking and are in line with locally agreed arrangements. The very good quality care and regard for pupils comes from all staff, including office personnel, the site manager and lunchtime staff.

26. Pupils' welfare is generally very well catered for, and a designated member of the support staff co-ordinates this well. There are good arrangements to review the needs of particular groups, such as pupils in public care, and the school does what it can to offset the lack of speech therapy.

27. A revised and effective health and safety policy is now in place, and staff take care to ensure the safety of pupils. School security has been strengthened considerably since the last inspection. A local authority officer, the site manager and appropriate teachers carry out risk assessments. Copies of these are filed in the headteacher's office.

28. There is considerable mutual respect between staff and pupils. The pupils feel valued. Their views are expressed both through an active school council and by individuals approaching the headteacher, deputy and other staff. Pupil representatives met with the police and building contractors in connection with improving security and in helping to formulate plans for the new school development.

29. Pupils speak highly of the way they were welcomed when they first joined the school. A very good programme of induction is in place. The headteacher and staff, staff of feeder schools, parents and pupils are all involved in a thorough familiarisation programme. This includes all prospective pupils spending a day in the school in July after the school leavers have departed. The school is able to form a good initial profile of new pupils' core needs.

30. Throughout their time at the school, pupils' individual needs are provided for very well, regardless of gender, ethnicity, capability or a range of special needs. All pupils have personal targets including social and behavioural goals. These targets are reviewed frequently and are often discussed in lessons. Pupils show enthusiasm to reach their targets and their achievement is recognised in school assemblies.

31. Careers guidance commences at the age of 13. The Connexions representative and careers teacher work very closely with the school to provide a high quality service. Good links with local colleges, and work experience placements, which have been built up by the school through good local contacts, are most beneficial to pupils as they prepare to leave school.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

Parents support the work of the school and the partnership between home and school is **satisfactory**. Links with the community are **good**, as are links with other educational institutions. As a result of re-organisation, the school is limited in the extent to which it can extend its links with mainstream schools. However, it is working constructively with other special schools, and good links with colleges extend pupils' learning opportunities.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- The school welcomes parents and maintains an open door policy.
- Good links within the business community enrich learning opportunities and career development.
- Good links with primary schools and colleges support pupils when they enter and leave school.
- Not all parents are active in their support of the school, and some condone unauthorised absences.

## Commentary

32. Those parents who expressed their opinions have mainly positive views about the school. The school welcomes parents and planned meetings are organised throughout the year. However, not all of the parents attend these meetings, and a significant minority does not attend annual reviews. There is good parental attendance at musical or dramatic performances. The school values parents, and provides a room for their use, but few make use of the open door policy to visit during the day. The school is aware that, for many parents, the demands of family life make it difficult to take an active role and they respect their position. The school maintains ongoing effective links with the carers of pupils in public care.

33. Parents are appropriately informed about their children's progress and the work of the school. Ends of year reports include the required information and about half of the parents accept the offer to meet class teachers to discuss the report. The prospectus contains the necessary information and so does the governors' annual report to parents. However the financial statement in the governors' annual report does not mention the large surplus that is being invested.

34. Teachers and support staff make entries in the home school diary throughout the day to update parents about the details surrounding their child's day and homework. Not all parents respond in the diary regularly, but there are frequent phone calls between staff members and parents. There are regular newsletters about upcoming school events but these, along with other written communication for parents, are presented in a very formal way. The school does not, therefore, communicate that it is a vibrant and lively community. A more user-friendly style of communication, along with greater details, would give parents a more accurate view of the school. The partnership between home and school would be strengthened if the school were more pro-active in encouraging parents to be active participants in school life.

35. Parents would be more effective partners if all supported the school's commitment to improve attendance. Unauthorised absences condoned by parents directly contribute to the school's unsatisfactory rate of attendance.

36. The work-related learning co-ordinator plays a leading role in maintaining the school's good and productive link with the business community. A wide range of employers willingly provides valuable work experience placements for pupils in Year 11. Employers are regularly surveyed for their views and their loyalty to the school reflects the positive nature of the pupils' experiences with them. The productive business links also extend to younger pupils, who have field trips, visits and visitors to extend learning activities. For example, pupils learn how to make pizza in food technology and will then visit a local pizza shop and cook in a professional kitchen.

37. The school maintains good links with its primary feeder schools. The well-planned induction for new pupils and parents begins in the summer term before pupils enter Year 7 and helps to smooth the transition to secondary school. The school makes effective use of Pathfinder funds to further its partnership with Southampton City College: Year 11 pupils are able to attend there each Friday. These good links ensure that all pupils who leave the school after Year 11 have a worthwhile destination, either in employment or further education.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management of the school are **very good**. Leadership by the headteacher **excellent**, and that of key staff is **very good**. Management is **good**. The work of the governing body is **satisfactory**.



## Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy head and other senior staff, provides a focus on achievement and clear vision for the development of the school.
- Day to day management of the school is good and provides a calm supportive atmosphere for pupils.
- The school improvement plan is an effective working document, produced in consultation with staff and governors.
- The governing body is very supportive and is beginning to provide challenge to the school.

## Commentary

38. The headteacher is very effective in providing a clear vision and sense of direction for the school in a period of considerable change. She is well supported in this by the deputy head and other senior staff. The very strong focus on achievement, which the leadership team promotes, is reflected in the school being granted a School Achievement Award (a national award) on two occasions in recent years.

39. The headteacher has recently organised a full day's conference with all special schools from the LEA in order to promote effective working relationships as re-organisation of special schools gets under way. The school held a training day in the summer term, attended by all staff and governors, to consult and decide priorities for the new school improvement plan. Targets are appropriate for the major changes that the school faces and include responsibilities, budget requirements and criteria for success. The plan is now a working document subject to regular review.

40. The deputy headteacher has a very strong presence throughout the school, providing a most effective and positive influence on the behaviour of pupils. Strong leadership has brought about a very inclusive approach throughout the school. Pupils with a wide range of special needs are very well supported. Pupils work well together because of positive role models provided by staff.

41. Professional development and performance management for teachers have been influential in promoting effective leadership throughout the school. Key staff have led worthwhile new developments in the curriculum at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4, and extended accreditation for pupils. Support staff meet with the headteacher on a regular basis and have an annual individual feedback meeting, though appraisal is not fully in place for them.

42. A strong culture of school self-evaluation is developing, due to very clear and effective leadership and management by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Guidance and support for subject co-ordinators are provided according to where it is most needed. Performance Management of teachers is also well organised and monitored so that school leaders are very aware of strengths and weaknesses in the school and take action to address them. There is a clear policy for induction of new staff which sets out how this will be provided. Use of performance data is less well developed, but systems to compare standards across different groups of pupils are beginning to provide a basis for where action might be needed.

## Financial information

### *Financial information for the year April 02 to March 03*

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,037,502.00
Total expenditure	1,045,906.00
Expenditure per pupil	9,095.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	167,026.00
Balance carried forward to the next	158,612.00

43. Local audits, the most recent carried out earlier this year, confirm that financial management is good. The Finance Officer is very effective in day-to-day management of finances and monitoring of budget areas. She is aware of requirements of best value, compares suppliers, and uses LEA

advice on purchases. The governing body's Finance and Premises Committee is involved in planning and reviewing the budget and reports back to the full governing body. A substantial surplus is being held in a reserve account, with the agreement of the LEA, to provide for any fixtures and fittings for the new building, and for upgrading of the old building where needed. This is a sensible measure in the circumstances.

44. The governing body is a most committed and enthusiastic group who are providing good support to the school leadership. The chair of governors meets weekly with the headteacher and individual governors have links to school subjects which they are informed about by relevant staff. Long standing governors feel that the governing body now provides a much greater level of challenge, not just a 'rubber stamp' as may have been the case in the past. Governors have undertaken training in self-evaluation and visit the school from time to time. However, these visits do not appear to have a particular focus, or to be reported in detail to other governors. Governors feel they are well informed about strengths and weaknesses in the school from the headteacher's and other staff's reports, as well as their own visits.

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

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

#### English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils develop their listening and reading skills well.
- Support staff work very effectively with teachers and pupils.
- Good leadership has led to good improvement since the last inspection.
- Pupils with speech and language difficulties make slow progress because of the lack of speech and language therapy.
- Teachers do not challenge higher attaining pupils to write as well as they could.

#### Commentary

45. Standards in English at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are well below the national average because of the range of pupils' learning needs on entry to the school. Overall, pupils achieve as well as expected but achievement in listening and reading skills is better than in speaking and writing. By Year 9 most pupils develop the confidence to speak to others during class discussions and do so audibly and clearly. However, several pupils with speech and language difficulties do not achieve as well as they could because, despite the school's best efforts, they do not receive enough support from speech therapists. Pupils listen attentively during lessons. For example, they listened with real interest to simplified extracts from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Average and higher attaining pupils know the plot and characters very well and make good progress with reading for understanding. Regular reading lessons at the start of each day help all pupils to further improve their reading. Pupils with more severe difficulties learn to recognise high frequency words and identify initial sounds in unfamiliar words. These pupils also make good progress with writing, and can shape letters correctly. However, higher attaining pupils do not write at length because they are not taught how to structure longer responses to questions. Similarly, pupils achieve well with reading in Years 10 and 11. Even low attaining pupils have a good understanding of the plot of Willy Russell's *Our Day Out* and can say what they think about different characters in the play. However, high attaining pupils still write very short responses, dictated by the worksheets on which they are asked to write.

46. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In all of the observed lessons teaching was at least satisfactory and some was good. Teachers manage classes very well. Their very good relationships with pupils enable them to deal very well with occasionally challenging behaviour. They minimise distractions and keep lessons moving at a good pace so that pupils concentrate and work hard. Teachers and support assistants plan and work together very effectively. For example, in one lesson lower attaining pupils dictated their answers to the support assistant who wrote them on whiteboards for the children to copy on to their own worksheets. The assistant then helped them form their letters correctly before helping a group of more competent readers to read aloud with good expression. This enabled the teacher to give more pupils individual attention and to improve their understanding of the text. Teachers lead class discussions well so that pupils listen carefully to each other and have time to answer questions thoughtfully. Although teachers plan the content of lessons carefully, they rarely explain to pupils what they will be learning

or to evaluate what they have learned at the end. As a result, pupils are not sure what they need to do to improve or how well they have done. They do not challenge high attaining pupils to improve their writing as much as they should. For example, a few pupils, especially in Years 9 and 10, would benefit from more help to structure extended, imaginative writing.

47. Leadership and management of English are good. As a result, improvement since the last inspection has been good. The teaching of reading has improved and the head of department has written detailed plans, in line with the National Literacy Strategy. They provide very good guidance for other teachers to plan lessons in English, and reading lessons during form time each morning. Teaching is closely monitored and this has resulted in the identification of suitable priorities for development. The department has recently introduced the opportunity for pupils to gain entry-level certificates in Year 11 and pupils enjoy the work that this entails. However, in all years, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use ICT to help their learning.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

48. The teaching of language and literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. Teachers introduce subject specific words in many lessons, and they carefully explain their meanings; however, they do not focus enough on common spelling patterns. They encourage pupils to listen carefully and to speak clearly, but opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend their writing skills are unsatisfactory. In particular, teachers provide insufficient opportunities or guidance for pupils to write at greater length.

### **French**

The provision for French is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- Pupils develop their listening skills well; the teacher has improved her use of French in the classroom.
- Although pupils enjoy French lessons, there is little motivation for pupils to learn the language as there is no visit made to France.
- There is too little use of computers as a learning resource, and opportunities to reinforce learning by setting homework are missed.

#### **Commentary**

49. Pupils' achievements in French are satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils do not learn French until Year 8, to allow for extra literacy sessions in Year 7. At the last inspection there were criticisms of the teacher's limited use of French during lessons. This has now improved, and so pupils in Year 8 soon learn to understand and respond to common classroom commands. A few are rather reticent when it comes to speaking in French, but the teacher overcomes this well by encouraging pupils to chorus their responses. Many try hard to improve their pronunciation, with some success.

50. In the lessons seen, the teacher made effective use of games, real objects and simulation. Pupils' concentration and interest were held well by a simple Lotto game in which they practised recognising vocabulary associated with sports. Similarly, a simulated café created enthusiasm and a very good reason for learning to order food and drink in French. Even the most reticent were able to do this by the end of the session.

51. Resources for the subject, poor at the last inspection, are now satisfactory. Although the teacher makes use of ICT for word searches, and the Internet is used for downloading images, there is no computer software to reinforce and develop language skills. Pupils do not have an opportunity

to visit France, despite the proximity of the school to the coast, and so pupils do not have strong motivation for learning the language. Nonetheless, their attitudes to the subject are satisfactory, and pupils have a reasonable understanding of how well they are doing in French because the teacher sets regular tests. Reading and writing skills are given less emphasis than speaking and listening, but the most skilful pupils do learn to read and write simple French phrases. However, opportunities to boost pupils' language skills by setting simple homework tasks are missed.

52. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory, and has improved since the last inspection. With support from a languages adviser, the co-ordinator has improved resources, planning and assessment.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with many good features.
- Improvements in the curriculum and assessment have raised standards.
- There is limited use of ICT and homework to help pupils learn.
- Standards and achievement have been affected by the absence of a permanent co-ordinator.

