

INSPECTION REPORT

SPRINGFIELDS SCHOOL

Calne

LEA area: Wiltshire

Unique reference number: 126557

Headteacher: Mr. G. Templeman

Lead inspector: Mr. Charles Hackett

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 25th March 2004

Inspection number: 264905

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	11 to 17 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	58
School address:	Curzon Street Calne Wiltshire
Postcode:	SN11 0DS
Telephone number:	01249 814125
Fax number:	01249 811907
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. R.C. Wheeler-Bennett
Date of previous inspection:	8 th March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Springfields is a residential special school for boys and girls aged 11 to 17 years with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Currently there are 58 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils board from Monday to Friday, although a few are able to return home for one or more nights each week. The school manages a centre that takes primary aged pupils experiencing emotional difficulties (the Sp.E.L. Centre). These pupils undertake ten-week part time placements. The school has also established a post-14 vocational project, which as well as being used by its own pupils, is accessed by 13 other secondary schools. All pupils attending Springfields have statements of special educational needs and their attainment levels on entry to the school are below and, in a few cases, well below average. Almost all are of a white English background. Since the previous inspection there have been a number of changes in the senior staff team including the appointment of a new headteacher.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21081	Charles Hackett	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology, physical education and modern foreign language
19552	Pat Butson	Lay inspector	
17182	Michael Farrell	Team inspector	Mathematics, design and technology, music and art and design
23412	Alvin Jeffs	Team inspector	English, personal, social & health and citizenship education and religious education
20024	Paul Wright	Team inspector	Science, geography and history

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Education
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
Gloucestershire
GL53 7JX

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Springfields is a **very effective** school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Very good teaching has ensured that pupils make very good progress. Work in lessons is supported by the high quality residential arrangements. Leadership and management of the school are very good and the school provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- All aspects of the school's work complement each other very effectively and ensure that pupils achieve very well.
- Very carefully structured support systems help pupils make very good improvements in their behaviour and attitudes to school.
- The lessons during the day and activities in the evenings provide pupils with a very high quality curriculum.
- The headteacher's vision for the development of the school has brought about very good improvements in its work.
- The primary support centre (Sp.E.L.) and the post-14 vocational project are excellent resources.
- Teaching and pupils' achievements are good or very good in all subjects apart from science where they are unsatisfactory.
- Links with other schools are excellent and ensure that the school plays an important role in the local authority's provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Leadership and management has improved and because of this many of the other aspects of the school's work have been developed well. All policies and procedures are now up to date. School development planning is much improved and the school now meets all statutory requirements. The curriculum is now very good, with significant improvements having been made to religious education and information and communication technology. Pupils' attendance has also improved significantly.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' overall achievements, with the exception of science, are **very good**. Pupils make very good progress in English, mathematics, information and communication technology, physical education and vocational studies. In English, pupils' speaking and listening skills are very well developed and as a result in many subjects pupils join in lively discussions, willingly accepting the view of others as well as putting points of their own. Pupils achieve passes in GCSE, GNVQ and work related units. All of these represent above average successes for a school of this type. Achievements in religious education, personal, social and health education, citizenship and art are good. In science, although in the past pupils have passed examinations, pupils' progress is now unsatisfactory.

The personal development of pupils including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Their attitudes and behaviour to school are very good and for many this represents excellent improvement since they joined the school. Pupils' attendance has also improved. Although, a few individual pupils distort the overall figures, overall attendance is good and this represents very good improvement for many pupils.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **very good**. All staff subscribe to a philosophy that includes and values each pupil. **Very effective** teaching ensures that pupils make very good progress. The planning of work to be covered and the structure of lessons has a positive impact on pupils' progress, as does the high expectations of teachers that pupils can achieve. They challenge pupils very well and ensure that lessons are interesting by using a good range of resources. Assessment of pupils' work is good but for a few lower ability pupils progress is not recorded in sufficient detail.

The curriculum is very good. All National Curriculum subjects are covered, although the teaching of French is restricted because of a lack of qualified staff. The post-14 vocational project makes a very positive contribution to the curriculum for older pupils. The very good range of activities available in the evenings extends the curriculum very well as does those available as part of the Friday club.

The quality of care and support is very good. The high quality residential provision plays an important part in this. Pupils respond well to the expectations and rewards for behaving well. The links with parents and the community are very good and the partnership with other schools is excellent, especially through the work of the Sp.E.L. Centre and the post-14 vocational project.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and ensures that the school is at the forefront of initiatives to develop resources to support pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. His senior colleagues complement his work very well and ensure that the school is a calm and purposeful educational establishment. Overall leadership and management are **very good**, as is the governance of the school. Governors are committed to the aims of the school and very supportive of staff and their work.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very positive about the work of the school. They feel the staff care for the children and that they as parents are encouraged to play an important role in the education of their children. Pupils are happy and stress how much they like the school. They feel they have good opportunities to learn and most enjoy the many residential activities.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school to improve further on its very good provision should:

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning in science. **
- For lower ability pupils look to improve ways of recording their progress.

***Records show that the school has identified this problem and is seeking to bring about improvement.*

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' overall achievement is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make very good progress and become effective learners in the classroom.
- Pupils' achievements are excellent in the post-14 vocational project and very good in English, mathematics, information and communication technology and physical education.
- Achievements are good in art, religious education and personal, social, health, and citizenship education.
- Progress in science is unsatisfactory.
- Opportunities to achieve success in external examinations are good.
- The achievements of pupils with additional special needs are very good.

Commentary

1. Pupils' records show that many pupils make very good progress to be able to undertake the Standard Attainment Tests at the end of Year 9. Last year 30% of pupils reached the expected national average. However, mainly because of the low level of pupils' attainment on entry to the school and their interrupted education, over 50% of pupils were unable to score in these tests. Pupils in Year's 10 and 11 continue to make very good progress and this enables them to take examinations before they leave school. Over the last three years achievement at GCSE has continued to be very good and for a school of this type, results are above average. In the last two years there has been 100% pass rate for GCSEs by the Year 11 pupils. Pupils have also achieved well in Entry Level Certificates, GNVQ awards and Ready for Work Units. GNVQ and 'Ready for Work' achievements represent significant progress of pupils and importantly can be built upon when pupils move on to College.
2. The excellent progress in the post-14 vocational project and the very good or good progress in other subjects is because teaching is consistently good or very good. Pupils with literacy difficulties make very good progress with their reading because of the very effective individual support they receive. All pupils make considerable progress in their ability to work and learn in lessons. Given their histories of finding this difficult, this represents a key success of the work of the school.
3. Pupils have previously achieved success in GCSE in science. However, scrutiny of pupils' present work and teacher's planning shows that standards have declined. There are no records to show pupils' recent achievements and it is difficult to see in lessons how much progress pupils are making. The record keeping of work undertaken and the results of pupils' achievements are poor.
4. Although girls are often disadvantaged by there only being one in a class, there is no evidence that their achievements are lower than boys. Opportunities as part of the residential curriculum and the Friday options are provided for them to achieve in topics that interest them such as body art and hair and beauty projects.
5. The achievement of pupils with additional educational needs such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and particular literacy difficulties is very good because they are fully included in lessons and work is pitched at the right level to enable them to participate and progress very well. The learning support system supports improvements in reading skills and other skills. Each pupil is individually assessed and an individual learning programme is developed which includes structured work to improve phonic skills and other aspects of reading,

