

INSPECTION REPORT

FURNESS SCHOOL

Hextable, Swanley

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 119038

Principal: Mr D Dawson

Lead inspector: Mike Kell

Dates of inspection: 2nd - 5th February 2004

Inspection number: 263525

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special (social, emotional and behavioural difficulties)
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 11 - 16
Gender of pupils: Boys
Number on roll: 70

School address: Rowhill Road
Hextable
Swanley
Postcode: BR8 7RP

Telephone number: (01322) 662 937
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Sheila Davies (Acting)

Date of previous inspection: 26th - 29th January 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Furness is a day and residential school with a total designated roll of 64 pupils, which is significantly bigger than average for a school of this type and age range. However, there are currently 70 pupils on roll because a number were transferred to Furness in September 2003 following the closure of another local authority school. There are equal numbers of pupils in Key Stage 3 (Years 7 to 9) and Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11). Thirty of the pupils are residential in one of three boarding houses. Just over ten per cent of pupils are looked after children in public care. All pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Needs that identifies social, emotional and behavioural difficulties as the main barriers to learning. Therefore, pupils' levels of attainment on entry to the school are below national expectations. The school has a wide socio-economic mix as it takes pupils from a very large geographical area. Most pupils live within the boundary of Kent local education authority but pupils from adjoining local authorities attend the school. These include the London boroughs of Bexley and Bromley as well as Thurrock, Medway and East Sussex. The overwhelming majority of pupils have a White British background. No pupils are learning English as an additional language. Very few pupils attend classes at mainstream schools and colleges in order to extend their learning opportunities and to encourage their personal development. The school does not provide a base for any regular outreach service to local mainstream schools to support teachers in their work with pupils who have significant special needs.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
13101	Mike Kell	Lead inspector	Religious education Personal, social and health education and citizenship History English as an additional language
19798	Jane O'Keefe	Lay inspector	
2746	Roy Lund	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Special educational needs
21267	Pam Miller	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design French Music
1224	Graham Todd	Team inspector	English Geography Physical education

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Furness is a **satisfactory** school. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress in their work and personal development. Their attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Residential provision makes a strong contribution to pupils' learning and personal development.
- Governance of the school is unsatisfactory. Statutory requirements are not met and governors do not have detailed first hand knowledge of all aspects of the school's provision.
- Aspects of the curriculum are unsatisfactory and its management lacks creativity. In particular, taught time is too short, pupils are not prepared sufficiently well for leaving school, and links with other schools and colleges are unsatisfactory.
- Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall; it is good in the residential provision but unsatisfactory between lessons and not always managed consistently.
- The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good.
- There is good provision for promoting pupils' social and moral development. Relationships with adults are good. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
- The school has worked hard to improve attendance, which is now good.

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Attendance has improved and information and communication technology (ICT) is better used across the school, but not yet consistently. The overall quality of teaching is better but assessment procedures still require improvement. Reports to parents about their children's progress remain inadequate. Some aspects of leadership and management have improved, such as financial management and monitoring some aspects of the school's work. Other issues, like governors' involvement in strategic planning, have not been properly addressed. There has been some deterioration in pupils' attitudes and behaviour but this is linked to the sudden change in the school population when it was required to admit 20 pupils from a closing school. The structure of the curriculum, particularly in Years 10 and 11, has not been reviewed in the light of recent developments and is, therefore, now less effective and appropriate.

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.

Overall, in relation to their prior levels of attainment and capability, pupils' **achievements are satisfactory**. Pupils with additional needs make similar progress.

Pupils achieve very well in French and art and design and they make good progress in mathematics and ICT. Achievements are satisfactory in English, science, design and technology, history, religious education and personal, social and health education (PSHE). There was insufficient evidence to judge achievement in geography and physical education. Music is not taught. These standards represent significant improvements on the findings from the previous inspection. Overall, however, short teaching time and pupils' attitudes and behaviour sometimes have a negative impact on achievement. Achievements are not enhanced sufficiently well by the school's links with other educational establishments. There are very limited links with local schools and no use is made of

local further education colleges. The residential provision makes a good contribution to the standards pupils achieve, but its lack of new technology facilities is a significant weakness. Attendance levels are now good. Punctuality is good at the beginning of the school day but pupils are often late to lessons. Their behaviour and attitudes to school are satisfactory. Provision for pupils' **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory** overall.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. There are two major barriers to learning. Lessons are too short and so teachers are not able to develop pupils' learning through a variety of activities. Sometimes, pupils' unsatisfactory attitudes and behaviour disrupt learning. Overall, teaching is satisfactory although some is of the highest quality. Effective learning support assistants play an important role in promoting pupils' learning. Lesson planning is satisfactory but there is no consistent format across the school. Teachers try to develop pupils' personal qualities too; they provide activities that require them to work independently, in small groups and to participate in whole class discussions. The residential provision makes a good contribution to the learning of resident pupils. Teachers' assessment of their pupils' work is satisfactory, but its inconsistency reflects the lack of whole school procedures and monitoring.

The curriculum is unsatisfactory overall. It lacks richness. There are some inadequacies in its management and it fails to comply with statutory requirements. The length of the taught week and the structure of the taught day are significant weaknesses. The PSHE programme is not sufficiently well organised and managed. Curriculum provision for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory, with no clear rationale underpinning the programme provided. The curriculum is narrow and limited, with no opportunities to benefit from college links. Opportunities for day pupils to be involved in activities outside the school day are very limited. Residential pupils enjoy a good range of sports, social and other experiences, and have regular opportunities to take part in residential trips.

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. Satisfactory support, advice and guidance are offered to pupils as they progress through the school. The school is beginning to seek the opinions of pupils and takes satisfactory account of their views. Pupils in the residential facility have a good input into the organisation of the house, such as helping to choose new furnishings, selecting menus and choosing evening activities.

The school has satisfactory links with parents and with the local community, but links with other schools and colleges are unsatisfactory. The school does not provide any formal, routine outreach support to teachers and pupils in mainstream schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Governance is unsatisfactory. The governing body is failing to ensure that all statutory requirements are met. The **leadership** of the headteacher and other key staff is **satisfactory**. **Management** systems and procedures are **satisfactory**.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents generally agree that their children like attending Furness. Inspectors do not share the concerns raised by a small minority of parents. Pupils' views of the school are satisfactory.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Governors need to be more involved with the school and ensure statutory requirements are met.

- Increase teaching time in line with national recommendations and increase the length of lessons.
- Improve the quality and breadth of the curriculum, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
- Develop links with schools, colleges and other off-site education providers.
- Manage pupils' behaviour consistently.
- Develop provision for promoting pupils' spiritual development.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, in relation to their prior levels of attainment and capability, pupils' achievements are satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress. Pupils with additional needs achieve equally well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Short teaching time limits pupils' achievements.
- There have been significant improvements in achievement in a number of subjects since the last inspection.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour sometimes have a negative impact on achievement.
- Residential provision makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and supports learning well.
- There are insufficient links with other schools and colleges to extend individual pupils' learning and personal needs.
- The lack of ICT in the residential houses is a significant weakness.

