

INSPECTION REPORT

ST LUKE'S SCHOOL

Swindon

LEA area: Swindon

Unique reference number: 126547

Headteacher: Jinna Male

Lead inspector: Graham Pirt

Dates of inspection: 29th September – 1st October 2003

Inspection number: 258997

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	56
School address:	Cricklade Road Swindon
Postcode:	SN2 7AS
Telephone number:	(01793) 705566
Fax number:	(01793) 705858
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Peter Webb
Date of previous inspection:	5/6/2000

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

St Luke's is a day school for boys and girls aged from 11 to 16 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties. It can admit up to 56 pupils and there is currently that number on roll of whom only four are girls. Pupils' attainment on entry is low, often because of inconsistent attendance at their previous schools. More than half have additional special needs such as dyslexia and ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). Most of the pupils have been excluded from mainstream schools. Six pupils come from an ethnic minority background but there are no pupils for whom English is a second language. Pupils come mainly from the borough of Swindon. Over 60 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is a very high proportion. Two pupils are in public care.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
14563	G Pirt	Lead inspector	Science, Art and Design, Music
11437	A Anderson	Lay inspector	
18461	V Wilkinson	Team inspector	Mathematics, Physical Education
28106	M Majid	Team inspector	Information and Communication Technology, History, Geography, Religious Education
20024	P Wright	Team inspector	English, Design and Technology
21081	C Hackett	Team inspector	Modern Foreign Language

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL53 7JX

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

St Luke's School provides pupils with a satisfactory level of education. Pupils achieve well in a small number of subjects and satisfactorily in most others, with no difference in achievement between different groups of pupils. The leadership of the headteacher is good and the quality of teaching is satisfactory with a significant amount that is good. The curriculum is good overall. Unsatisfactory punctuality and some unsatisfactory behaviour are barriers to pupils making better progress. **The school provides satisfactory value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- A good range of learning opportunities in Years 10 and 11 and for pupils off-site.
- The care and welfare of pupils but the behaviour system is not always consistently applied.
- Good links with other schools and the community.
- Good sports provision.
- The unsatisfactory punctuality of pupils despite the measures taken by the school.
- The underdeveloped management role of subject leaders.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since its previous inspection and has addressed the key issues of developing literacy and numeracy, extending opportunities for accreditation and improving pupils' attitudes, although the application of the system to manage behaviour of pupils has not developed sufficiently.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

The achievement of pupils is satisfactory overall. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 7, 8 and 9 in English, mathematics and science. Achievement in mathematics and science is good in Years 10 and 11. Achievement in other subjects taught, in both Key Stages is satisfactory apart from art and physical education where it is good. Standards of work are at the lower end of what is expected nationally for pupils of this age but when compared with similar schools many pupils who attend regularly are achieving well by the time they leave school.

Pupils' personal qualities are developed satisfactorily. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. Pupils express positive views about the school. Most enjoy attending and appreciate the help given by staff. Pupils respect the school and there is an absence of vandalism. Most pupils' behaviour improves in their time in the school. Pupils' **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.** Progress in moral and social development is good and helped by the extra-curricular provision. Art and geography contribute well to pupils' cultural development but there are limited opportunities for spiritual development. **Attendance is satisfactory.** Most pupils improve their attendance at school. Punctuality, often due to travelling difficulties in the local area, is unsatisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are examples of good teaching in English, science, information and communication technology (ICT), physical education, art and vocational life skills. In

these lessons teachers make sure that pupils understand what is expected of them and have good expectations of pupils' participation. The use of effective behaviour strategies by teachers, in successful lessons, helps pupils to apply themselves to their work and make progress. However, this is not consistent across the school. Assessment systems are satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11 but they are not always used effectively to help teachers plan work for individuals.

The curriculum is good overall and enriched by a good range of learning opportunities outside the classroom and also for pupils, who do not attend school full time, to be able to continue their learning through the school's 'Flexible Learning Programme' that matches provision to pupils' needs. However a modern foreign language is not offered and music provision is very limited.

The care, welfare and support of pupils are good and satisfactory guidance is provided for all pupils. Strengths are the monitoring of pupils' welfare and the individual attention paid to their needs through form tutors and the child and family co-ordinator.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Although the school makes good efforts to keep parents informed and involved academic reports do not provide sufficient information. **Links with other schools and with the community are good.**

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership in the school is satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is good. She has a clear vision for the school's development and high aspirations for the academic success of pupils to contribute to improvements in their behaviour. Other staff support her well but at present, due to their personal vision being at an early stage of development, their leadership is satisfactory.

