

INSPECTION REPORT

SOUTHFIELD SCHOOL

Wokingham

LEA area: Wokingham

Unique reference number: 110191

Headteacher: Mr M J Pedley

Lead inspector: Alastair Younger

Dates of inspection: 17th –19th May 2004

Inspection number: 260364

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:	61
School address:	Gipsy Lane Wokingham Berkshire
Postcode:	RG40 2HR
Telephone number:	0118 9771293
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Kemp
Date of previous inspection:	30/11/1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a special school for boys and girls with emotional and behavioural difficulties. No girls have been referred for many years. The school provides education for up to 69 pupils and residential care for up to 20. There are currently 61 pupils and 12 of them are resident during the week. Pupils are drawn from six different local authorities. Most pupils are white and English is the first language of all of them. There are no refugees or traveller children. Four pupils are in public care. All pupils have statements of special educational need, reflecting the severity and complexity of their social, emotional and behavioural need. The residential provision has recently received a very positive report from the Care Standards inspectorate. Audits of the school's finances are also very favourable. About a quarter of pupils are entitled to free school meals, reflecting a slightly below average standard of living for many of their families. When they are admitted many pupils have been underachieving, some for several years, because their needs have not been fully met in other schools. In recent years, on average, the attainment of pupils on entry has been declining and is below average, though a few relatively higher attaining pupils continue to be admitted. This results in a very wide range of ability amongst pupils. The school has a new headmaster. This is his first headship and the inspection took place four weeks after he took up his post.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23587	Alastair Younger	Lead inspector	Science, art, modern foreign language, physical education, religious education
8941	John Fletcher	Lay inspector	
22178	Kate Robertson	Team inspector	English, information and communication technology, design and technology, special educational needs
15590	Sue Slocombe	Team inspector	Mathematics, personal, social, health and citizenship education, geography, history, music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a fairly effective school. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in many subjects. This is because most of the teaching is at least satisfactory and over a half of it is good. Pupils' care and support are sound overall and there is a good, recently appointed, headteacher. The school is funded at a much lower level than most other schools of this type and although it has several significant weaknesses it is providing **satisfactory value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- It has a good, newly appointed headteacher who has a clear view of where improvements are needed and a good grasp of how to make them happen
- Pupils are often well taught, though there are still instances of weak teaching
- The curriculum is unsatisfactory overall, but satisfactory for pupils in Years 7 – 9
- Provision for science is not good enough
- There is high quality residential provision
- Systems to manage extreme behaviour are not always effective.

Steady progress has been made in addressing the main issues for improvement but there have been several setbacks, often relating to the recruitment and retention of teachers. Curriculum development, in particular has not kept up with national initiatives to make it more relevant for pupils in Years 10 and 11. There are, however, many grounds for optimism, with the headteacher recognising weaknesses and quickly introducing new initiatives to remedy them. All in all there has been **satisfactory improvement**.

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.

Achievement is satisfactory overall. It is often slowed by unsatisfactory behaviour and low attendance. In Years 10 and 11, lower attaining pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to expectations but are provided with too few opportunities to shine in more work related activities. Nevertheless, achievement is satisfactory overall in the very important subjects of English, mathematics, information and communication technology and personal, social and health education. Achievement in science, though, is poor and the potential for success, recognised in statutory tests at the end of Year 9, goes untapped. For many pupils, the greatest success is to be found in design and technology, where achievement is very good.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. However, pupils' behaviour is unsatisfactory and misbehaviour often remains the biggest obstacle to learning, frequently being the limiting factor in the effectiveness of teaching. Even this, however, is an improvement on the extreme behaviours that resulted in the need for pupils to come to the school in the first place. On the bright side, there is little confrontation between pupils and they often show themselves to be appreciative of the help given to them by staff. Attitudes toward learning are unsatisfactory overall. When pupils are well taught they show a genuine desire to learn but they remain very intolerant of weaker teaching and quickly switch off when it is less than good. Attendance is unsatisfactory overall.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory overall. Teaching is satisfactory overall. There are highs and lows, but over a half of all teaching is good or better. The best teaching comes from those teachers with the most enthusiasm. These are not necessarily the most experienced teachers and several notable successes were registered by newly qualified and graduate teachers. In English and mathematics, teaching is satisfactory overall but teaching in science is unsatisfactory. As a result, many pupils express a dislike of the subject and go into lessons intent on not learning. The best teaching is in design and technology; it is imaginative and innovative and pupils know they are getting a very good deal. The consequence of this is that they look forward to lessons, work hard in them and achieve increasingly well. A minority of teachers demonstrate limited strategies for managing the most extreme behaviour of a few pupils and, all too often, this results in the necessary removal of them from lessons, with the inevitable consequence that learning, for these pupils, ceases. In most lessons, support staff play a significant role in helping pupils to learn and to moderate their behaviour. The curriculum is unsatisfactory overall because in Years 10 and 11 it is not suitably tailored to best meeting the needs of less academically orientated pupils or giving all pupils enough opportunities to follow more work-related courses in colleges or with training providers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is good, management is satisfactory and governance is unsatisfactory. The new headteacher has quickly established himself and is rapidly bringing about improvements. This is his first headship but after only four weeks he has already demonstrated that he has a very clear understanding of where improvements are needed and has successfully convinced the staff to back him. Senior staff, especially those in the residence and in administration, pursue their duties conscientiously and efficiently and are providing good quality support to the headteacher. The role of subject leaders is developing well and although they are not sufficiently monitoring standards yet the planning of subjects, where there is a specialist coordinator, is good and improving. Governors have been perceptive and successful in appointing a good headteacher but the governing body as a whole is not playing a sufficient role in the drive for improvement. There is a significant problem in that it is seriously under strength, with the result that too high a proportion of the body is actually the senior managers of the school. This compromises its ability to challenge or support these very people.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Many parents are luke-warm about the effectiveness of the school and a minority are openly critical of it. Nevertheless, the majority of parents are happy that the school is helping their children to make progress. In public, many pupils loudly protest their dislike of elements of the school but in private, during conversation with inspectors, they had hardly a bad word to say about it and feel that is helping them to make progress. Pupils feel they get a fair deal and enjoy a wide range of subjects, especially physical education, design and technology and art. Nearly all of the pupils who are in residence have nothing but good to say about it.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Bring more consistency to the management and promotion of better pupil behaviour and attendance
- Raise standards in science
- Develop a more appropriate curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11
- Strengthen the governing body and extend its influence in the leadership and management of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils leave with GCSE qualifications.
- Achievement is satisfactory in most of the more important subjects but poor in science.
- Pupils with the greatest literacy difficulty receive good extra support.