Commentary

1. Pupils achieve very well in French and art and design and they make good progress in mathematics and ICT. Achievements are satisfactory in English, science, design and technology, history, religious education and PSHE. There was insufficient evidence to judge achievement in geography and physical education. Music is not taught. These standards represent significant improvements on the findings from the previous inspection. Achievements at that time were judged as no better than satisfactory, or worse in the case of music, in all subjects except physical education, where pupils achieved well. Pupils now achieve satisfactorily overall and they benefit from being able to follow examination courses in Years 10 and 11. The school offers accredited courses in most subjects, although not in a subject such as physical education, but the course offered is not always the most challenging. For instance, pupils take a General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) course in English and mathematics but this opportunity is not available in science.
2. Pupils' achievements are not enhanced sufficiently well by the school's links with other educational establishments. Links with local schools are limited to just two pupils who follow a GCSE course that the school cannot provide. No use is made of local further education colleges. These links are inadequate in extending and enriching individual pupils' learning and social needs. Pupils' achievements are supported satisfactorily by the school's overall use of local facilities, but planned and well-focused educational visits into the community are generally underdeveloped.
3. A number of aspects of the residential provision make a good contribution to the standards pupils achieve. For example, residential child care officers supervise and support pupils with daily homework, particularly in English and mathematics. Pupils' reading skills especially benefit from the residential provision. The English co-ordinator has provided the houses with a good range of books that are appropriate for pupils' ages and interests and residential child care officers work hard at encouraging pupils to read. However, the lack of new technology facilities in the residential houses is a significant weakness. Pupils cannot research work on the Internet in the evenings nor can they communicate with families and friends through e-mails and messenger services.
4. Two major barriers are currently limiting pupils' achievements: the amount of taught time and occasions when pupils' attitudes and behaviour disrupt learning. The length of the taught week

is too short and the structure of the taught day results in additional time being lost and causes too many disruptions. Both these factors have an impact on the standards pupils achieve. Short lessons mean that pupils frequently move between classrooms. These changeovers provide opportunities for pupils to waste time and for behaviour to deteriorate. Therefore, pupils often arrive into lessons late and agitated. Late lesson starts and teachers having to take time to settle pupils down reduces time for learning. As a result, a variety of activities cannot always be provided, even though they have been planned, and writing tasks, in particular, are frequently lost. The second barrier is pupils' unpredictable behaviour in lessons and teachers' ability to manage it. As a result, pupils' behaviour deteriorates in some lessons and this has a detrimental effect on the progress they make and standards they achieve.

5. The promotion of pupils' personal development is an important dimension of the school's work. This is evident in its ethos and much of the work that it does. Pupils make satisfactory progress in achieving their personal targets and this can be seen in practical ways. In classrooms, they follow well-established routines in subjects such as science and ICT, and they take the initiative and help with putting away equipment in art and design and design and technology. Teachers also provide activities that help to encourage both independent study and collaborative work with classmates. In both cases, pupils can be very mature and involved but they can also be dismissive and uninterested. Boarding provision lends itself to giving pupils responsibility and staff seize these opportunities well. Resident pupils are presented with many situations that encourage their personal growth and they succeed well.
6. Teachers promote pupils' literacy skills satisfactorily through other subjects of the curriculum. Work in many subjects encourages pupils to express their ideas orally, thereby gaining confidence in speaking in front of an audience, but teachers are inconsistent in the way they teach key subject vocabulary. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to improve their achievements in writing. Pupils frequently use and practise their mathematical skills in different subjects of the curriculum, but opportunities tend to happen by chance rather than as a result of detailed planning. Pupils weigh and measure in subjects such as science, design and technology, and food technology. They estimate and judge probabilities in science and use their data handling skills in English to produce graphs of the results of a survey about pupils' preferences of different types of TV programmes. Opportunities for using ICT in other subjects across the curriculum vary considerably from subject to subject; they are very good in French and mathematics and unsatisfactory in science and design and technology. New technology is not used sufficiently well to research information or for pupils with poorly developed literacy skills to draft and re-draft their work or to record information.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Attendance levels have improved recently and are now good. Punctuality is good at the beginning of the school day but pupils are often late to lessons. Pupils have satisfactory attitudes to school and their work. Their behaviour is satisfactory. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The dynamics of the school were very significantly disturbed by the very large intake of pupils from another school in September last year.
- Improved school systems have raised attendance levels.
- Behaviour and punctuality between lessons is unsatisfactory.
- Occasionally, some pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons disrupt learning.
- Pupils behave well in the residential houses.
- The school encourages pupils' social development well.
- There is unsatisfactory promotion of spiritual development.

Commentary

7. Attendance figures have improved since the last inspection due to improved school procedures and good links with the education welfare officer. Attendance figures are now higher than those nationally for schools of this type.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	11.2%	School data	5.7%
National data	12.8%	National data	7.4%

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

8. The recent very significant increase in pupil numbers, following the closure of another school, has had a very disruptive effect on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. These pupils have found it very difficult to adapt to the higher expectations of behaviour in Furness compared with their previous school. Staff have worked extremely hard to welcome and settle these transferred pupils and their own new Year 7 intake, as well as encouraging and reassuring existing pupils. The behaviour management system has been followed rigorously by most staff, and pupils are now beginning to respect the sanctions and value the rewards. Nonetheless, behaviour and attitudes remain unpredictable and relationships between pupils are fragile.
9. The frequent lesson changes in the school day have a negative effect on pupils' concentration and behaviour. These changeovers generally require pupils to be outside, moving between different buildings and demountable classrooms, and there are times when horseplay develops and harassment occurs. A significant number of pupils loiter around the premises during changeovers, often causing lessons to start late.
10. When teachers manage pupils well in lessons, they are attentive and well behaved. Good teaching provides interesting activities that encourage pupils to take part, listen, and concentrate on their work. However, behaviour deteriorates in lessons where activities are uninteresting or when teachers are inconsistent in the way they address bad behaviour. For instance, persistent swearing by some pupils may go unchecked.

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	67	16	3
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	2	4	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0

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

11. Pupils' spiritual development is not regularly planned for in lessons and therefore some opportunities are missed. Assemblies make reference to spirituality, such as when discussing the life of Mother Theresa, but pupils are not encouraged to reflect and think about these events. Most staff use the behaviour management system to reinforce the difference between right and wrong, and moral issues are discussed in lessons and assemblies. Subjects such as art and design and French give pupils opportunities to experience and appreciate other cultures and ways of life, but such opportunities are limited elsewhere in the curriculum, especially given the absence of music.

12. The school's provision for promoting pupils' social development is good, particularly in the residential houses. The work done by residential childcare officers does much to improve pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour. This contributes significantly to the personal development of the pupils in residence. Living in a close community helps them to develop in a socially acceptable way and make constructive relationships with other pupils and staff. The work and expectations of the residential childcare officers do much to promote pupils' confidence and raise their self-esteem.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Pupils' learning is satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress in developing new skills, knowledge and understanding. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but require further refinement and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is wide variation in the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Teachers and learning support assistants form effective teams.
- Lessons are too short.
- Residential provision supports the learning of boarding pupils well.
- Lesson planning is not always sufficiently precise and so activities are sometimes limited in variety and do not always match pupils' needs.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes sometimes disrupt learning.
- Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is inconsistent across the school.

