

INSPECTION REPORT

THE MEADOWS SCHOOL

Southborough

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 119029

Principal: Mike Price

Lead inspector: Charlie Henry

Dates of inspection: 19 - 22 January 2004

Inspection number: 263848

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:	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils:	11-16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	42
School address:	London Road Southborough Tunbridge Wells Kent
Postcode:	TN4 0RJ
Telephone number:	01892 529144
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Appropriate authority:	Barnardo's
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Barbara Berryman MBE
Date of previous inspection:	7 July 2000

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Meadows is a non-maintained day and residential special school for young people aged 11-16. The school is administered by the Barnardo's charity. All pupils have statements of special educational needs, detailing social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. Most of these needs are severe and extreme in nature and have led to exclusions from other schools, including special schools. A few pupils have autistic spectrum disorders, particularly Asperger's Syndrome, and a few have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Pupils are disaffected from learning and have low levels of skills, knowledge and understanding compared with other pupils of their age. At the time of the inspection there were 42 pupils (37 boys and 5 girls) on roll. Most pupils are residential, attending during term time, including at weekends. A few attend on a daily basis and are taxied in from nearby local education authority areas. Most are of white ethnicity with nine from minority ethnic groups, mainly mixed white black Caribbean. All of these have English as their main language.

The school has been awarded a distinction on the Sportsmark award, a national recognition of the commitment and range of provision to sports and physical activity.

The school was placed in special measures in July 2000 and removed following an inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) in October 2001. Recently the school has had difficulties in filling vacant posts that have affected the provision.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16979	Charlie Henry	Lead inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Special educational needs
9619	Bob Miller	Lay inspector	
20397	Rosa Blunt	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education Personal, social and health education and citizenship
2351	Jacque Cook	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design French Music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The Meadows is an **effective** school that successfully meets the needs of all its pupils. Clear leadership from the headteacher, senior staff and the governing body ensures that the whole staff work together closely to provide high standards of teaching and care and, as a consequence, pupils make good progress. The school is well managed and it has continued to improve well since its last inspection in 2001. Value for money is good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils develop very trusting relationships with staff that lead to good improvements in their behaviour and attitudes to their work.
- High quality pastoral care from all staff raises pupils' self-esteem and gives them belief in their own abilities and confidence to improve still further.
- Residential provision is very good and successfully extends pupils' opportunities to learn through a broad range of activities.
- Very effective teamwork by all staff ensures that meeting the needs of each pupil is a priority.
- Pupils achieve very well and make very good progress in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship and in physical education (PE).
- Largely due to staffing difficulties there are shortcomings in a few areas of the curriculum, especially in science.
- There is too little emphasis on the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in other subjects.

The school has continued to build well upon the good improvements made prior to the last inspection in 2001. It has continued to improve individual education plans and assessment procedures and these are now used more consistently and effectively. Residential and school provision work more closely together. The governing body has continued to improve its monitoring of the school's performance and is now beginning to get information first hand. Although a few links have been made with other schools, particularly with respect to sport and ICT, this area continues to require further development in other subject areas.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	Personal and social education
Year 9	Good	Very good
Year 11	Good	Very good

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

Pupils' achievements and progress are good in all year groups. Their achievements in PE and PSHE and citizenship are very good. They are good in English, mathematics and French, and satisfactory in other areas except for science where they are unsatisfactory.

The development of pupils' personal qualities is good and the provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils enjoy their work and want to do well. Relationships with one another are good and are very good with staff. Behaviour improves the longer pupils are at school in response to the positive approach of all staff and is good overall. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Staff have high expectations for pupils' work and their behaviour. They plan lessons well to meet the needs of each pupil. There is very effective teamwork between teachers and learning support assistants. The assessment of pupils' work is good and is used to plan further work although there are still some inconsistencies between subjects. The school's care, support and guidance for pupils are very good. The curriculum is good overall. Physical education and the range of extra-curricular opportunities are very good. There are weaknesses in a few aspects of the curriculum, particularly science, due to difficulty in appointing permanent teachers. The residential provision is very good. There is a good partnership with parents, satisfactory partnership with other schools and colleges, and good links with the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good.

The principal, deputy principal and the senior management team inspire and motivate staff and pupils very effectively. Planning for development is based successfully on a firm evaluation of how well the school is doing. There are excellent procedures for the induction of new staff including a comprehensive training programme. Governance is good, based on the successful partnership between Barnardo's, the governing body and the school. There are very clear procedures to ensure the finances are managed securely. The school complies with all statutory requirements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school. Analysis of questionnaires and parents' views at the pre-inspection meeting show very few concerns. A small number raised the amount of homework and the presence of bullying. The inspection team concluded that the school makes good provision to deal with both of these aspects. Parents were all very pleased with the improvements their children made while at the school.

Pupils are similarly very pleased with the school. They feel they are treated with respect and that they make progress. They consider that if they have any concerns there are staff they can talk to. They are not concerned about any bullying since staff manage any occurrences effectively.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in science through improving teaching and learning and ensuring work is planned at appropriate levels for the range of pupils in each class.
- Raise ICT standards by increasing its use in other subjects.
- Broaden the curriculum for history and music for pupils in Years 7-9 and religious education and vocational education for pupils in Years 10-11.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve well and make good progress overall in all year groups.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make very good progress in personal, social and health education.
- Progress and achievement are very good in physical education.
- Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and French, however, they make insufficient progress in science.

Commentary

1. Pupils' achievements have continued to improve since the inspection in 2001, in line with continued improvement in the quality of the education provided. Most have lower levels of knowledge, skill and understanding than many pupils of their age when they start at the school, due to behaviour difficulties and, in many instances, the resulting lack of consistent school attendance. However, they quickly begin to learn, as their behaviour improves and they gain confidence. There are no measurable differences in the achievements of boys and girls, nor between those with additional special educational needs, or those from different ethnic groups. Lessons are planned to interest and motivate all pupils and take into account the different levels they are at. The skilled use of learning support assistants means that the teachers can meet these individual differences well. The targets within individual education plans are well matched to pupils' needs and are challenging. These targets are known to all staff and are reminded to pupils as opportunities arise. Pupils are increasingly achieving success with GCSE examinations.
2. Pupils make particularly good progress in physical education and in PSHE and citizenship because of the consistently high quality of teaching. Lessons are planned very well to meet the needs of each pupil, whatever level they are at and based on very good assessment. All staff are involved in teaching PSHE and citizenship as it extends beyond the specific lessons and is part of all lessons and at times such as break and lunch. Residential staff also contribute very well to this important aspect of pupils' work, for example, insisting that homework is done and that pupils work as teams, supporting one another.
3. Good progress is made in English and literacy, building well on often low levels of attainment when pupils arrive at the school. Expectations are high and emphasis is rightly placed on improving the basic skills of reading, writing and spelling, by providing extra sessions each day that focus on these areas. The progress made in these areas also improves pupils' confidence and allows them to learn better in other subjects. These skills are built upon satisfactorily in all lessons. All staff know what pupils can do and what they need to improve, although opportunities are not always taken to build on these. Effective spoken communication is also improved well throughout the school, including in the residential units and when pupils talk through any concerns and difficulties they have. A Year 8 pupil carefully prepared a talk about the work he had been doing about life in South Africa. This is the first time he had made such a presentation. He practised carefully with a support assistant what he was going to say. Having gained the confidence for the actual presentation he invited the headteacher to attend. Ex-pupils spoke warmly of the way that improvement in their literacy had really helped them and had enabled them to go to college and gain further qualifications after leaving school.
4. In mathematics pupils have also often missed important aspects of learning at their previous schools. Good teaching, including the skilled work of learning support assistants, enables them to fill in these gaps and gain confidence. For example, younger pupils build on their