The management of the school is satisfactory. There are elements, such as self-evaluation and management of the 'Flexible Learning' provision, that are good but the management role of subject leaders is not as developed as it might be. **The governing body fulfils its role in shaping the direction of the school satisfactorily.** Governors have a satisfactory knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views of the school are mostly positive. They feel that the school is well led and managed, the teaching is good and that they can approach the school with difficulties. Several parents are concerned about the high levels of fixed term exclusions. Pupils are supportive of the school and speak well of links with other schools and colleges.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- The punctuality of pupils.
- Ensure that the systems for managing behaviour are applied consistently by all staff and the need for exclusions is reduced.
- Develop further the management role of subject leaders, including developing the use of assessment and marking procedures.
- Extend the curriculum by introducing a modern foreign language and increase the use of music in Years 7 to 9.
- Improve the content of annual academic reports to ensure they inform parents of their children's progress.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. By the end of Year 9 pupils have made satisfactory progress in most subjects and good progress in art and physical education. By the time that pupils leave school at the end of Year 11 those who attend well also make good progress in mathematics and science. The most able pupils achieve standards close to those in all schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in art and physical education in all years is good.
- Achievement in information and communication technology in Years 7 to 9 is good. Achievement in mathematics and science in Years 10 and 11 is good.
- Results in GCSE for those pupils participating are good.
- Levels of achievement and standards of a small number of pupils are adversely affected by unsatisfactory punctuality, unsatisfactory attendance and unsatisfactory behaviour.

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

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

Commentary

1. **The achievement of pupils is satisfactory overall.** This compares well with the judgement made about pupils' progress in the previous inspection. Achievement is satisfactory for all year groups in all subjects apart from art and physical education where it is good throughout the school and in mathematics and science where it is good in Years 10 and 11. Standards are at the lower end of what is expected for pupils of this age although some pupils achieve standards close to national expectations. Although pupils enter the school with widely varying levels of attainment, standards for most of them are below average because of previous disruption to their education. Pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Pupils' speaking and listening is developed through structured discussions. In reading, pupils become more confident and competent and their writing improves as they gain confidence in using a wider vocabulary in order to interest readers. Literacy skills develop although some pupils still have difficulty with spelling.
2. In mathematics, the progress and achievement of pupils who attend lessons regularly and behave well is good overall. For the majority of pupils it is satisfactory because of inconsistent attendance and some disruption of lessons. In information and communication technology pupils in Years 7 to 9 are achieving well overall with some pupils attaining national expectations. More able pupils in Years 10 and 11 are following a GCSE short course. Achievement in a modern foreign language and in music is unsatisfactory. The school sets appropriate targets in individual education plans and at statutory reviews. These are usually achieved. Other targets are also appropriately set in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Those pupils with additional needs such as dyslexia and ADHD, as well as minority groups, such as the small number of girls and those from ethnic minority backgrounds, achieve as well as other pupils in the school. Results in GCSE are showing an improvement over time.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. Their spiritual, moral, social development and cultural development is also satisfactory. This is good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory but punctuality in the mornings is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of pupils' attitudes to learning are at least satisfactory.
- The school works well at providing an environment that is free from bullying, racism and other forms of harassment.
- The school promotes good relationships.
- The school is successful in improving attendance of individuals when compared with their previous school attendance.
- The behaviour system is not always consistently applied.
- The school provides limited opportunities in helping pupils to develop confidence, the ability to reflect and a sense of responsibility.
- There is a high level of exclusions.
- A significant minority of parents do not ensure that their children attend promptly and regularly at the school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	14.3%
National data:	12.2%

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	7.8%
National data:	7.7%

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

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
34	70	0
22	76	0

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

Commentary

3. In relation to pupils' individual needs, there has been good improvement in this area since the previous inspection when behaviour was judged to be poor. Pupils express positive views about the school. Most enjoy attending and appreciate that staff are helping them to succeed. Respect for the school is shown in the good condition of the surroundings, the absence of vandalism and the care taken with equipment in practical activities. Many pupils arrive early each day to join in with the breakfast club, where they chat amicably with staff and each other.

