

INSPECTION REPORT

SHENSTONE LODGE SCHOOL

Lichfield

LEA area: Sandwell

Unique reference number: 104024

Headteacher: Mr S Butt

Lead inspector: Ian Naylor

Dates of inspection: 22nd - 24th September 2003

Inspection number: 258991

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:	5 to 12 years
Gender of pupils:	Male
Number on roll:	24
School address:	Birmingham Road Shenstone Lichfield
Postcode:	WS14 0LB
Telephone number:	01543 480369
Fax number:	01543 481104
Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Steventon
Date of previous inspection:	2 nd March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Shenstone Lodge is a small residential special school for 24 boys aged seven to twelve who have social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. It offers day and boarding, extended day and part time provision. There are currently 14 boarders. All pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Attainment on entry to the school is lower than the national average. The school admits pupils with considerably more complex needs than was the case at the previous inspection. There are four pupils with autistic spectrum disorder. Two pupils are in public care. Four pupils are of non-white ethnic background. The school, where possible, re-integrates pupils into mainstream primary schools. When this is not practicable the transfer for pupils at the end of Year 6 is to secondary special schools. Three pupils are temporarily in Year 7, as part of their re-integration and transfer arrangements, although the school normally provides only for Years 3 to 6. The school has recently achieved an Investors in People Award.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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19677	Marion Cumbers	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
10668	David Walker	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	4
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	6
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	11
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	13
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2 AND 3	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	18

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Shenstone Lodge is an effective school in which there is good achievement and learning by pupils in a well-ordered community. This is accomplished through good leadership by the headteacher and governors, and by good teaching. The very good attitudes of the pupils are the best feature of the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths are that:

- Achievement is good in English and mathematics.
- Teaching is predominantly good, particularly in the skills of literacy, numeracy and personal development.
- The personal leadership of the headteacher is good.
- Attitudes to attending school and lessons are very good and behaviour is good.
- The range of activities and learning opportunities for pupils in the evenings and at weekends are very good.
- The residential facility offers a very good level of care.
- Re-integration into mainstream primary schools is very good.

Its main weaknesses are that:

- Planning for information and communication technology (ICT) is under-developed across the school and improvements to this and other areas of the curriculum are not being made quickly enough.
- Achievement in ICT is unsatisfactory.
- Homework is not used well enough to support pupils' further progress.
- Checks by subject leaders on the quality of teaching in the subjects are lacking.
- There is no curriculum for pupils aged 12 to 14.
- Setting of targets for pupils' progress could be improved.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection in March 1998, particularly in addressing the main issues of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. The governors now have a better understanding of the progress made by pupils, and the work of staff in the classroom and the residential facility. However, there has been unsatisfactory attention to improving the curriculum planning for ICT.

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

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

Achievement is generally good by Year 6. It is very good in speaking and listening, good in reading and satisfactory in writing. It is good in mathematics. Achievement is satisfactory in science. It is unsatisfactory in ICT. Achievement in the other curriculum areas is best in religious education, physical education and music. Pupils make very good progress in their personal, social and moral development, and satisfactory progress in spiritual and cultural development.

Pupils show a very positive attitude to lessons and to the activities provided. They have an excellent sense of responsibility to other pupils and staff, and develop constructive relationships. Their behaviour shows good improvement from when they first arrived at the school. The very good attendance of pupils helps them to be successful in their personal achievements.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good.

Teaching and learning are good, particularly in literacy, numeracy, and personal, social and health education (PSHE). The best qualities of teaching are the teachers' knowledge of pupils' individual needs and the management of behaviour. The teaching of ICT is weak. There is a very good curriculum for the extended school day. The rest of the curriculum is generally satisfactory, except in the planning for teaching of ICT across all the subjects where it remains little improved from the last inspection. There is high quality of provision for the safety and welfare needs of pupils. In particular, the residential facility offers very sensitive support and guidance to pupils' emotional and social development. Staff create a happy, caring family environment within the school and this makes pupils feel happy and secure. Parents are encouraged by staff to play an active part in their child's learning, but the distance from pupils' homes to the school often prevents more involvement. Staff have regular contact with parents and provide a satisfactory flow of information about their pupils' progress. There is a thriving partnership between the school and a particular local primary school and strong links with several other schools. This helps to pave the way for the successful return of many pupils to mainstream school placements.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership by the headteacher is good. Governors give effective support to staff and pupils. Management is satisfactory.