Commentary

1. Pupils are given good opportunities to gain GCSE qualifications in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, information and communication technology, art and design and physical education. In 2002, they gained an average point score of 10.4, which was about double the national average for similar schools. Last year there was a slight decline but the average remained well above that for similar schools. In that year, 43 per cent of pupils gained five or more passes and 72 per cent gained three or more. Again, this represented a small decline in standards from the previous year but is still well above the average. It must be remembered that in each case the group of pupils being assessed was under 10 pupils and that when this is the case it is possible for the performance of a single pupil to greatly alter statistics. In statutory tests at the end of Year 9, the school has seen considerable improvement in English over the past two years, with 40 per cent of pupils now gaining Level 4 or above, against 11 per cent in 2002. Mathematics scores have remained more static, but started off at a much higher level and last year, 61 per cent of pupils were at level 4 or above. In science, the equivalent figure is 47 per cent. In all of these instances, attainment is above national averages for similar schools.

2. The above statistics show a good degree of success in examinations but do not give the whole picture because they do not tell the story of lower attaining pupils. These pupils have few opportunities to gain qualifications at the end of Year 11 because the school has not sufficiently followed up alternatives that would accurately reflect their achievement. There are, for instance no vocational qualifications on offer. Nevertheless, the inspection found that these pupils are making satisfactory progress overall and it is a weakness of the school that this progress is not being rewarded. There are no major differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils except for those who either do not attend or attend only infrequently and consequently achieve little. Pupils with the greatest need for improving their literacy skills receive very good extra support in sessions when they are withdrawn from other lessons. This support is based on good initial assessment of need, good teaching and careful checking of progress.

3. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in English, mathematics, information and communication technology, religious education and personal, social and health education. This gives pupils a firm foundation on which to build achievement in other subjects. For several years, achievement in design and technology has been very good, with pupils achieving notable success in GCSE examinations. Science, however, is an area of weakness. There have been many problems in the department, mainly relating to recruitment and retention of staff. In the past, statutory tests and GCSE results have suggested that standards in science are similar to those in mathematics and on the evidence of inspection, at least one of the Year 11 groups should achieve success in this year's examinations. Nevertheless, the work of other pupils, as presented to the inspection team, and the many weaknesses observed in teaching points to a decline and the current work of pupils does not support the success that many achieved in statutory tests in previous years.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

4. Pupils attitudes to learning, their behaviour and attendance are unsatisfactory. Punctuality is satisfactory. Pupils spiritual, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall but their moral development is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attendance is unsatisfactory
- Structures for managing challenging behaviour are ineffective and pupils' behaviour is often the limiting factor in their learning
- There are very few incidents of bullying or racism in the school and behaviour in the residence is good
- Pupils like the staff and trust them.

Commentary

5. The school monitors individual attendance closely but has been unsuccessful in encouraging some pupils to attend regularly and there has been no improvement since the previous inspection. Overall attendance is unsatisfactory and is limiting the achievement of some pupils. It reflects weaknesses in the Year 10/11 curriculum and an increasing number of days lost through exclusion. Many older pupils also fail to complete work experience and often drop out of their college placements. The low attendance and relatively high levels of internal truancy mean a significant loss of teaching and learning time which is having an adverse impact on overall standards.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	13.1	School data	11.3
National data	N/A	National data	N/A

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

6. As at the time of the previous inspection, pupils' behaviour is often inappropriate. Allowances have to be made for the fact that many changes were afoot during the inspection, with a very recent regime change and also the fact that Year 11 pupils had just started their study leave, leaving a void at the top of the pecking order which a few Year 10 pupils were striving to fill. Nevertheless, the current system of rewards does little to moderate pupils' conduct. There are no specific individual behaviour plans in place for use in the classroom. Many pupils often show poor levels of concentration and perseverance unless teaching is particularly good. They walk out of lessons very quickly if good teaching has not captured their imagination or interest. Towards the end of last term the school faced a very unsettling time. Many of the past year's exclusions occurred during this period and related to pupils about to end their formal education.

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	52	18	3
White – Irish		5*	
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean		5*	
Mixed – White and Asian	2	1	
Mixed – any other mixed background	1		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1		
Black or Black British – African	1		
No ethnic group recorded	4		

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

* Pupils have since left

7. In lessons which engage and stimulate them, often those in practical subjects, pupils quickly get involved in their work, persevere with the challenges set, enjoy their learning and interact with staff in a mature and socially acceptable manner. In too many lessons, however, a significant number of pupils show little interest in their work and are uncooperative and rude to each other and to staff. Some of this behaviour is very obviously contrived, with pupils showing off in front of inspectors. After several of these lessons, pupils talked politely and positively to inspectors, often saying how much they liked the school. At breaktimes and in the residence, pupils' behaviour is often very good and there is little evidence of the need for overly high levels of supervision. There is very little physical confrontation between pupils but inappropriate, frequently offensive, language is commonplace and the attitudes of many pupils remain negative.

8. Despite this unsatisfactory behaviour, pupils like and trust the staff and relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils know that they can trust and talk to any adult in the school or residence, and that appropriate advice and support will be given. This means that fears or concerns that pupils have are dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils regard bullying as only a minor problem that is dealt with well. There is little bullying or racist behaviour in the school and the residence provides a very settled and secure environment.

9. Pupils' moral development is unsatisfactory. A significant number of pupils' show little respect for authority and the current behavioural system is ineffective in fostering the ability to see the effects of their actions on others and to consider others' feelings. There are also few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for aspects of school life and not enough effort is made to involve pupils more, so that they can develop a greater interest in their own learning and development. Pupils play little part in the running of the school. Even in minor tasks such as making their own toast, or loading the dishwasher at breakfast club, pupils are given few opportunities to use their own initiative to help staff. Pupils attitudes and behaviour are much better in the residence than in the classroom and it is in the residence where their moral and social development is better catered for, with good opportunities for visiting local facilities and taking care of their own living space

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

10. The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory and pupils are well cared for. The curriculum is unsatisfactory overall but satisfactory for pupils in Years 7,8 and 9.

