

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SKILTS SCHOOL**

Redditch

LEA area: Birmingham

Unique reference number: 103617

Headteacher: Charles Herriots

Lead inspector: Charles Hackett

Dates of inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> June 2004

Inspection number: 264417

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	5-11
Gender of pupils:	Male
Number on roll;	50
School address:	Gorcott Hill Redditch Worcestershire
Postcode:	B98 9ET
Telephone number:	01527 853851
Fax number:	01527 857949
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Doreen Edginton
Date of previous inspection:	14/6/1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Skilts is a residential and day school for boys of primary school age with statements of special educational need for emotional and behavioural difficulties. The majority of pupils stay residentially for at least one night per week. Their attainment on entry is below average as the result of disruptive periods of education, often because of being excluded from mainstream education. Many join the school in years 5 and 6, and are, therefore, only in the school for a short time. A few pupils have additional special needs, such as attention deficit and hyperactive disorders and specific learning difficulties. There are currently no pupils for whom English is an additional language. Pupils travel into school in taxis, many having journeys of over an hour to and from school. The school was heavily supported at the time of its last inspection and shortly after it the local education authority decided it should close. Although it is understood that a final decision has not been made it now seems likely that the school will stay open for the foreseeable future. As a result a permanent headteacher has been appointed and the school is being required to take more day pupils.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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19693	Sally Hall	Lay inspector	
20024	Paul Wright	Team inspector	English, science, art and design, design and technology, music
28106	Michelle Majid	Team inspector	Information and communication technology, personal, social and health education, geography, history, religious education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Skilts is a satisfactory and improving school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Satisfactory teaching is leading to satisfactory pupil achievement. Pupils' personal development is good and is very well supported by high quality residential care arrangements. Satisfactory leadership, management and governance result in the school providing satisfactory value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The high quality of commitment and concern shown by all staff for the well being of each pupil.
- The improvements pupils make in their attitudes and behaviour and overall personal development.
- Good practice in teaching, such as the use of computers (ICT) by the subject leader, is not shared well with other teachers.
- The quality of checking and recording of pupils' progress and the use of this information to plan lessons is unsatisfactory overall.
- Although there are exceptions, teaching relies too much on the use of worksheets and the cutting and sticking of teacher written material into pupils' books.
- Pupils are involved well in what happens in the school and they have trusting relationships with adults.
- Residential care arrangements are very good but the link between activities provided in the evenings and work pupils undertake in lessons is not strong enough.

It is inappropriate to make comparisons with the judgements made in the previous inspection for a number of reasons. For that inspection extra support was provided for the school and for a long period of time after the inspection the school's future was uncertain as the local education authority had plans to close it. However, the school now seems likely to stay open and as a consequence a permanent headteacher has been appointed. This has brought about positive changes and evidence indicates that the overall quality of the school's work has improved over the last year.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
<b>Year 6</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Good</b>

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

Pupils' overall achievements are satisfactory. They make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills, personal, social and health education and music. Progress is satisfactory in reading, writing, mathematics, science and religious education. Although, pupils in one class make good progress in ICT, the progress of pupils in other classes is unsatisfactory. Pupils make good progress in their personal development particularly in relation to their social and moral development. Progress in their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes have improved and are now good as is the overall quality of their behaviour. Pupils' attendance is good.

### QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory. All staff show a genuine commitment to providing high quality care for all pupils. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy lessons and are well motivated when teachers use interactive white boards or when work involves them in interesting activities, such as a 'mini beasts' project in science. However, too much of the teaching

relies on pupils completing worksheets from commercial schemes. Also the planning and setting of tasks by teachers often fails to take account of pupils' different ability levels and as a result more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged by the work they are asked to complete. Teaching support assistants make valuable contributions to pupils' learning in all classes and those that teach specific lessons do so very well. The methods used to check and record pupils' achievements are being developed but as yet do not show clearly enough the rate of progress that pupils are making. The overall quality of marking of pupils' work is poor; it is not completed regularly, lacks comments that recognise pupils' achievements and fails to show pupils how they can improve.

The curriculum is satisfactory. All National Curriculum subjects are taught, although in mathematics and science the overall curriculum is limited. Pupils enjoy and benefit from the informal playtimes available in the evenings but would benefit further from a much closer link to the work that they are undertaking in lessons, for example, pupils regularly reading to care staff.

The quality of care for pupils is very good and the support and guidance provided for them is satisfactory. The residential facilities provide a high quality of care. The links with parents are good because the school tries very hard to involve them in the education of their children. The links with the community and other schools are satisfactory and being further developed.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership of the headteacher is good and he is managing the current period of change effectively. The newly appointed deputy supports him well in this task. However, at present it is not clear how the school plans to develop each subject of the curriculum. The governance of the school is satisfactory because governors are very committed and passionate about the school. They are not, though, sufficiently involved in its work and do not have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents are very pleased with the placement of their children in the school. They feel the school cares for their children well and that they enjoy and benefit from being there. Many express a wish for their child to receive an increased amount of time in the residential units. Pupils also state how happy they are in school. They talk enthusiastically about playing on the bikes after school, how staff support them if bullying occurs and their enjoyment in completing the recent project on 'bugs'.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Improve teaching by:
  - Developing ways in which the good teaching practices in the school are shared amongst teaching colleagues.
  - Improving how pupils' progress is assessed and recorded and ensuring that lessons are planned based on this information.
  - Reducing the use of worksheets.
  - Limiting the reliance on cutting and sticking of teachers' written work into pupils' books.
  - Improving the quality and consistency of the marking of pupils' work.
  - Improving the use of ICT to support learning in all lessons.
- Improve the links between the school day and the residential unit by ensuring that pupils' learning is effectively supported by the residential facilities and activities.

## STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Pupils' overall achievement is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results in Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) for pupils at the end of Year 6 are best in science and English.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills, personal, social and health education and music.
- The progress of a few pupils with the potential for higher achievement is at times reduced by the teaching methods used.
- Achievement in writing, reading, mathematics, science and religious education is satisfactory but in ICT it is unsatisfactory.
- Rates of progress of each pupil are difficult for the school to monitor because of weaknesses in their recording systems.

### Commentary

1. Care must be taken in judging pupils' progress based on their achievements in national Standard Assessment Tests (SATs) because of the many pupils who join the school late in their primary schooling and the small number of pupils in each year group. In recent years pupils have achieved their best results in English and science. In English last year of the 18 pupils in Year 6, three achieved the expected national level for their age and eight others the level below. This has been a pattern of results for English in previous years. Last year mathematics and science results were not as good but pupils achieved much better results in science this year. A third achieved the nationally expected level and another third the level below. They had similar results in 2001 when seven out of 14 pupils achieved the national expected level in science.
2. Pupils' good progress in speaking and listening is a reflection of the emphasis placed on developing these skills throughout the teaching day and in the residential units. Pupils freely engage in conversation and have the confidence to express their views and listen to those of others. The achievements of pupils in lessons for personal, social and health education are very well supported by the key aim of the school to improve pupils' personal development. Music is a popular subject and pupils make good progress because they enjoy the lessons and many take part in the regular choir sessions.
3. Pupils' satisfactory progress in other subjects is achieved largely through pupils working hard in lessons; many concentrate well for long periods whilst completing worksheets and teacher generated information sheets. However, it is because this work does not always challenge and interest them that pupils do not achieve at a higher rate. This particularly affects those few pupils with the potential for higher achievement. Progress in writing is satisfactory but there are too few occasions where pupils are asked to write independently and at length. There is evidence of good progress in reading for those pupils with reading difficulties, who receive individual support. However, for many, reading practice is not sufficiently regular in the classroom and without the support of regular reading practice in the residential units pupils are not making as much progress as they may be able to. Again in mathematics, science and religious education their progress is limited by too much emphasis on the completion of worksheets rather than learning in a more imaginative way.
4. Pupils' overall unsatisfactory progress in ICT is largely because of the unsatisfactory teaching of the subject in many classes. In the class taken by the subject leader pupils make good progress. Other teachers have varying degrees of competence in using computers and need a higher level of support to enable them to ensure that all pupils make good progress in developing their skills and understanding of the use of ICT.
5. There has been an improvement recently in the way the school records pupils' progress but current records make it difficult to analyse pupils' rates of progress. In addition although pupils



have individual education plans with targets, these are not always well written and there has been no analysis of pupils' success in achieving the targets. Inspectors' scrutiny of records show that many targets are not achieved and many are repeated. There is no evidence that pupils with additional special needs, such as autistic spectrum disorders or with attention deficit and hyperactive disorders achieve at a different rate to other pupils in the school.

### Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**. Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is **good**. Attendance and punctuality are **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils like coming to school and relate well to staff.
- Pupils usually work hard in lessons and enjoy staying in the residential units.
- Support for pupils' moral development is good and most pupils respond well to the new positive behaviour policy.
- Social development is generally good but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities.
- The attendance rates of most pupils improve but the school does not record absences correctly.

### Commentary

6. In lessons most pupils are enthusiastic learners and proud of their achievements. They usually listen carefully to their teachers and are keen to answer questions. Although they enjoy talking about their work and undertaking practical tasks, they often find difficulty in concentrating when they are given written work. This is mainly because they have low reading and spelling skills. Nevertheless most persevere and complete the worksheets given to them. Pupils enjoy participating in activities such as sailing and playing on mountain bikes after school. These activities have a positive impact on their social development.

### Exclusions

#### Ethnic background of pupils

#### Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	32	1	1
White – Irish	1		
White – any other White background	2		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	8		
Mixed – any other mixed background	1		

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

7. The introduction of whole school rewards for good behaviour has been successful. Pupils think carefully about what they should do and enjoy receiving awards for their class. In school and the residential units pupils demonstrate good manners and have learnt to treat each other and members of staff with courtesy. In class on a few occasions pupils cause disruption and walk out of lessons. Although sanctions are given and pupils are encouraged to understand the error of their ways, there is no system in place to ensure that pupils catch up on the work they miss. Incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. Staff and pupils work together in reducing anti-social behaviour and pupils feel that the number of incidents of bullying is reducing.