The headteacher, staff and governors work closely together to secure at least satisfactory standards of provision overall. They have together been able to introduce improvements in several areas and to sustain the quality of others. The headteacher and governors recognise the weaknesses that need to be addressed. However, the pace of change, particularly in the development of the curriculum, is slow.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally very happy with the school. They praise the way the school has helped their children. Pupils are happy to come to school. There are good relationships between them and also with the staff.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Develop the curriculum for ICT across the subjects and improve the way in which it is taught.
- Provide a better focus and timescale for the introduction of improvement to the curriculum.
- Implement immediately the school plan for having a clear homework policy.
- Ensure subject leaders regularly check the quality of teaching in their subject across the school by direct observation.
- Staff need to set clearer targets for pupils to help them improve their work in the subjects.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Introduce curriculum plans and resources for pupils aged 12 to 14.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses.

Good. Achievement in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory. In Years 5 and 6 it is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good achievement in English, mathematics, physical education, music and religious education.
- Very good achievement in PSHE.
- Unsatisfactory achievement in ICT.

Commentary

1. Pupils arrive in school with low levels of achievement. Many have been outside full-time education for some time. Most pupils make rapid progress in their overall levels of achievement, due to the school's provision and good teaching which builds pupils' self confidence and promotes success. Achievement is generally good by Year 6. It is very good in speaking and listening, good in reading, and satisfactory in writing. Achievement is good in mathematics and satisfactory in science. It is unsatisfactory in ICT.

2. Although it is not possible to give a judgement on achievement in Year 7, as pupils have only been in that year group for a matter of a few weeks, their progress appears to be as good as that of pupils in Year 6.

3. In the Key Stage 2 national tests (SATS) in 2003, two out of six pupils entered for the tests attained the average national standard in English and mathematics. This is an improvement since the previous year.

4. Achievement in the other curriculum areas is good in religious education, physical education and music. Four pupils have gained national grades in playing the clarinet. One pupil attained Grade 1 Distinction.

5. Achievement is very good in PSHE. Pupils make significant improvements in their capacity to learn, and make progress in the other subjects because they become more self-confident in their personal skills, for example, in relationships and communication with adults and other pupils.

6. There is a good rate of successful re-integration to mainstream schools by pupils, with pupils working hard over time to make the necessary adjustments and improvements to their basic skills. This makes it easier for them to cope with the standards expected in mainstream schools.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND OTHER PERSONAL QUALITIES

Very good attitudes and good behaviour. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is very good. Lessons start promptly and the pupils arrive on time.

Main strengths:

- Pupils have very good attitudes to their lessons.
- Pupils learn to distinguish right from wrong, and act accordingly.
- The school provides a very good variety of interesting activities, both within the school day and at other times, so that pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Relationships are very good between pupils and with staff.
- Pupils put good social and moral values into practice in their daily lives.

Commentary

7. This has remained a very strong area since the previous inspection. The high attendance rate shows that pupils enjoy school very much, and want to come so they can participate in the comprehensive variety of exciting activities offered. Pupils' attitudes to their lessons are very good. They respond to staff very well and work hard. Behaviour is usually good. Staff manage inappropriate behaviour effectively. They deal with minor disturbances quickly so that pupils can continue with their learning. The residential provision has a very positive effect on pupils' development. The good teamwork between teachers, learning support practitioners and residential childcare officers, both in the classroom and in the residence, helps to strengthen relationships and build pupils' trust. There are few acts of harassment or incidents of racial tension between pupils.

8. Pupils learn the responsibilities of living in a community. The school's code of behaviour is used well in the school and in the residence. Staff make pupils aware of how well they match the code at the end of each lesson or during other suitable times of the day. Staff reward pupils' achievements with house points. These can culminate in a special celebration, such as the Head Teacher's Award, or the more tangible reward of a special trip out. Staff use the school Guidance and Support (G.A.S) sessions to good effect to allow pupils to improve their emotional and social relationships, by talking about them with each other and with adults. Pupils value these sessions. Staff help them to set targets to improve their behaviour. As a result, pupils improve their social skills and learn how they are expected to behave, so that they become excellent members of their community. The residential and extended day provision has the advantage of offering pupils a consistent approach to behaviour management, and this is a particularly strong feature of the school.