4. In many lessons pupils are confident to put forward opinions and ideas. During the inspection unsatisfactory behaviour was observed, often associated with boring tasks or low-level activities. On only a few rare occasions was good quality teaching met with a challenging behaviour from pupils, which was appropriately and effectively dealt with. Otherwise, good teaching met with entirely positive responses with the result that learning in these lessons was good.
5. Pupils have opportunities to develop and practice their social skills. They are helped to understand the difference between right and wrong and how to become better citizens. Pupils discover a sense of self-worth through having their views listened to. They are helped to understand why they, and others, can have conflicting feelings. Where staff have effective behaviour management strategies, most pupils respond fairly quickly and bring their behaviour back within acceptable limits. Most pupils who behave badly do improve during their time in the school, sometimes making good progress from a low starting point. The school has used exclusion extensively to manage serious incidents of unacceptable behaviour. This has been effective in reducing the number of physical incidents with staff and between pupils. The school is now actively working to reduce their reliance on this sanction.
6. The extra-curricular provision promotes satisfactory social and moral development. Cultural development is well supported by studies in art, geography and literature. The headteacher and other staff provide good role models and work hard to promote constructive relationships. Breaks and lunchtimes are settled occasions with pupils chatting and participating in games with good humour and most behaving sensibly. However, opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and show initiative are limited.
7. The overall attendance at the school is satisfactory and although significantly below the national average for all schools it is in line with similar schools and shows a recent improvement. The school helps pupils to improve their attendance compared with their previous pattern. The incidence of unauthorised absence is slightly above the average for similar schools. There are also significant levels of student lateness at the school. The marking of school registers though, is inconsistent.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and pupils learn satisfactorily. Assessment is satisfactory although information gained is not always used to guide teachers' planning. The curriculum provision is good.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is good. This helps pupils learn, acquiring new skills and understanding. This has been maintained from the previous inspection. When teachers use the behaviour management strategies effectively it helps pupils to apply themselves to their work and make progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' subject knowledge is good and used well to plan work.
- Good use of literacy and numeracy strategies.
- Systems to check pupils' achievement are good but are not always used to plan the next stage of learning and marking of pupils' work is not sufficiently informative.
- Relationships with pupils are good.
- The behaviour system is not always consistently applied.

Commentary

8. Teachers show a good knowledge and command of their subjects. They use this knowledge to plan well and provide pupils with clear explanations. The guidance provided by the GCSE course syllabus in Years 10 and 11 helps provide better planning for lessons. Teachers use satisfactory organisational strategies and methods in most subjects. This is particularly so with the use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and those that they have developed themselves in science, art and physical education. Teachers use a range of resources to help pupils learn and encourage them to seek information from different sources such as the Internet. In a small number of lessons the needs of pupils with different ability are not fully met. On occasions the overuse of worksheets limits opportunities for independent writing. Time is generally used appropriately in lessons except when there are interruptions due to incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour. There are some inconsistencies in the expectations of teachers as to what is acceptable behaviour. In Years 7 to 9 teachers need to develop more consistent use of the school's behaviour management systems.
9. Pupils increase their understanding of the content and acquire new skills and knowledge. Where teachers were observed to implement the school's behaviour management strategy then pupils engaged in their lessons, applied themselves to the tasks and their learning was good.
10. The school has satisfactory systems to check what pupils have learned and to monitor their progress. Systems are good for pupils in Years 10 and 11 because they are closely linked to the requirements of accredited courses. Teachers, particularly those who teach pupils in Years 7 to 9, do not use the information they have about pupils' attainment to plan what individual pupils need to learn next. Too frequently this results in pupils being given work that is not sufficiently well matched to their needs because it does not challenge the higher and is too difficult for the lower attaining pupils. This is reflected in the satisfactory rather than good achievement seen in many subjects. Teachers appropriately monitor pupils' work during lessons and by marking their books. However, although teachers tick work, correct mistakes and provide supportive comments they do not help pupils to understand what they have achieved, what they need to do to improve or what they need to learn next. As a strategy to check pupils' achievement overtime the current system of marking does not provide teachers with enough information about the level of support a pupil has been given or the work they have missed. There are good examples of effective marking in science. The school has already recognised that this area needs improving and suitable plans are already in place to develop teachers' skills. Teaching of pupils with additional needs such as dyslexia is good and provides close attention to their needs through specific teaching.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 29 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	12	12	1	2	0

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

The curriculum

The curriculum provides good learning opportunities overall for pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Learning opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 are good.
- The curriculum is enriched well by a good range of learning opportunities outside the classroom.

- There are good opportunities for pupils who are not attending school full time to continue learning.
- The needs of pupils with specific learning difficulties are addressed well.
- The school's provision for careers education and work experience is good.
- Few opportunities to learn music and no opportunity in a modern foreign language for pupils in Years 7 to 9.