Teaching and learning

11. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but assessment is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Over a half of teaching is good or better but in nearly one in ten lessons teaching is less than satisfactory.
- A minority of teachers have limited strategies for managing extreme behaviour.
- Support staff play an important role in the classroom.
- There are weaknesses in the assessment of pupils' progress and in teachers' lesson planning.

Commentary

12. Although pupils' attitudes and behaviour towards learning are unsatisfactory overall, many teachers are successful in encouraging and helping pupils to overcome their difficulties in lessons which are often well taught. This is the result of teachers' enthusiasm and determination to not allow the behaviour of a few pupils to interfere with the learning of others. Most teachers are preparing interesting lessons, designed to capture the imagination of pupils. They are varying their methods, incorporating practical activities wherever possible and helping pupils to overcome ingrained fear of failure and frequent laziness. This is particularly evident in design and technology, information and communication technology and physical education, where the very good subject knowledge of teachers shines through. In other instances, a lesson for three pupils withdrawn for extra literacy support was very good because work was very clearly planned to help each individual to achieve success. Computers were well used to help pupils work independently and a good range of additional resources was very effectively used to help a reluctant reader overcome his aversion to the point that he moved on to select his own reading book moments later. An equally successful Citizenship lesson for Year 10 pupils helped them to understand the problems of having to make choices. Pupils were involved in stimulating role-play situations, there was good use of humour and tight organisation ensured that the lesson moved seamlessly from one topic to another. In contrast to this, a follow up lesson led to little additional learning because pupils were involved in very little discussion and the task set for them (a multiple choice questionnaire) was too easy and unstimulating.

13. Whilst unsatisfactory behaviour is often well managed, allowing all but a few pupils to learn in most lessons, there are instances when unsatisfactory behaviour is allowed to escalate to the point where learning for most pupils in a class ceases. The fact that these lessons are in a small minority demonstrates that the pupils are not unteachable or unmanageable but that teachers require special skills. A very small minority do not demonstrate these skills. In science, for instance, lessons rarely get off to a stimulating start and pupils take advantage of the many pauses as teachers wait unsuccessfully for minor indiscretions to be resolved. They often are not, and in the meantime other pupils have become frustrated by the lack of teaching and start to misbehave. One weakness is teachers talking to pupils who are not listening. The newly qualified physical education teacher successfully avoids this trap by insisting on eye contact when he is talking but a few other teachers waste their breath talking to the backs of pupils' heads. The reward and sanction situation operated by the school is not helping teachers because it is being abused, with marks for good effort and behaviour being far too generously awarded by several teachers in the hope that this will pacify the worst behaved.

14. There is a skilled team of support assistants. In most lessons they support pupils' learning effectively but occasionally their role becomes predominantly one of behaviour management.

Support is at its best when a balance between the two is maintained. It is weakened when individuals are expected to take on too much responsibility for behaviour and not enough for supporting pupils' learning. A delightful example of value added work between teacher and support assistant was observed in a Year 9 French lesson. Both were fluent in the language and their ongoing conversation aroused the curiosity of pupils who were trying to work out what was being said. In most lessons, support staff work with lower attaining individuals. They are effective in this but it does occasionally mask the fact that there is a need for teachers to prepare work that these pupils can attempt with more independence. Occasionally, for instance, support staff find themselves doing large amounts of pupils' recording for them.

15. Assessment for pupils who are withdrawn for extra literacy support is good. Targets for each lesson are regularly and realistically reviewed with pupils. This ensures that they are fully involved in their learning and the progress they make. The quality of individual education plans and the targets set within them are good. The targets are specific to individual pupils' needs, and are set at levels that are based on the SENCO's assessment. There is a problem though in that many teachers are paying insufficient attention to them. Lesson planning frequently makes no mention of individual targets and in many lessons planned tasks are the same for all pupils, irrespective of their ability. Although these pupils get extra support to complete their work this still results in an inequality of opportunity for them and also, occasionally, for under challenged higher attaining pupils. Although there are regular staff meetings to discuss the progress pupils are making against their targets, the information that staff offer is 'off the cuff' and needs to be more securely based on specific evidence. Too often, assessment is more focussed upon behaviour than learning and much of this is either anecdotal or relies too heavily upon the flawed reward system. Not enough is currently being done to systematically record the academic progress that pupil make nor to use this information to plan lessons.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5 (15%)	14(43%)	11(33%)	1(3%)	2(6%)	0

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

The curriculum

16. Overall, the curriculum is unsatisfactory. It is satisfactory for pupils in Years 7, 8, and 9 but unsatisfactory for pupils in Years 10 and 11. There is good enrichment of the curriculum. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The vocational curriculum has not been developed sufficiently to provide for the interests and aspirations of some pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities and visits expands pupils' classroom learning.
- Provision in several subjects is restricted by the lack of teachers with relevant subject expertise.

Commentary

17. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. In Years 7, 8, and 9, it is satisfactory and learning opportunities for pupils are at least adequate or better in the majority of subjects. An exception to this is science where provision is poor. Staff absences and lack of subject expertise have restricted development in history and geography. A few subjects have no permanent co-ordinator due to difficulties in recruiting appropriately qualified teachers with relevant knowledge and experience but where specialist teachers are leading subjects these subjects are developing well. There are suitable plans to address these issues as soon as is possible.

18. Learning opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11 are limited. Pupils have little access to vocational and work related courses that would provide more appropriately for some pupils' individual abilities, needs, and interests. Although pupils in Year 11 attend college for short 'taster' courses, these are not planned as an ongoing, integral part of the curriculum. All pupils, towards the end of their time in the school, have the opportunity to undertake well-planned work placements with local firms. Although a number of pupils complete these successfully, many attend briefly, or not at all. Careers education and guidance is well supported by staff from the careers' service and by a variety of speakers from local organisations. Accreditation for pupils' vocational work is limited. At present most pupils study for the GCSE but the range of accreditation for lower attaining pupils is very limited. Across the whole school, daily tutorial lessons are not used efficiently. They are inadequately planned and have no real focus, resulting in the ineffective use of a considerable amount of time. This was identified in the previous report as an area in need of improvement, but improvement is not evident.