8. There is a strong feeling of community amongst the pupils and staff. Because of the school's success in supporting and respecting everyone the good relationships that exist are a strength of the school. Pupils from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds generally get on well together and racial harmony is good. Pupils' cultural development is supported well by this but there is a limited range of additional activities, for example, involving the arts to extend this further.
9. Staff are skilled at developing pupils' self esteem and this has a positive impact on their personal development. Their spirituality is supported through their achievements being celebrated both in class and assemblies and, as a consequence, pupils become more confident and have a feeling of self-worth. For example, pupils enjoy singing in the choir and love to perform, especially if they can sing a solo. They are eager to express their opinions in lessons and through children's meetings. Members of the school council take their duties very seriously and are keen to bring about improvements in school life, whilst being aware of the financial constraints of their budget. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to gain independence and staff often do too much for them. For example at mealtimes staff wait upon the children and in class, assistants paste pupils' work into their books.
10. The vast majority of pupils attend school regularly. A few pupils have poor attendance and are not coming to school for reasons such as parent-condoned absence or absconding when school transport arrives at their home. The school swiftly follows up unexplained absences and works with the educational welfare service where low attendance is a cause for concern. Published absence rates are not accurate because the school does not always record absences correctly when pupils are away or are sent home.

## Attendance

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	7.6	School data :	1.3
National data:	10.5	National data:	8.7

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory and improving. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, as are the curriculum, the accommodation, resources and links with the community and other schools. Care arrangements in the residential units are very good. The support, guidance health and safety arrangements and links established with parents are good.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Effective teaching methods are evident in the school but these are not shared with all teachers.
- Lessons too often involve pupils completing worksheets and cutting and sticking work into exercise books.
- The work pupils are asked to complete is not always suited to their ability levels.
- Staff have high expectations for behaviour and usually manage pupils' behaviour well.
- A few teachers make good use of video projectors and whiteboards as part of their teaching, but overall ICT is not used sufficiently in teaching.
- Learning support assistants offer very positive and effective support to pupils.

- Assessment systems are being developed but at present are not always used effectively to set appropriate work for pupils or to clearly show pupils' progress.

## Commentary

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 26 lessons.

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	14	6	3	0	0

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

- All teachers and learning support assistants show considerable care and concern for their pupils but the quality of their teaching does vary. There are examples of good practice where activities are varied and pupils become interested. For example, in the class for the youngest pupils in the school and those with specific learning difficulties, activities are changed frequently and pupils are challenged by the tasks set. However, observations of lessons and scrutiny of teachers' planning shows that this is not always the case in all classes. Too often teachers rely for the main part of lessons on pupils working individually completing worksheets or filling in the missing word on teacher-written handouts. This does not effectively challenge pupils or meet their differing ability levels. This is particularly so for the pupils with reading difficulties, who have exercise books full of worksheets much of which they are unable to read.
- Teachers use the positive relationships they have with pupils to manage their behaviour well. They also make effective use of the recently introduced behaviour star chart system to reward pupils when they have done well. When individual pupils have difficulties the headteacher and deputy headteacher offer positive individual support, either helping pupils remain in class or returning them when they have left without permission. However, there is no consistent expectation for pupils to catch up on any work missed when they have been out of class and this reduces their opportunities to make as much progress as they could.
- There are times when teachers make good use of ICT. This is particularly so in relation to the recently purchased interactive whiteboards where pupils enjoy the activities that involve the use of them. This is the case in Year 6 where pupils in mathematics are working on direction and symmetry in moving triangles around the screen. In addition a learning support assistant taking the class with the youngest pupils makes good use of short video clips to make topics interesting for the pupils. However, overall, with the exception of the class taken by the ICT subject specialist, all other classes make insufficient use of ICT and fail to ensure that all pupils are developing good skills in using computers.
- The school encourages its learning support assistants to play an active part in lessons. In many they not only support individuals and small groups in helping with their learning but also are very quick and assertive in offering support to pupils that look to be experiencing difficulties controlling their behaviour. The school has also encouraged learning support assistants to develop their teaching skills. The lessons seen during the inspection taken by two learning support assistants were good. They included a range of activities and were enjoyed by the pupils, who worked hard throughout.
- Teachers do not make sufficient use of the information they have on pupils' achievements. For example, teachers often fail to provide higher ability pupils with work of sufficient challenge. Equally a few pupils with significant learning difficulties are not given sufficiently 'prescriptive' teaching programmes to enable them to progress at an appropriate rate. They are provided with one to one support, but often they are expected to complete similar worksheets to their peers in class. There are, though, a small number of pupils identified with reading difficulties and these pupils benefit from individual support lessons.

16. The school has recently introduced a “whole school” assessment package to check how well pupils are learning but the use of this is unsatisfactory. It is not used regularly to inform planning and identify appropriate targets on pupils’ individual education plans. There are no comprehensive tests on entry to the school to identify pupils’ strengths and weaknesses and to match work to individual need. The school uses a computer program to help with writing individual education plans, but this is not used accurately and targets are not linked and so do not follow a logical sequence. In addition, targets in individual education plans are not used as a reference in lesson planning. Pupils receive regular feedback about their behaviour, but staff do not regularly let pupils know how well they are performing academically. Pupils’ work is not marked regularly and when it is there are few suggestions made for how it can be improved.

## The Curriculum

The curriculum is **satisfactory**. The school provides **satisfactory** opportunities for enriching pupils’ learning. The accommodation is **satisfactory** and resources for learning are **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- All National Curriculum subjects and religious education are well covered.
- The amount of time allocated for many individual lessons is too long and pupils find it difficult to concentrate for such a long time.
- The curriculum for personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) provides good opportunities to help pupils develop appropriate personal skills.
- Literacy, numeracy and ICT are not given sufficient attention in the teaching of the different subjects in the curriculum.
- Opportunities for pupils to learn to play together during the evenings are very good but insufficient attention is given to supporting the work pupils do in lessons.
- There are a good number of teachers and support staff.

