

INSPECTION REPORT

Bristol Gateway School

St. Werburghs

LEA area: Bristol

Unique reference number: 132239

Headteacher: Mr. Mike Lewis

Lead inspector: Sarah Mascall

Dates of inspection: 23 May to 25 May 2005

Inspection number: 268539

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11-14
Gender of pupils:	Boys
Number on roll:	42
School address:	Stafford Road St. Werburghs Bristol
Postcode:	BS2 9UR
Telephone number:	0117 377 2275
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Richard Wike
Date of previous inspection:	May 2003

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Bristol Gateway is a school for boys, aged between 11 and 14, with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. All pupils have statements of special educational need. Many have had a disrupted education and have a history of non-attendance in their previous schools. As a result, their attainment when they start school is below average. Nearly all pupils are white British with only a small number who are from mixed ethnic backgrounds. There are no pupils from homes where English is an additional language. The school is based in one of the most deprived areas in Bristol. There are a high number of pupils (65%) who are eligible for free school meals and this reflects the low socio economic circumstances of the majority of pupils. There are 5 pupils in public care. Two pupils are dual registered and in the process of returning to mainstream schools.

The LEA is in the process of reviewing its provision for pupils with special needs and there are plans in place to move the school to a different, larger site and increase the age range to include Years 10 and 11.

The school, when last inspected in 2003, was placed in serious weaknesses.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20536	Sarah Mascall	Lead inspector	English, religious education, humanities, modern foreign language.
11575	Catherine Fish	Lay inspector	
20024	Paul Wright	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology, physical education, design and technology
14563	Graham Pirt	Team inspector	Mathematics, art and design, personal, social and health education and citizenship.

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PART A. SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Bristol Gateway is a **good** school that successfully achieves its objective in improving pupils' behaviour. Pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are good. Leadership and management are good and the school no longer has the serious weaknesses reported at the time of the previous inspection. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher and staff are very committed to ensuring that pupils improve their behaviour.
- Teaching in science and personal, social and health education and citizenship is very good and, as a result, pupils make very good progress in these subjects.
- Pupils make good progress in learning to read, but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to improve their writing skills.
- Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in ICT because teaching and planning for their learning are unsatisfactory.
- Very high quality care ensures that pupils feel valued and safe and their personal and social development is good.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to attend college and return to mainstream education.
- Procedures for assessing the progress pupils make are being developed, but, as yet, do not provide sufficient information for pupils to know how they can do better.
- The accommodation is poor and restricts aspects of pupils' education.

Since the last inspection in 2003, the school has made good improvements. There were a number of key issues and all these have been addressed well. There have been improvements in pupils' achievements and teaching and learning. Attendance is now good, as are systems for ensuring that pupils are healthy and safe. Governors and senior staff have developed their roles and responsibilities. Better procedures for assessment have been established. The accommodation has been improved, but it is still not appropriate to meet the needs of pupils.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	In relation to individual targets in: Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 9	Good	Good