knowledge of addition and subtraction and apply these to increasingly difficult and varied problems. Older pupils calculate simple problems in their head, learn a wide range of knowledge and gain understanding as they work towards entry level and GCSE examinations.

- Achievement and progress in science are currently unsatisfactory, due to the disruption in specialist teaching caused by recruitment difficulties. Progress and achievement are good in French because the quality of teaching is good. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in ICT. They make good progress in ICT lessons; however, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and to support learning in other subjects. Pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school are good. Behaviour is good and improves the longer pupils are at school. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are strong relationships throughout the school.
- Pupils successfully learn to take responsibility for their learning.
- The positive approach to improving behaviour is effective.
- The school promotes pupils' personal development very well.

Commentary

Attendance

- Pupils' attendance is satisfactory overall. The level of unauthorised absence is very low, however the level of authorised absence is high. This is due to the severe nature of the needs of the pupils, a few of whom have not attended school for a significant period before enrolling at the Meadows. The school works hard with pupils' home education authorities and specialist support services to increase the attendance of those few pupils who are reluctant to attend regularly. For each such pupil the school has a clear and negotiated plan to improve their attendance and these demonstrate success through improved attendance. There is very good liaison with parents in such instances. Punctuality to lessons is good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	16.6	School data	0.6
National data	12.3	National data	8.2

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

Attitudes and behaviour

- Pupils try hard to meet the high expectations that are set for them. They enjoy school and even when they do not manage to control their behaviour they maintain very good relationships with staff and try to work out any problems they have. These very effective relationships are built on trust and continue even when things go wrong. This is one of the strengths of the school and is due to the positive way in which staff deal with inappropriate behaviour. Staff have confidence in their approach and do not lower their expectations of their pupils as they talk through any difficulties. The lesson by lesson target setting for good behaviour and work is effective and is linked to gaining points. These points lead to rewards, both for the individual pupils and the class.

8. Younger pupils, especially those who have been at the school for only a short time, are more likely to behave in an unsatisfactory way. Older pupils, overall, behave better and act responsibly, seeking out staff to discuss any difficult issues. For example, a pupil in a mathematics lesson wanted to talk about why he had been upset the previous evening. The teacher listened to him carefully, giving him time to express his concerns. He was then able to get on with his work effectively.
9. Residential staff are also very effective in helping pupils to succeed in improving their behaviour. They set clear guidelines establishing what is acceptable. Pupils value the time staff are prepared to spend with them and the fact that they listen to what they have to say.

Exclusions

10. The number of fixed-term exclusions is high. Pupils are excluded for short periods as part of the school's strategy to help them understand their responsibilities for behaving in appropriate ways. This approach is successful since pupils want to be at school and its effectiveness is demonstrated by the lack of any permanent exclusion over the last two years. This is a significant achievement given the previous history of many pupils who have been permanently excluded from other schools. The school carefully monitors exclusions. There is no group within the school, boys or girls, or those from particular ethnic groups who are more likely to be excluded.

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	31	44	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	3	0
Black or Black British – African	2	7	0
Any other ethnic group	2	2	0

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

Personal development

11. Responsibility and independence are developed effectively. For example, in classes pupils are given just enough help so that they can successfully complete their work and are then expected to work independently. In a Year 9 English lesson pupils were trusted to go to the computer room to word process their work. The pupils worked conscientiously, only requiring periodic monitoring by staff. Older pupils are allowed to go out of school at lunchtime to go to nearby shops. In the residential provision pupils are allowed to have a television in their rooms and are trusted to switch it off when they should. When they demonstrate reliability, they are further trusted to use public transport, for example when going out in the evening.
12. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Assemblies are lively and give good opportunities for pupils to think about others less fortunate than themselves and reflect on their own circumstances. Lessons about life in apartheid South Africa give pupils an insight into a very different culture and the struggle for freedom from oppression. As they study poems about 'the journey home' they think carefully about the thoughts and feelings of the writer.
13. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good, as is that for their social development. The PSHE and citizenship programme, together with the very strong role models shown by all staff, helps pupils understand their responsibilities. They develop a strong sense of what is right and wrong. Pupils enjoy living in the residential provision and usually stay in the same unit

while they are at the school, which means that there is a range of ages together. This helps them to be more tolerant and to respect the feelings and property of others. Their self-esteem grows as friendships are formed and very strong relationships are built with staff. Many opportunities are planned and provided for pupils to work together, especially in sports and other extra-curricular activities. Social skills are also improved very well in the residential units. Pupils are encouraged to follow rules and spend their leisure time co-operatively, for example playing pool or taking turns on video games. Specific targets are set for pupils, for example, to help them take care of themselves and by the time they leave to have learnt to look after themselves, to keep their rooms tidy, to shop and cook meals. Cultural development is good overall and prepares them well for living in a multicultural society; however, this is not extended sufficiently through the art curriculum. There are many educational and sports trips, for example, to outdoor pursuits centres, to attend competitions with other schools and to visit cultural and art events, such as the Young Vic. Overall, the provision for pupils' personal development has improved well since the last inspection.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is good. The school's care, support and guidance for pupils are strengths as is the provision made for their personal, social, health education and citizenship. Physical education and the range of extra-curricular opportunities are very good and also contribute very well to pupils' personal development. The residential provision is very good. There are weaknesses in a few aspects of the curriculum, particularly science.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In a significant number of lessons the quality is very good and occasionally it is excellent. In a few lessons the quality is unsatisfactory, largely due to weakness in planning. The assessment of pupils' work is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in physical education and PSHE and citizenship.
- Staff build very effective relationships with pupils upon which trust and confidence grows.
- Lessons are usually well planned to ensure pupils are interested and motivated, although in a few the work is either too easy or too difficult.
- Learning support assistants contribute very effectively to the work of teachers in maintaining high expectations for pupils' behaviour and work.
- Assessment is good in most lessons and used to plan for further work.
- Residential unit staff support the work that pupils do in class very well.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (5%)	9 (22%)	14 (34 %)	12 (29%)	4 (10%)	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. The quality of teaching and learning has been maintained and built upon the improvements reported in the last inspection. The quality is good overall, is very good in many lessons and excellent in a small number. Teaching and learning in PSHE and citizenship and in physical education are consistently of a very high standard due to the expertise of staff to know exactly what pupils need to learn based on detailed knowledge of their needs. Activities are chosen

that motivate pupils and will help them learn. Pupils are expected to work hard to make good progress.