### **Commentary**

53. In relation to their abilities, pupils achieve satisfactory standards in mathematics. In lessons, progress is always at least satisfactory. For example, higher attaining pupils in Year 7 made good progress as they added and subtracted tens and units, learned multiplication tables and applied this information to work on money and time. Lower attaining pupils in Year 9 showed an understanding of number value, and were able to identify the properties of a cube competently. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 identified the properties of two-dimensional shapes and recognised three-dimensional shapes. In Year 11, a number of pupils achieved merit, with two gaining a distinction in the Certificate of Educational Achievement (COEA). For older pupils setting has helped teachers to plan suitable tasks, and to challenge the most able pupils to achieve success in externally accredited courses.

54. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with many good features. For example, the lessons that were observed with the higher attaining pupils in Years 8 and 10 were good. These lessons featured good knowledge of the subject and very effective planning for individual pupils. In other lessons there were lower expectations, and teachers did not demand as much from them in either quality or quantity. In all the lessons, teachers and support staff very effectively guided and encouraged pupils. The teachers assess the pupils' knowledge and understanding during the lesson and provide effective feedback to help them make progress.

55. One significant feature that strengthens the teaching is the very good relationship between the staff and the pupils. As a result, pupils are well managed and this makes a valuable contribution to their learning and achievement. The pupils are not afraid to contribute in the plenary sessions of the lesson or to ask for help in the lesson, and this strengthens their learning. The staff are skilled in capturing the pupils' attention by asking challenging questions, and they successfully elicit thoughtful responses.

56. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The acting co-ordinator is enthusiastic and is attending a mathematics course organised by the LEA. Resources are satisfactory, but only limited use is made of ICT, especially with the lower attaining pupils.

## Mathematics across the curriculum

57. There is evidence that pupils' numeracy skills are developed in certain areas across the curriculum such as art, science, physical education and design and technology. However, numeracy skills are not used consistently across the curriculum and missed opportunities to reinforce the subject were observed during the inspection. The school shop has a very good display of prices to guide pupils when purchasing certain goods with a specified sum of money. This makes a valuable contribution to their social and personal development, not only in their ability to handle money, but also in their language development.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers and support staff know the individual needs of pupils very well. They use this knowledge effectively to include all pupils in suitably challenging tasks.
- Pupils are quickly engaged by starter sessions at the beginning of each lesson and these sessions also demonstrate what pupils already know.
- All pupils leave school with suitable external accreditation.
- Pupils work well in small groups and help one another. This enhances their learning.
- Investigative work is used very well to enhance learning. It also boosts pupils' confidence.
- Behaviour in the laboratories is good: largely due to good behaviour management by staff.

### Commentary

58. Standards in science at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 are well below the national average because of the range of the pupils' learning needs. However, pupils' achievement in the subject is good throughout the school. In Year 7 pupils achieve standards below those expected for pupils in a school such as this. They soon begin investigative work. They develop good skills and understanding in this and progress well. They learn the importance of observing carefully. In lessons seen in Year 10, pupils understood what constitutes a 'fair test'. Pupils make good gains in their knowledge and understanding across a broad science curriculum. By Year 11, all pupils are successful in the Entry Level Certificate. Every leaver last summer had this accreditation. The results in science were very commendable, and were the best for any subject. Now, Year 10 pupils are beginning a course with a view to gaining a grade in the General Certificate of Secondary Education. This is an improvement since the last inspection and will entail a more rigorous homework schedule.

59. Teaching and learning are good. There are carefully constructed worksheets, which well match the capabilities of the whole range of pupils. The worksheets enable pupils to tackle increasingly challenging tasks. They build in work for the less able and extend the most able pupils. The success depends in many cases on the very perceptive work of support staff. Pupils respond well and enjoy their work in the subject. It would help pupils further if they were given more opportunities to undertake some extended writing to support their literacy development. Progress in numeracy is well supported in science. Because teachers and support staff know the needs of each pupil very well, they not only adjust the work to suit the pupils but manage classroom behaviour well. It is rare to see any significant disturbance. Relationships are very good, and pupils were seen helping one another in a most constructive way. Pupils with more complex learning difficulties are well integrated.

60. Pupils are keen to participate and show what they know. They readily answer questions and willingly read aloud. Older pupils know their personal targets, and explain how they plan to attain their goals. During experiments, frequent questioning ensures that pupils understand what they are

doing. This enables the more able to make predictions, and allows teachers to judge the learning and progress of pupils. Controlled excitement is evident in lessons and clearly assists learning. The closing session of each lesson enables a recap of what has been learned during the lesson and is a useful day-to-day assessment tool.