19. A good range of organised, relevant, and interesting activities take place after school. These are well attended by pupils, some of whose transport is arranged for a later time so that no pupils who wish to attend are excluded. Pupils who reside at the school have many opportunities to select from a wide variety of activities both within the school and in the local area. Day visits and residential trips provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills. As part of the forthcoming trip to France, pupils will be able to experience a different culture and environment.

Care, guidance and support

20. Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are well provided for. The support and guidance made available to pupils is satisfactory. The school values pupils' views and is seeking to involve them more in day-to-day organisation.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is vigilant, has good procedures and is effective in securing pupils' well-being.
- Care and support for pupils is enhanced through the effective links with external agencies and specialists.
- Systems for monitoring achievement and personal development are underdeveloped, inconsistently used and do not effectively inform the otherwise satisfactory support and guidance provided.
- There are opportunities for pupils to express their views and opinions, but regular surveys of opinion are not undertaken.

Commentary

21. Comprehensive arrangements for child protection are in place and the school is both vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities. Staff show consistently good levels of care and concern and ensure that day to day activities are carried out safely. Appropriate supervision is always provided and full risk assessments are always undertaken in relation to visits and off site activities. The consistently good level of care provided for residential pupils is supported by the recent National Care Standards report. Good systems ensure that identified hazards and safety concerns are quickly eliminated and the rules relating to medicines on site are strictly followed. Comprehensive records of incidents and accidents are maintained. Pupils enjoy trusting relationships with most adults.

22. From time to time pupils become disturbed and exhibit unacceptable behaviour. Staff know pupils well, are constantly alert to potential outbursts, minimise disruption and effectively ensure the safety and well being of others. Strong and effective links with a range of external agencies and therapists have been developed and are well used to enhance the support and guidance made available to individual pupils. The particularly strong links with Social Services and the Youth

offending Team ensure a broad professional input and have helped the school to develop more specific improvement and development targets for some pupils.

23. Procedures for recording and monitoring pupils' academic progress are unsatisfactory. As a result, the support provided to aid progress does not effectively draw on past achievement. The lesson-by-lesson monitoring of punctuality, language, effort and behaviour (PLEB) informs the weekly reward scheme but is cumbersome, inconsistently applied and not used routinely to help determine individual pupil's development targets. In extreme cases when personal development is at risk the school intervenes effectively and identifies tailored support targets. However planned personal development programmes for all pupils are not currently effective. The school is aware of this and is planning to review the PLEB scheme and the ways in which it can be used more effectively to aid pupils' personal development and preparation for life after school.

24. Individually, pupils are often encouraged to give views and opinions on their experiences and on aspects of day to day routines and they are always listened to, but there are no formal arrangements to routinely gather views or to involve pupils in the school's work and development. The School Council provides an opportunity for pupils to express views and make suggestions, it is appreciated by most pupils and has, for instance, been responsible for getting water dispensers installed around the school. Pupils are often not sufficiently involved in the review of PLEB scores at the end of lessons and, as a result, many feel that this is a process imposed upon them rather than one in which they are active participants. This reduces the system's effectiveness.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

25. The school enjoys a satisfactory partnership with parents. Satisfactory links with the community enrich learning opportunities. The level of interaction with mainstream schools and colleges is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents feel their children make progress but many are lukewarm about the effectiveness of the school.
- Satisfactory interaction with the community enhances pupils' social development and broadens learning experiences.
- Links with schools and colleges are underdeveloped and have been identified as a priority for improvement in the coming year.

Commentary

26. The majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school. They agree that their children are helped to become more mature and that they make reasonable progress. There is also positive support for the genuine and consistent level of care shown towards their children. Several parents expressed concerns about behaviour, the level of communication on their children's progress and the quality of advice they are given to help them support their children at home. Inspectors agree that these are all areas with scope for improvement. They are also priorities for development identified by the new headteacher.

27. The information and advice made available to parents on pupil development and progress is satisfactory. Annual reports provide useful commentaries on what pupils know, understand and can do and, for some subjects, good information on how to improve. There is an annual parents' evening at which parents can meet teachers and discuss children's achievements and parents are encouraged to contact school if they have any concerns. The relatively new initiative to ring home with highlights of good effort and achievement is highly valued by parents and is a good development. Annual reviews are well attended. Detailed reports and regular home visits by care staff in respect of residential pupils secure a closer partnership with these parents and carers. There is no regular newsletter to celebrate achievements and the school does not organise special evenings on topics that will help parents to support their children at home.

28. The school enjoys satisfactory links with the community. There are occasional lettings of premises to local clubs and societies. Pupils often visit community facilities and there are regular outings and trips to local places of interest, which extend and enrich learning experiences. Good use is made of local sporting facilities and the school competes against local teams in sporting fixtures. Community figures visit the school to contribute to the learning programmes but links with local companies and businesses are underdeveloped and this contributes to a weakening of the curriculum for older pupils. Residential pupils get good opportunities to interact with the community on frequent outings in the evenings.

29. Links with mainstream schools are unsatisfactory. There are recent initiatives to enable pupils to join in with occasional lessons in a mainstream environment. College links are underdeveloped. Opportunities for pupils to attend taster days at local colleges are available but no pupils are currently following vocational courses at college and there is no collaboration with colleges over the provision of work related programmes. Good plans have very recently been developed to provide much improved vocational options next year, which will involve close collaboration with a local college and some local employers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

30. Leadership is good, the headteacher and senior staff work well together. Management is satisfactory but developments have been hindered by staff absences and by the lack of specialist teachers for several subjects. The governance of the school is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and is moving quickly to address the main weaknesses.
- Senior staff are providing good support.
- The governing body is under-strength and its role in supporting and monitoring the work of the school is limited.
- Finances are very well administered and are used effectively to support the school's priorities.

