

INSPECTION REPORT

LEVER PARK SCHOOL

Horwich, Bolton

LEA area: Bolton Metro

Unique reference number: 131692

Headteacher: Catherine Hargreaves

Reporting inspector: Alastair Younger
23587

Dates of inspection: 10th – 14th September 2001

Inspection number: 235512

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	8-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Stocks Park Drive Horwich Bolton Lancashire
Postcode:	BL6 6DE
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	David Vickery
Date of previous inspection:	23 rd February 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23587]	Alastair Younger	Registered inspector	Religious education Art	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning How well the school is led and managed
8941	John Fletcher	Lay inspector		Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
27429	Margaret Smith	Team inspector	English Information & communication technology Equal opportunities Special educational needs	Quality and range of learning opportunities
27424	Alan Dobbins	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography History Modern foreign language	
22391	Nick Smith	Team inspector	Science Design technology Music Physical education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a special school for boys and girls between the ages of eight and sixteen. Most pupils are admitted with a statement of special educational need identifying emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. It was formed in 1996 following the amalgamation of Bolton's primary and secondary EBD schools. There are places for 42 pupils but at present there are 34 pupils on roll, all boys, all white and all with statements of special educational need. All pupils have been underachieving prior to their referral but only one is identified as having additional learning difficulties. About a half of all pupils are entitled to free school meals

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Lever Park has many weaknesses, most stemming from weak leadership and management. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall and leads to pupils making unsatisfactory progress. This is compounded by a poor, disorganised curriculum, within which many learning opportunities stand in isolation. Many pupils are not attending on a regular basis. This further interferes with learning as work missed is rarely made up for later. The leadership and management of the school have not succeeded in creating a school where staff work as one in the best interests of pupils. The stability that these pupils need is sadly lacking. Too much time and energy has been wasted on staff problems and not enough on those of pupils. The school is giving unsatisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Child protection and health and safety procedures are well developed.
- The school works hard to develop links with parents
- The accommodation is very good

What could be improved

- Teaching: pupils in Years 7 to 11 are making little progress because teaching is inconsistent.
- The leadership and management of the school: there is low morale amongst staff, school improvement is too slow and there is insufficient monitoring of teaching and the curriculum.
- The curriculum: it does not meet statutory requirements.
- Pupils' behaviour: there are many serious incidents on record.
- Attendance: many pupils attend infrequently. Several pupils frequently absent themselves from lessons.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

In accordance with section 13 (7) of the school inspection act 1996, I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1999. Since then there has been a significant decline in many areas, including leadership and management, the curriculum, teaching and pupil behaviour. Very little progress has been made in addressing weaknesses identified by the previous inspection.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	by Year 6	by Year 11	Key	
speaking and listening	C	C	very good	A
reading	C	D	good	B
writing	C	D	satisfactory	C
mathematics	C	C	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	D	D	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	D	D		

The most telling statistic is that not one of last year's leavers of last year's leavers gained an externally accredited qualification in any subject. This year's target is for 50 per cent of leavers to achieve one or more grades A to G in GCSE examinations. Given that only one pupil in the school has an identified learning difficulty, this target is very low. Primary aged pupils are achieving more than secondary ones. This is because their curriculum is better planned, there is a more consistent approach to its teaching and pupil attendance is very good. Pupils in years 7 –11 do not achieve enough in English because too little time is spent teaching the subject, expectations are low and the principles of the national literacy strategy are not applied sufficiently in other subjects. Achievement in mathematics is satisfactory. There has been more consistency in its teaching and organisation than in any other subject. Nevertheless, numeracy is not being sufficiently addressed in subjects other than mathematics. Achievement in science is unsatisfactory; not enough is taught and there are large gaps in pupils' knowledge.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Unsatisfactory. Many pupils do not show much enthusiasm for learning. Only the best teaching motivates them. Too often they do not make enough effort and this slows learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Unsatisfactory. During the inspection the school was orderly and many pupils behaved well in lessons but there are many serious incidents on record and two terms ago the school was closed for a short period of time because it was considered to be out of control. Incidents include physical violence and offensive verbal abuse. Many teachers spend a lot of time maintaining order in lessons, time which could otherwise be spent promoting learning.
Personal development and relationships	Unsatisfactory. Pupils take very little responsibility for their own actions. Many remain very self centred and show little respect for other peoples feelings. They do not learn to study independently and do not develop the maturity needed to return to mainstream schools. They tend to remain very dependent upon adults in the classroom.
Attendance	Poor. Although primary aged pupils attend very well, on average, only about two thirds of pupils on the roll of the school are attending at any one time. Just under a half of all absence is unauthorised. The situation is made worse by poor timekeeping in school and by pupils absenting themselves from lessons. If pupils do not attend, they do not learn.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 4 – 6	Years 7 – 11
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Most lessons were well taught during the inspection but over the past year too many lessons have had little relationship to previous lessons, or to subsequent ones, because teachers have not sufficiently been organising and planning what they teach. This has resulted in pupils learning only slowly and leaving school with no qualifications.

Over the past year about one in five lessons have been taught by temporary teachers. These are often called in at short notice and have only minimal guidance as to what they are expected to teach. This is the direct result of poor curriculum planning. It leads to a high amount of unsatisfactory teaching. The exception to this is mathematics, where there has been more consistency and pupils are learning at a satisfactory pace. In English and science there are positive signs of improvement but the teaching of personal, social and health education remains weak because it is badly organised.

The success of many lessons during the inspection was the result of good lesson planning and a concerted effort to make lessons interesting. One of the factors present in all of the best teaching was the way that support assistants provided a good link between teachers and pupils. A weakness was teachers' poor time management. This resulted either in time being wasted or tasks not being completed in lessons.

Numeracy is well taught as a part of mathematics but it is not sufficiently planned for or taught in other subjects. Literacy is well taught in the primary classroom but not well enough in secondary classes. Computers are not being used with sufficient regularity. The school is not meeting the needs of many individuals. Weak assessment practice results in teachers not having sufficient understanding of individual learning difficulties. Work and expectations are too often not appropriate. This demoralises pupils and slows learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Poor. The curriculum does not meet statutory requirements. There is currently no foreign language for older pupils and history, geography and music do not meet requirements. Religious education is being taught this year but has not been a consistent feature of the curriculum. There are large imbalances in the curriculum with, for instance, less than half as much English (for secondary aged pupils) than would be found in most other schools. Poor management of the curriculum resulted in no Year 11 pupils gaining qualifications last year.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Unsatisfactory. Spiritual and cultural provision falls short of expectations but moral and social provision is adequate.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection, health and safety, which ensure the well-being of pupils, are good. Procedures for monitoring behaviour and attendance are satisfactory but very little use is made of the data gathered and this is why the quality of policy is not reflected in outcomes. Procedures for monitoring academic progress and personal development are poor.