15. In the best lessons teaching is very carefully planned using detailed knowledge of the pupils' skills and abilities, established by detailed and effective assessment. This information is used to set individualised targets that are well matched to challenge the pupils to improve. These targets are known to the pupil as well as any support assistants and used to encourage the pupil to do well. Throughout the lesson the teacher monitors the pupils' performance giving skilled advice that is pitched at just the right level. At the end of the session the teacher reviews how well the pupil has done and discusses what the pupil must do to improve still further. The achievements are recorded and these are then used at the next lesson to remind the pupil what they must do. For example, in a Year 7 and 8 football lesson the teacher grouped pupils according to their ability, with an assistant working with each group. Demonstration was given about how to improve their skills in controlling a ball and targets were set for what they should achieve. The teacher then worked very effectively with each small group in turn, monitoring what each pupil was doing and giving further advice about what they were doing. In so doing the assistants were able to build on this expertise when the teacher worked with the other groups. The pace of the lesson was kept brisk, no time was lost and pupils were fully involved and interested.
16. Teachers and learning support assistants work very well together to encourage good behaviour and prevent unacceptable behaviour. They create a calm atmosphere, praising pupils when they do well and talk through any difficulties as they arise. This results in the development of trusting relationships that is characteristic of the school. Their expectations of what pupils should do are very consistent, for example, in a Year 8 mathematics lesson a pupil was not keen on writing out the full question and answer. He asked the teacher if he could just write the answer and having been told he must write the question as well he then waited for the opportunity to ask the class's learning support assistant the same question. Without having discussed the issue with the teacher the assistant replied in exactly the same way.
17. In the few lessons where the teaching was unsatisfactory this largely related to problems that the school has had in recruiting specialist teachers. In these lessons the work planned for pupils is not as well matched to their needs as it should be; as a result they become bored or frustrated and their attitude and behaviour deteriorate. For example, in a science lesson the work on placing living things into categories was not based on an assessment of what the pupils already knew, hence it was too difficult for most and learning was unsatisfactory.
18. Parents praised the way staff in the residential units get pupils to complete their homework. Education social work staff will ask teachers for homework if pupils do not appear to have any and will provide an appropriate level of help. Where pupils are reluctant to do their homework, other ways are developed. For example, completing part of the work and working on literacy and numeracy skills through organised activities, such as running a shop.
19. Most teachers do not plan effectively for pupils to develop their ICT skills in other subjects nor do they encourage pupils to use ICT to help them learn in these subjects. Little use is made of researching information using CD ROM material, or in using the Internet, for example in art and design and in humanities.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory. Extra-curricular activities, including those arranged by residential staff, are very good. Accommodation is very good and the resources for learning are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Personal, social and health education are very good.
- The provision for pupils' participation in a broad range of sporting activities is outstanding.
- The provision for science is currently unsatisfactory.

- There is a good emphasis on developing pupils' literacy skills.
- As a result of staffing difficulties too little time is currently allocated to a few subjects.
- There are too few opportunities for older pupils to begin to learn vocational skills.
- The residential provision enriches and enhances the curriculum for the pupils very well.

Commentary

20. The curriculum has been carefully planned and designed to meet the needs of all the pupils. Overall, the school has maintained the improvements reported in the last inspection report. On the whole, the curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of all pupils; however, there are a few areas that are underdeveloped as a result of current staffing difficulties. National Curriculum guidelines are used well and each subject has appropriate plans of what pupils should learn. Personal and social education is particularly strong with a great deal of emphasis being placed on developing relationships and attitudes. This emphasis can be seen in all lessons, around the school during out-of-lesson times such as at breaktimes, and in the residential units. As a result there is a very effective nurturing of positive relationships between pupils and staff that are a strong feature of the school. This gives pupils the confidence to attempt tasks and challenges they may find difficult; it also ensures that they have someone to talk to when they have problems or concerns. Sex education and education about drugs misuse are covered well.
21. A further strength of the school is physical education. The opportunities for pupils to take part in a wide variety of sports, including as extra-curricular activities during the lunchtime and during the evenings and weekends for residential pupils, is outstanding. These activities provide opportunity for pupils to gain self-esteem and achieve success, whilst building solid, trusting relationships with staff. Pupils are very motivated and take good advantage of the range of activities during the school day and during their leisure time. There is a focus on personal challenge and achievement with pupils and staff working together to achieve success. A broad range of accreditation is available in physical education and pupils are rightly proud of their achievements.
22. Good skills in literacy are identified as very important and the school timetable has an appropriate focus on improving individual skills in reading and spelling, in addition to daily English lessons. This focus ensures that pupils are challenged and supported to improve their individual skill levels with certificates gained for achieving various milestones. This support encourages pupils to believe in their own abilities, to increase the opportunity to study other areas of the curriculum more fully and to gain in self-esteem and confidence. This approach, together with the carefully constructed English lessons based on the National Literacy Strategy, ensures that pupils make good progress and succeed in examinations at the end of Year 11.
23. The school provides a very good level of extra-curricular opportunities and experiences. There are trips, visits, residential opportunities and a wide variety of sporting and other activities. Sports activities are available regularly during and after school and at weekends. Other activities include Green Action, a local initiative for environmental work, and outdoor activities, such as fishing. Pupils taking part in the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme enjoy riding and cycling. In addition there is a good range of other activities from visits to local libraries and shops to theatre visits to London and residential visits to Cornwall, the Lake District and, further afield, to Germany. This focus on opportunity and activity serves to broaden the horizons of pupils and to raise their self-esteem and confidence levels giving them many chances to have new experiences and achieve success.
24. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 is focused on providing pupils with good opportunities to achieve well and to work towards the next stages of their career. The opportunities for accreditation with General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) and entry level examinations are good and pupils respond well to these high expectations. Much work is also undertaken in careers, work experience and personal and social education to ensure that

pupils are ready to move on after school. The school has very good links with the Connexions service and all pupils have interviews with the personal adviser from this service. Very helpfully, links are made with personal advisers from their home areas to further help pupils move forwards after they leave the Meadows. Additionally, pupils considering further education are helped to find appropriate provision in their home areas and links are made. A few pupils are able to access courses at colleges local to their homes before they leave school thus ensuring a smooth transition after school.