as well as skills in mathematics. The behaviour of the pupils with additional special educational needs is also skilfully supported.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **very good**, both in school and when in the residential units. Overall pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes to learning have a positive impact on their achievement.
- The school provides very good opportunities to help pupils to develop self-esteem and a sense of personal responsibility.
- The residential provision is very popular with pupils and is very effective in reinforcing the school's very positive ethos.
- Pupils' personal, moral and social development is very well supported by the excellent role models provided by staff.
- Good attention is given to providing pupils with opportunities to develop their spiritual and cultural awareness.

Commentary

6. The school's social progress records show that pupils enter the school with very negative attitudes towards learning and whilst at the school they make very good progress in the way they apply themselves to work in lessons. This is demonstrated by the evidence of the inspection when in almost every lesson observed the response from pupils was either good or very good. Pupils appreciate the recognition given to them through rewards such as merits. They are proud of the merits they gain for their efforts and are pleased to discuss what they have to do to receive them. This contributes greatly to their personal development.

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	55	17	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	1	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0

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

7. Exclusions are used to effectively support the school's promotion of good behaviour. Detailed records of exclusions are kept and this sanction is only used for serious breaches of the school's behaviour policy. Discussions with pupils indicate that they have very good awareness of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. For example, they understand that a consistent level of good behaviour is required in order to maintain a more privileged place on the residential units. The behaviour management system is very successful in getting pupils to focus on their own behaviour and take on increased responsibility for their actions. Pupils' moral development is very well supported by this system, which encourages pupils to understand the difference between right and wrong. The school sets very clear individual targets aimed at improving pupils' behaviour and pupils respond well to these.
8. Teachers and support staff provide excellent role models for pupils, show respect for them all and encourage them to think about how their attitudes and behaviour affects other people. This is evident throughout each day because of the consistent approach taken by all staff. Pupils

have very good opportunities to develop their social skills. They have the chance to work in a variety of group and social situations and take on responsibilities. For example, through the peer mentoring programme, the more established pupils participate in helping new pupils to settle into the school. The very good range of out-of-hours activities also makes a very positive contribution to pupils' social development.

9. Assemblies and work in religious education and art support pupils' cultural and spiritual development well. The development of pupils' speaking and listening ability allows them to enter into extended discussions in religious education comparing the principles of different religions. There are daily assemblies and once a week the assembly gives pupils the chance to hear readings from the Bible. The French exchange visits are used very well to show pupils the differing cultures of England and France.
10. Pupils' attendance is good and above the average for similar schools. A significant proportion of the absences recorded are by a very small number of pupils who fail to take up their placements or who are still on roll but not attending whilst a further review of their special needs is undertaken. Unauthorised absence is lower than usually found in schools of this type and has significantly reduced since the last inspection from over 18 per cent down to 3.5 per cent – an excellent improvement. The school has also been very effective in reducing the numbers of pupils absconding from the school and from lessons. The school has very good procedures for promoting pupils' attendance, working closely with parents.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	15.1	School data :	3.5

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 is **very good**. Teaching is **very effective** and as a result learning is **very good**. The curriculum, including residential activities, is **very good**. The partnership with other schools is **excellent**. Links with parents and the community are **very good**. The quality of care, support and guidance that pupils receive is **very good** and well supported by the work of the residential units.

Teaching and learning

Except in science where progress is unsatisfactory, pupils make very good progress as a result of very effective teaching. Teaching and learning are excellent in the post-14 vocational project and very good in maths, information and communication technology, physical education and vocational studies.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned with clear objectives for pupils' learning and successfully engage pupils.
- Questioning is very skilled and encourages pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills very well.
- In lessons teachers have high expectations for pupils to work and behave in an appropriate manner.
- Teaching in science fails to ensure that pupils make sufficient progress as they move through the school.
- Assessment of pupils' achievements is detailed but for a few lower ability pupils would benefit from staff recording the small steps of progress they make.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 42 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	17 (40%)	15(36%)	8(19%)	2(5%)		

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.

Commentary

11. Teachers put considerable emphasis on ensuring that there is a clear structure to lessons. At the start of lessons the learning objectives are made clear and a good range of activities is used to engage pupils in learning. This was the case in a very good Year 9 physical education lesson seen, where the teacher wrote the lesson objective on a board and whilst pupils were engaged in different activities he referred back to it. At the end of most lessons teachers recap on the work undertaken and use questioning well to check on how well pupils have understood the work they have undertaken. In a few lessons this method of finishing a lesson is not used as effectively and as a result pupils are not encouraged to evaluate any mistakes they have made. All teachers, though, make sure pupils are awarded their merit points for their efforts.
12. The interaction between teachers and pupils is very positive. Teachers seek to ensure that pupils speak clearly and give complete answers. This is particularly effective in English lessons where 'yes/no' type answers are not accepted. This emphasis encourages pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills and is leading to pupils engaging very well in discussions, giving their views as well as listening to those of others. For example, in a motor vehicle lesson, Years 10 and 11 pupils were fully involved in a discussion about the necessary bench skills required for work undertaken on the brakes and tyres of a car.
13. Pupils know what is expected of them in lessons. Teachers are very consistent in setting their standard and this leads to pupils staying on task and behaving very well. Only on a few occasions during the inspection did pupils move off task. However, even if this was the case, teachers were very quick to check pupils and assist them to get back on task. Only in science lessons is learning effected by the teacher not having sufficient behaviour management skills to ensure that pupils are working at an appropriate pace. In a Year 8 science lesson observed, pupils all completed the same task, the purpose of which was not clear, and the teacher failed to keep pupils learning at a suitable rate.
14. Whilst in all other subjects teaching is good or very good it is unsatisfactory in science. Despite the teacher's good subject knowledge lesson planning is very limited. Pupils are not always clear what they are learning and records of their achievements are not always maintained. Pupils clearly enjoy taking part in the experiments but the support for their written work is very limited and as a result its quality and the marking of it are poor.