The school works hard to cultivate productive partnerships with parents and to let parents know how their children are progressing. It meets with a satisfactory degree of success, limited by the reluctance of many parents to become involved, for instance by attending their children's reviews.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Poor. The headteacher has vision but, all too often, valuable initiatives are started but not completed. Staff morale is very low. This has contributed to high staff absence and turnover with the result that teaching is unsatisfactory and pupils are not learning enough. The curriculum is being poorly managed.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Poor. There has been considerable recent improvement from the point, a year ago, when the governing body was described as 'useless'. A new chair, has brought organisation to the governing body and ensured that committees are formed and beginning to function. Lack of monitoring, coupled with the reluctance of staff to air grievances through the correct channels has resulted in governors not fully appreciating the problems facing the school. The governing body has failed to fulfil all of its statutory duties, especially regarding the National Curriculum.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Poor. Neither the curriculum nor teaching is being monitored. Behaviour and attendance are monitored but not analysed or evaluated. Staff, other than the headteacher, have no targets against which their performance can be evaluated
The strategic use of resources	Poor. Costs are about £15,000 for each pupil in the school. There are currently 34 pupils on roll. There are 18 staff, including the equivalent of nine full time teachers. Despite this, about 20 % of lessons were taught by supply teachers last year. The school makes inefficient use of funds available.

Staffing is unsatisfactory. About a half of the teaching staff have left within the past year and although they have been replaced there are many gaps in subject expertise. The situation has been compounded by the failure of a newly appointed humanities teacher to take up post at the beginning of term. The accommodation is very good. There are specialist rooms for most subjects and classrooms can provide an attractive learning environment. Weaknesses include the small hall for physical education and the small, underused library. Most resources are satisfactory but computers are not being sufficiently used.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Insufficient responses were received from parents about their views to reliably represent all parents. Nevertheless, all four parents who expressed views about the school were broadly supportive. Criticism related to behaviour in the school and lack of work being sent home. The inspection team has to disagree with many of the parents' positive views but support their negative ones.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The greatest difficulty facing the inspection team was the dearth of previous work. Very few subject co-ordinators could provide sufficient past work to back up judgements on achievement over the past year. Of the 17 pupils in Key Stage 4, only one Year 11 pupil is attending regularly and 14 have only been in the key stage for one week. For this reason, most judgements in this report refer either to primary or secondary pupils.

2. Most pupils are not achieving enough. What they are being taught is often disorganised; they are not being taught enough and many are not attending. During the inspection, most pupils achieved success in set tasks but in conversation with teachers, management and pupils it is clear that over the past year this has often not been the case. In too many lessons pupils are being asked to learn for the sake of learning, unaccompanied by the great motivating factor that what they learn in one lesson will often be of use in another. This is not the case in the primary classroom where overall achievement is satisfactory because teaching is more consistent, the curriculum better and they are attending regularly.

3. Teachers are hampered in their efforts to evaluate achievement because there has been very little assessment of what pupils already know. This has resulted in either no targets being set for individuals or targets being very vague and uninformed. This situation is being remedied and initial testing has now taken place for about a half of all pupils. More urgency is required, pupils within every class have widely varying ability and insufficient attention is being paid to ensuring that work set is appropriately presented to ensure that all pupils can achieve to their potential. As a result, lower attaining pupils often have difficulty in learning because they have great difficulty in reading worksheets and instructions.

4. There has been a downward trend in examination results. Two years ago, pupils in Year 11 were passing examinations, including GCSE, in several subjects. Last year not one pupil was entered for any examination. This is not necessarily a fair reflection on pupils' achievement as disorganised management contributed to the situation. Nevertheless, staff acknowledge that there has been a downward spiral. This year several subject co-ordinators are optimistic that pupils will once again achieve success in examinations.

5. There are two notable success stories. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. This includes outdoor pursuits, and Bronze Certificates were awarded last year. It is hoped that pupils will achieve Silver and Gold this year. The Enterprise Scheme has been successful, giving a sense of pride in achievement to those pupils participating. After advice from an external consultant, this was set up as a business, run by pupils, and sponsorship was arranged. These two initiatives provide very good examples of what can be achieved by the pupils. More needs to be done to build on this foundation.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Pupils' responses are unsatisfactory. The good features mentioned in the previous report have largely disappeared. Some of this can be attributed to insufficient challenge, unsatisfactory teaching, and in some cases, inappropriate activities. In several lessons observed, pupils were inattentive, disinterested and left the class for little reason. Pupils

responded well to better teaching. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson, for example, pupils demonstrated mature attitudes in accepting the routines and discipline of the classroom and became fully involved in all tasks.

7. Behaviour during the week of the inspection was good overall but pupils' bad behaviour was a contributory factor to the temporary closure of the school eight months ago. An unacceptable degree of bad behaviour is recorded in incident books including physical violence to adults and other pupils and offensive and crude verbal abuse of staff. There have been a high number of exclusions over the past year. The fact that during the inspection there were never more than 25 pupils in school and never less than 18 staff almost certainly contributed to good behaviour seen during the inspection. Bad behaviour was always, a contributory factor to weaker teaching. Staff, governors, parents and the LEA report that behaviour is usually a lot worse than that seen by the inspectors.

8. Very little is done to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their learning and actions. There is virtually no independent study. No pupils have developed to the point where return to mainstream school is a feasible possibility. Table manners at lunchtime are good, but opportunities are missed to give pupils responsibility for simple duties in the dining room.

9. The overall attendance at Lever Park is poor. It has got worse since the last inspection. In the past year, 2,479 half days have been lost through unauthorised and 3105 through authorised absence. This means that on an average, only two-thirds of pupils attend each day. This significantly reduces opportunities for learning. Punctuality at the start of the day is satisfactory but teaching and learning time is lost throughout the day because lessons often start late and breaks overrun. There is a significant internal truancy problem across the school. Pupils in the school often experience moments of frustration and crisis and it has become the norm at these times to leave the room and go for a walk around the grounds. Whilst these pupils are usually back in class relatively quickly the practice interrupts and restricts further effective learning time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

10. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall but satisfactory for primary pupils. Although three out of five lessons were well taught during the inspection, about one in seven were less than satisfactory. Good lessons were well planned and offered suitable challenge to pupils, demonstrating that there is a core of teachers who are able to teach well. The main problem is that, with a disorganised curriculum, lack of consistency and poor long term planning, the good practice seen in individual lessons is not leading to sustained learning.