9. The spiritual and cultural development of the pupils is good. School assemblies include collective worship, and, together with religious education lessons, these enable pupils to learn the important elements of the Christian faith and other world faiths. Visits to the theatre, museums and art galleries, as well as to places of natural beauty, are common features of the extended curriculum and give good support to learning for boarders and day pupils.

Attendance

Very good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	2.9%	School data	0.3%
National data	12.3	National data	8.2

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	3	3	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	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

Good.

Teaching and learning are good or better in the majority of lessons.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1	6	8	4	0	0	0

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

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching is good in literacy, numeracy and PSHE.
- Staff understand the individual needs of pupils and plan accordingly.
- Staff work together very well to support pupils' learning
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not always taught well.
- Homework does not support learning.
- Setting of targets for academic achievement, and tracking and evaluation of pupils' progress could be improved.

Commentary

10. Teaching is of better quality overall than at the previous inspection, particularly in English and mathematics. This is because, unlike before, there is no teaching that is unsatisfactory and there is now better planning and preparation for lessons by staff, based on a greater understanding of the needs of pupils.

11. There were good or better lessons seen in English, mathematics, science, physical education, music and design and technology. Teaching is best in English and mathematics where there is evidence from pupils' work and teachers' records that pupils have improved in their achievements and are making at least good progress.

12. Teaching of Year 7 pupils is hampered by the lack of a suitable curriculum. Although this is to some extent compensated for by the individual approach that teachers provide for pupils, learning is only satisfactory.

13. Most lessons are lively and interesting. Staff work together very well to support pupils' learning and this teamwork is evident in all lessons. Teachers efficiently delegate tasks to support staff, such as preparation and leading of group work. Staff provide a good range of relevant activities for pupils. There is a careful mixture of whole class teaching, group work and individual support and this has a good impact upon maintaining pupils' interest and concentration.

14. Support staff often successfully lead in teaching parts of lessons. This was seen in a very good English lesson with pupils in Years 3 to 5 where the learning support practitioner led very effectively a whole class session on speaking and listening skills.

15. The behaviour of pupils in lessons is extremely well supported by good teaching. Staff take particular care to explain to pupils what they will learn in each lesson, consequently, pupils know what they have to do to succeed and are well motivated to learn. Staff make clear to pupils regularly what is acceptable behaviour and they have high expectations that pupils will follow these guidelines. At the end of each lesson there is usually a discussion of what staff feel has been achieved by each pupil and how well they have behaved. This is usually most effective when pupils are allowed to make their own appraisals of their performance and effort, and that of others. Staff make very good use of praise and encouragement for pupils' successes and there is a consistent use by all staff of the school's reward system of house points. This leads to good control and management of pupils' behaviour by staff. Staff have very good relationships with pupils and this effectively promotes pupils' self-confidence, and consequently pupils' behaviour and learning is predominantly good.

15. Assessment by teachers of pupil' progress is satisfactory overall. It is best in the recording of the social and personal development of pupils and then using this information to guide behaviour management. One teacher is responsible for arranging regular testing of all pupils' basic skills of reading, spelling and arithmetic. This is done efficiently. These records are shared with staff, who use the information well when planning lessons. However, teachers' marking and commenting on pupils' work is not always consistent across each of the classes or the subjects and therefore it loses much of its impact. Much more could be done to track and evaluate each pupil's progress from the time of admission. Targets are set for behaviour and social development, but not enough attention is given to setting targets for pupils' academic achievements.

16. Teaching has the potential to be even better, but the unsatisfactory focus for ICT lets it down. Teachers' use of ICT to promote pupils' learning in lessons is occasionally satisfactory, but overall it is not planned for consistently. Also, there is only sporadic use of formal homework by teachers because there is not currently a whole school expectation that homework will be set. Many opportunities to extend pupils' independent learning are missed. However, there are good informal links between the classroom and the extended day and residential provision. Staff continue to support pupils' learning well through a variety of stimulating activities available during the evenings and at the weekends, particularly those which promote pupils' personal and social education. Regular formal homework would give further impetus to pupils' learning.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, but the pace of change is far too slow. Personal, social and health education is good. The curriculum for the extended day and pupils in residence is very good. However, little progress has been made in planning for ICT and provision remains unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Good improvement in English and mathematics.
- The school provides very good guidance and support for pupils.
- Good use of visits and the school environment - they enhance the curriculum.
- Very good curriculum for the extended day and for pupils in residence.
- Information and communication technology is not planned well across the subjects.
- The curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is unsatisfactory.

17. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully adapted and have provided a firm structure for teaching English and mathematics. The result has been better teaching and an improvement in pupils' achievement. In English, mathematics and science there are satisfactory policies and plans, which are regularly reviewed. However, the monitoring of the other subjects of the curriculum is unsatisfactory; it is taking far too long to initiate change. In particular, the development of ICT is unsatisfactory. This has a negative impact upon most subjects. Some work has been done to increase resources in ICT and there are some examples of successful use of ICT in teaching. However, the overall development of the subject has not improved significantly since the previous inspection. There are no clear guidelines for teaching ICT and planning does not sufficiently support the achievement of higher attaining pupils.

18. The PSHE programme successfully addresses pupils' social, emotional and behavioural needs. The guidance and support given to pupils provides a firm basis for them to develop relationships and self-esteem, and to begin to value education. There is a strong emphasis on PSHE both in school and in the residence, and there is a very good example of teamwork and collaboration between teachers and care staff to produce plans and resources to support it. This makes PSHE an effective area of support to pupils.

19. The school grounds are used very well to enhance the learning experiences for pupils. For example, in science they study mini-beasts, and in practical work done in the garden, they grow plants and vegetables.

20. There is a good range of very well organised evening and weekend social, leisure and sporting activities, which make up the 24-hour curriculum. Day pupils have the opportunity to join some of these activities after school. Often these activities involve the local community. An excellent example is school's link with the West Bromwich Albion F.C Study Support Centre for an after school club, where day and boarding pupils integrate with mainstream pupils in a range of social skills activities.

21. The school works successfully towards re-integration of pupils and one of its main aims is to return them to mainstream education as soon as possible. It has been successful in this and there are particularly good links with Ferndale Primary School. Pupils are given very good support to re-establish themselves within their year group. This paves the way for successful transfer to secondary education. There are similarly good procedures for ensuring the successful transition of other pupils to secondary special schools.

22. There are three pupils in the Years 7 to 9 age group; for them, the curriculum is unsatisfactory. This is because the accommodation is unsuitable for teaching subjects such as science, and design and technology. There are also issues surrounding a lack of specialist teachers; for example, a modern foreign language teacher. There are clearly problems to be resolved by the school about the practicality of placement and education of pupils beyond Year 6.

23. The teachers at the school are well qualified and experienced, and are very well supported by the support and care staff. They know the pupils well, and as a result stable and trusting relationships are formed.

24. There are plans to improve the accommodation by building a new gymnasium for physical education. The plans for this have been passed and funding has been raised.

Care, guidance and support

Good. There is a high quality of provision for the safety and welfare needs of pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The ethos of the school promotes re-integration to mainstream school whenever possible by end of Year 6.
- Strong partnership between all staff ensures effective application of behaviour policy.
- Warm relationships and friendly supportive atmosphere.
- High standards of care in the residential facility.
- The pupils currently have nobody from outside the school to talk to about any concerns they might have.
- Registration of attendance does not take place at the start of the morning and afternoon session.

25. The school has good procedures for child protection and makes effective use of local authority guidance. All staff understand and follow these procedures. The school has good arrangements for the regular review and updating of training for child protection, use of restraint and first aid. Procedures for ensuring the medical welfare of the pupils are efficient and are followed meticulously. Pupils' views are taken into account when trips and activities are planned. Ninety per cent of the pupils in the survey said that the teachers listened to their ideas at least most of the time. Procedures for ensuring a healthy and safe environment for the pupils are good. Risk assessments, including those for trips and activities in and out of school time, are effectively carried out and reviewed systematically.

26. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and friendly. Induction procedures are very good and contribute well to settling the pupils on admission. There is good support provided to all pupils through the system of key workers. The school's GAS scheme provides regular one-to-one updating of personal home and school objectives which have a very positive effect upon pupils' personal and social development. Teaching, care and learning support staff know the pupils well, and keep daily home and school records of behaviour. Pupils therefore have good access to well-informed support, advice and guidance.

27. Residential routines are very good and enable pupils to benefit from a well-integrated 24-hour curriculum. The consistent approach from all staff in their care of pupils ensures that pupils profit from excellent role models. There are high levels of care and a wide range of stimulating and appropriate activities for pupils. Bedrooms are well kept and decorated and there is a wide range of games and pastimes, as well as television, video and computer activities, to interest the pupils in inclement weather. Outdoor facilities are good. The pupils also have access to a variety of evening clubs, such as cub-scouts, which enables them to integrate with the local village youngsters. The school arranges transport, where appropriate and with the agreement of parents, to allow pupils to benefit from a slightly longer school day.

28. The school is seeking to re-establish a source of possible contact outside school for pupils if they have any concerns, as these arrangements have broken down. Procedures for registration of attendance are unsatisfactory as they do not meet requirements for morning and afternoon sessions. However, the school does record attendance and find out about reasons for absence in a systematic way.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community.

Good. Parents are kept well informed of their child's progress in school. There are good links made by the school with other schools and the local community.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Parenting skills courses for parents are shared with other schools.
- Induction of pupils is good.
- Annual reviews are good.
- Distance makes links with parents difficult.

Commentary

29. Links with parents are good overall. They are happy with the information that the school provides for them and particularly value the regular parenting courses run for them by the school. Home/school diaries are used well to maintain a dialogue between parents and staff. Staff set targets for behaviour over the weekend when appropriate, so that parents can provide consistent application of the school's behaviour policy.

30. All parents attend the annual review meetings and there are open mornings each term when parents are brought in by bus to talk to staff about their child's progress. Parents are well received by the school, and they think the school is approachable and listens to their views. They feel the school is very good at helping to get support for their child from many other professionals.

31. Arrangements for the handling of parental complaints and addressing their concerns are very good. There is no formal home/school agreement, but the induction procedures make the school's expectations clear.

32. The school's links with the community are very good. It is part of a small consortium of special schools in the region, and has a close working relationship with a number of mainstream schools. The school has very good arrangements for linking with other schools. There are also good procedures for provision of work placements for students from local secondary schools and colleges, and the school hosts a number of social events that include community involvement.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The school has an effective governing body. The leadership of the headteacher is good. There is satisfactory management.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Governors work closely with staff - they are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and take positive action to secure improvements.
- The headteacher provides strong direction and control for pupils' behaviour and welfare.
- There is a very good school ethos created through good teamwork among all staff.
- Financial procedure and controls are good.
- Management of curriculum implementation and review is too slow and is affecting overall provision.
- Subject leaders do not evaluate the quality of teaching across their subject.

Commentary

33. The headteacher provides effective support and guidance to staff and pupils. He has a clear idea about the key aims for the school and these have been upheld since the previous inspection. He has provided strong leadership to sustain the many strengths of the school recognised at the previous inspection, such as pupil attendance and attitudes to school. He has also ensured that pupil welfare and residential care remain strong features of the school. He has been responsible for many areas that have been improved, such as teaching, particularly English, mathematics, science and PSHE, and the increased rate of pupil re-integration to mainstream. He has developed very good teamwork among staff. Together with the staff, he has successfully made these improvements. This is despite the organisational difficulties of a small school with a higher than average staff absence through illness, and to which pupils are admitted with greater complexity of need than was the case at the previous inspection.

34. The support that the small governing body gives to the school is good. The chair of governors is a very dedicated and experienced governor who has a good grasp of the everyday life of the school. He and colleague governors have instituted good procedures for reviewing policy and procedures and for making evaluations of the curriculum and teaching. They have a good awareness of the financial controls of the school. They effectively review spending and set school budgets. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Governors consult staff about policy decisions and generally challenge senior staff to explain their planning priorities. They ensure that school purchases are prudently undertaken to provide the best value. They seek comparisons where possible with other schools in similar situations on spending, and on the rate of academic achievement by pupils.