Commentary

11. The school has made satisfactory improvements to the curriculum since the previous inspection. The curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory and includes opportunities in personal, social and health education, careers education and citizenship. Learning opportunities provided include all the subjects of the National Curriculum except for a modern foreign language and music. The school has disapplied the requirement for all pupils to learn another language and the time is appropriately used to provide additional learning in literacy and numeracy. This decision limits the range of learning opportunities pupils are given, particularly those who have good literacy skills. It will make it difficult for them to be reintegrated into mainstream school. The school has been unsuccessful, over a considerable period of time, in recruiting a specialist music teacher and the subject is not currently being taught. However, the school does provide opportunities for pupils to develop their musical awareness by inviting music groups to perform and run work shops. The school provides good support for pupils who have specific learning difficulties and a teacher provides additional learning opportunities for them on an individual basis which ensures that their achievement is satisfactory.
12. The learning opportunities provided for pupils in Years 10 and 11 prepare them well for the next stage of their learning or for entering the world of work. There is a good emphasis on vocational studies and effective links with local colleges provide pupils with a wide and relevant range of subjects to choose from. The range of accreditation offered to pupils is good and includes GCSE and the ASDAN silver award for careers education and personal, social and health education. The school has good links with the careers education service and provides good opportunities for work experience. The school has developed an effective and flexible learning programme for pupils who, otherwise, would be permanently excluded from school and for those who find attending school full time difficult. Individually planned learning opportunities, which reflect their needs and interests, include the vocational life skills curriculum, college courses, extended work placements and community based learning programmes as well as supported home study.
13. Learning opportunities for pupils of all ages are enriched by a good number of visits to support the learning done in the classroom and visitors such as drama groups. The school provides pupils with good opportunities for learning outside the classroom including residential opportunities. On Friday afternoons a wide range of activities such as sailing, cookery and art are offered. These are part of the school's strategies for improving behaviour and make a significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development as well as enriching their learning opportunities and improving their attitudes to school.
14. There are good sporting links with other schools, particularly for football, which enable pupils to develop their skills further. The accommodation is good and supports pupils' learning well by enabling the school to provide specialist teaching rooms. However, the nature of the building means that it takes a high staffing level to monitor the separate staircases. In many subjects there are good resources to support teaching and learning but they could be improved further in history, geography, design and technology (resistant materials), information and communication technology and personal, social and health education and citizenship. There is a good number of experienced support staff who make a satisfactory contribution to teaching and learning and who provide effective support in lessons where their roles and responsibilities are effectively planned by teachers.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a good level of care and welfare and support for its pupils and they are given satisfactory guidance.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The care for pupils at the school is good.
- There is effective monitoring of pupils on the child protection register.
- Insufficient guidance is provided for pupils based on the assessment systems used. Marking is not effective enough to enable pupils to know how well they are doing and how to improve.

Commentary

15. The care for pupils at the school is good, which is a satisfactory improvement from the previous inspection. Child protection procedures are well known to staff and accord with the Area Child Protection Committee's recommendations. There is effective monitoring of pupils on the child protection register. Statutory requirements for health and safety are met and the school is secure, safe and in sound repair.
16. Pupils are given personal support and guidance through their relationship with their form tutors, both during tutorial times and during relaxed, social occasions such as breakfast club. The pupil and family co-ordinator provides valuable support and guidance to them. Individual education plans are generally focused on behaviour and not on academic targets. Targets are not considered sufficiently when teachers plan lessons. There is no evidence in lessons that pupils are made aware of how they need to improve through marking or discussion. There is no school council to enable pupils to share their views. However pupils are able to make a contribution to their annual reviews and records of these indicate a good level of discussion.
17. There is a behaviour system in place, but individual targets are not referred to on a consistent basis and the regular reminders about inappropriate behaviour are not always effective or consistently applied by different staff.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parents' views of the school are mostly positive. The school's links with the local community are good as they are with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents feel that the school is well led and managed and teaching is good.
- Parents feel that the school is approachable with any problems but several parents are concerned about the high levels of fixed term exclusions.
- The school utilises the community well to support their children and the partnership with other schools and colleges is good.
- A minority of parents do not give pupils sufficient support in attending the school.

Commentary

18. The parents' meeting with the inspectors had a low attendance and a small number of the parental questionnaires were returned. A majority of parents are supportive of the school and of its aims and objectives. Parents feel that their children like school and that they are making

some progress. Parents also feel that the teachers are good and that the school is well managed. A small but significant minority of parents were concerned about the high level of short fixed term exclusions. The inspection team agrees and the school have rightly identified this as an issue. They are very proactive in following up all such exclusions by letter and in ensuring that parents and carers are invited to discuss any issues promptly. There is good support by the family support co-ordinator who is also very proactive in providing a wide range of help and advice to parents of all students at the school. All parents of students new to the school are offered a home visit to discuss any particular concerns involving their children. In addition, occasional parent courses are run by the school as a means of building up the home/school partnership but these courses and the monthly parents' forum are unfortunately not well attended.