11. The best teaching is mainly by longer standing and more experienced teachers. The weakest is by temporary staff who have had not had the opportunity to establish relationships with pupils and are given virtually no guidance and support. They are often called in at short notice and have only minimal guidance as to who or what they are expected to teach. The situation is made worse by the high number of lessons being taught by these teachers. It contributes to pupils learning only slowly and last year leaving school with no qualifications.

12. Too many lessons have little relationship to previous lessons, or to subsequent ones. An example of good practice was seen in a mathematics lesson for Year 9 pupils. Pupils used their previous learning to help them to evaluate statistically the value of cars in the school car park. The lesson succeeded because pupils saw its relevance and because they were well motivated. In contrast a history lesson, on the legends of Rome, being

taught at short notice, failed to gain the attention of pupils. They questioned why they were being taught this in the first place and, in the short time available, by the time the teacher had explained why it was the end of the lesson.

13. Several teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge. When accompanied by a good understanding of pupils this usually leads to good learning. This is especially evident in secondary mathematics, where there has been more consistency and pupils are learning at a satisfactory pace limited, mainly, by spasmodic attendance.

14. The success of many lessons during the inspection was the result of good lesson planning and a concerted effort to make lessons interesting. One of the factors present in all of the best teaching is the way that support assistants provide a good link between teachers and pupils. A weakness is teachers' poor time management. This results either in time being wasted or tasks not being completed in lessons. Numeracy is well taught as a part of mathematics but it is not sufficiently planned for or taught in other subjects. Literacy is well taught in the primary classroom but not well enough in secondary classes.

15. Provision for meeting special educational needs is inconsistent. In the best lessons, individual needs are met through good planning. Too often, the class is taught as a group and less able pupils, unable to keep up independently, either fail to learn, or become dependant on the support assistant. Weak assessment practice results in teachers not having sufficient awareness of individual learning difficulties. Work and expectations are too often not appropriate. This demoralises pupils and slows learning.

16. A weakness, present in too many lessons, is the habit of teachers to allow pupils experiencing problems to leave the room. Whilst this enables the lesson to proceed to the benefit of those remaining, it results in several pupils taking advantage of the system to avoid work and not benefiting from the otherwise good teaching. In this respect this is not a satisfactory strategy for behaviour management. For instance, in a Year 7 religious education lesson one of the five pupils present was absent from the class and learned nothing. In the absence of any contingency or system to ensure that the work he missed would be made up it is clear that this pupil, representing one fifth of the class, is not making progress.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

17. The curriculum falls well short of expectations. It does not meet statutory requirements. It has deteriorated since the last inspection. The curriculum is neither broad nor balanced. Insufficient time is allocated for the teaching of English, science, history, geography and music and no modern foreign language is taught. This is partly due to the fact that, at 22.5 hours, the school week is very short for older pupils. Religious education is currently being taught, but has not consistently been over the past year. Mathematics provides the best example of a satisfactory curriculum.

18. The National Literacy Strategy has not been introduced for pupils in Years 7,8 and 9, even though the intention to do so was expressed at the time of the last report, and appears in the development plan for 1999. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have not been effectively implemented in subjects other than mathematics and English.

19. There are insufficient opportunities for older pupils to follow relevant college courses in vocational subjects. This further reduces the relevance of the curriculum. When coupled

with the absence of any external accreditation for Year 11 pupils it is not surprising that many pupils choose not to attend. A Breakfast Club is operating successfully but there is little evidence of other extra curricular activities, though it is hoped to provide a residential experience later in the year.

20. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have a weekly careers' lesson and have access to a careers' officer. However, the two lessons observed during the inspection were poor, and pupils gave no indication that they had any confidence in their future. They showed no interest in planning for work experience. There was little evidence of resources to inspire, or inform pupils about career opportunities. This has had the effect of de-motivating pupils and is not preparing them for leaving school.

21. Older pupils have fewer opportunities than their peers in other schools. This is because they are leaving with no qualifications, often no work experience and with very little understanding of careers. Primary aged pupils have not had equal opportunities for recreation for some time. For the past year they have not had breaktimes outside because their safety cannot be guaranteed. This is not much of a childhood for them. It could easily be remedied by staggering breaktimes, but no one seems to have thought about that.

22. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is unsatisfactory overall. It has deteriorated since the last inspection. The school is not overtly spiritual. For example, there is no planned programme of visits by religious leaders in the local community or opportunities to give thanks, for example at lunch-times. Spiritual development is mostly promoted through the programme of assemblies, though counselling sessions following periods of 'time-out' provide opportunities to discuss concepts such as trust and respect.

23. Pupils are taught to discern between right and wrong. One of the reasons they are in the school is because of their difficulty in controlling their emotions so it is understandable why satisfactory provision does not always produce satisfactory outcomes. Many staff develop good relationships with the pupils, especially support assistants, who make a valuable contribution to pupils' moral development. They follow pupils from class to class and most often are the first adults pupils speak to for support, advice and counselling.

24. Lessons in personal, social and health education focus in a direct fashion on issues to do with social development, including sex education and drugs misuse. At lunch-times, pupils, accompanied by an adult, sit in small groups to eat their lunch. In these less formal situations, good relationships are established to the benefit of pupils social development. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 spend nights away under canvas as part of their Duke of Edinburgh programme. These make a significant contribution to their social development, especially though increasing their self-confidence.

25. Cultural provision is weak. It is at its best in art where pupils have studied African and Aboriginal art. This term pupils are being taught about the importance of faith to people of different cultures and about Ancient Greece and Rome but there is little evidence of any concerted study though several good quality displays emphasise the history and traditions of different people. There are weaknesses relating to pupils' understanding of their own locality and culture. In the light of recent racially motivated unrest in neighbouring towns this is an area urgently in need of development.