Commentary

31. The headteacher provides good leadership based on a clear vision of how he intends to improve the school. He has very quickly identified the school's main strengths and weaknesses and has used this as a basis for perceptive and innovative plans for improvement. He has a comprehensive knowledge of means by which advice and additional funding to support future developments for the school may be obtained. The headteacher is providing a clear sense of direction at this crucial time in the school's development. Senior staff are very supportive of the headteacher and play an important role in the organisation and smooth running of the school. In particular the staff responsible for residential provision work closely with the headteacher and school staff in providing very efficient, high quality care for the pupils in their charge. Procedures for the handover from education to care staff, and vice versa, are carefully followed to ensure that all relevant information is shared and understood on a daily basis.

32. The management of the school is satisfactory. The work of subject co-ordinators is developing well in many subjects and planning of the curriculum and schemes of work by established subject specialists is good. However, procedures for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' work are insufficiently detailed, lack clarity, and do not provide a focus on learning. Because of the emphasis on the managing and recording of pupils' behaviour, insufficient information is available on their achievement in lessons and it is often unclear how much pupils have learned, and what progress they have made. Strategies for managing and promoting pupils' behaviour are underdeveloped and are not used consistently.

33. Day to day administration is very efficient and financial procedures are followed correctly. Financial control is good with the records of expenditure meticulously kept. The business manager provides regular, detailed information to the headteacher and the finance committee. Every effort is made to ensure that purchases are cost effective and procedures for obtaining competitive tenders are in place. In previous years a greater than average proportion of the budget has gone unspent and a significant reserve has been built up. This year, the school has sufficient funds to meet immediate priorities. This has involved considerable inroads into reserves and future improvements identified in the strategic plan will require additional monies. At present, the school is funded at a much lower level than others of its type. The development of an appropriate alternative curriculum for Year 10 and 11 pupils will depend on the additional funding the school may be able to attract.

34. The governing body is significantly under strength. Recruitment of new governors is a real issue for the school. At present there are insufficient governors for there to be an appropriate committee structure and for governors to gain sufficient first-hand evidence of the school's strengths and weaknesses. For the past year, school staff have formed almost one half of the governing body, with the result that if any of the other governors are absent, staff carry a majority vote on decisions. This situation has not been abused in any way but it is an undesirable situation to be allowed to continue. Planning by the headteacher to attract new governors from parents and from the local community is in hand and the governing body has already increased in number.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1001369	Balance from previous year	131305
Total expenditure	1083376	Balance carried forward to the next	49298
Expenditure per pupil	16415		

* figures for the Year 2003 – 2004 are due to be released and show a considerably lower balance.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range of accreditation opportunities for older pupils is limited
- Activities in lessons are not meeting the needs of pupils whose literacy levels are low
- Withdrawal support for pupils with literacy difficulties is very good
- Displays in the two English classrooms are effective in celebrating achievement
- Systems for assessment are ineffective in identifying what pupils know, understand and can do

Commentary

35. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory throughout the school and the subject is satisfactorily led and managed. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils are capable of engaging in conversations maturely, expressing themselves clearly, listening well and responding sensibly when teaching is good. At other times, they are reluctant to speak or listen and can become abusive and truculent. Reading is satisfactory and higher attaining pupils read fluently. They make satisfactory progress in their writing with some more able Year 10 and 11 pupils write fluently and concisely in well-constructed sentences. Whilst pupils in these year groups follow GCSE courses in language and literature, accreditation for lower ability pupils is limited. Currently they may leave school without any certification.

36. The three-part lesson structure of an introduction, a main activity and a final review is evident as part of the literacy strategy, which is well implemented. During lessons most pupils have a good attitude to their work but when lessons are taught in an uninspiring or unimaginative way a minority of pupils become distracted and this leads to restlessness and poor behaviour. The situation is made worse when pupils arrive late and then take too long to settle down to work. When expectations are high and pupils are presented with more inspiring activities pupils listen well and are productive. For instance, one Year 7 lesson was successful because the teacher had prepared a series of interesting activities based around the text for *Treasure Island*. The good mix of practical and written tasks ensured that pupils were productive. A Year 9 group demonstrated a good understanding of the *trans* prefix when beginning a unit of work on the transition to the next stage of their education. They suggested and considered the meanings of a variety of words including *translucent* as examples. The range of ability in classes is wide and often activities for pupils with significant literacy difficulties do not meet their needs sufficiently, this inevitably impacts on pupils' behaviour in lessons. For instance, when a pupil with reading difficulties became bored with a play reading he eventually walked out of the room. There are no computers in classrooms and therefore new technology is not used sufficiently well to support or extend learning.

37. Withdrawal support for pupils with literacy difficulties is very good. In these sessions, pupils have very specific targets and a range of interesting and effective resources is used to stimulate and inspire pupils to learn. In one session for example, a range of games, the use of a computer program and one-to-one spelling work successfully met the pupils' needs. The very firm approach and involvement of pupils in their own learning through the target system ensured that pupils' achievement in these sessions was good. Good systems for assessing pupils on entry to the school and regular testing are in place for all pupils but assessment procedures still lack the necessary rigour to track pupils' progress as they move through the school.

38. Displays in both English classrooms are good. They are especially stimulating in the classroom for younger pupils. Vibrant colours and evocative images act as a suitable background for celebrating pupils' achievements, whilst also being utilised as an aid to teaching. Pupils are proud of their work and appreciate the value their teachers' place on their accomplishments.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

39. The school provides satisfactory opportunities to promote students' literacy skills through other subjects of the curriculum. In many lessons, teachers are helping pupils to improve their vocabulary, reading and writing but these opportunities are not sufficiently planned for to maximise their impact.

French

40. One lesson was observed and pupils' work was sampled. No overall judgement is made of provision but the lesson observed was well taught and pupils past work is good. The teacher uses a good range of methods to capture and maintain pupils' interest. Work in pupils' books includes a wide range of writing, word-searches, illustration and worksheets. This work is carefully marked and graded, often with accompanying, helpful annotation. Pupils are building up a good understanding of essential French, which would stand them in good stead should they ever need to communicate. They know numbers up to 100, can tell the time and know the essentials of polite conversation, for instance saying hello and goodbye and asking others what their name is. In the lesson observed the teacher and assistant worked very well together, both using French fluently and setting pupils a good example. Bright, informative, displays around the classroom give pupils a good taste of French culture. Pupils behaved well and most were engrossed and worked hard to achieve success as they learned the names of colours, revised the names of items of clothing and practised their pronunciation.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievement of pupils in Year 9 and in Year 11 compares very favourably with those of similar schools.
- Procedures for the monitoring and assessment of individual pupil's learning are inadequate.
- Strategies for managing pupils with extremely challenging behaviour are not always effective.
- There is good planning for the development of numeracy skills in other subjects.