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

Pupils' achievements are **good**. They are very good in science and personal, social and health education and citizenship. Pupils make good progress in mathematics, religious education and humanities. Progress in English is satisfactory overall. Pupils make good progress in their reading skills because effective support is given. Opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills are satisfactory, but in English, and in many other subjects, pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to develop their skills in writing. Although there is a good range of computers in school, weaknesses in planning and assessment means that pupils make unsatisfactory progress in ICT. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and, because of this, their attendance is good. Pupils make good progress in improving their behaviour and, as a result, behaviour overall, is good. Pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also **good**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**; they are very good in science and personal, social and health education and citizenship. Teaching is good in mathematics, religious education and humanities and satisfactory in English. The teaching of ICT is unsatisfactory. In other subjects, teachers use their subject knowledge well to plan interesting activities and many have high expectations of behaviour. Support assistants provide effective support in helping pupils to behave and work. Assessment is satisfactory, but it is still being developed and it is not used consistently by all staff. The marking of pupils' work does not help pupils' know how to improve. The curriculum is good and ensures that pupils have a good range of learning opportunities. There is a particularly good focus on preparing pupils for the next stage of learning and several attend college courses in Years 8 and 9. The curriculum is enriched very well through a wide range of activities. Accommodation is poor, but there are good plans in place for moving to new premises in September. Resources are good. The care, guidance and support for pupils is very good. There are good systems in place to encourage pupils to behave well and pupils value the rewards they receive for doing well. The partnership with parents and the community are good. There are also good links with colleges and schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school is **good**. The headteacher has been very proactive in developing the school and finding better accommodation. He has high expectations for what the school can achieve and has, since the school opened, brought about a number of effective changes. He is well supported by the senior management team. Governance is good. Governors are a committed group who know their school well. The school is managed well. There are daily staff briefings which ensure staff are well informed. Although most staff manage their subject areas successfully, the systems for identifying the strengths and weaknesses within their subjects are not fully developed.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are positive about the school. They appreciate the support they get from the head teacher and his staff. Pupils enjoy school. They like all the different activities linked to the rewards system and the residential trips.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Enable pupils to achieve better in information and communication technology by improving planning and teaching.
- Ensure that there is a more effective approach to developing pupils' skills in writing.
- Ensure that systems for assessment continue to be developed and that they are used consistently.
- Implement plans to move to more appropriate accommodation.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop very good skills in personal, social and health education and citizenship because the school places a great deal of importance on this area.
- Pupils benefit from very good teaching in science and, as a result, make very good progress.
- Pupils develop their skills in reading well because of the good arrangements to help them improve.
- Pupils' progress in developing their skills in writing and using information and communication technology are unsatisfactory.
- The school has set itself challenging targets which enable it to monitor the progress pupils are making.

Commentary

1. When pupils start at Bristol Gateway, many have experienced disrupted educations, however, by the time they leave in Year 9, most have made good progress in many aspects of their education. The success of this is reflected in the fact that twelve pupils have transferred to mainstream education or college courses in the last four years. Those pupils with additional learning difficulties, such as Aspergers syndrome, make the same progress as all other pupils. There are high expectations that pupils will develop their personal and social skills and the very good work being carried out on emotional literacy and the high quality teaching in PSHE means that pupils make very good progress in improving. All staff support pupils well and there is a positive ethos within the school which enables pupils to feel valued and keen to do well.
2. Several pupils in Year 9 have achieved passes in GCSE in science. This is a result of the very high expectations of staff teaching the subject who ensure that pupils have very good opportunities to carry out practical experiments and develop an understanding of scientific terminology. In mathematics, religious education and humanities, pupils make good progress. They clearly enjoy these subjects and work hard to achieve.
3. Pupils make satisfactory progress in English. The school has ensured that those pupils who have low reading ages have one to one sessions and benefit from good opportunities to improve their skills. As a result, nearly all pupils increase their reading ages at a rapid pace. However, there is not the same focus on developing pupils' writing skills. In subjects such as history and religious education, pupils are expected to write in detail, but this is not the case in many other subjects including English, and pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. Staff encourage pupils to improve their skills in speaking and listening and, where there are high expectations of behaviour, pupils listen well to each other and contribute to discussions. This, though, is not consistent across the school and although there are opportunities for pupils to be involved in role-play, these are not always managed well and pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress in developing their communication skills.
4. There is a well resourced ICT suite, but the resources in classrooms are only just being updated and this has prevented staff from making better use of computers in their teaching. This, together with the limited planning to teach the subject, has resulted in pupils not developing their ICT skills to a satisfactory standard.
5. At the time of the last inspection, the school was placed in serious weaknesses because of concerns about the progress pupils were making in several subjects. The school has made

good progress in dealing with these issues and no longer has serious weaknesses. It sets itself realistic targets to enable pupils to do well. It is aware of its own strengths and weaknesses and, as a result, targets such as those in science, are very challenging.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **good**, as is their attendance. Pupils' personal development, including moral, social, spiritual and cultural development, is also **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils like coming to school and, as a result, their attendance is good.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and these, together with the effective behaviour management systems, enable pupils to behave well.
- Pupils have good opportunities to learn about their own and other cultures.