26. Links with other educational institutions and the local community are unsatisfactory. Integration opportunities for pupils are not pursued with any vigour. In the last year arrangements with a mainstream school, for one boy, and with the local college for Years 10 and 11 pupils to follow a vocational course have ended unsuccessfully. Last year's

successful involvement in a Young Enterprise project brought Year 9 pupils into direct contact with nursery children at a local primary school and provided good opportunities for social development. The community element of the Duke of Edinburgh award provides a good opportunity for some pupils to extend their understanding of the wider community, as do off site activities on Friday afternoons. Nevertheless, many opportunities to use the wider community to enhance learning and development are not taken.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. Staff always show concern for the well being of pupils. Procedures to deal with child protection issues are good and the school is vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities. The school works effectively with the Educational Welfare Service, the police and the Youth Offenders team but has difficulty securing appropriate help from the Education Psychologists and Social Services. There are clear procedures to protect pupils' health and safety. Appropriate first aid supplies are available around the site and first aiders hold up to date accreditation. Clear accident and incident records are kept. The main weakness is that with a high number of incidents, some of them physical, and with pupils regularly absenting themselves from lessons it is not possible for the school to offer absolute guarantees of safety at all times.

28. Procedures for monitoring attendance are satisfactory. The school follows up unexplained absence on the same day. Working closely with the educational welfare officer, great efforts are made to encourage individual families to ensure their children attend. Gradual reintroduction packages are developed for school refusers and phobics. The school presents certificates and prizes for pupils achieving significantly improved and high levels of attendance on a half termly basis. That there has been no success in improving overall attendance levels despite these efforts supports the inspection finding that the school is not providing pupils with the curriculum they want or need.

29. The weekly points system, as operated, is an ineffective means of monitoring and promoting good behaviour in the school. Targets are not sufficiently specific, measurable or time related. The awarding of points at the end of lessons is inconsistently applied by different staff and tends to be over generous. This allows pupils to manipulate the system to ensure that they enjoy the reward of off site activities on Fridays. There is no ongoing monitoring of behaviour against the targets in individual plans and the data gathered from the weekly monitoring system is not used to develop and agree individual behaviour improvement plans. There is evidence from the incident book that there is bullying in the school and the confinement of primary children at break and lunchtimes shows that current procedures are not effective in eliminating oppressive behaviour. In this respect there has been a deterioration since the previous inspection.

30. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are unsatisfactory. Individual targets are too vague and recording of development is inconsistent. Pupils are not targeted to gradually take more responsibility for their actions and to show more understanding and respect for other people's feelings. Some sound opportunities to support personal development, to improve social skills and to help prepare for life after school are being provided for older pupils through the Young Enterprise Scheme and Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

31. The school's failure to assess and analyse academic progress effectively means that it is insufficiently informed about which pupils, or groups of pupils, are underachieving. This is a deterioration since the previous inspection. Pupils have individual education plans including targets for behaviour, literacy and numeracy. In practice only behaviour targets

are referred to. The special needs co-ordinator has previous experience but has only been in post since the beginning of term. She is trained in dealing with speech and language difficulties. So far half of all pupils have been assessed for reading, as each one is due for Annual Review. It is planned to complete assessments this term, and introduce initial assessment for pupils within six weeks of entering school. The co-ordinator has drawn up comprehensive plans to improve provision, and has been given sufficient non-contact time in which to implement them.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

32. The partnership with parents is not making a significant contribution to pupils' learning and development, although there are satisfactory links with parents and carers. The school is following a number of initiatives designed to encourage parents to become more involved in the school and in the education of their children. The undemanding nature of parents and carers is exemplified by the limited response to the questionnaire and the lack of attendance at a pre-inspection meeting. The few views of the school that have been received are complimentary about its work and the positive impact on their children. Two parents did comment negatively about standards of behaviour in the school and inspectors agree that behaviour overall is unsatisfactory.

33. Communication with parents is satisfactory. The school operates an open door policy and actively encourages dialogue. A few parents are beginning to use the school for help with day to day issues of life as well as a valuable source of advice and guidance on all aspects of caring for and bringing up children with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Frequent contact with parents by telephone and through the newly established programme of home visits is beginning to develop the partnership relationship.

34. The school is quick to involve parents and carers whenever there is cause for concern about any aspect of development or progress. A new initiative to report particularly good effort or achievement to parents, although initially treated with suspicion by parents, is now appreciated. Parental attendance at annual reviews of progress and development is poor, but the school ensures that parents and carers who do not attend are made aware of targets for individual education programmes.

35. Annual reports to parents give a satisfactory account of what pupils have done, their level of achievement, their attitude and effort and an indication of their targets for the future. However, there is a weakness in that they do not clearly state what pupils know, understand and can do and what they need to do to improve. The school has recently launched a parent support group. There was good attendance at meetings on drugs awareness and at a Social Services presentation but no parents turned up for an Educational Welfare Service presentation during the inspection. Future initiatives are planned to develop further the partnership and to encourage more parental involvement in the academic learning programmes; these include special evenings on literacy and information and communication technology.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

36. There has been a significant deterioration in the leadership and management of the school since the previous inspection. The new headteacher, appointed shortly after that time, has not been able to draw staff around her to create a stable and successful school. Morale is exceptionally low and there is an unhealthy degree of suspicion and recrimination between factions of the staff. Far too much time and energy over the past two years has been spent resolving staff problems and not enough on helping pupils.

37. Frustrations arise because the headteacher, having vision and optimism, does not sufficiently follow this up with action. Too many initiatives and intentions fall by the wayside after very short periods of time. Responsibility for this state of affairs must be shared but ultimately falls upon the headteacher. Specific responsibilities assigned to her include curriculum development, monitoring and evaluation, staff development, finance, attendance and performance management. The inspection team judged each of these areas to be poor. On the positive side, child protection, for which the headteacher is also responsible, is good. The deputy describes his main function as 'building up the confidence of staff in the headteacher'. In the meantime the school is failing to provide a satisfactory education for its pupils.

38. The curriculum is poorly managed. Subjects, such as personal and social education, do not have a co-ordinator, and for most others, including the core subject of English, the co-ordinator is newly appointed and without training or experience in the subject. This weakens organisation, especially as information and documentation has not been passed on from previous co-ordinators. Notable exceptions are mathematics and art, which are well led. Many pupils are arriving in Years 4, 5 and 6 and are unlikely to leave until the end of Year 11. This represents about three-quarters of their compulsory schooling, yet very few subjects have plans to show how they will ensure no unnecessary duplication of work or omissions from National Curriculum programmes of study. Poor curriculum management is the main cause of weaknesses in teaching and learning.