61. The subject is well led and there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. For example, the Year 7 and Year 8 curriculum has been updated to suit the needs of a changing intake of pupils. Resources have been improved by an injection of extra money this year. The addition of a fume cupboard, mentioned at the previous inspection, has to wait for the new buildings. The improvement in investigative work over recent years is very noticeable and is very beneficial to pupils. Teachers' record keeping is good, and pupils' personal targets are included and taken into account in all individual planning. New ICT equipment has been purchased very recently and will be brought into use in the near future. However, the use of ICT as a learning tool in science is an area for further development.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- Pupils make good progress in lessons because teaching is consistently good or very good.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and respond well to the teacher's high expectations of their behaviour.
- The teacher's expertise in the subject is very good, so that pupils progress well in a wide range of skills.
- There has been little progress in the use of ICT across other subjects since the last inspection.

### **Commentary**

62. Skilled staff and high expectations of pupils mean that their progress continues to be good or very good, as at the last inspection. All pupils respond very well to the tasks, which are related to their own interests, for example designing team shirts for the rugby world cup. Skilled teaching - making good use of the well-resourced room - means that pupils work at their own level, and understand what is required of them. Targets for the lesson are checked at the beginning and end of the lesson and, although these are the same for the whole class, they help pupils to reflect on their own achievements. There is provision for pupils who achieve tasks quickly to move on to learn more advanced skills.

63. The scheme of work provides clear guidance on what pupils will learn. Throughout lessons, pupils extend their understanding of the uses of ICT through a wide range of programmes, as well as improving their literacy skills when they read and write in some of their lessons. Errors in writing are not always corrected: for instance capital letters are sometimes omitted on samples of work. However, pupils make good efforts to read difficult words related to the task, such as the names of countries playing in the rugby world cup. Pupils also learn the appropriate subject vocabulary and begin to understand the teacher's use of words such as 'text' or 'desktop publishing'.

64. In previous years, Year 11 pupils have achieved accreditation in word processing, but this is no longer available. A new accreditation scheme has now been selected and pupils at Key Stage 4 are expected to gain awards for their work.

65. Support provided for some pupils is very good, so that those who need help with literacy can proceed with the task alongside others. There is no technician to help with problems that arise with hardware, with the result that either the co-ordinator's time is sometimes taken up in this way, or computers are out of use for a while.

66. A lunchtime club provides further opportunities for pupils to enjoy using computers for activities such as internet searches or completing previous work, sometimes related to other subjects.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

67. Use of ICT across other areas of the curriculum remains limited, though there is good use in music and art, and some use in English, science and design and technology. Digital cameras and a new digital video camera are used for recording pupils' achievements in some areas. Teachers have completed training under the New Opportunities (NOF) scheme and are making much greater use of ICT for their own planning and reporting. However, some classrooms have no computer set up for pupils' use in lessons and provision of a school-wide network is not planned until the new building is completed.

## **HUMANITIES**

Religious education was inspected in detail and is reported in full below. Only two lessons were seen in **geography** and these were satisfactory. In **history** no lessons were seen, so it was not possible to make a judgement on provision.

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- Some pupils at Key Stage 4 are entered for externally accredited awards for geography
- The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge of geography. The scheme of work for the subject is good, providing clear guidance for teachers' planning.
- Pupils work at a good pace in lessons.
- There is very little use of ICT in geography.

### **Commentary**

68. Achievement in geography is satisfactory. Older pupils work well and, in one lesson observed, answered questions about the geographical features and climate of Southern France. Pupils were attentive throughout the lesson, but there were few visual resources to stimulate learning. Information technology is rarely used in geography because of very limited access to computers, though occasionally pupils use the Internet to find information. One pupil had printed out pictures of Henry VIII and his wives, for instance.

69. A well-planned curriculum for the subject provides pupils with a good range of learning experiences. Teachers successfully plan lessons from this curriculum, and make varied provision for pupils of different abilities. Following curriculum re-organisation in Years 10 and 11, history is not taught at this stage, so that pupils can focus on an accredited course in geography in the time available. This has been worthwhile, as the more able pupils have been successful in gaining an Entry Level award for geography.

70. There is no development plan in place at present for history and geography, though the co-ordinator plans to do this following the inspection.



## Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Although teaching and learning were good and very good in two of the three lessons observed, teachers do not keep good enough records of pupils' achievements. There is too little use of ICT to promote learning.
- The subject contributes well to pupils' personal development.
- In lessons observed, teachers and support staff had a very good knowledge of pupils' individual needs and this considerably enhanced the learning process.
- Pupils are reflective in lessons and are gaining a better understanding of the topics that they are studying. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- In a subject that lends itself to outside visits, none are undertaken.