### Commentary

17. The curriculum during the school day is soundly planned and provides pupils with a good range of experiences. All pupils have equal access to these. The school places appropriate emphasis on the important areas of English, mathematics and science and these are all given sufficient time on the timetable. ICT is not covered as well and in most classes what is taught in this area is too narrow. Music plays an important part in the life of the school and enriches many areas of the curriculum. A number of pupils learn to play musical instruments and many sing in the choir and attend a recorder club. The timetable includes a number of lessons that are up to one and a half hours long. This is too long and as a result pupils lose enthusiasm in their work.
18. There is an effective programme of work designed to develop pupils’ personal, social and health education and citizenship. Pupils are given opportunities to learn about the dangers of smoking, alcohol and taking dangerous drugs. These aspects are also well supported by the work of the care team in the evenings. Pupils with reading difficulties are given good individual support during the school day, but there is not a planned approach to support these pupils in the teaching of each subject. This is also the situation for numeracy and ICT.
19. Pupils enjoy and benefit enormously from the chance to play with their friends in the evenings. Careful staff supervision allows them to do this safely and they enhance their social skills as a result. The school also provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, including football training and gym clubs. However, there are very limited links made between what happens in the teaching day and the residential units. For example, pupils who have missed lessons during the day are not supported to catch up on work missed and specific programmes to support individuals, such as those to improve reading, are not followed in the evenings. In addition, opportunities to participate in after school clubs are limited to pupils who are in residence.

20. The accommodation is satisfactory and there is a satisfactory range of resources. There is plenty of space throughout the school to take small groups for individual tuition or to hear children read. Teachers are suitably qualified and experienced to teach the curriculum. The match of support staff to the curriculum is good. Many are well qualified and experienced and make a significant contribution to the raising of standards and achievement.

### Care, guidance and support

The school's provision for the pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **good**. Pupils' receive **satisfactory** support, advice and guidance. Involvement of pupils through seeking their views is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Residential care arrangements are very good and ensure that pupils are very well looked after.
- Staff help pupils develop their personal and social skills.
- Pupils have trusting relationships with staff.
- Individual staff give pupils advice and guidance on how to improve their behaviour but there are no whole school systems for this.
- There is a lack of guidance available to pupils on how they can improve their work.
- The school pays good attention to pupils' views.

### Commentary

21. Pupils benefit greatly from very high quality of care provided in each of the residential units. A recent Care Standards inspection report confirms this and shows that considerable improvements have been made since the appointment of a new head of care. The school works closely with medical professionals to support the welfare of pupils and their families. The residence provides a 'homely' environment and staff committed to caring for the pupils. Many of the pupils and parents commented that the food is one of the best things about the school. The domestic bursar is committed to using fresh produce and successfully promotes healthy eating. The school has good procedures to ensure that pupils work in a safe and secure environment. Supervision at lunchtime, breaks and after school is good. The head of care has completely revised the child protection documentation and this is now good. Staff are aware of the school's procedures and know how to report any concerns. The head of care pays good attention to ensuring that risk assessments are completed and the arrangements for first aid are good. Good records are kept when medication is given.
22. Staff, both in school and the residential units, know the pupils well and understand their needs. Pupils are encouraged to work and play together and they learn to share equipment and play team games. Staff are good role models and show pupils how to interact with others. Consequently pupils are courteous, polite and display good manners particularly at meal times.
23. Pupils help to set their own weekly targets for behaviour and these are assessed at the end of each lesson. Successes in achieving these targets are celebrated in class and assemblies. Teaching and care staff talk with pupils if they have had problems but there is no formal system that ensures that there is a follow up to incidents or that allows the school to see from records what specific behavioural difficulties are occurring.
24. Although teachers give pupils positive encouragement in lessons, they do not give them enough guidance on what they need to do to improve their work. Marking does not often show pupils what they need to do to make their work better. Individual educational plans contain targets for improvement but these are often too vague, for example 'sustain concentration' and can remain the same for the whole year.
25. In lessons and assemblies, staff value pupils' views. Pupils also have satisfactory opportunities to comment on their achievements before their annual review. Pupils who stay in the residence are able to voice their opinions about improvements such as new activities and equipment.

Members of school council show confidence and maturity as they discuss their ideas to enhance school life. For example, as a result of their suggestions, the school has given the council funding, enabling it to refurbish a shed for use as a 'Chillin Zone' and provide new play equipment.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school's links with parents are **good**. The school's links with the community and other schools are **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Staff are very approachable and day-to-day communication between home and school is good.
- Parents express positive views about the school.
- Although satisfactory overall, the links with the community fail to support pupils' development in a few important aspects.
- There are good arrangements for the transfer of pupils to secondary school.