39. The governing body is improving. A year ago there was effectively no governing body. A new and experienced chair has ensured that committees are formed. In the past year, meetings have become increasingly well attended, compared with a year ago when, on three successive occasions, there were insufficient governors present to ratify the position of parent governor despite her attending the meetings. Nevertheless, the governing body is still not playing its part in the development of the school. It is not monitoring any function of the school and is thus not able to hold senior staff to account. Lack of monitoring, coupled with the reluctance of staff to air grievances through the correct channels has resulted in governors not fully appreciating the problems facing the school. The governing body has failed to fulfil its statutory duty relating to its responsibility for ensuring that the full national curriculum is being taught.

40. The current school improvement plan identifies broad targets. It is not regularly reviewed, resulting in any progress or deterioration not becoming apparent until the end of the year. Whilst the written aims and values for the school are appropriate, they are not seen in practice. Most of this year's targets have been carried forward from last year, evidence of a lack of improvement in many targeted areas.

41. Strategic use of resources is unsatisfactory and the school fails to follow the principles of best value. Educational priorities are not arrived at by careful evaluation but tend to be reactive. Over half a million pounds is spent on the school each year. On an average about 25 pupils are attending each day and eighteen staff are employed, nine of them teachers. Despite this generous staffing there is extensive use of supply teachers to cover absence. This is not an efficient use of resources.

42. There have been few opportunities for training. Professional development is very limited, and appraisal of staff, other than the headteacher, through performance management has yet to begin. The absence of procedures to recognise the professional needs of teachers and support assistants, in combination with the rejection of money specifically earmarked to improve the expertise of staff, limits their effectiveness in promoting learning and in meeting the needs of the pupils. Despite the limited training

opportunities both head and deputy have had minibas competency training. This is poor use of training when so many more pressing issues remain. The induction of new teachers works satisfactorily. Support assistants have no formal programme of induction, but do take part in helpful, weekly meetings with the deputy headteacher.

43. The last audit was two years ago. There is an inventory and the day to day running of the school office is in good hands. There is insufficient command of the school budget. The school had great difficulty in presenting figures for last year to the inspection team. The use of new technology is unsatisfactory. Computers are very rarely used in lessons other than information and communications technology. Only £2000 has been spent on computers in the past year. The school has not made use New Opportunities Fund money to support in-service training in information and communications technology.

44. The school is generously staffed. Numbers are more than sufficient to meet the needs of pupils. However, the range of expertise of the staff does not match well with the requirements of the curriculum. There is minimal English experience and no teacher has expertise in a modern foreign language, resulting in the subject not being taught. Similarly, no permanent teacher has expertise in geography, history, music or religious education. Over the last year, these subjects were mainly taught by a large number of different supply teachers and in each subject achievement is low. Over the same period, about half of the teaching staff left the school and the rate of teacher absence was high, at nearly 20 percent. Each contributes to disadvantaging pupils, limiting the range of their learning by preventing them from building in an organised fashion on previous learning.

45. The accommodation is very good. The specialist teaching rooms for science, design and technology including food technology, art, the computer suite and the primary suite are all well designed, spacious and well resourced. Smaller rooms are well used for counselling pupils and for 'time-out' purposes. The administrative suite is pleasant and large. The hall is also used as the gymnasium, but good use of the local leisure facilities minimises this disadvantage. Storage space, except for physical education is satisfactory. The school is very clean and free from graffiti. The grounds are large and well kept. At break and lunch-times they are well used by older pupils for organised games of football, as is the games room for matches of chess, constructing models and for playing computer games. The library is small. It is not well used as a resource or in promoting the skills of independent learning.

46. Resources to support teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In geography and history they are unsatisfactory and in religious education they are poor. Over all subjects, but especially mathematics, the range and quantity of software programs, CD-ROMs and of other electronic aids such as programmable vehicles is very limited. As a consequence, only in a few lessons are computers used to support teaching and learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. In order to raise standards the school should now:

- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - Improving longer term planning to ensure that each lesson follows on logically from the last and leads into the next
 - Ensuring that planning is sufficiently detailed to enable temporary teachers to cover lessons.
 - Keeping pupils in classrooms whenever possible
 - Reducing the reliance upon temporary teachers
- Address weaknesses in leadership and management by:
 - Clearly defining absolute responsibilities and monitoring the effectiveness of senior staff
 - Involving all staff in improvement planning
 - Improving management by subject co-ordinators
- Remedy weaknesses in the curriculum by:
 - Ensuring that it meets statutory requirements
 - Improving its breadth, balance and relevance, especially for secondary age pupils
 - Improving assessment procedures and making better use of the information gathered
 - Providing greater opportunities for external accreditation
- Improve pupils' behaviour and attendance by:
 - Using information, already gathered, to identify trends and causes
 - Monitoring the effectiveness of action taken

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	58
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	8	27	15	6	2	0
Percentage	0	14	46	26	10	4	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents almost two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	34
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	14

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	N/A
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	N/A

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	18

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	15

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	34
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	62	6
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y4 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4
Average class size	6

Education support staff: Y4 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	131

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000 -2001
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	£
Total income	593,099
Total expenditure	595,077
Expenditure per pupil	13,224
Balance brought forward from previous year	55,694
Balance carried forward to next year	55,716

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

35

Number of questionnaires returned

4

Insufficient responses were received from parents for their views to reliably represent all parents. Nevertheless, all four parents who expressed views about the school were broadly supportive. Criticism related to behaviour in the school and a lack of work being sent home. The inspection team has to disagree with many of the parents' positive views but support their negative ones.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

48. Achievement in English is unsatisfactory overall. This shows a decline since the previous inspection. Pupil achievement is, however, satisfactory up to the age of eleven, where planning is better, the national literacy strategy is implemented and provision to meet individual needs is better.

49. Speaking and listening skills are promoted well for primary aged pupils, especially in the well organised literacy hour. Pupils are happy to speak out in class, and show confidence when talking to visitors. Positive promotion of speaking and listening skills is less consistent in the rest of the school, resulting in pupils having difficulty in expressing themselves fluently in many situations. However, in an above average Year 9 basic skills lesson, pupils entered into good dialogue with staff, patiently awaiting their turn to speak and showing respect for the views of others.

50. Primary age pupils make satisfactory, and occasionally good, progress in reading. One pupil is now achieving in line with national expectations. Enjoyment of stories and books is encouraged through the literacy hour, and pupils show interest and enthusiasm. In one lesson each pupil said something about the main character in the story they were reading. Support staff play a significant role in helping those with reading difficulties, ensuring they make steady progress.