25. While there are good opportunities to achieve in a wide range of subjects, the provision of more vocational courses is underdeveloped. The school is aware of this need and has well advanced plans to improve the courses offered from September. The plans have been carefully made and researched and include making use of vocational projects focusing on the building trades. These plans with opportunities to gain vocational qualifications will further enhance the choices available to pupils in Years 10 and 11.
26. There is a very effective twenty-four hour curriculum provided for pupils who are in the residential units. Their progress in school, both academically and in terms of improving their behaviour, is well supported as they discuss how their day has gone with staff. Pupils are helped to make productive use of their leisure time, developing and broadening their interests.
 - Pupils are taught the skills and knowledge and given practice to be independent, for example, to use public transport confidently, to manage their personal hygiene, launder clothes and cook.
 - They are supported to complete homework.
 - Where appropriate, activities are organised that necessitate pupils using their literacy and numeracy skills; for example, using a recipe to prepare a meal.
 - There is a good range of activities available in the units. Pupils play games such as pool, table tennis, basketball and snooker. They watch videos and listen to music.
 - Activities are organised to meet specific needs. A group goes running which has helped weight-loss.
 - At the girls' unit, a pond has been constructed in the garden fostering interest in pond life.
 - Each unit has several activities planned each week that are off site, some for groups, such as swimming and going to the cinema, and others for individuals. These may be developing a particular interest, including fishing or going to the golf driving range.
 - Pupils attend clubs in the community.
27. Overall, there are sufficient teachers to meet the requirements of the curriculum. However, the breadth of what is taught in a few subjects is currently affected by shortages. These problems are very recent and the school is actively seeking new teachers to resolve these difficulties. For example, at present no music lessons are being taught because of lack of staff expertise. The school is, however, redressing this lack to a very limited extent by providing opportunities to take part in performances, such as the school's Christmas pantomime, and through the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme. Likewise, staffing difficulties have limited the provision of history for pupils in Years 7–9, religious education for pupils in Year 11 and the quality of science provision throughout the school. There is a very good number of learning support assistants throughout the school and educational social workers in the residential units. These are very experienced and contribute very effectively to helping pupils make progress.
28. The school has very high quality accommodation with specialist rooms, further enhanced by access to additional nearby physical education and sports facilities. The pupils and staff appreciate the quality of their surroundings, making good use of them and caring for them well. Pupils are proud of the way their school looks and take care of the building and grounds. The accommodation is light, airy and very pleasant, adding to the friendly, welcoming and confident ethos of the school.

29. The residential accommodation is of a high standard and well resourced because:
- Each unit has the feel and look of a family home with appropriate furniture and furnishings which are, on the whole, in very good condition.
 - Even in the smallest of the units, there is plenty of room for pupils to eat communally, watch television together and yet have any privacy they require.
 - Pupils may, and many do, personalise their rooms, for example with posters and items brought from home.
30. Learning resources are good overall and, in many instances, for example, for physical education, they are very good. While there are new computer suites for pupils in the upper and lower schools, there is a lack of up-to-date computers in classrooms. There are also too few facilities and too little use made of information and communication technology in lessons, for example, there are no interactive white boards that are useful for displaying images to the whole class. These aspects have limited the development of this subject throughout the school.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' care, welfare and safety is good. The provision for support, advice and guidance is very good. There is good involvement of pupils in discussions about school improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Induction arrangements for new pupils are very good.
- Procedures to ensure pupils' work in a safe and healthy environment are good.
- The pupil council provides a valuable opportunity for pupils to be involved in school improvement.
- Pupils have very good access to well-informed support, advice and guidance.
- The residential units provide high standards of care for pupils.

Commentary

31. Pupils are very well supported by the very good relationships that exist. Pupils feel that staff treat them fairly and with respect. Many feel trusted to do things on their own. The induction process for new pupils is of a very high quality, spread across an extended period of time and leads to most pupils being able to settle quickly into school routines. There are suitable policies for health and safety and child protection, which staff implement effectively. A concern raised during the inspection about the operation of electrical equipment in design and technology was immediately addressed. A recent National Care Standards inspection confirms that the school offers a high standard of care.
32. Pupils' achievements and personal development are well monitored and reported upon. Older pupils receive impartial advice both from within school and from outside agencies on further study or career opportunities. The school works with Connexions services from pupils' home areas to ensure that transition to local further education is well planned and effective.
33. The school considers pupils' views, mostly through the pupil council, on a number of topical issues. Pupils approve of this and feel they are valued and listened to and that their views are welcomed and dealt with seriously. When the issues they raise cannot be acted upon straight away they are told why and if action cannot be taken then this too is explained to them. A particularly good feature of these arrangements is the allocation of a small amount of the school budget to the council, for example, in buying extra waste paper bins. Pupils are involved in setting and reviewing personal targets. This adds well to their feeling of trust and they take their involvement seriously. As two ex-pupils explained, they are made to feel that they have a real and valued role in planning for their own futures. They felt that this helped prepare them for when they had to make decisions after they left school.

34. The very well organised provision in the residential part of the school ensures that the high standards of care and support identified at the last inspection have been maintained and improved. There are very good arrangements to ensure that information is passed to and from the unit staff. There is an effective handover at the beginning of the day and at lunchtime, when education social work staff from the residential units work in class with pupils, helping to settle them down. Similarly, at the end of the day, when pupils are collected information is passed over. Very good records in the units help staff to keep track of pupils' progress against their targets and care plans are effective. Each pupil, both day and residential, has a key worker who knows the pupil very well and is the main point of contact for parents and staff. They attend any meetings about the pupil including the annual review.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a good partnership with parents. It has a satisfactory partnership with other schools and colleges and has good links with the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are very pleased with the school.
- The school has productive links with the community and these continue to be developed.
- There are good links with parents, however written information given to parents is underdeveloped.