Assessment

15. The assessment of pupils' achievements is good. Teachers regularly check on pupils' progress through end of module tests. The results of these are recorded and used to show progress. In addition many teachers are good at encouraging pupils to evaluate their own performance. For example, in physical education the teacher regularly asks pupils how they could have done better when performing a certain activity. In information communication and technology the rigorous approach of the teacher to get pupils to look carefully at their work and see how they could possibly improve it leads to very high standards in terms of the presentation of their work. The assessment of pupils' basic literacy skills is very thorough and this leads to pupils with weaknesses receiving individual support. This is very effective as future assessments show that most pupils make very good progress. To improve assessment further teachers could analyse

the results of assessments in more detail and look to have a greater awareness of the small steps of progress that lower ability pupils are making.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **very good**. It provides a wide range of opportunities and is very relevant to pupils' individual needs. The way the curriculum is extended through many other activities is **very good**. The accommodation and resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school offers a twenty-four hour curriculum which is both rich and relevant to individual pupils.
- There have been a number of very imaginative developments within the school's curriculum and these contribute very well to pupils' achievement.
- It is a strongly inclusive school, valuing and celebrating all pupils equally.
- The curriculum for personal, social, health and citizenship education is well planned and taught.
- Resources are very good in vocational education, ICT and design and technology.
- The residential unit known as 'School House' in its present state has many limitations.

Commentary

16. The school curriculum has developed well since the last inspection. Improved resourcing for ICT, design and technology and vocational education means that these subjects offer pupils the opportunity of high quality practical experiences equal to and often superior to mainstream settings. Improvements in subjects such as religious education and music have taken place and enrich the daytime curriculum well. In addition the physical education curriculum is excellent and an exemplar of its kind. The curriculum is very wide in the range of subjects it offers and every effort is made to create relevance for the full range of pupil interests and abilities. Elements such as the 'alternative curriculum' concentrate on the development of pupils' social and independence skills. In addition, the school has pioneered the very effective Sp.E.L. Centre, which supports pupils from a large number of mainstream schools. Schools report how individual pupils benefit greatly from their part-time placements in the centre.
17. A very significant development has been the enhancement of curricular opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The post-14 vocational project gives pupils excellent opportunities to learn a wide range of skills and work in a different environment from the conventional classroom. Pupils very much enjoy these experiences and for many these have led to college placements on similar courses or employment in related trades.
18. All pupils are boarders and a very impressive range and quality of experiences are available outside the classroom. All of the boarding units offer very good opportunities for pupils to participate in sport, artistic and craft activities and also to learn social and domestic skills essential for independent living. Thus, pupils experience a warm, welcoming and stimulating environment during weekday evenings. As pupils progress through the house system they begin to have access to a greater degree of independence, finally gaining the opportunity to attend the local youth club, army cadets, bowling and trips to Bath, Swindon and Salisbury.
19. All staff subscribe to a philosophy that includes and values each pupil. Pupils of all abilities and with a wide range of difficulties are accepted and planned for. This is noticeable within lessons, where behaviour difficulties are dealt with firmly and consistently, but always with the pupil's interest at heart. Activities are developed to reward individuals and also to recognise their interests. Thus, golf, swimming, cooking, snooker, nature walks, playstations and karaoke are just some of the activities developed in response to pupils' wishes. This is enrichment of a very impressive and effective nature.

20. The curriculum for personal, social, health and citizenship education has developed well and provides a sound basis for the school's wish to encourage pupils to become responsible members of society. The consistency of this curriculum across teaching and care settings is a strength of the school and provides pupils with a positive and consistent approach that assists their progress both socially and academically.
21. The rich curriculum is well supported by teachers, who are experienced and knowledgeable in their subjects, teaching assistants and volunteers who provide valuable personal and academic support and resources that enrich the day-to-day curriculum. The good accommodation and resourcing is most noticeable in ICT and activities such as vehicle maintenance. The residential accommodation in general offers an environment where pupils can relax and feel 'at home'. However, the School House is one part of the accommodation where attention is required. The condition of the fabric of the unit, the quality of décor and the 'institutional' feel it conveys detracted from the high quality education that pupils received. However, it is noted that work is ongoing to improve the décor of the building and the possibility of re-siting the school makes long term expenditure unwise.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides **very well** for the care, welfare and health and safety of the pupils. The support, advice and guidance offered to pupils are **very good**. The school is **very good** at seeking, valuing and acting on the pupils' opinions.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school takes very good care of pupils; child protection and health and safety have a high priority.
- Staff offer consistent, very high quality support, advice and guidance to pupils, based on their good assessments of the pupils' individual needs.
- The residential care arrangements support pupils very effectively in their academic and personal development.
- Arrangements for pupils entering and leaving the school are very good.
- The school council and residential unit meetings are very good examples of the way the school considers and respects pupils' views.

Commentary

22. Staff and governors work hard to ensure that pupils are very well cared for and that appropriate procedures and training for child protection, health and safety and risk assessments are in place and followed. The first National Care Standards Commission report and the previous Ofsted inspection included many recommendations for improvements in these areas. The school has prepared a detailed action plan to address these concerns and has made good progress towards achieving it. However, a few issues relating to the residential accommodation and level of staffing, including the availability of a mental health social worker, are still unresolved. Day-to-day medical arrangements are very good, and efficiently overseen by the matron.
23. The support and guidance offered to pupils and their families continues to be a strength of the school. Pupils have very good and trusting relationships with staff and want to do their best for them. Staff use the behaviour and care plans very effectively to identify pupils' individual needs and the actions necessary to achieve them. Great care is taken to ensure that the relatively few girls in the school receive appropriate support. Key to the school's success in providing very good, well-targeted support, advice and guidance is the very effective behaviour management system and good assessment procedures. Because pupils behave very well, they are able to make the most of the very good teaching and care provided and so make very good progress. Pupils have regular tutorials in both the school and care settings and these are particularly effective because staff are given very clear guidance on what should be covered. Pupils are involved in setting and reviewing their targets and attend their annual review meetings. Most

pupils use the pupil planners well to evaluate their achievements and problems during the week, so encouraging greater self-awareness.