51. In the rest of the school pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to read and reading records do not exist. A few Year 9 boys name books by Roald Dahl but most say they do not read out of school. Year 7 pupils are achieving at a lower level than the younger pupils in school, and are insufficiently challenged. This leads to unsatisfactory progress. Achievement in reading covers the full range from fluent reading with expression, to pupils who cannot read simple texts without help, but progress is not monitored throughout school so remedial strategies are not being adequately used. There is no consistency of approach to tackling unknown words. Some pupils sound out letters, and break down longer words, others simply wait to be told the word. Most of the reading observed during the inspection was of comprehension exercises on worksheets. This is very unstimulating. A much better example of pupils being encouraged to read was in a Year 10 lesson where pupils were reading newspapers. During the inspection Year 7 pupils were introduced to an abridged version of Dracula, and Year 9 to 17th Century poetry. No pupil has a reading book. The library was not used during the inspection, except as a classroom.

52. Shared and independent writing for more able primary aged pupils results in good achievement and at its best in imaginative stories, complete sentences and neat, well formed writing. Less able pupils fill in missing words with help from support assistants. Progress in lessons is good. Progress over time is satisfactory, limited by the little time available for this activity.

53. Progress in writing for secondary aged pupils is unsatisfactory. Most form letters well, though lower attaining pupils confuse upper and lower case letters and their writing inconsistently uses both. Lack of challenge slows progress. Throughout school there has been an over dependence on worksheets over the last year, very little work was presented

for scrutiny, much of it incomplete. Written work, during the inspection, for older pupils, was better, more imaginative and varied. However it is still well below national expectations in quantity and quality.

54. Observed teaching ranged from very good to unsatisfactory, with most being good or better. It is clear, however, on the evidence of the little work pupils have done over the past year, the lack of planning and the little progress that pupils have made, that this standard has not been maintained over the past year. The most effective teaching was seen in well planned, well structured, literacy hours for primary pupils and basic skills lessons in Years 9 and 10. A Year 10 lesson on 17th century poetry, and a Year 7 drama lessons were particularly well planned and the pace was good. These fostered good attitudes and pupils learned well. When there is insufficient challenge and individual pupils needs are not met, such as in a Year 7 basic skills lesson, pupils interest fades and escalating behaviour problems prevent learning.

55. The co-ordinator is newly appointed to the school, is not a specialist in the teaching of English and has no experience in co-ordinating English. He has not had the time nor support to make the delivery of English satisfactory. No schemes of work were left by the previous co-ordinator, and at present, schemes of work from another school, are in use and not sufficiently suited to this one. The co-ordinator has attended a two day Literacy Training Course, and is incorporating some elements of the strategy, into his planning. This is not adequate and the school has not fulfilled its stated intention to introduce the National Strategy for Literacy at Key Stage 3. The library is poorly stocked, and there is a limited range of computer software for the teaching of English. Computers are rarely used in English lessons, even though pupils are learning word processing skills in information and communications technology lessons.

MATHEMATICS

56. By the time they are 11, most pupils are attaining at a level more commonly found in pupils aged several years younger. When they leave school at 16 years of age they do so with no accredited qualifications in mathematics. This is worse than would be expected and represents a deterioration since the last inspection. There are, however, many positive signs that much better is to come.

57. Lessons for primary aged pupils are well planned by a teacher with a very good knowledge of each pupil's ability in mathematics. Good deployment of support assistants and good use of small resources such as cards, dice and coins allows all pupils to work on tasks appropriate to their learning. This is reinforced and practised through games that are made more enjoyable to the pupils because of the good relationships they have with the support assistants and the teacher. As a result, pupils take pride in their ability to recognise smaller and bigger numbers, in counting to 100, and by 5s and 10s to 1000. The highest attaining pupils apply their counting skills to money and calculate and give change up to £1.00.

58. Lessons for secondary aged pupils are made relevant to the pupils' interests. For example, the mean value of a distribution was introduced by checking the prices of cars in Glass's Guide before finding the average price of a car. In this lesson, Year 10 pupils were fully committed to their learning because of their great interest in cars. Year 11 pupils know how to use statistics. They describe a distribution of scores by the mean and median and easily recognise the range. The highest attaining pupils understand the usefulness of these statistics and use them to explain, for example, the average cost and the average age of a sample of cars.

59. As a result of good quality teaching, and for those in Year 11 the knowledge that a qualification is now available to credit them for their learning in mathematics, pupils are responding well. They are beginning to enjoy learning mathematics. In lessons, the good quality teaching is usually matched by good progress in learning. A barrier to stronger progress is that when pupils behave inappropriately they are too often removed from the classroom and many pupils miss additional lessons through absence. As a result pupils achieve at a lower rate than would be expected given the overall good quality of their teaching.

60. The recently appointed co-ordinator of mathematics has provisionally entered Year 11 pupils for GCSE examinations this year and has reorganised schemes of work to ensure that in future pupils will be better prepared to achieve success in examinations. The new teacher of primary aged pupils has undertaken numeracy training and applies the principles of the numeracy strategy well in her lessons. The Key Stage 3 strategy for Year 7 pupils is well organised, implemented well and is beginning to provide additional support to those pupils with the poorest mathematical skills and knowledge.

61. Schemes of work reflect national curriculum expectations. Increasingly, they are being used to guide lesson planning and are contributing to learning becoming more ordered than previously. More frequent assessment has started to inform lesson planning and is helping to identify pupils with similar needs. Textbooks from a single published scheme are used for all secondary aged pupils. This has limitations because it does not sufficiently provide good extension work for higher attaining pupils. Information and communication technology is under-used.

SCIENCE

62. There has not been enough improvement since the previous inspection. Pupil's achievement in science is unsatisfactory. Pupils have not been able to maintain laboratory practice or individual work over the past year and their achievements are lower than would be expected from pupils in similar schools. Work books submitted for scrutiny show incomplete work in aspects such as the knowledge of earthquakes, for the oldest pupils, and a decline in the quality of presentation and handwriting for those pupils who are fourteen. Books are damaged and work defaced. Not enough time is set aside for teaching the subject.