### Commentary

71. Religious Education is taught as part of humanities and is allocated one lesson a week. Standards are well below national average because of the range of pupils' learning needs. However, pupils' achievement in the subject is satisfactory overall. Younger pupils begin to have an awareness of basic religious themes and learn about a range of religions and religious celebrations. For instance, in one lesson in which they learnt about the festival of Diwali, there was a clear growth in understanding as the lesson progressed. Older pupils grasped the concept of the parable and successfully linked the parable of the Good Samaritan to present everyday experiences. A Year 10 class maturely discussed aid agencies, and pupils were able to identify the relative strengths of a number of well-known agencies. The level of knowledge and understanding was impressive. Whilst all pupils participated well, the most able added beliefs and views of their own.

72. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. A weakness is that the work throughout the years is not recorded thoroughly enough, by pupils and teachers, to give a true picture of pupil progress. Use of photographic evidence in pupil folders and more day-to-day pupil assessment would make records more informative. Lessons are generally well planned and appropriate to the levels of ability of the pupils. There is a lack of consistency between quality of planning for Year 7 and that for all other classes. Lesson plans in most classes contain methods for fully including pupils in the lower and higher ability range. Teachers and support staff know pupils' individual needs very well and are able to ensure that they all progress. Speaking and listening are very good. Staff ensure that all pupils take part in discussions and there are notable confidence gains amongst the pupils.

73. Pupils enjoy lessons, are very co-operative and display good attitudes towards the work. However, the quality of their experiences would be much enhanced by a series of relevant visits. More opportunities could be given for pupils to practice extended writing and aid progress in literacy. The subject makes a good contribution to social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, which is an improvement on the previous inspection. ICT has not been used in lessons.

74. On the suggestion of the local authority advisor, Year 10 and Year 11 have not been having discrete lessons as such: moral and social themes have been included as part of PSHCE. This has made it difficult to unravel progress for these classes. However, Year 10 have a weekly lesson reinstated this term. This lesson was seen, and it was good.

75. The co-ordinator is not a specialist but is very interested in the subject and enjoys teaching it. She has built up good schemes of work and programmes of study. She would benefit from the opportunity of monitoring the Year 7 groups. Assessment has been introduced since the previous inspection and this is an improvement. As indicated this could be further developed. In the

school's self-evaluation, humanities is identified as a subject which needs further development. Resources have been further improved and are now good. There has been significant progress and improvement since the previous inspection and this forms a good basis for further development.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

The subjects of art and design, design and technology and music were inspected fully and are reported below. Only one lesson of physical education was seen, and this was good, but insufficient evidence was obtained to make judgements on provision and achievement.

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses:**

- Teaching and learning are very good, and result in pupils achieving very well.
- The co-ordinator's skill and enthusiasm stimulates pupils' interest and enjoyment in the subject.
- The co-ordinator provides clear direction and strong leadership.

### **Commentary**

76. Pupils achieve very well in art and design. This is linked to skilled teaching, pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment of the subject, and the wide range of good quality learning experiences. Pupils use a wide variety of different materials in their paintings and collage work. The range of high quality displays around the school is evidence of the standard of work in the department. One of these displays is the 'sculpture wall', which formed part of an accredited course for Year 9 pupils. It involved a collaborative effort by all the pupils as well as developing designing skills to explore how shape, form, space, colour and texture can be used to create different designs. In a Year 10 lesson, pupils studied the work of famous painters like Leonardo Da Vinci, Picasso and Van Gough. They discussed their work in groups, and transferred the image of a painting using the overhead projector.

77. The very good teaching results in very good learning and progress by all pupils regardless of their initial confidence or ability. Lessons begin promptly and there are clearly established routines, which are closely followed in the art room. The teacher presents an excellent role model: he shows clear respect and appreciation for all works of art, and so do the pupils. They respect each other's work and efforts, and are ready to help and support each other.

78. The management of the subject is very good with careful monitoring of teaching, learning and achievements and a long-term vision of development planning. The co-ordinator provides strong leadership and has developed a sound policy and schemes of work that encompass areas of study across the whole curriculum. All the pupils work towards accreditation through the COEA in Year 11. The 2003 art results testify to the success of very good planning, stimulating teaching and the commitment of the co-ordinator; pupils achieved three distinctions, 15 merits and six passes. Pupils enjoy the tasks and the challenges presented to them and as a result respond with enthusiasm and interest.

79. The school and the co-ordinator have responded positively to the comments of the previous inspection when the overall judgement was that the provision was good. Improvement has been very good: high standards have been maintained despite the increasingly complex needs of pupils, the curriculum has been widened, and external accreditation has been made available to pupils of all abilities in Year 11. The subject is a strength of the school.