Commentary

35. Parents are very satisfied with the work of the school. They are pleased with what the school offers and the progress their children make. The small number of parents' concerns over some pupils' behaviour and the assistance that the school gives parents to help with homework were not confirmed by the inspection. Behaviour observed during the inspection was good and there were effective arrangements for preventing and dealing with unacceptable behaviour. While some bullying does take place, pupils have the confidence to report it and know that it will be promptly and effectively dealt with. There is also effective use of homework, particularly in the residential units, to support the work pupils do in school. However, the school has rightly identified the need to assist parents further at home with the contribution they make to their child's learning.
36. The information provided for parents is satisfactory overall. There is a comprehensive and very well produced school prospectus, an annual report from the governors and a home-school agreement. Overall, there is regular telephone contact with parents and this is valuable and supportive. There are very good links forged with parents by staff in the residential provision. Each pupil's key worker talks to parents on at least a weekly basis about the progress their child is making in school. However, there are no school newsletters or curriculum information to enable parents to be more informed of what their child is learning. The twice-yearly academic reports, whilst informative, are inconsistent in the detail they provide about the progress pupils have made and what they know, understand and can do.
37. Pupils benefit from the trips they make into both the local and wider community. Visits to the zoo, museums and local sporting events all enhance their personal development. Pupils visit senior citizens in the local area and read poetry to them. All pupils take part in educational residential visits, both in this country and abroad. These regular outside visits contribute well to pupils' learning. People from the community visit the school and broaden pupils' opportunities for learning. Residential pupils make very good use of the local community, for example, when visiting leisure facilities and shopping.
38. The key issue identified in the last inspection that teachers maintain links with mainstream schools to ensure subject co-ordinators improve their subject expertise has been addressed satisfactorily. There are, for example, good links with a local school concerning sports

activities and, recently, a link has been made with a specialist technology school to broaden the facilities for learning ICT, however there is a lack of a link in science.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The leadership by the headteacher is good. The management of the school is effective. The successful partnership between Barnardo's, the governing body and the school ensures that governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The principal has a very good vision and sense of purpose for the school to improve standards, which is shared by the senior staff.
- Very good teamwork is fostered throughout the staff.
- The induction of staff is outstanding.
- The governing body is effective.
- Financial management is very structured and money is spent wisely.

Commentary

39. The principal, deputy principal and the senior management team inspire and motivate staff and pupils remarkably well providing very good role models. There is a clear focus to improve pupils' behaviour, build their self-esteem and enable them to learn. As stated in the mission statement there is 'a positive partnership in education and care'. Responsibility is well delegated and very effective teams of staff have been formed by the managers of the Years 7 - 9 and Years 10 - 11 departments in school, the head of care and the four team leaders in the residential units and the bursar of the administrative and ancillary staff. As a result, each area has the same aims but its own characteristics, although, as one pupil commented about the residential units "mine is the best, but the others are good too!" Staff work hard to include all pupils. They are very aware of the specific needs of pupils, such as the few girls, those from ethnic minorities and those who have additional special educational needs, and plan their work accordingly. Special programmes are devised to keep a pupil who finds it difficult to conform, in school, which as a last resort can involve a pupil taking lessons away from the class until there are improvements.
40. The development plan reflects the priorities which have been established well and there have been good developments since the last inspection. For example, a comprehensive assessment scheme has been recently implemented. However, the vocational part of the curriculum has not been given a sufficiently high priority, given the likely future needs of the pupils.
41. A good range of procedures has been developed to evaluate how well the school is performing. For example, lesson observations, supplemented by looking at pupils' work in Years 7 to 9, take place termly and are particularly helpful in improving the quality of teaching and learning in the main areas of focus, English and mathematics. This is important as many staff teach these subjects. The school is beginning to use information about pupils more effectively. A new computer program is being used to collect and collate information about incidents of pupils' unsatisfactory behaviour. Data has been produced for this term which clearly shows the potential of the planned further analysis, for example, to examine why there are proportionally more incidents with girls than boys in this period.
42. The school's ethos of calm and orderliness has developed further since the last inspection. Routines have been established and change minimised. The strategy for the educational social work staff to help pupils get settled in lessons by joining classes for the first lesson and to return at lunchtime is one very good example of how this has been achieved. Efficient administrative staff contribute very well to the smooth day-to-day running of the school. This frees the principal and senior staff to be readily available to support pupils, if necessary. There is a regular pattern of meetings which involve staff and keeps them informed. These include a leadership group meeting which brings together the team leaders from the residential provision

with the two department heads and the special educational needs co-ordinator from the school. This is effective in ensuring any pupils' difficulties are known about and tackled as a whole.

43. Maintaining the high quality of staff is a priority. There are excellent procedures for the induction of new staff including comprehensive training and mentoring by an experienced member of staff. New learning support assistants work alongside an established assistant to provide guidance and help. A recently appointed teacher spent the initial three or four days of her employment observing other staff teaching which she found valuable. Many staff, including those who are temporary, commented on how supportive and friendly they found their colleagues, which contributes towards the very positive relationships throughout the school. All team leaders are involved in the well structured reviews and performance management of staff. There is a good level of professional development which is linked to teachers' targets and to the school development plan.
44. The governing body is developing its role as a 'critical friend' in the school well, which is not always the case in a non-maintained school. Their training has been productively targeted at improving their role. They work very well with Barnardo's to help shape the direction of the school and clearly share the same vision. The governance is firmly based on a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. There are regular governors' meetings which are informed by an appropriate committee structure and members receive papers, including the principal's report, prior to the meetings. As a result, they are well placed to seek clarification and question actions. Governors are linked with subjects and visit classes, although at present, this is without a clear focus. This aspect of their role is planned to be the next stage of development. A representative from Barnardo's attends governors' meetings and has 'supervision' meetings with the principal where a broad range of issues regarding the running of the school are discussed. Solutions to the difficulties in recruiting suitably experienced teachers, which is currently having an effect on the breadth of the curriculum, are being urgently explored. Steps have been taken to ensure statutory requirements are met, for example, through properly fulfilling race equality legislation.

Finance

45. There are very clear procedures to ensure the finances are managed securely. Proposed expenditure is scrutinised thoroughly, prioritised very effectively and the principles of best value are applied well to ensure cost effectiveness. Careful budgeting is allowing a lowering of the amount of subsidy from Barnardo's while the provision has continued to improve. For example, most pupils in residence do not now have to share their bedroom and there are plans for all rooms to become single occupancy. Co-ordinators have completed audits of their subjects and are in the first year of prioritising and bidding for funding.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	2,707,439*
Total expenditure	2,707,439
Expenditure per pupil	60,165**

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	nil
Balance carried forward to the next	nil

*This figure includes a contribution from Barnardo's, leading to a balanced budget for the year.

**This is the average expenditure for residential and day pupils.

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

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with very effective teamwork between teachers and learning support staff.
- There is a very appropriate emphasis on improving literacy standards in the curriculum.
- The curriculum is broad and interests pupils, raising their achievement and giving them success in examinations.
- Opportunities for developing pupils' literacy skills in other lessons are often missed.