63. The school is addressing these difficulties and work and achievements over the course of the inspection indicate a positive trend. During the inspection, primary pupils carried out simple experiments to find out about how changes in state affect the volume of substances. They made predictions and recorded experimental findings in diagrams. Secondary pupils carried out safe, supervised experiments such as to investigate the effect of acids on metals. They enjoyed the excitement of the little explosion when hydrogen was lit. By the time they leave, pupils are working on practical topics and making crystals. The recent introduction of a GCSE course will hopefully encourage pupils to work at a much deeper level.

64. Teaching during the week of the inspection was at least satisfactory for all pupils and often involved good teamwork between teachers and support staff. Individual education plans are not effectively used and the quality of planning is inconsistent. When teaching was good it matched pupil's needs and made good use of previous knowledge. Relationships were good. Very good teaching occurred when teachers were confident, provided good resources and planned and explained objectives. However, on the evidence

of work produced, teaching over the past year has been unsatisfactory. Despite signs of very recent improvements there has been a decline in standards since the previous report.

65. The co-ordinator is new. An initial scheme of work is in place but this does not sufficiently stress the importance of planning for and including literacy and numeracy in science lessons. Nor does it address the importance of information technology. The co-ordinator has no opportunity to observe or join in with other teachers' lessons to help to evaluate how the subject is progressing. Assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory. Records of progress are not established and evaluation is under-developed. It is not possible to follow pupils' progress. Resources are satisfactory and enable an interesting delivery of the subject. The science room is well equipped, with gas and benches, a fume cupboard and a preparation room.

ART AND DESIGN

66. The rate of progress since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory overall but there has been a radical improvement following the appointment of a new teacher last term. Pupils are now achieving well, developing technique and becoming more confident and imaginative in their work.

67. Primary pupils study art as part of topics. In their work they develop satisfactory skills, they produce pencil drawings and paintings of objects they have observed and create collages by cutting materials of different appearance and texture and sticking these to a background. They become increasingly aware that texture and the natural appearance of different materials can be as important a part of a picture as the colours they mix when painting. Secondary age pupils have recently started to make good progress. They are losing the preconception that they cannot draw and are becoming more adventurous in their work. Added to this they are becoming more aware of, and influenced by, the work of famous artists and craftsmen such as Angus Suttie, the potter; Gaudi, the architect and Klimt, the painter. Pupils select appropriate tools, for instance they select different sized brushes when painting. Pupils have created visually stimulating models of insects, using wire and plaster. These show good observation and technique. Good displays of African and Australian native art show how pupils have adopted the techniques that make them distinctive and contribute greatly to cultural understanding.

68. Teaching is currently good, occasionally very good. It is leading to pupils enjoying working, becoming increasingly motivated and learning well. In a particularly well taught Year 10 lesson, advance planning and presentation ensured that the lesson got off to a good start and proceeded at a good pace. The strong support of a classroom assistant ensured that individual needs were being met. The optimism and high expectations of the teacher brushed off on the pupils, boosting confidence and resulting in pupils expressing pride in their paintings on tissue paper.

69. The new co-ordinator, appointed two months ago, has brought good practice and organisation to the subject. A simple, realistic improvement plan has been produced. External accreditation options have been evaluated and are being introduced this year.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

70. Pupils have not been achieving enough. Their achievement in lessons during the inspection was satisfactory overall and occasionally good but teachers' records and subject portfolios show that not enough work has been completed over the past year for pupils to have made progress. There have been difficulties in maintaining continuity in staffing and

teaching. The current post-holders are making early improvements and the design element of the subject is now included in the curriculum.

71. By the age of eleven, pupils are beginning to work co-operatively as they develop simple designs for model cars. They know how to join gears and how to test their machines by running them against others. Those who can read sufficiently well follow plans and written instructions. Others get help from support staff who are crucial to success. In food technology, pupils follow simple recipes to create, for instance, vegetable soup. They prepare ingredients, cutting and peeling them competently. They make good soup, test one another's and record preferences. By fourteen, pupils are making cakes and evaluating these against commercial examples. They choose well. These pupils understand and follow more complex recipes, understand the need for hygiene and behave well and safely in a kitchen. They have missed opportunities in the past but are keen to make up and do well. In design sessions pupils work slowly when involved in simple design and manufacture of models. They have missed out on the design elements in year eight. The oldest group has just begun to follow the GNVQ course in manufacturing. They understand the importance of reading instructions before starting projects. They also begin to appreciate why commercial design and testing are so expensive.

72. The quality of teaching observed was always at least satisfactory. It was least successful when teachers were over reliant on work sheets and talked too much. It was most successful when activities were used to break up the work, when pupils were allowed to put their views and when the teacher had planned effectively. Good support is provided by classroom assistants. Teaching is best in food technology, in these lessons objectives are clear, expectations are high, and relationships are good. Humour and understanding are features of really good lessons. Teachers now have secure subject knowledge and this can only enhance expectations.

73. The subject co-ordinator is newly appointed. He is well qualified and experienced. A scheme of work leading to GNVQ is being introduced. Assessment is at a very early stage and self-evaluation forms part of GNVQ modules. They have yet to be run. The school has a web-site to facilitate the enterprise project. Teachers have digital cameras to enable them to record better examples of progress. The co-ordinator has yet to see his mentor. He has no opportunity to see others teach. These failings must be addressed in order to improve delivery of the subject. Resources and accommodation are good and imaginatively chosen.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

74. Over the last year, lessons in geography and history have been taught by a number of different supply teachers. These teachers, in the main, did not have a good knowledge of the learning needs of pupils or, in some cases, specialist knowledge of the subjects. As a consequence in both subjects, little work has been completed the standard of work is low and teaching has been unsatisfactory. In neither subject have national curriculum programmes of study been followed.

75. During the inspection only history was being taught. The supply teacher was new to the school and had no previous experience of teaching pupils with special educational needs. He was a trained teacher of history with an extensive knowledge of the subject. In lessons, pupils made satisfactory progress in making connections between the Greek and Roman civilizations and in recognising the causes of World War I. However, because of limitations in their previous learning they are not able to use this information to make comparisons, evaluate their new learning in the context of previous learning, generalise or organise their understanding of history.

76. The school has recognised the need to develop these subjects. Recently, a teacher with specialist knowledge of humanities was appointed to co-ordinate both subjects. He informed the school a few weeks before the inspection that he would not be taking up the position. No accredited qualification is available to pupils in either geography or history. In both subjects the resources to support teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in range and in quantity.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

77. Progress in information and communication technology is unsatisfactory. Though good progress was seen during the inspection, the level of achievement indicates that progress over the past year has been unsatisfactory. Only a limited area of the curriculum is being taught. This relates to word processing. The strands of handling information, modelling, and measurement and control are not being covered.