## Design and technology

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils are not yet reaching the standards of which they are capable, because the school did not have suitably qualified teachers for 18 months.
- Overall teaching and learning are good, and pupils are making good progress.
- Improvement on issues highlighted in the previous report was postponed for a period of time because of staffing difficulties.
- The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic, but is relatively new in the post.

## Commentary

80. The previous report highlighted many issues in the department. These included many missed opportunities to reinforce other areas of study like food technology and life skills, and the accommodation and resources were unsatisfactory. The situation was made worse with the inability of the school to recruit suitable staff for eighteen months after the departure of the previous teachers. This accounts for the underachievement in the subject. However, with the appointment of the present staff, the majority of these issues have been rectified. The two specialist rooms have been refurbished, and resources are at least satisfactory.

81. It is not possible to judge the long-term benefit of the work of both teachers as they have only been in post for a short period of time. Teaching is good: the lessons seen were lively and interesting, and pupils were encouraged to develop independence skills. In a Year 7 class, pupils were able to use various electrical tools to make a flower stand which they had previously designed. In a very good food technology lesson with a Year 9 group, pupils made and decorated small cakes. The lessons had been carefully planned to develop skills and understanding, and a number of areas of the curriculum like language, mathematics, hygiene and health and safety were worked on during the session.

82. At present, the pupils benefit from good teaching, with very careful attention paid to health and safety. There are good relationships between staff and pupils, which promote free discussion on any problems that arise in their tasks. Pupils use their initiative and share in the responsibility for cleaning up at the end of the lesson. The teachers have created a harmonious learning environment. As a result of these developments, the improvement in the subject since the previous inspection is good.

## Music

Provision for music is **excellent**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good teaching and a rich variety of learning experiences enable all pupils to achieve very well in music.
- A committed and enthusiastic subject specialist provides outstanding leadership.
- Resources are very much better than at the last inspection; they now reflect a wide range of cultures.

## Commentary

83. Pupils' achievements in music are very good, because the school provides an excellent range of experiences and teaching and learning are very good. The subject has a high profile in the school and beyond. Parents and pupils thoroughly enjoy the school's musical performances, and the co-ordinator's file contains many letters from members of the public praising pupils' moving and skilful performances.

84. Music is taught throughout the school, and this enables pupils with a particular talent or interest in music to achieve high standards. For example, a pupil in Year 10 plays the guitar by ear, and another, who left last summer, now plays the drums in a band. The choir, assemblies and the three lunchtime clubs also enable pupils to develop their skills, to have fun making music with others, and to experiment with a musical instrument. Professional musicians provide workshops for pupils, and pupils perform at top venues. For example, the school successfully auditioned for the Schools Prom, and performed at the Nuffield Theatre in Southampton. There are also opportunities for pupils to perform with mainstream peers.

### Example of outstanding practice

#### **The school's commitment to including every pupil is particularly well demonstrated in music.**

Pupils who find it difficult to behave in some lessons become completely absorbed in music lessons. The subject is well liked by all, and even pupils who do not attend well make a special effort for school performances. Every pupil is immaculately turned out in school uniform for the Christmas concert. Last year, this opened with a solo song from a pupil in public care. In the percussion performance, a visually impaired pupil was well supported by a friend, who guided his hands towards the drums; a profoundly deaf pupil was provided with a vibrating pad, connected to the CD player, so that she could feel the bass beat. Each pupil has a role in these concerts and they make a supreme effort to do their best. Their performances are of a high quality and are very much appreciated by the audience.

85. In lessons, the teacher has very high expectations, and pupils respond very well to this. Her enthusiasm is infectious, so pupils are really keen to do their best. She enables them to do this by skilfully teaching skills, modelling, supporting, and by correcting as pupils practise. Because relationships are so good, pupils are not afraid to try, and there is a tangible team spirit in group sessions. This was very well demonstrated in a Year 10 lesson where pupils were practising hand chimes for the school Christmas concert, reading simple colour-coded notation. All pupils quickly settled, and there was an air of keen anticipation. The teacher pointed out to pupils that they were a special group and had to have special rules. White gloves were put on, and the most skilful pupils were given hand chimes in each hand. The teacher reminded pupils about the techniques of 'damping' and reading notation, using questioning well, so that pupils could learn from one another. There was absolute hush as the practice session commenced. In the first run-through, a few pupils needed to be reminded that they must not 'damp' the clapper; then the teacher supported a less skilful pupil by singing the numbers of the notes to her. By the third run-through, a good quality performance was achieved, and pupils clearly felt a sense of achievement. They sensibly helped to clear away at the end of the lesson.