35. The management of the school has improved and is now satisfactory. Successful areas include good financial administration and a satisfactory system of staff appraisal. Staff training and professional development are satisfactory. Less successful has been the management of longer term strategic planning. The school improvement plan, which although satisfactory, is less evaluative than it could be. It does not always pick up on key areas of development and take them to a successful conclusion. There is a slow pace of general curriculum change and innovation, and this is most marked in the development of the curriculum and teaching in ICT. Despite receiving a generous share of school and central government funding over several years, ICT has not been efficiently or effectively managed. Although most subject leaders check the quality of other teachers' planning in their subject they do not make enough observations of teaching to ensure a consistent approach.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	824,512.00	Balance from previous year	173,00.00
Total expenditure	932,362.00	Balance carried forward to the next	65,150.00
Expenditure per pupil	33,298.00		

Commentary

36. The school has planned carefully for savings in the last two years. This has resulted in a higher than average amount carried forward on the spending plan. This money is earmarked for improvements to the school gymnasium. Costs per pupil are relatively high. However, given the good teaching and achievement of pupils together with their high rate of attendance, and also considering the flexibility of provision with 5 day or 12 day boarding and the extended school day, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is good. Progress and achievement are very good in speaking and listening, and good in reading.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Speaking and listening skills are very good.
- Reading skills are good and improving.
- Writing skills are a weaker area.
- Homework is not used systematically to support learning.

Commentary

37. Two pupils out of six attained the national average in the end of Year 6 Standard Assessment Tests this year. This is an improvement on previous years. Achievements in reading are good and pupils often make remarkable progress from very low levels of attainment when they arrive in school. However, there is still scope for more rigorous use of homework to extend pupils' independent learning. Teachers have successfully introduced and adapted the national literacy strategy to the needs of pupils. Speaking and listening skills are supported very well in the subjects, but especially in PSHE and the residential provision. This is because staff have high expectations of pupils' responses and value pupils' views, giving them time to express their feelings. For example, in 'talk time' with pupils in Years 3 to 5, pupils are encouraged to discuss ideas and listen to one another's explanations.

38. Pupils lag behind somewhat in their writing skills because teachers do not provide enough opportunities for extended writing. Pupils themselves lack confidence in their own ability. By Year 6, pupils make satisfactory progress in their writing skills. There are some examples of pupils using writing frames to help with their written work. For example, there is good learning in a writing task to describe the characters and events in a class reading book- 'the Green Man' by M Hardcastle. Pupils successfully use ICT to word-process captions for the story, using a draw program. Pupils in Years 3 to 5 write in sentences and paragraphs about the 'Iron Man' by T Hughes. Teachers effectively use a range of word lists to help pupils learn simple spelling rules and to improve word recognition.

39. Teaching successfully engages pupils' interest by using a good range of well-planned activities and through good subject knowledge. Pupils are constantly challenged to think for themselves. Staff work extremely cooperatively to give good support to pupils during whole class teaching, group work and individual teaching sessions. They know the abilities and needs of the pupils extremely well. Staff build good relationships through good use of humour, and by judicious use of the school reward system. This enables them to exercise good management and control of pupils' behaviour, with high expectations of involvement and effort. Consequently, there are good responses from the pupils, who work hard and generally seem to enjoy lessons. This gives good support to pupils' learning by increasing their self-confidence and allowing them to enjoy success. Assessment of pupils' progress is good. However, there is a need for better planning and resources for a few low attaining pupils to allow for work to be more closely matched to pupil's specific needs.

40. The subject is managed satisfactorily, although there is a need for the subject leader to make regular checks to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistent across the school. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

The use of literacy in the other subjects is satisfactory, but could be developed further by a more consistent approach to writing skills and better use of homework to boost independent learning.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is good. Progress and achievement are good. This is because teaching is good and pupils have good attitudes to learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Progress and achievement are good and pupils are well motivated.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Teachers carefully assess and record pupils' progress and use this information to plan lessons that build on what they have already learned.
- Pupils' learning is not reinforced sufficiently at the end of all lessons.
- There is insufficient use of ICT.

Commentary

41. The progress that pupils make during their time in the school is now good. In this year's Standard Assessment Tests, two pupils achieved Level 4, which was broadly in line with the teachers' expectations. This is an improvement on the previous year when no pupil attained this level. Teachers adapt the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) very effectively. This is supported well by the detailed planning that underpins the work in each area of learning.