### **Commentary**

26. Staff work hard to reach out to parents and carers and make them feel welcome in school. New families are encouraged to visit the school and talk with staff about their hopes and concerns and useful leaflets, including one written by children, give families good information about the school. Staff contacts parents to celebrate successes as well as discuss concerns. Reports are provided on pupils' progress and these contain satisfactory written information. Parents are interested in their child's progress and feel able to talk with both teachers and care staff about any worries. They feel that they are well prepared for annual review meetings and are given good opportunities to voice their opinions and suggestions. Newsletters give parents relevant and timely information about future events and celebrate the school's successes but the school's Internet website is currently out-of date and contains little that would interest parents. Families enjoy attending events such as concerts and over half of the parents manage to attend the annual review meetings.
27. The school's sound partnership with the community enriches the curriculum and has a positive impact on pupils' social and personal development. Good use is made of the local environment for topic work such as the mini-beasts project and for physical activities, such as sailing and swimming. However, there are a few visits and visitors to enhance pupils' experience of subjects such as history, art or geography. Nor are there enough links established to deepen pupils' understanding of Britain as a multi-cultural society.
28. The school works closely with its feeder secondary school to ensure that the transfer of Year 6 pupils is as smooth as possible. Pupils often join Skilts in Y5 and this means that there are only limited opportunities for the school to prepare pupils for re-integration into mainstream. However, currently two pupils spend between one and three days respectively in mainstream school, but there is no joint planning of lessons for these pupils. The staff meet with other colleagues who teach in similar special schools but as yet have not shared good practice, especially about how to manage pupils with more challenging behaviour.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school as a whole are satisfactory and the leadership qualities of the new headteacher are good. The governance of the school is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The new headteacher is ambitious for the school to be successful and successfully leading the school through its present period of change.

- Working patterns for staff have weaknesses that need to be addressed.
- The leadership and management of the curriculum, teaching and learning, although satisfactory, are not bringing about sufficient improvements to pupils' achievements.
- The school's development plan is a relevant document for improving the school but lacks details of how the priorities for development will improve pupils' achievements.
- The governors are supportive and passionate about the school but lack an understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
- Financial management is good and based on sound record keeping.

## **Commentary**

29. The headteacher is leading the school well and working hard to improve the quality of education it is providing. He has brought in good quality staff, including the new deputy headteacher and the head of care, and is supporting the longstanding members of staff well in effecting changes to their working practices. His leadership style has ensured good relationships amongst both new and established staff. Good training opportunities have been provided for all staff. This is particularly so for two teaching support assistants, who now as part of their contracts teach and do so to a high standard. Despite these noteworthy developments improvements have not been made to ensure that staff working practices are appropriate. For example, care hours involve too many split shifts and the practice of teachers undertaking long hours of extra duties limits their ability and time to prepare their lessons and mark the work of pupils.
30. The improvements made to the school have not yet had sufficient impact on the quality of the curriculum, teaching and learning. Although the overall curriculum is satisfactory, there is not a clear overview of how aspects such as literacy, numeracy and ICT will be taught and developed in the teaching of other subject areas. There has not been sufficient impact on improvements to the strategies teachers employ and pupils are not being given sufficient variety in the way in which they can learn. Improvements have been made to how each curriculum area is managed, but these have not yet increased the rate of pupils' progress. For example, although the curriculum leader for ICT is a very effective practitioner himself, he has not been able to effect improvements in the teaching of ICT by other staff.
31. The school's development plan is a detailed document and importantly is now written after consultation with staff and governors. A good range of targets is included and they demonstrate the school's desire to improve the quality of education it is providing. It lacks, though, sufficient detail as to what it hopes to achieve as a result of these developments and there is insufficient evaluation of the impact of the developments on the achievements of pupils. For example, the ICT resources, which are now very good, have been a key development but there has been no review of how these are being used by pupils and how as a result pupils' skills in ICT are being improved.
32. The governors are very supportive. They are articulate and passionate in their belief of the value of the work of the school. Their correspondence with the LEA shows how hard they have fought for the school's survival, however, the minutes of their meetings and their arrangements to monitor the work of the school, show that they do not have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their systems for understanding what is happening in the school rely too heavily on receiving information from staff.
33. The school's finance officer maintains detailed records and is well supported by an external financial consultant. Detailed spreadsheets are produced which show clearly where expenditure occurs. This expenditure is reviewed appropriately by the school's finance committee. The domestic bursar monitors the catering and cleaning of the school meticulously and plays an important part in the smooth running of the whole school.

## Financial information

### Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1358710
Total expenditure	1306173
Expenditure per pupil	26123

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	75087
Balance carried forward to the next	54507



## PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

*Throughout this section of the report, overall judgements about **provision** relate to pupils' achievements, the effectiveness of teaching and learning, curriculum leadership and management and any other significant aspects.*

### ENGLISH

*Inspectors saw four lessons, held discussions with pupils and looked at written work, reports and records.*

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good focus on encouraging pupils to contribute to discussions and listen to each other.
- Opportunities for pupils to write independently are limited by an over reliance on the use of worksheets.
- Pupils with reading difficulties receive good individual support.
- The needs of the pupils and their capabilities are not thoroughly assessed.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills in other subjects.
- Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not help them improve their work.