78. Up to the age of eleven, pupils do not have discrete lessons in information and communication technology. During the inspection, computer use was seen only in one lesson where the programme was appropriate to the level of ability, and relevant to the lesson. Pupils operated a mouse well, and could operate the programme efficiently, once it had been loaded for them.

79. Year 7 pupils are beginning the 'Light Bytes' course, and made good progress in the lessons observed. They access programmes, using drop down menus and dialogue boxes, and understand how to use passwords. They each have a workbook in which to enter information about what they have learned. This will act as both a record of achievement, and a reference book.

80. Year 9 pupils are learning to use a word processing package, and making good progress in lessons, from a low starting point. The majority save and retrieve their work using floppy discs. They change size, type and colour of fonts. They are learning to use other Word facilities such as alignment, and print preview for drafting and redrafting. They are working through a structured course using worksheets from Basic Word Processing. More advanced skills in word processing, such as using the spell and grammar checker, copy and paste tools, are being learned in Years 10 and 11. Pupils understand why proof reading is still necessary when using the spell checker. All pupils load, print, and save their work, use menus and dialogue boxes, and alter the appearance of text.

81. The class teacher has responsibility for information technology in the primary class and, though the practice observed was good, there is insufficient use of computers to support other curriculum subjects. No specific skill teaching was observed during the inspection. Good use of tape recording was seen in an English lesson to support a writing exercise.

82. The co-ordinator teaches information technology to pupils from Years 7 to 11. Lesson planning, preparation and organisation during the inspection were good. She demonstrated very good relationships with pupils and they responded by working well. The pupils benefit from her very structured approach linked to good communication skills. These strengths resulted in good teaching during the inspection but have not been established for long enough to compensate for the unsatisfactory teaching since the previous inspection, as witnessed by pupils' lack of progress in that time.

83. The co-ordinator has only been in post for two weeks, and, though very experienced in teaching pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, has neither experience nor

training in the co-ordination or teaching of information technology. She is very aware of her need for training, and in the meantime, is teaching to her strength, word processing. No schemes of work, or programmes of study were left by the previous co-ordinator, so documentation for the subject is at an early stage of development. The co-ordinator has written a good development plan, which, if implemented, could produce good improvement.

84. Other than in one English lesson, there was no use of computers to support other curriculum subjects during the inspection, and no evidence in planning documents that teachers see them as an integral part of their teaching. This is almost certainly because of lack of staff confidence. The school has not yet taken advantage of the 'New Opportunities Fund' training in information technology. The quantity and range of software is inadequate. Staff training is a priority, in order to ensure that appropriate purchases are made. There are enough computers in school, and one digital camera, but more resources are needed to meet the requirements of the national curriculum.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

85. No modern foreign language is currently taught so pupils cannot make any progress.

MUSIC

86. The delivery of music is unsatisfactory. The subject has not been taught for a year leading up to the inspection and is now offered to primary and Year 7 pupils only. Work is co-ordinated by a local authority adviser and is taught for two lessons per week in the library. The headteacher assists. The purpose of the programme is to develop a basic understanding of rhythm, singing and playing very simple instruments. Lessons, policy and scheme of work follow the local authority guidelines. They do not provide sufficient input for this school. Resources are satisfactory but the accommodation is inappropriate. Achievement is delayed throughout the school and is poor. Teaching is not monitored or evaluated. The plans are short term and music is not part of the school development plans. Lesson plans have focus but no evaluation and no examples or ranges of opportunity. The input is clearly insufficient in terms of depth, assessment, development and training, expectations and progress.

87. The lessons observed were well delivered by the specialist adviser. The longer term plan is for another teacher to deliver the subject. At present music is not offering enough to pupils. Most are currently being denied the opportunity to perform, to learn about instruments and to have access to the widest world of music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

88. Pupils are not achieving enough. There has been a deterioration since the previous inspection. During the inspection pupils tried hard and behaved reasonably when well managed by specialist teachers but non specialists found teaching much harder and poor behaviour and a lack of self-control means that pupils do not develop basic skills such as balancing and co-ordination.

89. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 practice basic soccer skills, they have difficulty stopping and controlling a football, however with effort they all learn to kick with both feet. Close control skills remain undeveloped. However, by the age of fourteen, pupils are carrying out more complex activities and are showing signs of working together in teams. The most able group showed an understanding of the skeleton in a theory session.

90. Teaching is unsatisfactory. This is due to the lack of understanding of the subject by non-specialist teachers, as well as their lack of understanding of pupils' individual needs and abilities. Specialist teachers have high expectations that pupils will achieve and behave well, with results that pupils work at a good pace and with a degree of concentration. They are also enthusiastic, willing to train in the rain. This motivates pupils. Good teachers maintain good order and manage their pupils well. They stress the importance of safety. This is not the case with every teacher.

91. Physical education and outdoor education are seen as separate entities. The physical education co-ordinator has arrived with experience and expertise. He has not yet been in post for long enough to have made significant changes but the introduction of GCSE and accredited topics should enhance the delivery of the subject. The co-ordinator has vision and determination to succeed

92. Resources for the subject are adequate, but the accommodation is unsatisfactory. The hall is unsuitable for physical education. It is crowded, is a thoroughfare and lacks storage space. The school compensates for this by using a local sports hall. The grounds have good quality outdoor equipment and grassed and hard play areas.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

93. The schools approach to religious education is poor. Until this term, religious education has not featured sufficiently in the curriculum and as a result pupils' achievements have been few. No work from the previous year was available for scrutiny. There is very little planning and no one was aware of holding responsibility until the week of the inspection, the agreed syllabus of the local education authority is not been followed. Statutory requirements are not being met. The subject is making no significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development and very little to their cultural understanding.

94. Religious education featured on the timetable during the inspection, with each class getting one lesson a week. In a well taught Year 10 lesson, the teacher used his good knowledge of Islamic culture to make the lesson interesting. In their responses to questions, however, it was clear that pupils had virtually no understanding of the Muslim world. By the end of the lesson though, they understood that the Koran was the Muslim holy book and recognised the significance accorded to fasting. A Year 11 lesson failed to generate similar interest because the teacher, new in school that day, failed to realise the low ability of the only pupil in the class, resulting in no progress being made by the pupil.