42. Teaching and learning in mathematics are always at least good. The impetus provided by the NNS has re-invigorated the subject, and pupils find the work stimulating and interesting. Teachers start the lessons effectively by explaining what pupils will learn and recalling work from previous lessons. They challenge and engage pupils with quickfire mental arithmetic questions. Teachers prepare worksheets that match the capabilities of the pupils well, so that they can successfully attempt a progressively demanding series of questions. This motivates the pupils and they respond by working hard and showing high levels of enjoyment.

43. Teachers and classroom support staff know pupils' abilities and aptitudes very well, which helps them to manage pupils' behaviour successfully. Relationships are very good and play a positive role in maintaining the quality of learning in mathematics. Staff are skilled in the use of a variety of activities and strategies to support learning in numeracy. They take every opportunity to praise and to encourage success, and this helps to motivate the pupils to greater efforts and to raise expectations. Pupils respond positively, and are very keen to participate and show what they know, understand and can do. Staff discuss briefly, at the end of each lesson, the behavioural points that pupils have accrued in each lesson. However, more could be done to let pupils make assessments of their own performance. Assessment by staff of pupils' progress is good overall, and provides clear information to both pupils and teachers about progress.

44. The subject is very well led and organised and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. The documentation and training of the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) have been carefully studied and creatively adapted, so that it meets the needs of the pupils very well. Planning for teaching shows that all teachers have a good understanding of the needs of pupils.

The resources available to support teaching are satisfactory. However, ICT was not used in mathematics lessons, neither was there evidence of its application in pupils' work. The co-ordinator is aware of this and is working to remedy this weakness. There has been good improvement in teaching and provision since the last inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

45. There are sound opportunities for pupils to extend their numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, in history pupils were made aware of elapsed time when learning about the mummification process in Ancient Egypt. Graphical representation is used to display pupils' progress in Merit Awards.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is satisfactory. The weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been fully addressed.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- A practical curriculum that provides good opportunities for pupils to develop enquiry and investigative skills.
- The school environment and educational visits are effectively used to enhance learning.
- Good curriculum links are being made with design and technology.
- The use of ICT is unsatisfactory.

46. Pupils achieve satisfactorily and make sound progress with their learning. The analysis of teachers' planning and pupils' work shows that there is an appropriate curriculum in place. The planning of work has been modified to meet the wide range of pupils' needs. The school grounds are effectively used for environmental science, and the study of living plants and creatures. Pupils keep gardening diaries which show, for example, records of planting and compost making and information on how the age of a tree can be determined by counting the annual rings.

47. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school, but there are some weaknesses with assessment. For instance, the marking of pupils' work is cursory; it is often just ticked or a sticker awarded and there are few comments to help pupils to improve their work.

48. During the inspection, in a very good Year 6 lesson, pupils were very keen to predict the effect of heat on materials such as paper, wood, plastic, pebbles, aluminium foil and copper. Probing questioning, for example, 'Will a pebble get hot?' and 'Will copper melt?' challenged pupils to think carefully about their responses and carry out the experiments with great care. Higher attaining pupils were quick to observe that some changes were reversible and others were not. However, they could have been given more independence when recording the results of the investigation.

49. The management of science is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has ensured that visits are carefully planned to match the modules of work. For instance, the visit to the National Space Centre, when studying the earth and beyond, was linked in with a science 'Focus Week' about space. There are some good examples where ICT has been used to record achievement using digital photography. However, the school has not given sufficient thought about using ICT to enhance pupils' learning; for example, research using the Internet, the use of data tables and the recording of investigations. Although teachers' planning is checked, no time has been allocated for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching. This is unsatisfactory.

50. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Throughout the school, pupils' achievement in ICT is unsatisfactory. Issues from the last report have only been partially addressed.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- There has been an improvement in hardware. Computers have been networked and each class now has two computers. Some laptops are also available to older pupils.
- Good use is being made of digital photography to record achievement.
- Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory and their skills are weak.
- The planning of the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

51. Insufficient attention has been given to developing this subject; the result is that pupils do not get enough opportunities to use computers. Currently, they will leave the school without the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills to access a mainstream school curriculum. Records and reports show that teaching is mainly word-processing with some desktop publishing. More could be done to improve the breadth of the subject, to include, for example, such things as control technology, monitoring and the use of spreadsheets.