Commentary

13. Overall, teaching is satisfactory, although some teaching and learning is of the highest quality. At these times, teachers who are very confident in their subject knowledge manage and enthuse pupils extremely well. They plan very high quality activities that are skilfully prepared so that individual pupils can be challenged and achieve success. Very efficient time management allows them to provide these activities. Classrooms are very well organised. Very high quality relationships and encouragement are characteristic features of these lessons. All pupils are included because of the very good teamwork between teachers and very effective teaching assistants, who play a very important role in promoting pupils' learning. They contribute greatly in helping to maintain pupils' attention and in managing their behaviour. These lessons are rich and rewarding learning experiences for all pupils.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	9 (18%)	21 (43%)	16 (33%)	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

14. An impressive feature of the most effective teaching is the way in which teachers develop pupils' communication skills. They do this by orchestrating discussions very well, using carefully worded questions to challenge individuals and to extend answers, and through the promotion of subject-specific vocabulary. They are able to do this because they manage pupils' behaviour efficiently and with minimum fuss and provide pupils with well-established routines for them to follow. Therefore, lessons are orderly. Pupils settle quickly, listen carefully to what they are asked to do and respond positively. These lessons are busy

sessions during which pupils are very productive, working very hard and with interest and enthusiasm.

15. Lesson planning is satisfactory but there is no consistent format across the school. The best plans use information about pupils' prior learning to plan activities that are appropriate to their age, interests and abilities. The plans identify what pupils are expected to learn and show the activities that have been chosen to develop subject-specific skills, knowledge and understanding. At these times, the learning needs of all pupils are met as tasks challenge the most able pupils and extend their understanding. On other occasions, teachers' planning is much less effective; lessons do not have a clear focus on what it is anticipated pupils will learn and the progressive activities that will develop this learning.
16. In addition to providing opportunities for pupils to make academic progress, teachers try to develop their personal qualities, too. They provide activities that require pupils to work independently, such as investigating desktop publishing and web page design, and testing parts of a leaf for starch. Pupils carried out these tasks very successfully, but at other times, for instance, an exercise investigating mathematical probability, they find it very difficult to work unaided. Pupils also find it difficult to work in small groups, like those who were asked to participate in paired discussion about film reviews and to explore the language and terminology used. They are also given opportunities to participate in larger group work, such as whole class discussions in PSHE about solvent abuse and the causes and effects of stress. Pupils' responses to these opportunities are unpredictable. On occasions, they are fully involved and show perceptive insights but at other times their attitudes are immature and discussions break down.
17. Teachers' assessment of their pupils' work is satisfactory, but its inconsistency reflects the lack of whole school procedures and monitoring. Assessment in some subject areas is more developed than in others. It is good in mathematics, ICT, art and design, and French. Teachers mark and assess pupils' work regularly and use the information they obtain to plan lessons that meet the needs of individual pupils while maintaining coverage of curriculum programmes and the syllabuses of externally accredited courses, such as GCSE. They feed back to pupils about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. Assessment is unsatisfactory in science, geography, history, religious education and PSHE. Marking is not sufficiently informative to help pupils to get better and records do not show in any detail what specific skills pupils have learned.
18. A recent worthwhile development has been the adoption of an electronic assessment system that enables teachers to see where individuals and groups need reinforcement in different areas of the subject. Further development of this system will enable pupils to be given clearer targets because, currently, pupils receive variable feedback on their learning. Few pupils are able to say what they need to do to get back to mainstream school or move on to college of further education, and most do not know what National Curriculum level or expected GCSE grade they are working towards.

The curriculum

The curriculum is unsatisfactory overall. There is an insufficiently broad range of opportunities to cater for the interests, aptitudes and needs of all pupils. Opportunities for additional activities outside the school day are unsatisfactory. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory to meet the needs of a secondary school curriculum. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum does not fulfil statutory requirements for pupils in Years 7 to 9.
- Opportunities for day pupils to take part in activities outside the school day are limited.
- The amount of time available for teaching is too short.
- Residential pupils enjoy and benefit from a good range of evening activities.

- Pupils are not sufficiently prepared for employment or further study after they leave school.
- Management of the curriculum requires further development.

Commentary

19. The school is failing to comply with statutory requirements. Music is not taught to pupils in Years 7 to 9 as all attempts to employ a specialist music teacher have been unsuccessful. The curriculum lacks richness and opportunities for creative and aesthetic development. Although a specialist music teacher works with residential staff on how to offer musical experiences, generally the school does not provide opportunities for pupils to listen to music or perform. There are no planned compensatory opportunities for musical experiences, for example, in assemblies or subjects such as history, geography, English or religious education. In addition, these subjects, along with PSHE, do not give pupils enough opportunities for drama activities. Provision for PSHE is unsatisfactory. The programme is not sufficiently well organised and managed. Citizenship is taught to pupils, but inadequate planning means that there is no comprehensive programme of study in place.
20. The school offers accredited courses in Years 10 and 11 in most subjects, although these are not available in a subject such as physical education. However, the course available in subjects is not necessarily the most appropriate or the most challenging. For instance, pupils can take a GCSE course in English and mathematics but this is not available in science. Only two pupils benefit from links with a local mainstream school where they take a GCSE course in subjects that the school cannot provide, but none currently use local college facilities.
21. A significant weakness in curriculum provision is the length of the taught week. Pupils spend significantly less time on planned activities than the recommended figures for these age groups. In particular, Friday afternoon activity sessions are not planned in relation to the curriculum. Pupils choose from a range of sports, art and design, design and technology and leisure activities but planned links, for example, between the sports activities and the physical education curriculum, are not evident. In addition, some pupils are withdrawn from these activities for reasons of behaviour management, which reduces significantly their curriculum entitlement.
22. The curriculum programme for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory. Individual pupils' needs are not considered as there is no clear rationale underpinning the curriculum that is provided. It is one curriculum for all pupils. Therefore, plans arising from the transitional reviews of pupils' Statements of Special Educational Needs in Year 9 cannot always be addressed in ways which meet individual pupils' needs. Careers lessons are beginning to prepare pupils for further education or employment, and residential staff are working on the inclusion of work-related skills into everyday experiences. The school's adviser from the Connexions careers service is providing very good support to pupils in Years 9 to 11. This is helping the school to develop links and a more work-related curriculum for those pupils who could benefit from such provision, but planning is still at an early stage. Arrangements for work experience are unsatisfactory. Although there is well-organised support from a learning support assistant, there is no system for establishing with potential employers the pupils' educational and personal and social targets. Parents are required to negotiate placements, which in some instances result in the pupils being placed in situations that offer limited experiences. Some placements break down and it is then difficult to re-establish positive residential and educational plans.
23. The time being taken to implement changes in the curriculum for Years 10 and 11 reflects some inadequacies in management of the curriculum generally. Recently developed management systems are not yet providing an effective overview of the curriculum. For example, there are inconsistencies in the quality of long and medium-term planning between subject areas. Currently, planning does not acknowledge pupils' different learning needs and styles by references to suitable teaching approaches and resources, such as the use of new technology.