Commentary

46. Many pupils who join the school have low levels of literacy when they arrive. They are disaffected with learning and have low expectations of themselves. The school has a very appropriate focus on improving their reading, spelling and writing skills. This ensures that pupils are able to take part in other curriculum areas more successfully and gives pupils confidence in their own abilities. Each day has a lesson for reading and one for spelling in addition to an English lesson based upon the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils are encouraged to read every day. They choose books that interest them. Some use structured reading schemes. There is a good emphasis on reading for pleasure as well as for information. This builds interest and enthusiasm as well as developing skills. Pupils read with adults and discuss the contents of their books as they complete book reviews. There are very effective reading and spelling 'challenges' with awards made at bronze, silver and gold levels. These enable pupils to be rewarded for the progress and effort they make.
47. In English lessons, pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils in Years 7 - 9 describe characters in soap operas and say what are their most striking features. They build on this knowledge and understanding to help them to consider the characters in Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* and say what type of people the characters were. Pupils consider the names that Dickens gives his characters and learn how these names help to describe them. They create their own names for characters, carrying out this activity with much enthusiasm and good humour. Pupils dress in costume and assume characters from Dickens' novels. They are relaxed and enjoy their and other pupils' performances. They use these insights well as they make good progress in writing descriptively. Pupils in Year 11 preparing for their GCSE examinations make good progress in their understanding of the ways in which texts can influence the reader. They make very perceptive comments about the use of pictures and emotive language in an advertisement for a charity in Africa.
48. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they know their pupils and their attainments well. As a result, lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all pupils. The teachers use the structure of the National Literacy Strategy effectively both in their planning and in their management of lessons. They explain clearly what they want pupils to learn, together with the activities that they will undertake. This means that pupils have a very clear understanding of what they must do to succeed and to improve their skills further. Teachers ensure that lessons are busy, so that there is no wasted time and the different activities neatly build upon one another. Learning support assistants know the pupils well, often pre-empting any

difficulties that they might have and very effectively support them through these. Together with teachers they manage behaviour well and ensure that pupils receive praise for their hard work. The teamwork of teachers and learning support assistants is a strength. There are high expectations from staff that all pupils will achieve the goals that have been set. Successes from previous years are celebrated and past pupils sometimes return to school to talk to pupils about what they have achieved after leaving the school.

49. The curriculum is good, with careful attention given to a broad range of texts and styles to be studied so that it has interest for all pupils. The main curriculum is extended very well through special events, such as book week and poetry days, as well as theatre visits and visitors to school. These efforts add effectively to pupils' interest in the subject and increasing their motivation. There is a good range of examination opportunities for pupils of different levels of ability in Years 10 and 11. In extra-curricular activities literacy is enhanced by visits to the local library, by theatre visits and by taking part in performances which involves learning lines, taking turns and using language for effect.
50. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable about both the subject and the pupils' needs and brings these together effectively when planning. Her enthusiasm successfully influences all of the school's work, for example, in organising events outside of normal lesson time, including educational visits, and contributes well to keeping pupils interested. The curriculum audit has identified important areas for improvement, including more effective planning for improving pupils' literacy through different subjects. This aspect was also identified through the inspection as an area for further development. There has been good improvement overall since the inspection in 2001.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. Language and literacy are developed in other subject areas satisfactorily. However, the opportunities to tackle individual pupils' targets for improving their literacy within other subjects' lessons is not sufficiently planned for. In religious education lessons unknown spellings and new words are put onto the board and, in humanities, pupils are encouraged to sound out words they are attempting to write. Pupils in PSHE and careers lessons are encouraged to discuss issues, including taking turns and listening to the views of others. They are helped in this by teachers and learning support assistants who reflect their views back to them and encourage them to think things through. In interviews with the Connexions adviser, older pupils begin to learn the skills associated with job interviews.

French

52. Overall, pupils make good progress in French and all gain an entry level examination award. This is achieved through only one lesson a week in Years 7 - 9 and two lessons a week in Years 10 and 11 and is the result of very good teaching. Lessons are planned very well to include a range of activities that quickly gain and keep pupils' interest. Pupils do especially well when 'games' are used, such as a French version of 'Happy Families', or they are asked to recall facts from listening to and joining in with a French 'rap' style song. The teacher is skilled in using the right mix of French and English to ensure that pupils experience success. Mnemonics are very effective, for example, thinking of the 'wheat' in a breakfast cereal reminds pupils of the French word for the number eight, 'huit'. Pupils learn to recall and write words and phrases in French, and answer and pose questions. A weakness is the lack of opportunity for pupils to study a foreign language at GCSE level.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in mathematics.
- Teachers and support staff work well together to help pupils learn.
- By Year 11, most pupils are able to deal with challenging work.
- An increasing number of pupils are entered for GCSE examinations.
- There is insufficient use of ICT.

Commentary

53. Many pupils have missed important sections of their learning in mathematics by the time they join the school and often they are reluctant to attempt new work. Consistently good teaching and very skilled assistance from learning support staff gradually build pupils' confidence enabling them to do well. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, pupils worked hard to match questions with answers and thoroughly enjoyed opportunities to win in card games. They were helped to succeed because there were enough staff to work on a one-to-one basis with them and the activities were pitched at the right level of difficulty for each pupil: The more able subtracted two digit numbers and the least able subtracted one from a single digit number. Pupils in Year 9 understand how to calculate the mean, median and mode. They learn to construct frequency tables from tally charts and show results in bar and line graphs. Lessons are planned well and start promptly. In a particularly good beginning to a Year 10 lesson, one pupil wrote a series of groups of numbers on the board and the class took turns to write them underneath in the correct ascending order. Including negative numbers in one example was an additional challenge. Pupils in Year 11 learn the rules to calculate the size of angles with many calculating answers in their heads. One pupil was particularly pleased to solve how to tackle a less straightforward example. As a result of the progress they have made, all pupils in Year 11 are expected to gain entry level awards this year and additionally, ten are working towards a GCSE examination. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Overall, pupils' achievements are maintained at the same high level.
54. In every year group, staff are very good at getting pupils to explain how they have worked out answers. This is one of the good procedures used to assess how well pupils are learning. Work is usually marked during a lesson, so errors are dealt with quickly and pupils feel they 'get their work right'. This is reinforced by praise and further encouragement. A commercial computer program has been introduced and is being used to improve the mathematical skills and concepts of a number of pupils successfully. The associated printout sheets clearly demonstrate pupils' progress and it is proving an especially good activity for helping one less able pupil to learn well. Apart from this, opportunities for pupils to use ICT to help them in their work are too few.
55. Leadership and management are good. The subject audit, development plan and very clear policy are used well. Procedures such as the scrutiny of work in Years 7 - 9 and the moderation of course work for the entry level examination help to ensure consistency of standards and expectations, even though there are seven teachers of mathematics throughout the school. The new assessment records provide a good basis for setting targets for each pupil. At present, pupils do not begin working on investigating problems early enough to prepare them for their later examination work.