24. The level of care provided by residential care staff is very good and, as a result, pupils' personal and social development is very effectively promoted. The school regularly reviews the number of care staff, which is still relatively low, and now provides comprehensive training for them. A real strength of the school is the very effective communication procedures within and between the education and care teams. These ensure that the needs of the pupils are being met, so helping them to achieve very well. Pupils' academic work is strongly supported in the residential units and pupils are expected and, where necessary, helped to complete their homework. This contributes very well to pupils' progress. Their personal development is also very well promoted through the activities provided and the organisation of the units. Pupils have to earn the right to move from School House, where there are few privileges, through Serenne and Springfields, to Paddocks where they have increasing independence, such as the right to go to the shops unsupervised. Pupils and parents think this is a fair and effective system. The inspection team agrees, although the school should consider reviewing a few of the more formal procedures in School House, such as lining up at meal times, to make clearer the distinction between 'home' and school.
25. Staff take great care to make sure that pupils and their families are well prepared for the move to the school and for settling pupils in. Usually only one pupil starts in a week and parents are encouraged to help pupils move in. Existing pupils are given responsibility for looking after new pupils and this is very good practice. There are good links with Connexions for pupils from Year 9. These, together with very good careers education, well planned work experience and college placements, and a good personal, social and health education programme, ensure that pupils have appropriate guidance and are very well prepared for leaving school.
26. The school expects pupils to take an active part in making decisions about all areas of school life. The school council - still at an early stage of development - and the daily residential unit meetings contribute very well to pupils' personal development.
27. Pupils know that they will be listened to and that their suggestions will be taken seriously, such as when they asked for more activities for girls and improvements to packed lunches and the playground facilities. A recent survey carried out by the local authority showed that pupils are generally positive about the school and that staff dealt effectively with any reported bullying.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has **very good** links with parents and the community. Links with other schools and colleges are **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's excellent links with other schools and colleges are of great academic and social benefit to pupils from Springfields and mainstream schools.
- The school keeps parents very well informed about school life and their children's progress and achievements.
- Parents think very highly of the school and how it helps their children.
- The school makes very good use of the local community and is highly regarded by it.

Commentary

28. The school's outward-looking, innovative approach to its work has resulted in excellent links with mainstream schools through the post-14 vocational project and Sp.E.L Centre.

The Sp.E.L. Centre was set up by the school to work with primary schools, children and their families to help those children identified as being emotionally and socially immature to succeed in mainstream schools. Pupils attend the Centre for two days a week for ten weeks and are supported by Centre staff in their own schools. In addition, the Centre is an Emotional Literacy resource base, and the specialist teachers and learning support assistants provide expert training and support for staff from other schools in the behaviour management techniques used in the Centre. Local primary schools and parents think extremely highly of this provision, with many reporting dramatic improvements in children's behaviour following attendance at the Centre. The local education authority's Behaviour Support Service has recognised the value of this early intervention initiative and has now taken over the funding of the Centre, managing it jointly with the school. It has been so successful that the LEA is now planning to open another centre, also to be jointly managed by Springfields.

The Vocational Education Centre has been similarly very successful, providing a very highly thought of service to pupils from mainstream secondary schools as well as to Springfields' pupils. The school works very effectively with further education colleges to prepare pupils for leaving school and, particularly, to cater for the needs of those pupils whose placements at the school are not successful. There are, however, no opportunities at present for Springfields' pupils to take part, when appropriate, in lessons at mainstream schools and this is something that the school is keen to develop.

29. Parents are provided with very good information about the school, both before their child starts and once they are resident. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school is committed to involving parents fully in their child's education and they are encouraged to visit or telephone the school at any time. Some help in class and with evening activities, such as the talent show which was held during the inspection, and an increasing number attend events at the school, including the governors' annual meeting. A parents' support group in Trowbridge, organised jointly with Dr Barnados and the NSPCC, is another example of the school's innovative approach to working with parents as well as the pupils. Many families, however, live a considerable distance from the school and cannot visit regularly but, because school staff take the pupils home every Friday, personal contact is assured and this benefits everyone. The school makes very effective use of the recently redesigned 'pupil planners' to let parents know about their child's successes as well as of any concerns about their work and behaviour. Annual review meetings are well attended and the written information within reports is detailed.
30. Parents have great confidence in the school; they think that their children are very well looked after both at school and in the residential setting and that they make great progress in both their behaviour and school work. All the parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and returned questionnaires said that staff expected their children to work hard and treated them fairly and that there was a good range of interesting activities provided. The inspection team fully supports these very positive views. A few parents and pupils were concerned about pupils' behaviour – to be expected given the pupils' special needs – but feel that the school does all it can to stop bullying. Although formal surveys to seek parents' views are not carried out regularly, the school is very good at consulting them informally and taking their opinions into account, for example when they were able to suggest changes to the pupil planner.
31. Links with the wider community are very good and include a residential exchange with a school in France, as well as local links. It is very clearly part of the school's mission to provide pupils with a wide range of different experiences that will help them with their learning and personal and social skills, and help them recognise the responsibilities of living in a community. The school has, therefore, developed a high profile in the town and pupils contribute to many local events such as the Calne and Wessex Chamber of Commerce evening, the Great Baton Challenge and the Lantern Parade. The 'Aunties' scheme is very successful in providing volunteers from the community to help pupils with their reading skills. Staff plan all activities very carefully, making sure that the boys' and girls' individual interests are taken into account. One common feature of all the out of school activities is the praise given by organisations and members of the public to the attitudes and behaviour of Springfields' pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are **very good**. Governors know and support the school **very well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's strong leadership and his determination to develop the work of the school are key features of its success.
- The school is ambitious and keen to do its very best for pupils.
- Management systems ensure that the school runs smoothly and links very well with other schools and the local education authority.
- The financial allocation to the school has been used effectively to establish a strong staff team and good resources.
- Governors are very active and play an influential part in the school's development.