24. Residential pupils enjoy a good range of sports, social and other experiences, and have regular opportunities to take part in residential trips. Judo and competitive games help pupils to focus on self-control and social development. Homework is supervised each day and this makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Opportunities for day pupils to be involved in activities outside the school day are very limited. There are no lunchtime clubs and although some attend after school clubs such as art and pottery, very few benefit from these activities.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is good. Satisfactory support, advice and guidance are offered to pupils. The school is beginning to seek the opinions of pupils and takes satisfactory account of their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' and students' care, welfare, health and safety are given high priority.
- Pupils' good relationships with adults encourage them to express their views.
- Adults know the pupils well and therefore support them effectively.
- Key workers provide pupils in residence with good support and advice.
- Systems for monitoring and supporting pupils' learning are inconsistent.
- There are good induction arrangements for pupils new to the school.

Commentary

25. There are good arrangements in place for ensuring the health and safety of pupils. Risk assessments are carried out in all areas of the school. There are good procedures for child protection and all staff have received appropriate training. The very recent inspection of the residential provision carried out in accordance with the National Care Standards Commission confirmed that boarding pupils are looked after safely.
26. Staff know pupils well and have a caring, supportive approach towards them. Parents are pleased with the care taken of their children. The school is both vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities. There are generally good relationships between staff and pupils and staff have pupils' wellbeing in mind at all times. Relationships are particularly strong in the residential houses. Therefore, pupils can always find an adult with whom they have a positive and trusting relationship, although on occasion pupils' attitudes towards adults, and some comments they make to them, are unsatisfactory. Adults in the school are very good role models and there is a consistency of expectation of how pupils will work and behave.
27. New pupils are inducted carefully into the school. Induction arrangements are good and effective in enabling pupils to make a smooth transition into the school. A useful and easy-to-follow booklet, explaining all of the school's procedures and rules, is provided for each new pupil. Staff are sensitive to the needs of each pupil and work hard to assimilate them. As a result, pupils settle well into life at the school and residential childcare officers work hard to smooth their transition into boarding life. As pupils progress through the school, they receive satisfactory advice and guidance on employment and future career and education opportunities, except for the unsatisfactory arrangements for work experience.
28. Systems for monitoring pupils' behaviour and personal development are satisfactory. The use of academic assessment data to support pupil progress is satisfactory overall but does vary from subject to subject. In ICT, art and design, and French, for example, assessment data is used well to develop future teaching plans whereas in science, assessment systems are still at an early stage of being developed. Pupils receive variable feedback on their learning and have limited understanding of what they need to do in order to improve. Pupils in residence receive good support and advice from their key workers. Their progress is carefully monitored and recorded, including their behaviour.

29. The existing good relationships with adults around the school enable pupils to express informally their opinions and make suggestions about day-to-day routines and how the school could be improved. For example, pupils in residence have a great deal of say in the organisation of the house, such as helping to choose new furnishings, selecting menus and choosing evening activities. However, they do not yet have a formal forum that enables them to air their views on the school and to contribute to decisions about its future. The school has been slow in setting up a school council, although elections for representatives have now been held. Pupils are not regularly encouraged to self-evaluate their performance in individual lessons and subjects or to express their views on how enjoyable and relevant the activities were. This is an area that needs further development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has fostered satisfactory links with parents and they are generally happy with the education and care their children receive. There are satisfactory links with the local community, but links with other schools and colleges are unsatisfactory. The school does not provide any formal, routine outreach support to teachers and pupils in mainstream schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body fails to fulfil its statutory requirements to produce an annual report for parents and to offer to hold an annual meeting.
- There are good links with parents through the residential provision.
- Reports to parents on their children's progress are poor.
- There is well-managed community use of the school's premises.
- Insufficient use is made of local schools and colleges to extend pupils' learning.

Commentary

30. Parents and carers generally agree that their children are encouraged to become mature, that the teaching they receive is good, and that their children are treated fairly. However, a minority of parents raised concerns about behaviour in the school, thought their children do not make sufficiently good progress, and believe that bullying is an issue. Good systems are in place for dealing with parents' concerns and complaints and this is appreciated by parents.
31. The school is beginning to forge improved links with its parents. Parents' afternoons have recently been introduced and these are well used as a means of welcoming and informing parents. Attendance at these meetings is steadily improving. Parents receive satisfactory general information about the school in the form of the attractively presented prospectus and regular newsletters. In addition, a school magazine, which celebrates pupils' achievements throughout the year, is produced annually by pupils. Good links exist with parents of those pupils who board at the school. However, a number of parents at the parents' meeting commented that they wished the school would organise whole school events, such as a Christmas concert or sports day, which would further enhance their understanding of the school and its work.
32. The school is aware that the annual reports it sends to parents about their children's progress are poor. The quality of comments written in them is inconsistent and often very cursory. They do not inform parents about what their children have learnt, how well they are achieving, and what they need to do in order to improve. The governing body's failure to provide an annual written report and meeting for parents means that they are unable to get an overview of much of the school's work and developments. Annual Reviews of pupils' Statements of Special Educational Needs are carried out efficiently and parents' attendance at these is very good.
33. Satisfactory links exist with the local community. For instance, two pupils were recently involved in catering for over 30 people at a venue off-site as part of an educational visit.

However, the use of the community facilities for planned and well-focused educational visits is underdeveloped. In the main, the school uses local facilities, such as leisure centres and cinemas, well to support the residential programme of evening activities. The local community is able to benefit from using the school's facilities both during the school day and afterwards. A local pre-school group operates from a separate building on the school site, and one large building has been very successfully adapted for use as a conference centre. This area is developing well and provides useful extra income for the school. The community's use of the school's facilities is overseen efficiently by the amenities manager.

34. The links with other schools and colleges in the community are unsatisfactory. A programme of inclusion has just commenced for two pupils at a local community school in order for them to follow courses that are not available at Furness. Staff from the two schools have met and discussed various accredited courses but, overall, the links with mainstream establishments are very limited. There are, for example, no pupils attending local colleges as part of the educational programme in Years 10 and 11. This is unsatisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Governance is unsatisfactory. The governing body is failing to ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Leadership provided by the headteacher and other key staff is satisfactory. Management systems and procedures are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governing body has unsatisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Senior staff are committed to running a school in which all pupils and adults matter.
- The headteacher and deputy are very visible around the school and readily available but this reduces the time and opportunity for strategic development.
- The qualities of leadership and management are inconsistent across subject areas.