19. The annual review procedures are well handled by the school but the annual academic reports to parents do not provide sufficient detailed information to parents about their child's academic progress. Good efforts are made by the school to engage parents by sending out school newsletters to keep parents informed of the school's developments and parents' evenings are held each term during which parents have the opportunity to discuss their child's progress and to voice any concerns with teachers but are not well attended by parents. The headteacher is always available to discuss any particular issues or problems if required.
20. The school also makes satisfactory, if occasional, use of the local environment. The running of two football teams is good as are the flexible learning programme allowing students to take part in work placements and college courses which are designed to give them a taste of 'life after school'. The school reaches out well to parents in a wide variety of ways with a view to strengthening the school/home partnership.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. However the leadership of the headteacher is good and staff support her well. Management of the school is satisfactory overall. The governing body fulfils its role in shaping the direction of the school satisfactorily.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good leadership of the headteacher.
- Good self – evaluation of the school's performance leading to effective school improvement planning, although the role of subject leaders is underdeveloped in this at present.
- Good financial and administrative management.
- Performance management needs to be more linked to school improvement and the induction of staff needs formalising.

Commentary

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1139606	Balance from previous year	127601
Total expenditure	982016	Balance carried forward to the next	115466*
Expenditure per pupil	15344		

** there are appropriate plans in place to use this underspend.*

Commentary

21. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's development. This is based on high aspirations for the academic success of pupils and how this will contribute to improvements in their behaviour. She has a very inclusive view that aims for pupils to achieve as well as they possibly can in the most appropriate setting, following the most appropriate course. This approach motivates and influences both staff and pupils. It has led to innovative approaches to the curriculum such as the flexible learning programme and the vocational life skills curriculum. Other staff support her well but at present their leadership is satisfactory. The senior management team work well together and share her vision. However, at present they do not all have a full understanding of how it impinges on their role in leading the school. They provide good role models for pupils and other staff.
22. Governors are very supportive of the school and although they satisfactorily contribute to discussions about the shape and direction of the school and understand the vision for the school they need to become more involved in understanding how the various parts of the school work. Governors fulfil their statutory duties appropriately with policies in place. They have a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school but this could be improved by closer links with subject leaders and a greater degree of challenge to the senior management team.
23. The school is managed well on a day-to-day basis. Financial processes are well organised and responsibilities are clearly defined. The administration of the school works effectively. There are aspects of the management of the school that work well. The self-evaluation of the school's performance based on monitoring and analysis of test and examination results as well as how previous targets, for both pupils and planning, have been achieved works well. This means that issues raised by this inspection have already been identified and many feature in the school improvement plan. However, this does not extend sufficiently to subject leaders. There is insufficient monitoring of how various subjects are being delivered when taught by a number of staff. Importantly, these include literacy, mathematics and science. Performance management of teachers has only recently been introduced and as yet it is not having a significant impact on improving teaching or the consistency of certain areas such as management of behaviour or use of assessment. There is no performance management of support staff. There are induction procedures but these are only just being formalised at present. Staff development is satisfactorily managed but needs to be more closely related to outcomes of monitoring.
24. Overall the leadership and management of the school provide a satisfactory climate in the school to support learning. Additional needs are met satisfactorily by the inclusive nature of the educational climate in the school.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Ten lessons of English or literacy were observed and inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work. No lessons were seen in a modern foreign language.

Provision in English is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well led and managed and the subject leader works closely with his colleagues to promote pupils' achievement.
- The Literacy Strategy in Years 10 and 11 is effective and as a result most pupils are passing GCSE.
- Assessment and marking of pupils' work is not consistent in all classes.
- Reports to parents do not always say what pupils know understand and can do.

Commentary

25. Standards have improved since the last inspection, when pupils' progress in reading and writing was described as just satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Given their starting points, the progress and achievement of most pupils in English during their time in the school is satisfactory. Progress is limited because assessment is not being used effectively at an individual level.
26. As they progress through the school pupils' speaking and listening skills become more developed. They learn to take part in structured discussion and express their own ideas. However, teachers too frequently accept one word answers to questions and do not promote discussion due to the difficulties they face in managing pupils' behaviour. Achievement in reading, as measured by pupils' progress in the standardised tests used by the school, is satisfactory, with pupils selecting their own books and higher attaining pupils reading with understanding and comprehension. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in improving their written work, learning to choose more interesting or adventurous vocabulary and to think about how to capture the reader's interest. Several pupils still have problems with basic spelling, punctuation and grammar, although there are signs of satisfactory improvement over time.
27. The requirements of the National Literacy Strategy have been successfully incorporated into the English timetable. By Year 11 most pupils are gaining passes in GCSE examinations, mainly with grades of D to F. Examination coursework is good. For instance, pupils are able to answer questions about the meaning of well recognised poems and can identify and interpret the messages they contain. There is a need to ensure marking is consistent and for annual reports to clearly state what pupils know understand and can do.
28. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and this has led to satisfactory improvements since the last inspection. Assessment of pupils is regular, and pupils' main areas for development can be tracked from their statements through to their individual education plans. However, these are not always effectively linked to day-to-day teaching plans. The subject development plan appropriately recognises where there can be improvements. The library is well situated at the centre of the school and is well stocked with a comprehensive range of fiction and non-fiction books.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

29. Language and literacy across the curriculum are satisfactory. Teachers use a range of resources in lessons and pupils are encouraged to use information from different sources. Individual needs are being met through extra literacy lessons which focus on basic skills of reading and writing. The subject manager works closely with his colleagues to promote pupils' achievement and all subject teachers are provided with good information to enable them to plan work and ensure that pupils are challenged at an appropriate level. However, in a small number of lessons there is not a clear understanding of the range of ability in the class. Also, the use of too many worksheets in all areas of the curriculum limits opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills.