Mathematics across the curriculum

56. Mathematics is taught satisfactorily in other subjects of the curriculum, although it does not often appear on lesson plans. Opportunities are taken, for example, in physical education, particularly when dealing with distances, in food technology to weigh and measure and notably

in French when pupils are often asked to count. Good use was made of mathematical skills in the graph work in ICT.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is too much unsatisfactory teaching and learning.
- Work is poorly planned to meet the range of needs within the class.
- There are good resources, including the use of a nearby field and wood.

Commentary

57. The school has had significant difficulty in providing science since the departure of the previous permanent teacher. As a consequence the quality of science has deteriorated since the last inspection and pupils do not make satisfactory progress. Following short-term temporary arrangements there is now a specialist science teacher. While this has solved the problem of ensuring the school has suitable specialist knowledge the new teacher is not yet familiar with the range of pupils' knowledge and understanding of science in the classes and the extent to which planning and teaching must be pitched to all of these levels.
58. Where teaching and learning are satisfactory the teacher uses practical-based activities to interest the pupils. This is especially evident when using the environmental study in the countryside adjoining the school. This enthusiasm then carries back into the classroom, for example when a girl pupil studied reference books to try and identify whether she had heard a green or spotted woodpecker. In unsatisfactory lessons there is too great an emphasis on requiring pupils to make notes from the board on topics that lack interest, for example, the classification of living things. There is also too little checking as to whether the pupils understand what has been written. As a result, pupils' attention and concentration drift and they become unwilling to work. ICT is not used sufficiently to motivate pupils and to develop their learning.
59. Leadership and management are currently unsatisfactory. The science curriculum is broad and based on previous planning within the school. However, too great an emphasis is currently being placed on aiming for GCSE examinations without sufficiently establishing whether pupils are capable of this, especially since there have been gaps in their learning of science in the recent past. Given the newness of the teacher to teaching the full science curriculum, especially to pupils who have special educational needs, there is not sufficient specialist curriculum support, for example, through a link with another school's science department. Assessment is underdeveloped and does not adequately monitor what pupils have learned, nor provide a basis for setting targets for further work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress and learn well in ICT lessons.
- There is insufficient use of ICT in other subjects to develop their skills further and to use ICT to help learn other subjects.
- There are good resources in the ICT rooms; however, there are inadequate facilities in other classrooms.

Commentary

60. Pupils make good progress and learn well in the ICT lessons; however, this is not built upon in other subjects. Consequently progress and learning of ICT are only satisfactory overall. Most ICT lessons are well planned and pupils gain skills, knowledge and understanding about a broad range of topics. Pupils respond with keenness to learn and they try hard to develop their skills, helping one another if they can. In less effective lessons pupils are not challenged sufficiently, both to develop their understanding further and to maintain the highest standards of behaviour. Pupils develop word processing skills, including important aspects of editing their work, such as changing the font style to add extra emphasis to parts of the text. They learn to use databases and use these to produce graphs and charts, for example, to show the popularity of different types of cars using a pie chart. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 work towards a short course qualification at GCSE level.
61. The co-ordinator has effective plans to show how the subject will develop further. For example, a recent link has been made with a local grammar school so that more able pupils can extend their knowledge and skills with more advanced technology. The co-ordinator is aware that there is insufficient planning to use ICT to help learning in other subjects and that this prevents further practice of the skills, knowledge and understanding gained in the ICT lessons. A staff training scheme is underway, however, this is not yet supported by a resource development plan to ensure that all classrooms have up-to-date computers, so that pupils can continue to develop and apply what they learn in the ICT lessons. There are two good suites of computers for pupils in Years 7 – 9 and Years 10 -11. These facilities are available for use by other subjects when not being used for ICT lessons; however, this use is relatively small and does not add sufficiently to the overall ICT provision. The subject has maintained the improvement found in the previous inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

62. There is insufficient use of ICT to support other subjects. It is used occasionally for improving the presentation of written work, for example, in English, through word processing. Limited use is also made in mathematics, using a program to improve skills. However, there is too little use of ICT for research using the Internet and CD ROMs, for example, in humanities and in design and technology and art and design.

HUMANITIES

Provision in humanities (geography and history) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for GCSE humanities is good.
- There is insufficient history being taught at the present time to pupils in Years 7-9.

Commentary

63. The provision overall in humanities is satisfactory, however, currently, very little history is being taught for pupils in Years 7 –9. This is the result of staffing difficulties that have now been resolved and the new humanities teacher has begun to develop a broader range of topics to be taught.
64. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall and, sometimes, particularly in GCSE classes in Years 10 and 11, it is good. Pupils in Years 7 - 9 learn a wide range of knowledge about geography, such as the use of maps. They apply this understanding as they describe the difference between 'A' roads and smaller roads and describe methods of transport. However, due to a too narrow curriculum at present they make insufficient progress in history. By Year 11 pupils have gained the confidence to use their knowledge to explain their views with well thought thorough explanations. For example, they describe prejudice and its effects. They look at anti-Jewish cartoons from the Nazi period and recognise them as propaganda. These

pupils showed good commitment to their work, they concentrated well and made real efforts with the tasks set.

65. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The most effective teaching is in Years 10 and 11, for example, as staff skilfully draw out pupils' knowledge and extend this by linking the work to other areas of the curriculum. When looking at the cartoons in historical resources, pupils were reminded of work they were doing in English relating to media. They were able to apply this knowledge to their study of the cartoons, making very thoughtful points about the intentions of the cartoonist and the methods used. There is too little use of ICT either to extend pupils' knowledge of history and geography and as a teaching and learning resource to motivate pupils and hold their attention.
66. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The new subject co-ordinator is beginning to tackle areas of weakness, especially in broadening the range of history topics being learned by pupils in Years 7 – 9. Overall, the quality of the provision for geography and history and the standards achieved have been maintained since the last inspection in 2001.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned.
 - There is a wide range of artefacts to interest pupils.
 - ICT is not used effectively to help pupils learn.
 - Current staffing difficulties have resulted in Year 11 pupils spending too little time on the subject.
67. Religious education is taught during cultural and social studies lessons for pupils in Years 7 – 10. The curriculum is carefully planned from the local agreed syllabus. This year, pupils in Year 11 have no timetabled religious education; however, a few aspects of the syllabus are covered in the humanities module on prejudice and persecution. As a result, the curriculum for religious education is too narrow for these pupils. However, overall the quality of the provision and standards achieved has been maintained since the last inspection. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory.
68. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Staffing difficulties mean that, at present, religious education is taught by non-specialist temporary staff and this has affected the standards pupils achieve. When teaching is satisfactory, objectives for what pupils are intended to learn are clearly stated. Pupils are interested and take part in discussions to extend their understanding. In less successful lessons pupils carry out tasks that do not contribute to their knowledge or hold their attention, for example, spending too long on colouring pictures. There is a good range of resources including texts, videos and artefacts from various religions. However, there is insufficient use of ICT, for example, to research topics being covered.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