#### Commentary

34. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills and their progress in these areas is good. Pupils use and develop their skills well in lessons and during other periods such as circle time in the house units. For example, in a good literacy lesson for pupils in Year 2, the teacher encouraged pupils to predict what the answer might be to her questions. Pupils responded by answering questions sensibly and clearly. In all subjects teachers are keen to get pupils involved in discussions and this supports their learning well.
35. Pupils' achievement in writing is satisfactory. They receive a high level of individual support and encouragement from teachers and support staff when carrying out writing tasks. As a result by the end of Year 6 higher attaining pupils print or use cursive writing neatly and punctuation is mostly used accurately. Lower attaining pupils learn to write over a guide or to copy words from the board. However, a scrutiny of books indicates that much of the written work is based on completing words or sentences on worksheets. As a consequence, most writing is quite brief and pupils are not learning how to write more freely and imaginatively in extended pieces of writing. Although a few pupils use a word processing program, there are few instances where writing skills are being effectively supported through ICT. Even where lessons are devoted to writing, the time pupils actually spend on this activity is short.
36. The progress of the majority of pupils is satisfactory in reading. However, pupils are not encouraged to take books home or onto the residential units and there are no home (or house unit) school reading records. Eight pupils benefit from regular, intensive 'reading recovery' sessions, which are effective in improving their reading levels. There are, though, other pupils who require regular individual guided reading sessions who do not receive them. The well stocked and attractively decorated library is a very good resource but it is unsatisfactory that not all groups have regular timetabled library sessions and it is currently underused.
37. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers have adequate subject knowledge and plan lessons satisfactorily. They make effective use of the guidance offered by the National Literacy Strategy. In the best practice observed what it is hoped pupils will learn is made clear at the start of lessons and discussed with pupils so that they know what they will be doing. The good relationships staff have with pupils are used well to encourage them to work hard. For

example, in a good lesson in Year 6, the teacher used praise and her own enthusiasm to help pupils learn effectively. This was a good example of the school's aim of raising pupils' self-esteem being seen in practice. However, assessment of pupils' work is inconsistent. Insufficient use is made of individual targets to plan the work pupils will do. Samples of pupils' work are not regularly collected and the marking of pupils' work by teachers lacks the constructive comments that would help them improve.

38. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The English policy provides useful information and guidance for all staff. The subject manager recognises the need to monitor the work of other teachers in order to have an effective overview of how literacy is being taught throughout the school.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

Literacy across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. Although speaking and listening are promoted well in other lessons and in the residential units, the over reliance on worksheets in other subjects restricts opportunities for extended writing. Reading skills are not reinforced sufficiently well in other lessons with staff frequently reading information when many pupils could attempt the texts themselves. Presentation of pupils' work is frequently unsatisfactory.

### **MATHEMATICS**

*Inspectors saw five lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work and discussed these with individual pupils.*

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils work hard in lessons mainly because teachers have high expectations for them to stay on task.
- Although in two classes teachers provide a good range of activities, in other classes there is too much emphasis on pupils completing worksheets.
- Lessons usually include an interesting starter activity and a recap of what has been covered at the end.
- The assessment and recording of pupils' achievements are weak and not used to help teachers plan their lessons effectively.
- There are limited opportunities for pupils to use and apply mathematical skills in other situations.
- The recently appointed subject leader has assembled a useful subject file but is not bringing about an improvement in the teaching of mathematics throughout the school.

### **Commentary**

39. Pupils understand that in mathematic lessons they are expected to work and most try hard to complete tasks set for them. It is mainly because of this that pupils' achievement is satisfactory. However, in many of the classes a lot of their work is based around completing worksheets from a commercial scheme and there is a very limited range of other teaching activities. In two classes, there is more evidence of a wider range of activities, which make use of interactive whiteboards and practical activities. For example, a Year 6 group during the inspection went out into the playground to time a few practical activities and then used the results to develop an understanding of the addition of figures with decimals.
40. Teachers have sought to adopt aspects of the National Numeracy Strategy. This has led to structured lessons where there are starter activities and often a recap of work at the end of the lesson. However, because many of the lessons are very long the time pupils are expected to work independently is too long and pupils become restless and the rate of their learning suffers.

For example, a Year 6 group were seen measuring lines on worksheets for over an hour and many of the pupils lost interest.

41. Although within each teaching group pupils show a wide range of ability, systems used to determine where they are in their learning are inadequate. As a result teachers are not clear what skills pupils have already mastered and this means that the work set does not always match pupils' ability. For example, in a lesson observed a pupil who despite being able to quickly answer the question 'what is 12 percent of 400?' was then asked to undertake similar work to that of his colleagues in the classroom, some of whom were still developing their understanding of number up to 20.
42. The subject leader has only recently taken on responsibility for the subject. She has gathered together a clear subject file, which demonstrates what is planned for each class and suggestions for the improvement of the curriculum. However, there is insufficient emphasis put on analysing pupils' achievements and what the school might do improve these. She has, as yet, only had a limited impact on developing her colleagues' strategies for teaching mathematics. There are, insufficient resources to help pupils learn mathematical skills through practical activities.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

The teaching of mathematics across the curriculum is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient planning for how mathematical skills will be taught in other subject areas. During the inspection no specific examples were observed of reference to mathematical skills in the teaching of other subjects and in teachers' files there is limited planning as to how these will be developed.

### **SCIENCE**

*Four lessons in science were seen. Inspectors looked at pupils' work in all year groups and held discussions with pupils about their work.*

**Provision for science is** satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have achieved well in this year's external examinations.
- Teachers plan lessons that place a proper emphasis on practical activities.
- Assessment in science is inconsistent and teachers' marking of pupils' books lacks constructive comments.
- Computers are not used effectively to support learning.