Commentary

35. The school has experienced a difficult period over the past 18 months. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have only held the permanent posts for fewer than two terms even though they have both been employed by the school in other senior posts for many years. The assistant headteachers are also newly appointed. At the beginning of the autumn term, the school admitted 20 pupils, covering a wide age range, from a neighbouring school that closed. Some of these pupils were boarders and all were in addition to the school's own new Year 7 pupils. Final arrangements for this transfer were not made until the last day of the summer term and the urgent erection of new demountable buildings had to take place during the summer holidays. It is against this background that judgements on leadership and management are made.
36. The governing body is interested in the school and supportive of its work, but not in a sufficiently 'hands on' way that enables governors to find out for themselves what is going on. Focused visits during the day, and evening visits to the residential provision, are only just beginning. Therefore, governors are at the very early stages of gaining understanding of the strong points of the school as well as those areas that require further development. As a result, they only have a limited knowledge of the school when discussing matters with the headteacher and senior staff over the direction and purpose of the school. Governors are failing to fulfil their statutory obligations. The full National Curriculum is not being offered to pupils in Year 7 to 9, even though strenuous efforts have been made to appoint a music teacher. Governors do not produce an annual report for parents nor do they offer to hold an annual general meeting to explain and discuss details of the school. This is unsatisfactory.

37. There is a commitment to running an equitable establishment in which all individuals matter and the headteacher has a developing idea of how he wishes the school to evolve. The headteacher, deputy and other senior staff share an appropriate vision for the school but they have not yet translated that into a sharply focused strategic plan that identifies the most important priorities for improvement. However, future strategic thinking now has to consider the detailed practical implications of reorganisation following the local education authority's review of special educational needs provision. This has given the school a different designation with effect from the beginning of the next school year. The headteacher and deputy are not currently acting as motivational and inspirational leaders for staff or pupils because too much time has been consumed by dealing with day-to-day events, particularly the integration of so many pupils who arrived at the same time. This integration has been managed very well but not without cost to the school's longer term development. The new pupils found it very difficult to adapt and therefore valuable senior management time was used dealing with confrontational and disruptive behaviour. The situation still continues now, albeit to a lesser extent.
38. Senior staff members have responsibilities for particular elements of the school but a number of these have only recently been allocated. Therefore, roles and responsibilities have not yet become fully clear and aspects of the school's work have suffered as a result. For instance, leadership of the curriculum is unsatisfactory overall. The whole school curriculum lacks creative leadership and the quality of leadership is inconsistent across subject areas. It is strong in subjects such as art and design, ICT, French and mathematics but unsatisfactory in PSHE, religious education and science, which does not have a subject co-ordinator.
39. The school is managed satisfactorily although current systems for gathering information about the school and its performance are not yet always formal and routine. Some management systems, such as monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and the performance management of staff, and staff training are used. However, these systems are inconsistently applied and lack some robustness. For example, not all residential child care officers are having regular supervision meetings. Teachers' classroom practice is monitored but observations are not recorded in informative and developmental ways and best practice is not disseminated effectively in order to raise the overall standard of teaching.
40. Senior managers have a satisfactory understanding of how the school is performing and its relative strengths and weaknesses. They are very visible around the school so that, at an informal and superficial level, they know what is going on. However, there is no established culture for reviewing and evaluating the school's work. Therefore, developments tend to be a reaction to circumstances rather than initiatives that have been identified as a result of any structured and rigorous analysis of performance. For example, there are no systematic mechanisms for senior managers to monitor pupils' achievements through tracking progress.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,486,298
Total expenditure	1,488,156
Expenditure per pupil	21,259

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	25,657
Balance carried forward to the next year	23,799

41. The school manages its resources satisfactorily. Spending is linked to identified areas for development and the school applies the principles of best value satisfactorily in its purchasing decisions. However, governors are not yet routinely evaluating the effectiveness of its spending by monitoring its impact on raising standards. The school has not been subject to a full local authority financial audit for some years.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow accredited courses and this motivates them.
- Reading is taught well and so pupils achieve well.
- Residential childcare officers effectively support the learning of those pupils in residence.
- Opportunities for extended writing are very limited.

Commentary

42. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory throughout the school. Their speaking and listening skills are satisfactory, but these skills are not currently promoted through role-play as drama is not taught as part of the English curriculum. This is a weakness in provision. At times, they engage in conversations maturely, expressing themselves clearly and listening well, responding sensibly. At other times, they are reluctant to speak or listen. Reading is good and higher attaining pupils read fluently. Less competent readers are taught effectively using a well-structured multi-sensory phonic approach to developing their skills. Reading is well supported by residential childcare officers for those pupils in residence; this does much to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils' achievements in writing are less good. Although they make satisfactory progress in their writing, few are able to write fluently and concisely in well-constructed sentences.
43. Learning support assistants in all lessons make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. They have clearly identified roles, engage pupils very well and display a high level of care for them. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although at times it is good and occasionally very good. In these lessons, the work is well planned and pupils show a genuine interest in what they are required to do. The activities are challenging but pupils remain motivated, working diligently, concentrating hard and behaving well. However, in other lessons, the work is not as challenging and expectations are not as high, particularly expectations about pupils' writing. Consequently, there is a small number of pupils who are not achieving in writing as well as they could. The situation is made worse because of the loss of teaching time resulting from pupils arriving late at lessons and then taking far too long to settle down to work.
44. There has been satisfactory improvement in English since the last inspection, with all issues raised at that time having been addressed. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory. The monitoring of teaching is in place and this is helping to raise the quality of teaching and improve standards. Teachers are using ICT satisfactorily to support pupils' learning, with a good use of text frames to develop pupils' writing as they work. Pupils' work is marked satisfactorily and teachers' comments are beginning to help pupils to improve their work. However, the pupils are not engaged enough in setting their own targets. Recent improvements have been made to aspects of assessment; baseline assessment and regular testing are in place but assessment procedures still lack the necessary rigour to track pupils' progress as they move through the school.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

45. The provision for developing pupils' literacy skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. Opportunities are provided in a number of subjects for pupils to express their ideas orally. Pupils were observed reading aloud in history and geography lessons and this helped them to gain confidence in speaking in front of an audience. There is some inconsistency about the teaching of key vocabulary in different subjects; for example, word lists are used effectively in mathematics, but not in science. Overall, pupils do not have opportunities to practice their writing skills regularly enough and reinforce the work done in English lessons. Although extended writing is planned in some classes, it rarely happens because of the short lessons, time wasted at lesson changeovers and some unsatisfactory behaviour.