69. Overall, pupils achieve and make progress in design and technology at a satisfactory level. They learn new skills and further develop existing ones as they design and make a range of projects, for example, small stools and tables, decorative plaques and a book case. In making these items they use a range of hand and electrical tools. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory overall, but occasionally these are unsatisfactory. This variation is usually due to frustration that their work is not just as they wanted it to be or when they have to wait for a teacher or support assistant to help. While individual risk assessments are undertaken for the use of electrical tools, following a careful training programme, these do not take sufficient

account of such variations in pupils' behaviour and attitude. As a result unnecessary risk can occur. The school has taken immediate and appropriate action to address the concern raised about this during inspection. Assessment of pupils' learning is satisfactory although is not detailed enough to show exactly what has been learned and, therefore, what are the targets for further improvement. There is insufficient use of ICT in researching and designing projects.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

70. Many pupils gain an entry level award in art and design in Year 11 and a few gain lower grades in the GCSE examination. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and at times a few pupils make good progress, for example when making prints from lino cuts or creating surrealist ménages. However, pupils' progress is hampered because they do not have sufficient experience in researching and planning their work. There are no sketchbooks, ICT is used rarely and much of the curriculum is based on Western European culture. As a result, standards have dropped since the last inspection.

Music

71. Due to staffing difficulties, music was temporarily not being taught at the time of the inspection. A music appreciation course is an option as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme and is interesting and well organised. At present, the option involves only one pupil who is making good progress.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education (PE) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well, resulting from consistently very high quality of teaching.
- The curriculum is very broad and is extended still further by extra-curricular sports activities at lunchtimes and in the evenings and at weekends.
- The subject is very effectively led and managed.
- Pupils' success in PE contributes very well to their personal development.

Commentary

72. Pupils in all year groups and of all levels of ability do very well in PE. They develop a very broad range of skills and knowledge covering a very wide range of physical activities. These extend beyond PE lessons and include those undertaken at lunchtime, such as football and snooker; as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme, including fishing and cycling; and as evening and weekend activities for residential pupils. Pupils take part in a wide range of tournaments and competitions against other schools and are very successful. PE is a strength of the school. The quality of the provision has been recognised by the achievement of a distinction in the prestigious national Sportsmark award.
73. At whatever their starting point all pupils improve their skills. There is no discernible difference in the achievement and progress made by girls or boys, or by the more able in comparison with the less able. For example, in football, pupils learn how to control and trap a ball and in swimming they improve their strokes. The assessment of what each pupil can do at the beginning of a module forms an accurate and detailed baseline upon which targets are set and progress is measured. This assessment uses a simple yet very effective breakdown of what are the most important areas to be learned in the activity being taught. Progress is assessed continuously and recorded against the same set of key points for learning. As a result pupils can see exactly how much progress they have made.

74. The quality of teaching and learning are consistently of a very high standard, occasionally they are excellent. Teachers use their in-depth knowledge of the subject and their own sporting expertise to motivate even the most reluctant pupils. Lessons are very carefully planned, making excellent use of support staff to provide a highly effective team. Typically the support staff work with small groups of pupils, with the teacher providing coaching and guidance to each group in turn. As a result, all pupils try hard and want to do well. The expectations for very good behaviour and attitude to work are consistently maintained and met. Pupils play co-operatively as a team, which for most of the pupils is a substantial achievement. For example, when playing one-touch football they follow the rules rigorously and show a lot of self-discipline. Occasionally pupils, and particularly a few new ones, are reluctant to be involved in the activities. The teacher has carefully planned for these eventualities, for example, so that they can help monitor how well others are doing; in this way they quickly get drawn in to taking part in the activity.
75. The subject is very well led and managed. The quality of PE provision and the standards pupils achieve have made good improvements since the last inspection. The curriculum is very good and links well with the other activities that can be undertaken out of lesson times. Very good liaison with a local mainstream school allows use of a swimming pool and for summer sports competitions. These facilities extend the school's own very good sports hall and gym. ICT is not yet used to help pupils record and analyse their performance to show if they have improved, nor are pupils helped to plan their own fitness routines, as preparation for when they leave school.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well.
- The building of relationships and trust as part of pupils' social development is a strength of the school.
- The curriculum prepares pupils very well as they develop towards adulthood.
- The content of PSHE and citizenship lessons is built upon very effectively throughout pupils' time at school.

Commentary

76. The provision in personal and social education includes the formal PSHE and citizenship lessons as well as the everyday efforts of all staff throughout the pupils' time at the school, including in the residential units. Overall, the provision has improved effectively since the last inspection and it is very well managed. Pupils' progress has also improved well as a result. The curriculum covers all of the areas that that are important for teenagers as they develop towards adulthood and fulfils the statutory requirements for citizenship. The lessons make very effective, yet sensitive, use of pupils' own experiences, giving them the opportunity to clarify and develop their views and learn new things. The topics covered include important areas of sex education and education about drug misuse. Teaching is well planned and makes good use of visitors to extend the expertise of staff.
77. Many pupils who join the school have difficulties in making and maintaining positive relationships with others. The work of all members of the staff team ensures very effectively that pupils have many good opportunities to overcome their difficulties. Pupils show by their behaviour and attitudes both in lessons and in and around the school that they are making very good progress in this area. They enjoy and gain very much from the social opportunities that the school provides, for example, working with staff as part of the cast of the pantomime that they performed recently. Pupils take part in a wide variety of activities and visits both within the school day and during the evenings and weekends. These also contribute so well to

developing social and personal skills. As a result their improving self-esteem enables pupils to achieve well in their lessons.

78. Personal and social elements are found in many subject areas, for example, pupils studying Charles Dickens talk about how it might have felt to be a street urchin and in humanities pupils discuss prejudice and its effects. In religious education pupils express their concern about pollution and the effects on people, and in careers lessons pupils discuss their rights and responsibilities in the work place. The very interesting range of topics covered in assemblies adds to the content of the other lessons, for example, a talk about street children links well to work about life of the poor in Victorian times. Teachers, learning support assistants and residential social workers are very skilful in encouraging pupils to think about and discuss issues. All of these members of staff provide very good levels of support and praise and help pupils to make links between their work and their experiences and feelings. Teaching ensures that pupils have the knowledge that they need to make choices in their lives, for example, the work on sex education is carried out well and teachers make sure that questions are clearly and sensitively answered helping pupils to deal with subjects that some find challenging.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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