Commentary

32. The headteacher has overseen very good improvement in the work of the school since the previous inspection. He is an excellent leader, who is very well respected by governors, his colleagues and the staff from other schools. As headteacher he has ensured that the school has successfully pioneered different approaches to meeting the needs of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and still retained those elements of its work that were effective previously. In his time as headteacher relationships with the local authority have improved considerably and now ensure that the school plays a key role in the development of the authority's provision for pupils with special educational needs. He is very well supported by his deputies and other key staff, who all play a prominent role in the development of the school.
33. The school has been innovative in its approach to provide the very best for its pupils. As well as supporting pupils from mainstream schools experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties, the headteacher, together with the previous post holder actually physically started the vocational project by building the first workshop. Now, through its success, the Learning and Skills Council has supported further development and awarded a large grant that has seen the extension of the project to its present, impressive facility. Equally successful has been the development of the Sp.E.L. Centre, which has been regarded by the LEA as so effective that a similar facility is now planned for elsewhere in the County. The headteacher is also at the forefront of providing support and training for staff of other EBD schools as part of the South West EBD network.
34. The calm, purposeful atmosphere in the school is testament to the highly effective management systems in place. Senior staff are visible and follow rigorous monitoring arrangements. The headteacher has a well-established programme for monitoring teaching and one of the deputies maintains effective records for the monitoring and evaluation of pupils' behaviour. As an example of their determination to ensure that behaviour systems are effective, one of the deputies has recently conducted a survey on bullying. The results have been used to inform staff of potential bullies and victims and work is now in place to deal with these difficulties.
35. The school uses its financial allocation very well. It makes sure that best value is achieved in its purchases. This is a very good improvement since the previous inspection. Subject and department audits and plans now inform expenditure on resources and staffing. Appointments are made following a careful analysis of need. For example, the appointment of an ICT technician has supported the development of ICT in the school. Additionally the post of a learning support teacher has had a very positive impact on improving the basic skills of pupils.
36. Governors are very active in their support and play an important role in the development of the school. The Chair is in regular contact with the headteacher and other governors are frequent visitors. Through their committees and regular visits, they know the school very well. Their visits, a few of which are unannounced, are all recorded and reports are provided for staff. They have every confidence in the work of the school and are keen that it develops as a centre of excellence. The minutes of their committee meetings show their full involvement in all aspects of the school's work.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1360647
Total expenditure	1383233
Expenditure per pupil	23848

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	37066
Balance carried forward to the next	14480

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

French

It was not possible to observe the teaching of French during the inspection. All pupils in Years 7 to 9 have French lessons. At present, however, this is limited to modules offered in one term of each year. These modules are taught by specialist staff from the local secondary school. The school is seeking to extend these opportunities. In addition, Springfields has a long standing exchange visit with a French school called Serrene in Orleans. Staff and pupils from both schools visit each other every two years. This has provided pupils with valuable first hand experience of the country and the language. Prior to the visit the senior care officer runs a French club in the evenings where pupils are able to experience aspects of the French culture and practise a few simple sentences in French. Work on display in the school includes articles written by pupils describing how much they have enjoyed their experience. The visits make a significant contribution to extending pupils' cultural experiences.

English

Seven lessons were observed. In addition there was a detailed scrutiny of individual pupil progress through work samples and teacher records.

Provision for English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good, giving careful attention to pupils' individual needs.
- Pupils enjoy the subject, respond well in lessons and progress very well over time.
- The development of speaking and listening skills is given a high priority in English and other subjects of the curriculum.
- Pupils do not achieve as well in their written work as they do in reading, speaking and listening.
- Prompt attention is paid to those pupils requiring specialist support in literacy skills and they progress very well as a result.
- There are very good links between English and other subjects such as personal, social and health education.
- Leadership in English is very good but not enough time is allowed for the co-ordinator to monitor the teaching of writing skills in other subjects.

Commentary

37. The previous inspection report identified teaching as good. It is now routinely of a very high standard. Lessons are very well planned and delivered, with pace and clear learning objectives. Teachers have a very good rapport with pupils and use this to ensure that pupils maintain good standards of behaviour in lessons which, in turn, assists them in persevering with tasks and producing good quality work. Many pupils lack confidence in reading and writing. However, sensitive support in listening to pupils' views and producing written responses gives pupils the security to attempt tasks they might otherwise avoid. In a very good lesson on poetic conventions, the teacher used a quiz, discussion and worksheets to encourage pupils to revise concepts such as alliteration, simile and metaphor. A parallel group, working with the special needs coordinator, used the Internet to identify key vocabulary associated with 'fencing' and finished with a video excerpt from a 'James Bond' film, which placed the words in context.

38. Pupils indicate that they enjoy English as a subject and this is reflected in the very good progress made. This is apparent in the results of those pupils, who have been in school for over a year. By the time they reach fourteen their results in English standardised tests are much better than those of similar schools nationally. Similarly, continued very good teaching saw

pupils last year gaining a 'D' and an 'E' grade in GCSE English and 7 gaining the entry level certificate.

39. Pupils who experience severe difficulties with reading and spelling receive very prompt support during their first year at the school. This continues, as and when appropriate, and means that these pupils also achieve very well. Individual education plans and teacher records show good or very good progress for pupils who start at Springfields with low confidence and literacy skills. This, again, is an improvement since the last inspection.
40. Pupils' progress in speaking and listening throughout the school is impressive. Many pupils arrive unable or unwilling to listen carefully and express themselves coherently. As the result of good attention to these skills in all lessons, they develop well in taking turns to speak, using appropriate vocabulary and speaking in public. These skills transfer well to the boarding settings where pupils become confident in meeting visitors, talking about themselves and venturing opinions and ideas.
41. This very good progress is not so obvious in written work, where a reluctance to express themselves in writing remains with pupils for longer. The effect of this reluctance is that pupils, including the higher attaining ones, do not produce extended written work with a vivid vocabulary. The school has identified this difficulty and is constantly seeking to develop effective strategies to improve this aspect.
42. English lessons contribute well to the personal and emotional development of pupils. This was evident in a very good lesson dealing with death and dignity. The respect paid to pupils' views and feelings was an important element of the lesson and involved the pupils all the more by relating closely to them as individuals.
43. The improvement in English results largely from the very good leadership provided by the English co-ordinator. She presents a very good role model in her relationship with pupils, the precision of her work and the careful attention she pays to individual needs. Progress is recorded well and individual targets discussed regularly with pupils. However, National Curriculum levels are often too large a step for lower ability pupils and not enough work has been carried out to refine the targets set using national schemes that are currently available to record the progress of such pupils. This is not helped by the fact that too little time is allowed for the co-ordinator to work with other staff in the development of English skills across the full range of subjects. Resources and library provision have both improved significantly over the past few years.

Language and literacy across the curriculum.

Reading and speaking and listening skills are well supported in the teaching and learning of other subjects. In many lessons seen during the inspection pupils were fully engaged in discussions, all able to make valued contributions. Pupils have made improvements in their writing skills but more work needs to be carried out to find ways of encouraging longer and fuller pieces of writing in subjects such as history, science and religious education.

MATHEMATICS

Five lessons were observed, pupils' work and planning documents were scrutinised and a discussion was held with the mathematics co-ordinator.

Provision for mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements are reflected well in their examination successes.
- The teacher has high expectations for pupils' achievement and sets tasks that challenge them.

- Lessons are consistently well planned and structured.
- Mathematics is well led and managed.
- Pupils' achievement is carefully assessed and recorded but for a few lower ability pupils the steps of assessment are not small enough to indicate and encourage further progress.
- While not formally planned as part of the teaching of other subjects, mathematics skills are practised in many of them.