French

Provision in French is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and therefore pupils learn very well.
- There is a very good emphasis on developing language and understanding its patterns and roots.
- Leadership and management are very good and there are high aspirations for the subject

Commentary

46. The teacher has excellent subject knowledge and pupils benefit from her very high quality pronunciation. The teacher is supported strongly by the learning support assistant. French is spoken throughout lessons, for giving instructions as well as for demonstrating examples. Pupils remain on task very well; pupil management and relationships are very good. Pupils greatly enjoy the subject, which is new to most of them on entry to the school. There has been good improvement in provision since the previous inspection.
47. Pupils learn useful sets of basic words and phrases. For instance, from Year 7 onwards, they say and write the day and date. There is a clear emphasis on target vocabulary, for example, *'plus'* and *'numero'* when Year 7 pupils are working on simple addition sums. Some use their knowledge to say two digit numbers such as *'dix-sept'*. By Year 10, pupils have made good progress in pronouncing words that include sound combinations that are different to those found in the English language, such as *'bouteille'*. They rehearse this well when saying phrases such as *"une bouteille de Cola"*.
48. The classroom is immersed in French culture and artefacts, and the phrases used for instructions and key vocabularies are displayed around the room. There is very good emphasis on examining the patterns of language, such as exploring French words that end with *'eur'*. This focus enables pupils to improve their understanding of languages, and the links between different languages, and develops their ability to identify words with similar roots to those in English. For example, Year 7 pupils related *'dens'* to *'dentist'* and *'monstre'* to *'monster'*.
49. Leadership and management are very good. The subject curriculum is very well planned. It reinforces skills such as numeracy and includes the use of new technology and resource banks to support learning. As well as being an advanced skills teacher, the teacher has gained an additional qualification on using ICT in the classroom. Consequently, the interactive whiteboard is used to very good effect to demonstrate ideas and collate pupils' answers, and pupils use new technology to consolidate learning. For instance, a Year 11 pupil used new technology to match successfully work-related words with the appropriate pictures in order to complete a crossword. The curriculum also includes social aims, such as preparing pupils for life and work in the European Union. Subject development planning is ambitious but realistic.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall and all pupils who attend achieve well. The absence of a few pupils in Year 11 spoils their opportunity to take GCSE.
- Pupils of all ages work hard and have good attitudes to learning.
- Behaviour management and relationships between adults and pupils are very good.
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

50. There has been good improvement in provision since the last inspection. Throughout their time in the school pupils improve their ability to use mathematical terms and techniques. For example, when handling data Year 7 pupils remember the terms bar chart and pictogram, and use a frequency table to produce a tally chart. By Years 10 and 11, pupils use and apply these skills when choosing how to present data from a wider range of options. Consequently, pupils are able to follow a GCSE course in Years 10 and 11 and many are successful in this. However, non-attendance means that a few Year 11 pupils fail to complete the course.
51. Teachers give careful thought to the approaches that will appeal to pupils and inspire learning. The key features of the Numeracy Strategy for pupils in Years 7 to 9 have been incorporated into lessons and they promote learning well. The pace of teaching is good and the timings of different sessions within lessons are carefully considered. Introductory activities may involve rapid mental arithmetic work, such as around a game of bingo, or, as in the case of a Year 9 group, a timed multiplication test. In the main, teaching sessions games, practical activities, demonstrations and competitions are all exploited. Tasks that match individual pupils' learning needs are usually provided. This can be in terms of the degree of challenge, the level of support needed, or the amount of work provided. Pupils have good understanding of what they are required to do and are pleased with their successes. Learning is helped by pupils' clear understanding of their own targets.
52. Pupils' attitudes in lessons are generally good, and occasionally very good. For instance, they respond well to opportunities to become fluent in mental calculations and work in some depth on specific problems. Nevertheless, on some occasions, their restlessness resulting from the problems they bring in with them following break times or lesson changeovers threatens to affect their learning. However, the high quality teaching and very good behaviour management strategies employed by teachers and learning support assistants generally deal with this effectively, so that disruption to learning is minimal. Teachers and learning support assistants work together as strong teams. They work to common core standards, for example by putting an emphasis on getting pupils into lessons on time.
53. Mathematics is well led and managed by an effective subject leader. Pupils' achievements are assessed well at the end of topics and pupils are beginning to be involved in self-assessment of their work through completing 'I can' sheets. There are good procedures developing for collating this performance data to track pupils' progress and to give teachers sound guidance about the focus for future teaching. New technology is used well to consolidate and extend learning through an ICT program that allows pupils to work individually at different tasks and improves their fluency in basic numeracy.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Although there are many examples of pupils using and practising their mathematical skills in different subjects of the curriculum, these tend to happen by chance. Planning does not routinely identify opportunities when these skills can be developed or reinforced. Pupils demonstrate their skills in measuring in design and technology, and they weigh ingredients in food technology. Pupils use their knowledge of data handling and graphs in ICT, and their understanding of angles and distances when using a program in control technology. Mathematical skills and knowledge are promoted in science when pupils estimate equal quantities in test tubes, judge probabilities and weigh materials. Year 11 pupils use their data handling skills in English to present in graphical form the information they have collected about pupils' preferences of different types of TV programmes. No instances were observed of numeracy skills being promoted in other subjects such as history, religious education and PSHE.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some teaching is excellent but pupils' achievements overall are satisfactory.
- Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.
- Learning support assistants support pupils' learning well.
- Teaching and learning are adversely affected by inadequate accommodation for the preparation of investigations and a lack of technical support staff.

Commentary

55. Since the last inspection, which reported that teaching and pupil achievement were generally good, the subject has suffered from a lack of appropriate staffing. As a result, standards have fallen. The appointment of two new science teachers within the last year has begun to improve the situation and the subject is now organised better. However, subject development planning and programmes of work still require considerable further development and older higher attaining pupils still have no access to GCSE courses. The improvement in provision since the last inspection is, therefore, unsatisfactory.
56. In the very best lessons, teachers have secure subject knowledge, high expectations of learning and behaviour, and they use scientific language appropriately. In particular, they use the correct terminology in investigative work, such as the vocabulary associated with variables, making predictions and the concept of a fair test. Lessons are planned to take individual pupil needs into account and learning support assistants are used very appropriately to support the pupils' learning and to defuse potential inappropriate behaviour. The skilled use of questioning enables pupils to predict the results of experiments and reinforces their knowledge and understanding. Well-produced worksheets enable pupils, including those pupils with limited writing skills, to record these predictions. Pupils clearly enjoy their experiments and receive high quality support from the teachers and learning support assistants, although some work well independently. Teachers continually ask questions about methods and expected outcomes while the pupils are undertaking their practical work, so there is a happy buzz of activity. Pupils have very positive attitudes and behave well, despite sometimes being very unsettled when they enter the laboratory.
57. Not all aspects of teaching and learning are of such high quality. In some lessons, time is not used effectively and inappropriate behaviour disrupts learning. Throughout the subject, insufficient use is made of new technology in investigative work or for enabling pupils with less developed writing skills to make notes, plan their research or record results. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are extended well through discussion about method and the process of prediction, but generally there is insufficient routine use of key words. Numeracy skills are

reinforced by weighing and measuring and through recording data in the form of graphs and tables.

58. There is currently no subject leader for science and this is having a detrimental impact on the effectiveness of subject development planning, curriculum innovation, assessment procedures and the monitoring of teaching and learning. In particular, assessment information is not used to plan systematically the learning experiences for individual pupils. Although some investment has been made in new resources, they are still unsatisfactory, especially ICT resources. The lack of adequate preparation areas means that equipment and materials cannot always be prepared and locked away before lessons. The range of activities being offered to the pupils is also being affected by the lack of technician support.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because of effective teaching.
- The use of ICT across the curriculum is good in some subjects but underdeveloped in others.
- Resources are satisfactory for discrete subject lessons but unsatisfactory in most other subjects. The lack of technical support is affecting the range of ICT activities which can be undertaken.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- The lack of ICT facilities in the residential houses is a significant weakness.