MATHEMATICS

Three mathematics lessons were observed and inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work.

The provision in mathematics is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The learning opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 are good and as a result the achievement of pupils by Year 11 is good.
- The achievement of those pupils who attend school regularly between the Years of 7 and 9.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is good.
- The use of information about younger pupils' attainment to plan what they need to learn next needs to be developed further.
- Insufficient opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in other subjects and to use computers to support their learning.

Commentary

30. Subject plans provide appropriate guidance for teachers and ensure that pupils build on past experiences contributing to the satisfactory achievement of pupils over time. Pupils are admitted to school with low levels of attainment because their prior learning has often been severely disrupted. Pupils who respond well to the school's routines and expectations make rapid progress in Year 7 and continue to build on this good start in Years 8 and 9. This is confirmed by the DfES's value added data, which is measured by the amount of progress pupils make between the Years 6 and 9 SATs
31. Teaching and learning are satisfactory for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and good for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The quality of teaching and learning has been maintained and this reflects the findings of the last inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide pupils with clear explanations. They use questions well to check if pupils have understood and they correct misconceptions quickly so that pupils are successful. During lessons they monitor pupils' work effectively and provide good levels of support so that pupils achieve. However, teachers do not effectively use the information they have about pupils' attainment to plan what individuals need to learn next and work is, therefore, not always well matched to pupils' abilities. Although teachers mark pupils work with them in lessons providing them with good levels of praise and opportunities to correct their work, they do not use marking constructively to indicate for pupils what they have learned and how they can improve.
32. The learning opportunities are based on the requirements for accredited courses and provide good guidance for teachers when they prepare lessons. Teachers make better use of information about pupils' attainment to plan work so that pupils can be successful in gaining accreditation and this is reflected in the GCSE results for 2003 when almost all pupils achieved D or E grade passes. The work prepared for pupils enables them to consolidate their

understanding and to recall and use knowledge and skills in different situations. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are effective in encouraging pupils to participate in lessons. Learning provides pupils with enough challenge to engage their interest and teachers provide good levels of support to ensure that pupils experience success. Across the school there are not enough opportunities planned for pupils to use information and communication technology to support their learning.

33. Leadership and management of the subject are good although the co-ordinator is currently handing over responsibility for the subject to a new co-ordinator. Appropriate priorities for improving the subject have been identified.

Mathematics across the curriculum

34. The opportunities planned for pupils to use their numeracy skills in other subjects of the curriculum are satisfactory but are too dependent on the skills of individual teachers. The school has not yet considered how some elements of the mathematics curriculum could be taught, more interestingly, through other subjects, for example, through design and technology and science. Opportunities such as these are frequently used to practice rather than teach skills.

SCIENCE

Three lessons were observed during the inspection and inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work.

The provision in science is good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' subject knowledge leading to good learning opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils' good attitudes to the subject.
- Insufficient use of information about younger pupils' attainment to plan what they need to learn next.
- Limited use of computers in the subject.

Commentary

35. The published scheme followed by teachers provides appropriate guidance when planning lessons. This ensures that pupils who attend regularly build on past work and helps with their satisfactory achievement over time. Pupils have low levels of attainment in the subject because their prior learning has often been severely disrupted. Those who follow the school's routines and respond to teachers' expectations make good progress in Years 7 to Year 9. Most pupils achieve passes in GCSE. However, achievement for the majority of pupils is satisfactory because of the inconsistent attendance and occasional unsatisfactory behaviour.
36. Learning opportunities for Years 10 and 11 are based on the course requirements for accredited examinations and provide good guidance for teachers to prepare their lessons. Information about pupils' attainment is used more effectively to plan work. This is reflected in the GCSE results for 2003 when most pupils achieved grades D to F. The work prepared for pupils enables them to consolidate their understanding and to recall and use knowledge and skills in different situations. There are not sufficient opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to support their learning in science.
37. Teaching and learning are good for pupils in all years. The quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum have been maintained from the previous inspection. Teachers explain facts clearly in a way pupils understand. They check if pupils have understood by the use of good

questions. During lessons they monitor pupils' work effectively and there are some very good examples of marking that provides pupils with good praise and very useful information about how they can improve. This provides a good level of support and helps pupils to achieve.

38. Leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has a clear view of how the subject needs to develop. However, there is not sufficient monitoring of how the subject is delivered by different teachers teaching the subject. The accommodation is good for the size of the groups and resources are good and well used.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Four lessons of ICT were observed during the inspection and inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work.

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory. Pupils are achieving well in the areas of ICT that are taught.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The programme has been well planned with reference to the Key Stage 3 Strategy.
- The management of ICT is good.
- The range of accreditation for Years 10 and 11 is suitable for all abilities.
- The attitude of most of the pupils is good.
- There is no provision for the measurement and control part of the curriculum.
- ICT is used insufficiently in other subjects.

Commentary

39. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are achieving well overall. Where teaching is very good, pupils are attaining according to national expectations. The teacher is using the Key Stage 3 Strategy very effectively and as a result pupils are very interested in their work and more able pupils are able to work independently. All pupils are fully included in the lesson, with very good support for a less able pupil from the learning support assistant. Pupils listen to each other's presentations respectfully and respond well to the praise and positive encouragement from the teacher. However, where teaching is less than satisfactory, the behaviour strategies used were ineffective; pupils are not engaged sufficiently in the learning and therefore make little progress.
40. More able pupils in Years 10 and 11 are following a GCSE short course. In the Year 10 lesson seen, pupils worked enthusiastically; they were able to use previous learning to design a company logo for their project work and were able to identify different types of logs and discuss the effectiveness of different types of business cards. The teacher showed very good subject knowledge, was very aware of individual needs and set realistic and achievable challenges. The school ensures that less able pupils are able to gain entry level accreditation for their ICT skills.
41. ICT is now well managed as the co-ordinator has a clear vision of improvements needed and has set achievable targets for 2004 in a realistic development plan that will improve the curriculum provision. The increase in lesson time reflects the importance of ICT in the school and the progress of pupils, especially those in Year 7. However, the issues from the previous report, namely extending the curriculum to include measurement and control and the use of ICT across the curriculum, still need to be addressed. Resources are satisfactory and data projectors are used well. However, the ICT room is too small to enable larger groups of pupils to learn effectively.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

42. ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Although in some subjects, such as English, history, geography and religious education, the internet is used well for research and pupils use the search skills learned in ICT lessons, there was little seen in most other subjects except for basic word processing. In art, there is evidence of pupils importing and modifying images. There are no opportunities for pupils to experience data logging in science or control technology in design and technology. The co-ordinator needs to audit the use of ICT throughout the school and offer support to staff.

HUMANITIES (Including religious education)

Only one lesson was seen in history and one lesson in religious education (RE) and inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work. No lessons were seen in geography.

43. In the one history lesson seen during the inspection, pupils knew a few of the differences between the northern American states' views on slavery and the southern states' views and could say that the south thought that slavery was all right. The teacher used a wide range of strategies to keep the pupils on task, including a video clip, and learning was satisfactory. It can be seen from scrutiny of work that pupils are making satisfactory progress. The subject is well managed with good learning opportunities for the pupils; the planning follows the QCA guidelines; planning is very clear and includes links to other subjects such as literacy, numeracy and ICT.

Provision in religious education is satisfactory.

44. Pupils follow the local agreed syllabus in RE. The planning is good and the co-ordinator intends to enrich the subject with more visits to places of interest. The pupils have already visited a church and a Sikh temple. In the one RE lesson seen during the inspection, teaching and learning were good. Planning was good and the teacher displayed good subject knowledge. The teacher had created a relaxed atmosphere in the class and managed behaviour well. All pupils were fully involved in the lesson and the teacher showed skill in picking up their own experiences and linking them to the lesson. In Years 9, 10 and 11, pupils look at such topics as crime, the law and politics and moral issues such as abortion and euthanasia. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and Technology

Two lessons were seen in design and technology and inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work.

The provision for design and technology is satisfactory. This results in satisfactory progress and achievement by pupils throughout the school.

Commentary

45. The course is well planned and pupils appreciate its relevance. They make satisfactory progress, both in individual lessons and over time, in understanding the properties and uses of these materials for both decorative and functional purposes. Pupils are able to identify the uses and limitations of materials such as wood, plastic, metal and glass and know how to work with them to achieve a planned effect. They learn how to join materials to get both temporary and permanent fastenings. They are aware of the basic elements of effective design and they demonstrate that they can select and use resources and a range of materials to produce a product that is fit for its intended purpose. Many develop new practical skills, for example the use of a pillar drill or chisels, to a good standard and demonstrate satisfactory attainment in practical aspects of this subject.