Commentary

44. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 progress and achieve well and pupils in Years 10 and 11 progress and achieve very well. Standards have been maintained from those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils each year have achieved well in GCSE and entry level certificates. Last year five pupils passed GCSE and almost all passed the entry level certificate.
45. Teaching is good for the younger pupils and very good for older pupils. In a good lesson for Year 7 pupils, they had to convert one metric unit into another. The task, although challenging for pupils, was achieved by most because the teacher had thoughtfully structured the lesson and deployed the teaching assistant well to support a pupil who needed particular help. Similarly in a very good lesson for older pupils undertaking a course leading to GCSE, pupils were very well challenged by the task of collecting and presenting data to make comparisons between different newspapers, such as the number of pages and costs. Very good relationships and tight organisation enabled all the pupils to achieve the ambitious objectives of the lesson.
46. The structure of lessons successfully keeps pupils on task and learning. There is usually a warm up activity and a main part of the lesson followed by a very effective summing up. A variety of resources sustain the pupils' interest and the lessons are broken into a series of shorter tasks to enable the pupils to concentrate better. Pupils are kept fully involved in the learning process. For example, at the end of each lesson, the teacher carefully explains to pupils what points she has awarded and what they could have done to perform better.
47. The subject is taught exclusively by the mathematics teacher, who has very good subject knowledge. She leads the subject very well and is ambitious that pupils achieve as well as possible. Information and communications technology is used appropriately and other good resources have been acquired. Assessment is good and careful records are kept of pupils' achievement. However, for the less able pupils more finely graded assessments would be more helpful and enable pupils' small steps in progress to be more readily demonstrated.

Mathematics across the curriculum

The teaching of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. Mathematics skills are taught in other subjects such as careers education, physical education and science. However, mathematics skills are not systematically and formally built into the planning of these other subjects.

SCIENCE

Judgements are based on five lessons seen, scrutiny of the work previously undertaken by pupils and the records of the science co-ordinator.

Provision for science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The recording of pupils' achievements is unsatisfactory.
- Lower ability pupils in Years 10 and 11 are not offered appropriate levels of external accreditation to record their achievements.
- Teaching fails to ensure that pupils are making sufficient progress in their learning.

- The subject leader displays a good depth of subject knowledge but his leadership of the department is weak.
- Homework is used effectively.

Commentary

48. The quality of provision has not been maintained since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be a strength of the school. Pupils' achievements are not recorded well and as a result the teacher is not clear how well pupils are learning. Although higher attaining pupils have previously achieved passes in GCSE science a scrutiny of pupils' current work indicates that this will be unlikely in future years. In addition, lower attaining pupils are not offered the chance to have their achievements in science recognised through examinations. For example, last year there were no entries for the entry level certificate.
49. The teaching of science is unsatisfactory. Part of the reason for this is the unsatisfactory application of the school's behaviour management strategies and the planning of lessons is weak. The aims of what pupils will learn in lessons are unclear. For example, in a Year 8 lesson observed, although pupils showed a willingness to follow instructions it was not clear why they were doing certain tasks because the teacher had failed to set learning objectives for the session. The planning for the lesson also failed to allow for the different ability levels in the group. During the inspection there were lessons seen where the teaching was satisfactory, pupils' behaviour satisfactory and tasks were presented to most pupils in a way that they understood. However, teaching was no more than satisfactory because pupils are not challenged by the tasks and their rate of learning is slow.
50. Although the subject leader displays a good level of subject knowledge, leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. Plans for what each year group will learn and how pupils' skills and knowledge will be developed as they move through the school are not well established. There is no reference in planning to what pupils know or how their individual needs will be met through the work they will be asked to complete. Because of this, pupils often lose interest in lessons and concentration and behaviour often deteriorates in lessons.
51. Resources and accommodation in science are satisfactory, but there is only limited technical support available for the teacher. Homework is set effectively after most science lessons and often pupils are asked to carry out simple science related investigations in the residential units.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Four ICT lessons were seen and the use of ICT in the teaching of other subjects was considered.

Provision for information and communication technology is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils have very good opportunities to take examinations.
 - Standards of teaching are very high, which enables pupils to develop skills in a wide range of applications.
 - Pupils' coursework is of a high standard with very good emphasis placed on presentation.
 - The resources and the staffing for ICT are very effective and support the development of the subject well.
 - ICT is used well in many subject areas, although in a few it could be made more use of.
52. Pupils achieve very well throughout the school. Years 10 and 11 pupils undertake examinations in GNVQ units. This is a very suitable course for pupils as it offers them the opportunity to undertake coursework and take examinations at the end of each module at different times during their school career. In addition it provides the opportunity to repeat modules should pupils be unsuccessful.

53. The high standards of teaching are supported by the excellent planning of the teacher, who ensures that there are clear learning objectives for each module of work. A major strength of her effective teaching is the high standards she sets for the presentation of pupils' work. This was evident in a Year 11 lesson observed where the teacher insisted on all aspects of the project work being of a similar high standard. Marking shows that whilst accepting the efforts of pupils, she is very helpful in pointing out how their work can be improved. It is through this that pupils are able to develop their skills. Pupils' coursework is very well presented and shows that pupils have developed very good skills in the use of a wide range of applications.
54. The high quality facilities for ICT include computers being available in each classroom and within the residential units. All computers are networked and this enables pupils to log on and access their own files in most areas of the school. Pupils can, therefore, during the evenings use the computers to access their homework and complete work. Although, this is well supported by care staff, the school recognises that many care staff require further training to enable them to be of greater assistance in supporting pupils in using computers.
55. The work of the ICT technician plays a very important part in maintaining the school's ICT network. In addition he is able to work individually with pupils undertaking projects. The high quality of coursework includes very good presentations using a commercial package, which is now being well used by the school in their reception area to show visitors aspects of the work of the school. The ICT suite is well set out and contains up to date equipment that is well used and looked after by pupils.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

56. There is good use of computers in English, where pupils complete assignments from hand written drafts. Again care is taken to ensure that presentation is of a high standard. In other subjects, although there is satisfactory use of computers in most, there is scope for further development of the skills of staff to assist them to develop those of pupils further.

HUMANITIES

History and geography

During the inspection three lessons were seen but there is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgements about these subjects.