Commentary

59. There has been good improvement since the last inspection as a result of better teaching and increased resources. Therefore, pupils acquire new skills and understanding and demonstrate increasing competence in the subject as they move through the school. They make good progress.
60. Teaching overall is good, and much is very good. Lessons are planned effectively to include appropriate activities for all pupils. These are both stimulating and interesting. The teacher's enthusiasm and high expectations, both for learning and for behaviour, are apparent in every lesson and the pupils cannot help but respond positively and enthusiastically. Their attitudes and behaviour are good. Pupils follow well-established routines and learning is supported by effective work sheets and the contributions of very good learning support assistants. Therefore, they make good gains in acquiring new skills and knowledge about an increasingly wide range of programs and software as they move through the school. They produce high quality word-processed documents, spreadsheets, computer-based presentations and web pages. The good progress that pupils make means that they have the opportunity to follow an accredited examination course in Years 10 and 11.
61. The subject leader has worked very hard to improve the provision in ICT since the last inspection, not only in the subject itself but also by providing high quality training and support to her colleagues. Subject development planning and programmes of work are now good and overall provision for the subjects has been enhanced by improved resources and accommodation.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

62. The opportunity for using ICT in other subjects across the curriculum varies considerably from subject to subject. It is used very effectively in French, where an interactive whiteboard motivates the pupils and reinforces their learning, and in mathematics. Its use in science and in design and technology is unsatisfactory. It is not used sufficiently well to research

information or for pupils with poorly developed literacy skills to record and evaluate their work. There is little evidence of a planned and systematic use of ICT to help improve the presentation of pupils' work or for drafting and re-drafting. The lack of ICT facilities in the residential houses is reducing pupils' ability to practise these skills in the evening or to undertake appropriate follow up work in ICT and to research information in other subjects for homework.

HUMANITIES

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils now follow an accredited course in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils develop good understanding of historical language and vocabulary.
- Learning is supported well by using local resources and facilities.
- Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

63. Pupils follow a broad and balanced subject curriculum in Years 7 to 9. The current Year 10 pupils are the first year to have begun an accredited course. This is a good development since the last inspection.
64. On occasion, pupils learn well, although their learning is satisfactory overall. Some lessons have strong features of teaching. Planning identifies what it is hoped pupils will learn and these objectives are shared with the class. These introductory sessions are also used well as opportunities to reinforce expectations of behaviour and application to work. An enthusiastic teacher uses resources well to initiate and support discussions. He orchestrates these discussions well, using a good combination of prompting, questioning and informing. A particularly good characteristic of these discussions is the promotion of appropriate subject-specific vocabulary and more general knowledge and language. When they are concentrating, pupils enjoy these sessions a great deal and gain a good level of historical knowledge and understanding. They are keen to be part of the discussions and volunteer mature and perceptive contributions. A Year 10 pupil was able to describe a democracy as "a government that runs by law", and a Year 9 pupil inferred that the cramped conditions in which slaves were kept resulted in "no privacy".
65. Although pupils learn well in some lessons, their achievements overall are satisfactory. Significant time is lost as pupils make their way across to the classroom and they frequently take too long to settle down. Consequently, the activities that are planned are rarely completed and it is the writing task that generally suffers. Pupils do not get regular opportunities to express their ideas in writing. At times, learning also suffers because pupils' attitudes deteriorate and unsatisfactory relationships between pupils sometimes manifest themselves as disruptive behaviour.
66. Since the last inspection, the provision for history has improved satisfactorily. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. A relatively new subject co-ordinator has revised the curriculum and this now has a good balance. Learning is supported through visits to local places of historical interest, such as the group of Year 7 pupils who were seen studying Norman castles in preparation for their forthcoming trip to Leeds Castle. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. Records simply reflect general grades of effort and work. They are inadequate in showing what new information pupils have acquired and what new skills they have developed.

Geography

67. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching and learning as too few lessons were observed during the inspection. Limited pupils' work, and unsatisfactory assessment practice, did not provide sufficient information to evaluate pupils' achievements.
68. In the lessons that were sampled, pupils were taught well. For example, they made good gains in learning about over-population in poor regions of the world such as India and Africa. They contributed well to discussions and read aloud confidently and willingly to the rest of the class. However, short lessons and late starts, combined with some difficult behaviour and unacceptable attitudes, meant that planned writing tasks were rarely started. This has an adverse effect on the standards pupils achieve.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject does not make a sufficiently strong contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
- Learning is generally satisfactory, but pupils' behaviour sometimes reduces opportunities to acquire new information.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

69. The permanent teacher of the subject was absent throughout the inspection and so all lessons were taught by temporary staff. Pupils were taught satisfactorily and they make satisfactory progress. This represents satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection, when a significant proportion of teaching was unsatisfactory.
70. The teacher is very caring and enthusiastic and constantly praises pupils' contributions and encourages their participation. He has good subject knowledge and is keen to relate religious education and understanding to everyday events as this is seen as the most effective way of gaining pupils' interest.
71. Despite this appropriate and sensitive approach, pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are frequently unsatisfactory and at times poor. On these occasions, pupils arrive late and are very reluctant to begin work. They will not participate in discussions, other than to make flippant and unnecessary remarks, and may be very unpleasant to each other. At other times, pupils become very engaged and interested and demonstrate good general knowledge and keen insights. For instance, a class of Year 10 pupils were extremely interested in a lesson that focused on crime and punishment and contributed a number of possible reasons why people commit crimes; drugs, no job, no money and a form of employment. One pupil was able to relate the discussion to a television documentary he had seen and he did this sensibly and articulately. Younger pupils made similarly perceptive comments on occasion. For example, a Year 8 pupil commented that people pray "to ask for something. For help."
72. Although the subject makes some contribution to pupils' personal development, such as the promotion of speaking and listening skills, it fails to develop other dimensions of personal development. Whilst lessons may make references to religious and social acts and events, there is very little consideration of spirituality and encouraging pupils to reflect about these situations. In addition, there is little evidence of the school actively promoting pupils' awareness of other faiths and cultures and pupils' understanding of living in multicultural Britain.

73. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. There are shortcomings in the scope and quality of the subject curriculum and little consideration of building up a programme of activities that are appropriate to pupils' ages and which build on their prior learning. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall good teaching ensures that pupils learn well when working with resistant materials and in food studies.
- At times, pupils behave inappropriately and this affects their learning.
- New technology is not used at either the design or making stage.
- The range of activities which the pupils can undertake in resistant materials is limited because of inadequate storage space and the lack of technical support.