Commentary

41. On entry to the school pupils have limited achievement in mathematics. From this unpromising start, however, they make satisfactory progress as they build up trusting relationships with the staff and are taught for much of the time by a teacher with good expertise in the subject. Standards of achievement are satisfactory overall. This is demonstrated by the improving results of tests and teacher assessment of pupils in Year 9, and by the number of pupils in Year 11 who were successful in achieving a lower grade in GCSE mathematics or gaining a Certificate of Achievement. These results compare very favourably with those of similar schools. A scheme of work linked to the numeracy strategy is well developed. It is instrumental in improving standards and in underpinning pupils' progress. Targeted support using special teaching materials to help pupils to 'catch up', is provided appropriately for those with low levels of mathematical skills and understanding.

42. Most pupils attend lessons willingly and want to learn. Teachers know the pupils well and how to influence and encourage them. However, there are occasions when pupils do not make sufficient

progress and lose interest in the lesson because the tasks and activities are not sufficiently well planned to match their needs, abilities, and interests. In particular, pupils are sometimes affronted, and challenge their being given work that they perceive as more appropriate for much younger pupils. Where tasks are interesting and demanding pupils generally settle and work well, as for example in a lesson for Year 9 pupils that involved collecting data by designing a survey and producing a tally chart. However, on a number of occasions, lessons are disrupted by pupils' very challenging and inappropriate behaviour and this slows progress. Strategies for dealing with such events are underdeveloped and pupils are too frequently rewarded for doing very little.

43. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Where behaviour is managed well and where the lesson is planned effectively to meet pupils' needs and interests, it is occasionally good. Support staff make a very positive contribution. They know the pupils well and often anticipate potential problems, thus preventing possible confrontations. Although teachers keep records of pupils' achievements these are focussed mainly on behaviour and effort. There is little detailed information on what or how pupils have learned. This is a significant omission particularly when pupils are frequently out of class, or decide not to take part in some tasks and activities. The monitoring of pupils' work is weak, as is the assessment, and does not provide the information that will assist teachers plan lessons that will meet individual pupil's needs.

44. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. The coordinator has identified, quite appropriately, some of the strengths and areas for improvement in the subject, in particular the need to develop the use of information and communication technology (ICT). Resources are good but they are not sufficiently used in supporting pupils' learning. There has been satisfactory improvement in provision since the previous inspection.

Mathematics across the curriculum

45. The mathematics co-ordinator has produced a clear detailed policy statement and action plan to support the implementation of numeracy in other subjects. An area of numeracy is chosen as a focus and teachers are expected to plan their lessons to include and develop this. Where this is done well it makes a very positive contribution to the improvement of pupils' skills. For example, in physical education, pupils were able to describe accurately the angle at which a javelin should be held immediately prior to throwing and at which it should be launched to best effect.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **poor**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been considerable decline in provision since the last inspection
- Teaching is very weak and, as a result, pupils achievement is poor
- A group of higher attaining Year 11 pupils are achieving well
- Pupils do not like the subject

Commentary

46. Science is a problem area for the school. This has not always been the case and the previous inspection reported that 'good standards have been maintained'. Since then, there has been significant deterioration. Part of the problem lies in the difficulties the school has had in recruiting and retaining specialist science teachers. There have been six in the past six years, so no continuity has been maintained in the development of the subject and leadership and management has consequently suffered. It is now weak. There is also a problem with the accommodation. It is not suitable for larger groups of pupils, with laboratory space for experimentation being cramped. Tenders for improvement are currently in circulation and money is available for improvement. There is also very little space for storage of equipment or for preparation of practical activities.

47. Teaching is frequently poor. The school's self-evaluation has identified this and observation of lessons confirmed the school's concerns. In addition to the poor teaching observed, the work in pupils' files adds further strength to the judgement. Much of it is badly organised, with many pieces of unfinished work. In some instances the work that pupils completed last year is of a higher standard than the work they are doing now. Expectations are far too low. Pupils record very little. It is reported that 'if pupils write about anything it will be a sentence to cover a whole experiment', yet these are the same pupils as those writing suitably extended pieces in English. Planning for lessons rarely identifies clear learning objectives and there is no attempt to vary work to meet individual needs, with all pupils in a group being given the same tasks and the same worksheets to fill in; as a result, pupils do not have equal opportunities to achieve. The pace of lessons is slow. A Year 9 lesson, in which pupils were testing leaves for starch floundered because equipment had not been prepared in advance and whilst the teacher was searching for apparatus in a disorganised store pupils lost interest and started to misbehave. Very few strategies are evident to manage misbehaviour, which consequently swiftly escalates to the point where pupils' learning ceases. Too much reliance for behaviour management is put upon a good support assistant.

48. Pupils achieve very little. There is an exception though in Year 11, where a group of higher attaining pupils have completed a good variety of work to a relatively high standard. This class has a different teacher and most of these pupils are expected to gain a lower grade pass in GCSE science this year. No lessons for this group could be observed as they were on study leave but it is clear that the teaching of this group is much better than that for the rest of the school. Work is carefully marked, with helpful hints as to how it could be improved; comments such as 'remember the units or you may lose marks in the exam' are simple but effective. There is good attention to promoting numeracy, through the use of formulae, the solving of equations and the drawing of graphs.

49. It is very evident that pupils do not enjoy science lessons. In conversation, many express the view that it is their least favoured subject. The coordinator reports that 'there seems to be a culture of science not being liked by pupils', but several pupils voice the opinion that this was not always the case and that they used to enjoy it. Certainly, some of the earlier work in their files shows considerably more effort and achievement than is currently being found. Year 7 science files contain several pieces of defaced and uncompleted work and there is little in these files to engender pride. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes in lessons often demonstrate their frustrations. They show little interest in their work, are openly abusive to the teacher and many simply do not turn up for lessons. All these factors present a significant barrier to better achievement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision for ICT is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The long term absence of the coordinator has affected pupils achievement in ICT
- Pupils enjoy using computers and usually make good progress in lessons.
- There are good resources in the ICT suite but there are few computers of a good enough standard to support learning in many other classrooms
- Assessment is an area for development.