57. Geography and history are taught during Years 7 to 9. In geography, pupils study the British Isles and the growth of settlements and villages. They can distinguish between different types of settlements, for example, a market town and an industrial town. Pupils have good attitudes to geography, linked to the teacher's high expectations for them to achieve and behave well. The practical approach taken by the teacher is successful in generating pupils' interest in the topics being covered. For example, in a good Year 7 lesson pupils made good progress in understanding the differences between "Nucleated" "Dispersed" and "Linear" settlements.
58. In history, planning is good and linked to the National Curriculum and pupils are given the opportunity to learn the key skills for the subject. In Year 7 pupils learn about the tactics employed by the Roman army in putting down the uprising led by Boudicca. In a lesson seen the teacher very effectively used a video clip and a map to go through the battle sequence, enabling the pupils to understand why and how the disciplined Roman soldiers defeated a much larger force. Pupils in Year 9 are learning about the horrors of trench warfare in World War 1. They contributed enthusiastically to a discussion of life in the trenches and are able to identify why and how they were built.

Religious Education

Two lessons were seen and pupils' work and teachers' records were scrutinised.

Provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in their understanding of a range of faiths and issues such as prejudice, personal responsibility and marriage.
- Teaching is very good and based on very strong teacher-pupil relationships.
- The subject is well resourced and lessons supported by a wide range of stimuli.
- The curriculum deals thoroughly with a wide range of faiths, including Christianity.
- Not enough opportunities are available to meet representatives of the faiths studied.

Commentary

59. Pupils progress well in their study of religious education. They have good opportunities, through discussion and role play, to explore issues such as marriage in Islam, as well as touching, drawing and using the artefacts linked to a wide range of faiths. In addition, they are able to experience lessons that relate to both the understanding of religion and learning from it. Skills such as curiosity, enquiry, self-awareness and commitment develop well, as is required within the locally agreed syllabus.

60. Teaching in religious education is characterised by pace and a rich range of stimuli, including television and video clips, games, role play and the good use of artefacts. For example, a very good lesson on Gandhi started with a short clip from the film, encapsulating his death and the early hardships he suffered. The teacher then effectively drew out an impressive number of points that pupils had noticed which contributed to a pen portrait of this famous Hindu. Along the way issues such as apartheid, Nelson Mandela and racial discrimination arose naturally and were fully explored by the group. Pupils also felt confident enough to talk about their own religious beliefs and racial experiences which increased the relevance of the lesson. By the end of this session it was clear that pupils have developed a good sense of identity and an ability to discuss sensitive issues relating to themselves and the beliefs of others.

61. The subject is well led and managed. Good planning ensures that pupils are able to study a good range of religions, although contacts pupils are able to make with representatives of these faiths is limited. There are currently too few opportunities to visit places of worship or meet members of other faiths. The religious education curriculum is complemented by a regular programme of assemblies that feature religious elements.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Design and Technology

Although two lessons of design and technology were observed there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the provision for this subject.

62. In a food technology lesson, for pupils aged 13 to 14, pupils practised the basic procedures to make a healthy snack bar. The busy, active lesson was well structured and the roles of the teacher and the teaching assistant were clearly indicated in the planning. Pupils were pleased with what they had made and proudly showed their mixtures to each other. The pupils successfully learned how to make a basic recipe, estimated how long each stage of the recipe would take and knew the characteristics of the mixture they were making.

63. In a lesson using resistant materials, also for pupils aged 13 to 14, pupils practised making a dowel joint using tools correctly and safely. The teacher and the teaching assistant successfully encouraged pupils to achieve good quality work by sensitive comments such as, "This looks as though you rushed it a little bit - it's not quite straight." The lesson was well planned and structured and the pupils responded with enthusiasm and attentiveness.

Music

There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the provision for music.

64. In a well planned lesson for pupils aged 11 to 12 on appraising music and fitting it into themes, a good variety of resources including a video and a compact disk were used which captured pupils' attention well. A series of short activities helped to maintain pupils' interest and the good pace of the lesson and crisp organisation of the teacher enabled pupils to progress well. Pupils were able to understand how music can reflect a time or place and consider how the intended purpose of a piece of music can effect the way it is created.
65. In a lesson for pupils aged 13 to 14, similarly clear planning gave the lesson a good structure. A school 'Auntie'* provided valuable support, particularly for one pupil who found the task difficult. Pupils were able to control sounds made by tuned and un-tuned instruments and worked together well when practising their compositions of sound effects and music to accompany a story they had previously written.

* Elderly members of the local community who come into school and support pupils in activities such as this and listening to pupils read.

Art

Three lessons were observed, pupils' portfolios and displays of work were scrutinised, planning and other documents were examined and a discussion was held with the art co-ordinator

Provision in art is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is good and good GCSE grades have been obtained by a few pupils in recent years.
- Patient, persistent teaching encourages pupils to extend their individual skills.
- The teacher's expectations of behaviour and achievement are consistently high.
- Flower arranging work extends and complements work in art lessons.
- The use of research books and materials is appropriately encouraged but the literacy levels of the texts are often too high for lower ability pupils to understand.

Commentary

66. Pupils progress well and show good achievement in their ability to use a range of materials for drawings, paintings and artefacts. Older pupils aged 15 to 16 can choose to do art General Certificate in Secondary Education (GCSE) as an option course and the few who have done this have achieved good grades. Last year these included a B and C. In the previous report, art was judge unsatisfactory. As provision is now good progress since the previous inspection has, therefore, been very good.
67. Pupils progress and achieve well because they are taught well. For example, in a lesson for pupils in Year 8, the teacher patiently but persistently encouraged pupils and as a result each progressed well in drawings based on an African artefact or photograph. She effectively reinforced the main points of what the pupils had learned towards the end of the lesson. In a GCSE option lesson, in which pupils were making drawings and paintings based on Surrealist images, again the teacher encouraged and challenged pupils well through questioning them and making suggestions about their work.
68. Lessons in art are well structured, having an introduction highlighting the learning objectives, a main part of the lesson and a useful session towards the end which often involves pupils showing their work and the teacher reinforcing the key teaching and learning points of the

lesson. Pupils show interest in the subject and their confidence grows because of the individual support that is given by the teacher. Pupils are appropriately given research tasks but these need to be supported by such structures as key word list where the reading level of the text is too high for lower ability pupils.

69. The art co-ordinator is the only teacher of art and leads and manages her department well. Her planning is systematic and clearly indicates what the pupils will do and what they will progress to next. Lesson evaluations and careful annotations of pupils' work are used well by the teacher to inform the planning of future lessons.
70. Art work is effectively complemented by the work of a senior member of the residential care staff, who offers an option course in flower arranging. High quality displays are on display from these sessions and there are plans to develop this work further to enable pupils to achieve examination success. Pupils involved show great pride in their finished displays. Pupils also have good opportunities to choose pottery and basic craft sessions as part of the evening activities.