46. In food technology, they use a wide selection of ingredients from all over the world to make meals and snacks in great variety. Pupils learn to use the equipment safely and hygienically. They are encouraged to complete design and evaluation briefs, select and prepare different ingredients, and know the most effective equipment for preparing food.
47. Older pupils have the opportunity to take the GCSE course, in which they have the opportunity to work with a wide range of resistant materials. Resources for teaching the subject are good although there are currently limited opportunities for pupils to have access to computers to aid pupils' learning.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and Design

One lesson was seen during the inspection and inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work.

The provision for art and design is good

Pupils' work shows that teaching is good overall and provision has been maintained since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well led, managed and taught and pupils achieve well.
- Good opportunities for pupils' achievement to be recognised through accreditation.
- The well structured learning opportunities.
- Limited opportunities for three-dimensional work.
- Limited use of information and communication technology.

Commentary

48. The course is well planned and pupils enjoy the experiences that are provided for them. They increase their skills in handling a range of media, extend their knowledge of other artists, the use of colour, line and tone, and the visual aspects of composition, including perspective. There is some limited use of computer technology in producing work.
49. In the lesson observed the teacher showed good subject knowledge, was aware of individual pupils' needs and set realistic and achievable challenges. The teacher's planned work keeps pupils interested in their work and more able pupils are able to work independently. Behaviour is managed well and the teacher has high expectations of pupils.
50. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are following a GCSE course and results are good with all pupils achieving a pass with some in the grades A to C. In the Year 11 lesson seen, pupils worked enthusiastically.
51. Accommodation and resources for teaching the subject are good although there are limited opportunities for pupils to use computers to aid their learning due to shortage of appropriate software.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Only one lesson of physical education was observed and inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work.

Provision in physical education is good.

This quality has been maintained since the last inspection because of effective development of the subject.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well led and managed.
- Good opportunities for pupils' achievement to be recognised through accreditation.
- Good range of sports activities available to pupils.
- Good links with other schools for sporting events.
- Limited opportunities for dance.

Commentary

52. Only one lesson and a football match with a visiting school were observed. The learning opportunities provided for pupils in Years 7 to 9 include all the elements of the National Curriculum except dance. The subject co-ordinator has appropriate plans to provide learning opportunities in the future by inviting a 'street' dance specialist into the school to run a workshop. The programme of learning for pupils in Years 10 and 11 provides a good opportunity for them to gain accreditation for their achievements through a GCSE and in 2003, the first year this opportunity was available, pupils have gained passes E to G in their examinations.
53. The curriculum is enriched well by the Friday afternoon activities when pupils are given good opportunities to participate in a wide range of additional sports activities such as golf and sailing. The school also provides good opportunities for pupils to be involved in more adventurous activities, such as climbing, during the residential trip to Wales.
54. The co-ordinator has established good links with other special schools locally and with schools further afield, which provide good opportunities for football matches and athletics events. Observation of a football match during the inspection indicates that these opportunities make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and their social skills. During school time pupils can participate in the badminton and tennis leagues and at break and lunchtimes teachers provide additional opportunities for pupils to practice their football skills during organised activities led by teaching and support staff. Visitors to the school contribute effectively to pupils' learning and the local football club and a county cricketer have provided coaching sessions for pupils. The recent admission of girls has been addressed well by the co-ordinator who is very aware that the school needs to ensure they are fully included in the activities available and that the curriculum is developed to sufficiently reflect their needs and interests. The co-ordinator has already attended a course about encouraging girls to participate in sport.
55. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The subject co-ordinator has identified appropriate priorities that will help improve learning opportunities further and these include continued development of the systems used to check pupils' attainment and the development of systems that will enable pupils to be involved in checking their own progress.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Only two citizenship lessons were observed and inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work, teaching and learning were satisfactory in both. No lessons of personal, social and health education were observed.

The learning opportunities provided for pupils in personal, social and health education and citizenship are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' learning is recognised by accreditation.
- The subject contributes to pupils' understanding of their community.
- There is no subject co-ordinator to lead and manage the subject.

Commentary

56. The programmes of study for both subjects provide pupils with satisfactory learning opportunities and include suitable modules about sex and drugs education as well as providing opportunities for pupils to learn about their place in the local and wider community. There is a satisfactory plan of what pupils will learn throughout their time in the school, which ensures that they do not cover the same work twice and more detailed plans have been established for many of the modules of work. These provide satisfactory guidance for teachers when they plan lessons. There are good opportunities for pupils' learning to be recognised and pupils in Year 9 gain credits for their achievement, which lead to the ASDAN bronze award and the successful achievement of pupils in Years 10 and 11 enables them to gain credits for the silver award. Curriculum plans and pupils' work indicates that teaching and pupils' achievement overtime is satisfactory.
57. Leadership of the subject is unsatisfactory as there is currently no one responsible for its management across the school. This is limiting further development of the subject because the school does not have enough information about how well it is being taught or how well pupils are learning.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