52. Teaching over time is unsatisfactory. Evidence from observations where pupils were using computers showed that their skills were weak. For instance, one pupil had to be shown how to double click on an icon to load the word-processor. Others were unfamiliar with the keyboard and were searching for different letters and functions. Pupils were very reliant upon staff and needed constant reassurance and help when using the computers. The support assistants worked hard to help pupils, but not all were confident or familiar with the programs.

53. The management of ICT is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has not planned carefully enough to develop the provision or teaching. The result of this is that staff are not adequately trained and pupils are not achieving the standards of which they are capable.

54. Progress since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

55. Information and communication technology (ICT) is rarely used to support learning in the different subjects of the curriculum, although a good example was seen during the inspection in an English lesson with Year 6 and 7 pupils using draw programs and word processing their work.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is satisfactory.

56. Religious education is timetabled for the latter part of the week and so was not observed being taught. The scrutiny of teachers' planning and analysis of pupils' work indicates that the teaching is at least satisfactory. The subject meets the requirements of the local education authority's (LEA) Agreed Syllabus. There is sound use made of the Internet to engage the pupils' interest, and opportunities are provided for higher attaining pupils to extend their ideas in written form. End of year subject reports and pupils' work indicate that pupils achieve well in the subject. This is in line with the previous report.

57. It was not possible to observe any teaching in geography, as the subject is not taught in this half term. However, a scrutiny of the planning and resources suggests that provision is satisfactory.

58. One lesson in history was observed. Teaching was satisfactory. Teachers' planning was scrutinised and from this, together with discussion with the pupils, it is evident that pupils make satisfactory progress. The pupils found the topic of Ancient Egypt very interesting and showed sound recall of earlier lessons. They could name some Pharaohs and explain the use of various Egyptian artefacts. In a link with geography, they could find Egypt on the globe, and with design and technology they made simple representations of a mummy and sarcophagus. An example of the use of the Internet from an earlier lesson was also used to reinforce their learning. Pupils were well motivated and keen to do well. Literacy skills are practised, with pupils taking it in turns to read aloud. However, there is insufficient use of writing skills to support learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

59. Three lessons were seen in music, two in physical education, one in art and design and one in design and technology. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils are making good progress in the majority of these curriculum areas.

60. In the music lessons, teaching is good, resulting in pupils achieving well and enjoying their lessons. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The curriculum has been enhanced, by offering pupils the opportunity to play the clarinet. Lessons in the clarinet are taught by a visiting specialist teacher and pupils have made very good progress, attaining national grades.

61. In physical education pupils achieved well. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection, and in the lessons observed teaching was judged to be very good. Pupils achieve well in a variety of games activities and make good progress in their swimming skills. Plans have been approved and funds raised for a new gymnasium; this will replace the very poor facilities currently at the school.

62. Teaching was good in the lesson observed in design and technology. The pupils were making shadow puppets, and the work was closely linked to science where the pupils had been studying sources of light. The teacher emphasised this, and the higher attaining pupil showed that he had a clear understanding of the work by explaining the meaning of translucent and opaque. Pupils used scissors, glue, split pins and string sensibly, when making their puppets. The design aspect was the weakest part of the work in this lesson.

63. The work on display around the school shows that pupils are making satisfactory progress in art and design. In the lesson seen, the teacher talked about the self-portraits on the wall from the previous week. They were satisfactorily used to reinforce proportion; for example, the position of the eyes, ears and mouth.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL, AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE) AND CITIZENSHIP

56. Only one lesson was seen in PSHE. Teaching was very good, with very good team work between all staff, which enabled there to be very good achievement and progress by pupils. Pupils were given good opportunities to discuss any difficulties they were experiencing at home or in school. Staff used the school's daily records of pupils' behaviour and social relationships as a basis for counselling. Pupils were expected to evaluate their own targets and to set new ones, with adult support. Staff handled often quite sensitive issues extremely well. There was a good link made by staff to the extended residential facility.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	2
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	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
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	4
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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