Physical education

Three physical education lessons were observed, a video of pupils taking part in gymnastics seen and records, including the department handbook, were scrutinised,

The provision for physical education is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils achieve very high standards in a wide range of activities.
- Planning for lessons and methods to check on pupils' progress are excellent.
- The excellent curriculum and additional activities ensure that pupils can take part in many different sports.
- The subject leader is very enthusiastic and ambitious to develop the subject further.
- Achievements in physical education play an important part in pupils' personal development.

Commentary

71. Pupils enjoy taking part in physical education lessons. They work hard and as a result they develop their skills well. For example, in gymnastics pupils have developed skills both in floor movements and vaulting. In a video seen of the presentation of their achievements to staff and other pupils, examples were observed of pupils performing head and hand stands and completing somersaults and handsprings over vaulting boxes. In basketball pupils have developed a good understanding of the techniques required for shooting and passing the ball and are able to make use of these in game situations.
72. Teaching is very good and based on very effective planning. Lessons always have a clear structure, which includes warm ups, periods where skills are developed and game and fun activities to end a lesson. Clear objectives for learning are emphasised and activities and skills to be developed are based on previous work. The department's handbook gives very detailed information on all activities that are covered and health and safety procedures that are important for each aspect.
73. Pupils take part in an excellent range of activities. Sports and activities covered in lessons are very well complemented by additional activities that take place in the evenings and during Friday club. In addition outdoor education weeks and a football tour extend pupils' experiences further.
74. Pupils have been very successful in team sports. During the last year they have won football, basketball, cricket and triathlon competitions. Success in the triathlon was the result of a very determined training programme undertaken by the pupils involved. The football trophy was won

in a final played at the local professional club's ground and photographs show this occasion had been a major event in the life of the school.

75. Pupils gain considerably from their participation in sporting activities. Their moral and social development is promoted well by the expectations of each activity. Pupils respond very well to the challenges. As an indicator of this the head of a local outdoor education centre has written to the school to congratulate the pupils on their attitudes and behaviour on a recent trip. Pupils themselves are delighted with their successes and in their responses to inspectors' questions about life at the school many referred to the opportunities they have to achieve in sporting activities.
76. The subject is very well led and managed. The subject leader's enthusiastic approach motivates the pupils to work hard and do their best. His emphasis on encouraging pupils to evaluate their own performances is very effective. He is ambitious for the future development of the subject and his plans for Sports College Status are well supported by the headteacher and governors.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHCE)

Two lessons were observed together with one tutor period. Additionally, curriculum planning for PSHE and citizenship were considered, together with samples of pupils' work and discussions with both staff and pupils.

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a well thought out curriculum, which adds to the personal development of all pupils.
- The subject is well co-ordinated and teaching is imaginative and stimulating.
- Good links exist between lessons in class and the work of the residential units, providing a twenty-four hour approach to all aspects of PSHCE.
- Work within tutor groups makes a strong contribution to this subject.

Commentary

77. The curriculum for PSHCE is very detailed and addresses all relevant issues, including sex and drug education. Pupils in Year 7 follow a course that covers rights and responsibilities, social and coping skills, respecting others and disability. By the end of Year 9 pupils have worked on topics relating to emotions and sex, rules that help, hazards in everyday life and viruses and bacteria. As they move through to their final years, pupils have looked at parenting skills and now have the opportunity of participating in accredited courses on childcare and parenting. The subject is well resourced, providing stimulating activities, video clips and visiting speakers. The relevance and interest of the courses contribute well to the maturity that older pupils demonstrate.
78. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and is largely responsible for the many developments that have taken place in the subject. Her development plan includes the introduction of pupil progress files, which provide a good basis for pupils to consider their own aims and targets. In addition, a full citizenship curriculum is in place for younger pupils, with that for older pupils in the final stages of implementation. Care has been taken to 'map' the subject across the full range of subjects. Thus, work on animal rights, disability and homelessness takes place in English, personal safety in science and the European Union in history, all contributing to the good progress pupils make in their awareness of the world around them.
79. The work on citizenship links well to the School Council and the responsibilities pupils are asked to take on in the residential units. There are many overlaps between the PSHCE curriculum and the boarding units. Work on personal hygiene, taking responsibility for one's actions and being a good citizen are just three themes that are reinforced jointly between teaching and care staff.

80. The teaching in PSHCE is good. It has pace, a wide variety of stimulating activities and shows an openness to discuss all issues as they arise. For example, within a lesson on bullying, pupils read and discussed the school's anti-bullying policy line by line. They then went on to identify and collected articles relating to bullying, in all of its forms, from recent newspapers.

81. Work in tutor groups also has a strong link to this subject. The use of progress files and pupil file planners reinforces the importance of responsibility for one's own actions, while every effort is made to discuss an individual pupil's own assessment of themselves, their progress and areas they need to develop. Much of this relates to personal skills, behaviours and topics covered within PSHCE lessons. It adds to the consistent and rigorous approach to personal development that is a major strength of the school.

VOCATIONAL STUDIES UNIT

Two lessons were seen, representatives from mainstream schools interviewed and pupil and staff records scrutinised.

Provision in the vocational studies unit is **excellent**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education and later life.
- The unit enables the pupils to work alongside mainstream pupils and develop skills and accreditation linked to further education courses.
- The unit offers very flexible courses with excellent resources.
- The unit very successfully involves mainstream schools and other service providers.
- The provision is very well led and managed.

Commentary

82. The post-14 vocational project provides an excellent extension to the normal curriculum available in schools and successfully engages pupils, both from Springfields and mainstream schools, in learning.

The unit very successfully achieves its aim of providing a flexible work related curriculum. Pupils are able to learn skills in motor vehicle maintenance, building and catering. This flexible curriculum is very relevant to pupils' individual needs and offers clear progressive routes into further learning and employment. The support pupils receive raises their aspirations to achieve to the highest levels of their capability. Pupils enjoy the courses on offer and the opportunities provided to work alongside their peers from mainstream schools.

The vocational unit works very closely with other mainstream secondary schools, local colleges and training providers. These other institutions value the high quality of courses and excellent standard of accommodation provided by the unit. All workshops are fitted out with excellent resources and each instructor has received good support to develop their teaching skills. These were evident in a very good session seen where after a period in a classroom looking at bench skills Year 11 pupils were very well supported to put these into practice in the workshop. The work of the unit is very well led and managed by a knowledgeable and respected co-ordinator who very successfully promotes its work throughout the local area.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	1
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	2

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

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