### **Commentary**

43. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and improving. The results from this year's SATs show that a third of pupils achieved at the expected national rate for this age group. Another third achieved the level below. These results compare very favourably with those achieved in similar schools. Pupils show positive attitudes to their work in science and have particularly enjoyed the recent project on mini-beasts. Discussions with pupils and displays of their work show the increased level of understanding they now have.
44. Teaching of science is satisfactory overall. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory and lessons have a good focus on practical investigation. In the better lessons staff encourage pupils to work well collaboratively, make careful observations and record their findings. For example, in a good lesson taught as part of the "mini-beats" topic, the lively approach of the very enthusiastic learning support assistant encouraged pupils to successfully identify the main characteristics of a snail. However, too many lessons rely on the use of prepared worksheets, which often demand a high level of reading ability which many lower attaining pupils do not

possess. Teachers do not use the marking of pupils' work as an effective way of finding out how well they are learning and to help measure pupils' rate of progress. There are not enough comments about any difficulties pupils have had with the work or how much support has been given.

45. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory because of the impact it has had on pupils doing well in SATs. However, the subject leader does not check on teachers' plans or pupils' work and the school does not analyse the outcomes of assessment to identify where there are areas of pupils' learning that need to be addressed. The accommodation for teaching science is adequate and the school has a satisfactory number of resources. Too little use, though, is made of ICT to either add interest to the lessons or for the pupils to achieve a better standard of presentation.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

*Inspectors saw three lessons, held discussions with pupils and looked at written work, reports and records.*

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' progress varies from good in one class to unsatisfactory in others.
- Although there is a suitable plan for the teaching of the subject most teachers lack knowledge and confidence to implement it and this affects pupils' learning.
- Resources are now good and include interactive whiteboards.
- ICT is not used well enough to support learning in other subjects.
- The subject leader has very good subject knowledge but does not have opportunities to check how well pupils are learning throughout the school.

### **Commentary**

46. Pupils' achievement overall is unsatisfactory. In one Year 6 class pupils use ICT frequently to support other subjects; for example, they have used branching databases in science. Pupils in this class, which is taken by the subject leader, make good progress. In many classes very little ICT has taken place and where it has it has been mostly word processing. Pupils have not developed a satisfactory level of competence in using computers. For example, pupils in one class have added to their word processed work by using computer generated pictures but these have been placed in the text without care or appropriateness.
47. The subject leader is very clear about what should be taught and his programme for the school is very appropriate. However, many teachers are insecure in their knowledge of ICT and do not feel confident enough to deliver the programme. As a result, although they are starting to use the new interactive whiteboards, they are not ensuring that pupils are covering all required aspects of the subject and developing their skills.
48. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory overall. The subject leader has a very good knowledge of ICT and keeps up to date with new ideas. However, he has not been given the time to monitor the effectiveness of the work of his colleagues and offer them the support they require. In addition he does not have sufficient information to monitor how well pupils are achieving. Resources for ICT have been upgraded recently and are now very good.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

49. The use of ICT to support work in other lessons is unsatisfactory overall. However, there is very good practice in one class in the effective use of the interactive whiteboard. In a science lesson pupils, having followed an interactive program, were amazed to find out how much water they used in a year while brushing their teeth. The Internet is used in geography to search for

information and an attractive display shows how pupils have searched the Internet to find information about Vincent Van Gogh.

## HUMANITIES

*History and geography were not part of the inspection focus. Therefore, judgements are not made about teaching, learning or provision. Two lessons were observed in religious education and one geography lesson was sampled. There were no lessons in history during the inspection week.*

50. A scrutiny of pupils' work in history shows that they cover the recommended topics of the National Curriculum. The youngest pupils have looked at important people in history, while Year 6 pupils have studied the Second World War.
51. One lesson was sampled in geography where pupils learned that oil spilled from tankers affects wildlife. They know that oil floats on water and can be dispersed by washing up liquid. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have learned about the seaside and older pupils learn about transport and map-making skills. The work seen is mostly on photocopied worksheets with little marking and no suggestions for improvement. However, in a Year 6 class, there was very good use of ICT, including the Internet to extend pupils' learning.

### Religious education

*Inspectors saw two lessons, held discussions with pupils and looked at written work, reports and records.*

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop an adequate understanding of Christianity.
- Good opportunities to discuss aspects of religion are provided but there are few opportunities for pupils to write independently.
- The subject is not currently a priority for development.

### Commentary

52. Pupils learn mostly about Old Testament stories and Christian festivals. There is a limited amount of work on other religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism. Pupils in Year 4 have learned about Jonah and Daniel. They have produced a small amount of work but this is reliant on low quality work sheets, word searches and dot-to-dot activities. Pupils in Year 5 are interested in the subject and enjoyed a video relating to the prodigal son, which helped them to understand the theme of forgiveness. Pupils were then confident to express their opinions about what they felt the 'prodigal son' was thinking.
53. Teaching in religious education is satisfactory. The school follows the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus for religious education and according to the policy it is implemented through lessons, assemblies and visits. Although the syllabus provides a suitable range of learning opportunities, a scrutiny of pupils' work shows a limited amount of written work and even less independent writing. There are, though, examples of innovative teaching approaches that generate interest in the pupils. For example, in a very good lesson in the Year 1 and 2 class, the teacher used role play and lively teaching to ensure that pupils fully understood the judgement of Solomon. In an animated discussion, pupils were able to suggest ways in which Solomon could tell whether someone was lying, such as looking at their eyes.
54. Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory as there is no evidence to indicate that the school is making improvements in this subject. The subject leader has not ensured that religious education is taught regularly in all classes or that assemblies make a

contribution to the subject as outlined in the policy. There is little use of ICT to enrich the curriculum.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