86. The co-ordinator provides outstanding leadership. She has continued to improve the subject, extending learning opportunities, and raising pupils' achievement. Resources, which were very poor last time, are now very good. The school has a very good range and number of instruments, and through the use of a loan service, pupils are enabled to experience instruments from a wide range of countries and cultures, such as steel pans and an Indonesian gamelan. The subject contributes very well to pupils' personal development.

## Physical education

Although it was not possible to make overall judgements on provision, a number of strengths of the subjects were identified:

## Main strengths

- The physical education staff are very enthusiastic. This has a very positive effect on the pupils.
- Boys and girls are equally keen on physical education and attitudes towards the subject are very good.
- Extra curricular activities are good and improving.
- The school has become a 'flagship' in tag rugby.
- Assessment of pupils' progress is good – this includes considerable self-assessment.
- Leadership in the subject is very good and engenders great enthusiasm amongst the support staff and pupils.

## Commentary

87. The co-ordinator for physical education has been responsible for the subject for less than a year. Leadership is very good. He has inspired support staff, who participate with great enthusiasm. This enthusiasm is successfully communicated to the pupils who, in the school council, spoke very highly of the subject. There is good coverage of the National Curriculum. Records of pupils' achievements are good. Pupils' have a personal card on which they can see their previous personal best, thus giving targets for the future. The pupils complete these cards themselves. Girls and boys participate and compete equally enthusiastically. Some girls play in the tag rugby teams.

88. In the single lesson observed, it was clear that staff knew the pupils' capabilities and limitations very well. Relationships are very good and it was noticeable that more able pupils were keen to help and encourage the less able. Confidence gains by pupils were tangible. All apparatus had name cards and pupils kept their own scores. Opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills were identified in the lesson plan.

89. Tag rugby has become something of a speciality and around 25 pupils remain for an after-school club. The local rugby football union coach, who also works for the LEA, is using the school as an exemplar for other schools. 'Awards for All' has given the school a £4,700 grant to enable them to set up a county special schools tag rugby team. Amongst other extra-curricular activities is a cross-country club. Pupils from this group enter county competitions. Although girls participate well in current activities, the co-ordinator is looking for clubs that are especially suitable for them. The school is also looking towards participating in some outward-bound activities. Orienteering has also been introduced.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in PSHCE is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good teaching enables pupils to develop a good understanding of themselves and their relationships with others.
- Pupils make good progress towards their targets for personal and social development in all areas of the curriculum.
- The school has made very good progress in planning for citizenship.

## Commentary

90. The school combines the teaching of personal, social and health education (PSHE) with the teaching of citizenship. However, other subjects, a half termly programme taught by class tutors and daily tutor time also makes important contributions to pupils' achievement. Overall, pupils achieve well, as shown by their good progress towards individual targets for personal and social

development. Teachers remind pupils of these targets at the start of every lesson and review them at the end. Most pupils know them well and try hard to achieve them. They develop their independence skills, improve their concentration and their ability to interact with others as a result. All pupils contribute to a class charter, with each class writing its own aims. Class tutors and pupils take this very seriously at the end of each day. As a result, pupils take more responsibility for their own learning, evaluating their own behaviour and actions against the class charter. For example, pupils in a Year 10 class were very honest in saying whether or not they had supported others, tried hard and respected other's property.

91. Three PSHCE lessons were observed. Teaching and learning were good in two and very good in one lesson. A Year 8 class learned how trust, caring and honesty are important qualities of friendship. The teacher's very good relationships with the class meant that pupils felt confident talking about ways that they had cared for others recently. In a Year 9 lesson, the teacher read a story that helped pupils to understand the difference between 'put-downs' and 'boost-ups' when talking to others. Skilful questioning by the teacher and support assistants then helped pupils to understand how what they say can affect the way others feel. In a Year 10 lesson, the focus was on making career choices. The teacher successfully used a very good variety of motivating activities that taught pupils how to improve their ability to make informed choices.

92. The school teaches specific lessons in citizenship as part of the PSHE curriculum but none were being taught during the inspection. The scheme of work meets National Curriculum requirements by also identifying ways that other subjects contribute to citizenship. Subject teachers include citizenship objectives in their plans but do not yet share them with pupils. A particularly successful feature of provision is the development of active participation and acting responsibly. The school council provides good opportunities for pupils to become involved in the life of the school. All pupils are involved in the election of representatives. Year 11 pupils act as 'buddies' for Year 7 pupils and the class charter system, described earlier, provides excellent encouragement for responsible action. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. Continuous evaluation and development of schemes of work by the coordinator is enabling the school to make citizenship and PSHE objectives accessible to all pupils.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement	Grade
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>6</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
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).*