Commentary

74. Generally, pupils learn well in lessons. This represents good improvement since the last inspection, when teaching and pupil progress were judged to be satisfactory. However, the achievement of some pupils in the design and evaluation elements of resistant materials is adversely affected by inappropriate behaviour, and the teacher's inconsistent response to this behaviour, and to the inefficient use of time in some lessons. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall.
75. Where teaching is good, the learning needs of individual pupils are taken into account. Lessons are planned to include elements of design and evaluation as well as making. There are clear routines for teaching and learning, which pay good regard to health and safety issues such as wearing goggles or face masks and washing hands before preparing food. Learning support assistants reinforce and explain key skills effectively and are also skilled at identifying when pupils' behaviour may be beginning to deteriorate and intervening before it becomes too disruptive. This reflects the good relationships that exist between adults and pupils. Therefore, teachers and learning support assistants are able to discuss and challenge pupils, such as considering elements of design and whether or not an artefact is fit for its intended purpose. As a result of this good teaching, pupils are keen to get on with their work and show an impressive regard for equipment and tools. Consequently, pupils throughout the school increase their skills, ranging from using a wider range of tools when cutting, joining and finishing wooden products to applying increasingly complex techniques when producing food. Adults' high expectations are maintained to the end of lessons and so pupils clear up after themselves, quietly and efficiently.
76. Leadership and management of design and technology are satisfactory. The subject leaders for resistant materials and food studies organise their subjects well and have improved the resources and programmes of work. However, new technology is not used sufficiently well. Pupils do not have opportunities for using ICT in design or in making, or when recording and evaluating their work. There are also shortcomings in accommodation and resources for resistant materials. There are difficulties over storage in the workshop for large materials and for pupils' ongoing work. The range of activities which the pupils can undertake is affected by the lack of some equipment, especially those relating to plastics.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching enables pupils to acquire many new skills and achieve very well.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development and multicultural understanding.
- An inspirational subject specialist leads and manages the subject very well.

Commentary

77. Previous learning is reviewed well in lessons and forms the basis of further learning. Pupils receive appropriate guidance in lessons but they are also encouraged to seek their own inspiration, which often comes from stimulating artefacts. Behaviour difficulties are usually dealt with through a combination of humour and clear and firm expectations. Relationships are very good and sometimes excellent. The teacher and learning support assistant have the same very high expectations and are a strong team. Subject-specific vocabulary is used naturally and, as a result, pupils use the correct terminology confidently, such as 'primary' and 'secondary' colours, and 'textiles'. There has been good improvement in provision since the last inspection.
78. The teacher's enthusiasm is infectious and pupils are highly motivated and productive in lessons. Pupils of all ages use their sketchbooks to good effect to try out and improve their ideas. They value the work in their folders and are pleased when they master new techniques. Consequently, progress is very good in relation to pupils' previous experience and capabilities. Pupils of all ages acquire new skills as they experiment with a variety of materials when working with two and three-dimensional projects. For example, Year 9 pupils achieve very good quality patterns with lino prints, while Year 10 pupils made similarly very good progress with their tree designs for a magic forest picture. Skilful teaching develops pupils' awareness of colour, their ability to do line drawings, develop patterns, and use blocks of colours and shading.
79. A very knowledgeable teacher encourages pupils' personal development very well, too, and encourages them to see art in everyday life. Pupils start to understand the social influences that inspire movements and styles, such as the arts and crafts movement and *Art Deco*. This helps them to identify similarities and differences between different types of art as they are introduced to the works of a wide range of artists from different times and cultures. For example, Year 9 pupils understand the relationship between the arts and craft movement's focus on pattern and the simplicity of *Art Deco*. Other pupils relate the patterning on African masks to modern designs. These experiences are used by pupils as inspiration for their own works, with regard to both artistic expression and techniques. For instance, Diana Ong's *Rush Hour* is a basis for the patterns and techniques used by Year 8 pupils for their wax resist pictures.
80. A talented subject specialist is developing the subject very well. Ongoing assessment is well used to encourage pupils to view their own work critically and to suggest ideas for development and improvement. The subject curriculum is structured to link well with subjects such as history and geography and very good planning seizes opportunities to encourage skills such as numeracy when working on scale and perspective.

Music

81. Provision for music is poor. The school does not have a music teacher and attempts to appoint a music specialist have been unsuccessful. Music is not taught and therefore the school is failing to meet its statutory requirement to provide this subject for pupils in Years 7 to 9. In addition, the school fails to provide musical experiences in assemblies and other subjects of the curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education

82. Too few lessons were observed to enable overall judgements to be made on the overall quality of teaching and learning, and pupils' achievements. Lessons that were sampled revealed a range in the quality of teaching and learning. Some teaching is good. For instance, a group of Year 11 pupils learnt well when they were actively engaged in the weights room, recording sets of completed repetitions such as shoulder and chest presses. Good attention was paid to health and the teacher ensured that the pupils worked safely, not lifting weights that were beyond their capabilities. Standards in this lesson were close to national expectations.
83. On the other hand, the learning of a large group of Years 7 and 8 pupils was unsatisfactory. They arrived late, took far too long to change, refused to listen to instructions and co-operate, and were disrespectful to the teacher. This meant that specific football skills were not taught in any depth because most of the group chose not to co-operate, just wanting to play a game of five-a-side football. The teacher addressed pupils' use of foul and abusive language but a great deal of teaching time was wasted as a result.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

Provision in pupils' personal, social and health education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning of the subject curriculum is inadequate.
- Lessons focus on an interesting range of topics that are appropriate to pupils' age and interests.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour often disrupt learning.
- Although teaching and learning and satisfactory, pupils' achievements over time are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

84. All pupils have one period of PSHE at the start of the week with their form tutor, but these sessions do not follow any long-term planned and structured programme. Therefore, teachers tend to follow their own short-term scheme or teach a series of 'one off' lessons. The inadequacy of this arrangement was identified during the last inspection but it has not been addressed effectively. The school attempted to support these sessions by introducing additional lessons and so all pupils now receive weekly discrete PSHE lessons as well as the tutor period. These are all taught by one teacher. This programme is not effective either. The school has not made sufficient progress in this subject since the last inspection. Both strands of provision for PSHE are inadequate.
85. The shortcomings in overall provision lie in the planning of the subject and pupils' achievements, rather than in the quality of teaching and learning. There is no coherent long-

term planning structure that ensures pupils follow a broad and relevant subject curriculum as they move through the school. The lack of such planning also means that there is no guarantee that pupils receive elements of citizenship within the programme. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.

86. Staff absence meant that lessons observed during the inspection were not taught by the usual teacher. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Aspects of teaching are good. The topics taught are relevant and appropriate to pupils' age and interests and therefore they frequently show enthusiasm and maturity in the way they discuss them. Solvent abuse, drinking excessive alcohol and stress were the content of different lessons observed and at times pupils learnt well. Effective discussions were supported by good quality resources and therefore pupils participated in the range of activities provided. Lessons were used well to support a variety of literacy skills. At times, pupils spoke maturely and sensibly and others listened respectfully. They read competently, extracting information from text, and the highest attaining pupils wrote fluently and neatly. However, overall, pupils produce little written work.
87. Although teaching and learning are satisfactory, pupils' achievements over time are unsatisfactory. This is because other factors, in addition to the unsatisfactory planning and lack of written work, reduce overall progress. Pupils frequently arrive late for lessons and when they do enter the classroom they take far too long to settle. Their attention and interest in lessons is unpredictable and relationships between pupils are frequently fragile. Consequently, all too often attitudes deteriorate to the extent that learning is disrupted.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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