### **Physical Education**

*There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about provision in physical education.*

55. From the lessons seen and a scrutiny of the school's records it is clear that pupils benefit from a wide range of physical activities. In one lesson seen three classes of pupils were split into two groups. Group one took part in cross-country; the route had been well organised and all staff and pupils were changed. In the other lesson pupils took part in gymnastics. Again high standards were set in the dress of all pupils and staff, pupils enjoyed a very active warm-up and all worked hard to produce different shapes on a mat and apparatus. Good opportunities were provided for pupils to demonstrate their achievements to others and staff provided very positive encouragement and support. Pupils were able to complete headstands, jump onto boxes and climb over a climbing frame. There was a good level of challenge in the tasks they were set. Records show that pupils have played football against other schools and these experiences have been linked well to literacy where pupils have written accounts of their football matches.

### **Art and design and design and technology**

*Neither art and design nor design and technology were a focus during the inspection. Only one lesson was seen in art and design during the inspection. It is not therefore possible to make firm judgements about provision in either art and design or design and technology.*

56. In **art and design** there are a variety of good displays around the school, which celebrate pupils' work. Pupils take care with their work and discussions with them show they are enthusiastic about the subject. Older pupils study the work of famous artists such as Van Gogh and Monet. All pupils have the opportunity to work with a variety of materials including paint, clay and textiles.

57. Scrutiny of work indicates an appropriate emphasis on all aspects of the **design and technology** curriculum. Pupils design, make and evaluate their work and a development of skills is evident from Years 2 to 6 in the design, making and evaluating. In food technology younger pupils learn the basic terms and the importance of hygiene. By Year 4 pupils are able to produce scones with the guidance of teaching assistants. In Year 6 pupils are beginning to appreciate the link between design and making.

### **Music**

*Inspectors saw two lessons, held discussions with pupils and looked at written work, reports and records*

Provision for music is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching is very lively and successfully encourages pupils to participate.
- A good range of performing, singing and playing opportunities are provided but there is too little emphasis on composing.
- The subject leader has good subject knowledge and plans well.
- Resources and the accommodation for music are very good.

## Commentary

58. Teaching and learning are good and this enables pupils to achieve well. Pupils' involvement in music makes a very effective contribution to their personal development. They enjoy their music lessons and respond well to the high expectations for their behaviour. In a very good lesson, pupils were able to identify the sequence of a song and could listen to the music and hear the chord changes. They sang in tune and with expression and were able to accompany the song with a limited number of chords. Pupils make very good progress in their understanding of musical terms and performance.
59. Pupils are encouraged to listen to and appreciate a wide variety of music. They sing with enthusiasm during assembly. Choir sessions are very popular and pupils sing with enjoyment and confidence and are keen to sing solo. They display a good sense of rhythm. However, pupils with low levels of literacy found it difficult to read the words of the songs and this affects their progress. There are individual music sessions available for any pupil who is interested and in these they learn to play the recorder, keyboards and improve their singing. Most emphasis, though, is on listening and performing and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to create and play their own compositions.
60. The subject is well led by a very enthusiastic unqualified teacher. She has a very good relationship with pupils and gives pupils lots of praise for their efforts. Planning of lessons is good and plans to develop the subject are realistic. The music room contains a quality recording system.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)

*Two lessons of discrete PSHE were seen, pupils observed at other times of the day and records and work considered.*

Provision for pupils in personal, social and health education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lunchtimes provide good opportunities for staff to promote pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship.
- Topics in discrete lessons are relevant to pupils' needs.
- Leadership and management are good and the subject is enhanced by the achievement of the Healthy Schools Award.
- Opportunities are missed on the houses after school to support and discuss behaviour in school.

## Commentary

61. Personal, social and health education is regarded as a very important part of the school curriculum and is closely related to the clear focus on improving personal and social behaviour. It is identified in other subjects and through the informal curriculum, such as the support given to all pupils at lunchtimes when they meet in the residential units. This is planned as a specific learning experience for all pupils in order to encourage healthy eating, social interaction and helping others. At lunch pupils are relaxed, behave very well and talk politely to staff and each other.
62. Teaching of the subject is good and consequently pupils make good progress. PSHE is planned for discrete lessons as well as being incorporated into other lessons and parts of the school day. The planning, which follows a commercially produced programme, provides pupils with suitable learning opportunities that include personal development, relationships and aspects of citizenship. There is suitable provision for sex and drugs education. However, in many classes there is too much dependence on photocopied sheets with insufficient opportunities for free

writing. In lessons staff use questioning very well to enable pupils to take part in discussions. In a good lesson with Year 4, the teacher took every opportunity to reinforce concern for others and the effect personal feelings have on other people and as a consequence pupils made good progress.

63. Leadership of the subject is good. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award, revised and developed a new sex and relationships education programme and improved the outside environment of the school. There was a very good involvement of pupils in this project. The subject leader has used outside agencies, such as the 'Healthy Bus', and extended the quality of resources through good use of the Internet.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
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
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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