Commentary

50. Development within the subject, until very recently, has been 'stalled' as a result of staff absence. As a consequence no pupils were entered for accreditation this year and there has been a deterioration in standards since the previous inspection. This has now been halted by the coordinator's return. Nevertheless, management by other staff and the very good use of computers in design and technology has ensured that pupils' skills development has been maintained at a reasonable standard. The lack of monitoring during this period also means that the school has not

ensured the best use of resources by teachers or identified the best way to support teachers in their use of new technology in their lessons.

51. The return of the coordinator has had a positive impact on lessons and in the lessons seen teaching and learning were never less than good, and occasionally very good. Pupils' attitudes were good and generally they behaved well. The teacher's firm management in one Year 10 lesson ensured that even when one individual misbehaved, this did not affect the learning of the rest of the group. Activities were motivating and the teacher's enthusiasm was infectious. The use of a mapping web site in a Year 9 lesson captured pupils' imaginations and they were soon immersed in their search for aerial photographs of their homes. Higher attaining pupils demonstrated their confidence in cutting and pasting images into their own presentation of a piece of work entitled '*Myself*'.

52. Systems for assessment are being updated, but currently do not sufficiently identify what pupils know, understand and can do. The achievements and progress of pupils in ICT lessons and in cross-curricular ICT work are not tracked closely enough to identify how different groups, as well as individuals, are progressing. In Years 10 and 11 pupils work towards a GCSE short course, but there are insufficient opportunities for less able pupils to gain accreditation. In the ICT suite accommodation is good, however few classrooms have computers limiting the use of ICT to support learning in other areas of the curriculum.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

53. Overall, the application and use of ICT in other subjects is satisfactory. Whilst there is clear evidence around the school in displays that different aspects of ICT are used in other curriculum areas to support learning, the range of applications is limited. ICT is used very effectively to record events and photograph the outcomes of various projects, but evidence of using ICT in pupils' work in different subjects is limited. Work is largely linked to word processing, information gathering, cutting and pasting or using ICT programs as learning tools or to modelling applications. The most notable use of computers is within the computer aided design element in design and technology where computers are used very well.

HUMANITIES

54. Work in geography was sampled in Years 8 and 9. History is taught in Years 7, 8, and 9 but none was observed during the inspection.

Geography

55. Geography is taught in Years 7, 8, and 9, but not in Years 10 and 11 with the result that pupils are unable to gain accreditation in the subject, irrespective of their ability. Pupils often enter the school with low levels of knowledge, understanding, and skills in the subject. They make progress and achieve satisfactorily in Years 7, 8 and 9. Although lessons are taken by a member of staff who does not usually teach the subject, teaching and learning in the small sample observed were satisfactory. The curriculum is insufficiently developed and the subject is not well co-ordinated as there is no teacher with the relevant subject expertise in the school.

History

56. The subject is not well co-ordinated and there is no teacher with subject expertise. Enough is done to ensure that statutory requirements are fulfilled for the teaching of history but on the evidence of the small sample of pupils' work provided for inspectors, the subject has a tenuous hold on the curriculum because insufficient time is provided for teaching and learning.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Religious education makes a considerable contribution to pupils' personal development, particularly in Years 10 and 11
- Teaching is satisfactory overall but insufficient attention is paid to varying work for pupils of different abilities and assessment focuses overly on pupils behaviour and attitudes

Commentary

57. Much of pupils' work in Years 7 to 9 is based upon the study of Christianity and Christian principles, not only in the United Kingdom but also in other countries. A good example is the study of the Greek Orthodox Church, which reminds pupils that religion is often global. Good comparisons are made between Christianity and other world religions such as Judaism and Buddhism. Pupils learning that nearly all religions have special books, rituals and places of worship. In Years 10 and 11 the subject makes a particularly good contribution to pupils' personal development as they learn about social and moral institutions such as marriage. They have made perceptive observations about the elements of a successful marriage, identifying the importance of trust, protection, friendship and support. In other work, pupils have discussed and learned about laws governing society. They show a keen awareness of the need for laws and prisons and have looked closely at the contrast between forgiving and seeking revenge.

58. The teaching, leadership and management of religious education are satisfactory, as is pupils' achievement. Most work is based upon the agreed syllabus of the local education authority, with pupils learning how to live in, and understand the multi-faith society in which they live. Plans for lessons accurately reflect what needs to be taught but, whilst acknowledging the wide range of ability in each class, not enough is done to vary work for pupils of different abilities. Nevertheless, the teacher prepares good worksheets to help pupils record their views and what they have learned; a sheet about how Siddhattha found enlightenment and became known as the Buddha was informative and challenged Year 7 pupils to fill in key missing words. Pupils enjoyed the exercise, sought help when stuck and worked contentedly and productively. There is a weakness in assessment in that it focuses more on recording pupils' attitudes and their behaviour, rather than providing an aid to help teachers plan more effectively to meet the needs of pupils of widely differing ability.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

59. Music was sampled, with two lessons being observed. One art lesson was observed and all pupils' work was looked at. Parts of two physical education lessons were observed. No judgements are made about provision in any of these subjects.

Art and design

60. Teachers have created a good environment for learning. It is visually stimulating, with informative posters and a wide range of pupils' work on display. When not on display, pupils' work is very neatly and carefully organised in individual portfolios. This gives it status and reflects the high expectations and professional standards of the teacher. As a result, pupils take pride in their work and most are keen to achieve success. The one lesson observed was satisfactory. Pupils were embarking on a new topic about 'People at Work'. Most of the Year 10 pupils showed interest and worked well as they selected detail from a picture they had chosen and relating that detail to a job they had previously identified as having an interest in. However, a very small minority of pupils behaved offensively and, although suitably managed, this detracted from the effectiveness of the lesson. Pupils' past work shows them to be building up good portfolios demonstrating a wide variety of techniques and a growing awareness of the work and influence of many famous artists such as Mondrian and Turner. Many year 11 pupils this year are entered for GCSE short course examinations and are in line to gain passes at the lower end of the scale.

Design and technology

61. Provision for design and technology is good overall. It is very good for work with wood, metal and plastic (resistant materials). No lessons were seen in either textiles or food technology, but planning shows good development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in resistant materials
- ICT is used very well to support the design aspect in resistant materials
- Resources and accommodation for resistant materials are very good
- Leadership and management is very good

Commentary

62. Pupils' achievement in resistant materials is very good. This is a result of the very good teaching that they receive. The very high standards reported by the previous inspection have been maintained. The specialist teacher is experienced and confident in the teaching of the subject and makes the lessons interesting and challenging for the pupils. In the lessons observed pupils were well engaged in their tasks. Both the teacher and support assistant gave good support, and careful attention was paid to safety and appropriate behaviour in practical rooms. Relationships with pupils are good and are used to motivate them to undertake the given tasks. On the few occasions when there were pupil outbursts the teacher dealt with these effectively but sympathetically. Pupils, who in other lessons were disruptive and rude, showed interest and concentration both whilst using computer aided design (CAD) and when making models.

63. Effective assessment is undertaken at the end of each unit or module and the subsequent support and advice give pupils confidence to achieve their tasks. Planning is thorough and provides a good framework for learning. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are entered both for GCSE and Certificate of Achievement, thus ensuring that all have some form of accreditation by the time they leave school. Results have improved and, increasingly, more pupils achieve higher levels.

64. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 experiment with their designs and practice problem solving. Staff offer skilled support to help them understand the processes they need to undertake when they plan, design, and make models. Many show good use of tools and materials and achieve their tasks well. For example, following an initial CAD lesson, Year 9 pupils produced good quality models for CD racks demonstrating growing confidence with tools such as saws and glue guns. Most pupils talk enthusiastically about their projects and take pride in their work.

65. Pupils' progress is well supported by the very good use of information and communication technology in their design work. Focussed lessons in the computer suite ensure all pupils have access to CAD and are well supported by the programs devised for recording their work. Design briefs are concise and easy to read and suitably pictorial for those whose literacy skills are poor. A wide range of software is used to produce graphics, technical drawing, desk top publishing and control system design.

66. Subject coordination is very good; there is a clear understanding that if activities are interesting pupils will not be inclined to misbehave. The accommodation is very good; there is a well-equipped workshop in which pupils may use metals, wood and acrylics. They also work on basic electronics. Much needed improvements in food technology and textiles have recently been developed and planning for these areas is good. The recently refurbished food technology room supports the development of this area well.

Music

67. Music is taught in Years 7, 8, and 9 and in one of the two Year 10 classes. A teacher with good subject expertise takes lessons for one day each week. Lessons are well planned, ensuring that any written work is within all pupils' capabilities. The small sample of teaching observed was satisfactory. Pupils generally enjoy making sounds but many are slow to realise that they need to organise these sounds to make music and that these skills and those of performance have to be learned and practised.

Physical education

68. Many pupils say they enjoy physical education and that they try hard. A good Year 10 lesson bore this out. In it, pupils were learning how to throw the javelin. All the participants changed quickly into appropriate kit and listened attentively as the teacher emphasised the importance of safety. The teacher adopted a friendly and informal tone but made it abundantly clear that when he talked, pupils listened and did as they were told. No time was wasted as pupils moved from listening and observing to participating in the exercise. The quality of coaching was very good and pupils quickly found out that if they took heed of the teacher's advice then their performance improved noticeably. Good attention was paid to incorporating elements of numeracy into the lesson as pupils were asked what unit of measure would be best to measure their throws and described the most effective angle for launching the javelin. Behaviour management is good. By making it very clear that if a pupil is not looking at him when he is speaking then that person is not listening the teacher ensures that his messages are being clearly understood. No empty threats are made. After a couple of reminders about behaviour, a Year 7 practical lesson was terminated slightly early and pupils then had then to continue a theoretical exercise in the classroom. This annoyed and disappointed many of them but it sent out a clear message for future lessons.

Personal social, health and citizenship education

Provision for personal, social health and citizenship education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well planned
- Assessment and record keeping are not sufficiently refined and do not provide a satisfactory level of information on pupils' progress and achievement
- Good support is provided by representatives of external organisations who visit the school regularly and are involved in the delivery of the course.

Commentary

69. The subject is well planned and documented and pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has spent considerable time in researching and writing detailed schemes of work that bring together PSHE, citizenship, and careers. Attendance at training sessions and advice from the local education authority have been helpful in providing information on how the three subjects may be planned and organised in one scheme of work. Lessons contain a wide range of topics intended to help develop the pupils' understanding of a number of complex issues, to improve their social skills, to increase their self esteem, and to manage their challenging and often disruptive behaviour. Procedures for the monitoring and assessment of pupils' learning are weak as insufficient information on pupils' progress and achievement is recorded to help teachers plan future lessons.

70. Good use is made of links with external agencies. Their representatives visit the school and provide information, advice and guidance specific to the function of their organisation. They also lead sessions on contentious issues where their knowledge and expertise is of relevance. For example, in a sex education lesson for Year 10 pupils, personal responsibilities and peer pressure were well

introduced and explored through role play. The pupils listened and watched carefully, answered questions sensibly, and were willing to share their views and opinions. They enjoyed the session and behaved in a mature and sensible manner. Work experience is well organised, providing opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11, not only to practise a range of skills, but also to gain a greater understanding of vocational activities. Unfortunately, a significant number of pupils either attend their work placements briefly or not at all.

71. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff are confident in the planning and delivery of the subject and plan tasks and activities that are interesting to pupils. However, these are not always well matched to the pupils' needs and abilities, as on such occasions when pupils with poor literacy skills are unable to manage a written task. An opportunity occurs at the end of every lesson for pupils to review and reflect on their work and behaviour, and for the teacher to award points for punctuality, learning, effort, and behaviour. This time is not always used well as not enough emphasis is placed on encouraging pupils to assess how well they have done.

72. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is aware of the areas that need improvement and is planning to deal with these shortly. At present there is little monitoring of teaching and learning thus reducing the opportunity to identify and share good practice and to rectify weaknesses in 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	5
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	5
Attendance	5
Attitudes	5
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	5
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	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
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	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	5
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
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).

For **special schools** without extensive examination results add a footnote as follows:

*In a special school such as this, **standards achieved** are judged against individual targets and not national standards.*