Commentary

6. Pupils have a good attitude to their work and many comment on how much better they like being at Bristol Gateway in comparison to other schools they have attended. Pupils enjoy talking about their work and undertaking practical tasks. There is clear evidence that many have improved their attitudes and behaviour whilst at the school and are keen to do well. There are good opportunities for pupils to work together, as evident when the whole school is in the hall working in tutor groups to complete tasks linked to emotional literacy. On the whole, pupils co-operate well together and help each other in their work. Pupils are encouraged to work independently in lessons and take responsibilities, such as being representatives on the School Council.
7. The good relationships with staff help pupils to develop their confidence and they respond well to the school's rewards system. Staff and pupils work well together in reducing bullying and pupils feel that any reported incidents are dealt with effectively. In discussions, pupils show they have a clear understanding of school rules, expectations for their behaviour and their responsibility towards others. This represents very good improvement since the previous inspection. The behaviour support system is based on pupils learning to make the right choice for themselves and, consequently, it makes a significant contribution to their personal development. Exclusions are used to effectively support the school's behaviour support system. Detailed records of exclusions are kept and this sanction is only used for very serious breaches of the school's behaviour policy or incidents relating to health and safety issues. The school is actively and effectively working to reduce the need for this sanction.

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	27	69	
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	4	18	1
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	4	

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

8. There are good opportunities for pupils to improve their social skills and awareness of moral issues during end of lesson behaviour assessments, assemblies and emotional literacy

sessions. At these times, pupils are asked to consider the consequences of their own and others' actions. An appreciation of their own and other cultures is also successfully fostered in history lessons and during French, Jamaican, Irish, Scottish and Welsh cultural days. Spiritual development is encouraged through religious education lessons, where a number of different faiths are studied. There are also appropriate opportunities for pupils to reflect, for example, on their behaviour and how they can improve.

9. The school has made good progress in improving attendance since the last inspection. Many more pupils now have good levels of attendance including a few with 100% so far this year and the rate overall is better than in the previous year. The school has achieved this, supported by the educational welfare officer, through a more rigorous approach in contacting parents or carers and pupils to talk through difficulties; the school also seeks to give the pupils provision that is relevant to them. The head teacher has a very secure knowledge of the attendance details of every pupil and knows the circumstances surrounding why pupils are away, even if the absence is unauthorised.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%) 2003/4

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	12.7%	School data	4.7%
National data	12.2%	National data	7.7%

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 is **good**. Teaching and learning are good as is the curriculum pupils are offered. The care, support and welfare of pupils is **very good**. Links with parents and the community are **good** as are those with colleges and the community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**. Assessment is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships and planning enable pupils to make very good progress in science and personal, social and health education and citizenship.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge well to provide pupils with a range of relevant experiences.
- Behaviour is managed well and, as a result, pupils have good opportunities to learn.
- Teaching assistants provide good support to teachers and pupils.
- Assessment procedures are being developed to enable teachers to monitor pupils' progress more closely.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 21 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	3	9	7	1	0	0

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

10. Teaching and learning are very good in science and PSHE because planning is effective and teachers are clear about the aims of the lessons. In science, lessons are introduced very effectively so that pupils know what they going to learn and quick questioning enables them to recall previous knowledge. There are high expectations that pupils will work hard in order to complete the work set. This was evident in a very good Year 9 lesson in which pupils had learnt, by the end of the lesson, how to complete and draw a circuit diagram. In PSHE, a very good understanding of the pupils' special needs, together with very good relationships enables teachers to discuss very difficult aspects of pupils' lives, such as problems with alcohol and drugs. Pupils respond very positively because issues are handled very sensitively by staff, who are confident to talk about their own experiences.
11. In many subjects, teachers have a good subject knowledge which is used to make lessons interesting. This is evident in history and geography where teachers talk with confidence about topics such as World War 2 and climate change and are able to answer pupils' questions readily. Staff ensure that pupils use the correct terminology and in a few classes, such as religious education, key words are displayed to help pupils learn and recall relevant vocabulary. Where resources such as overhead projectors are used this supports learning well. However, because classroom computers are unreliable and there are very few interactive whiteboards, ICT is not used as well as it could be to provide a wider range of activities.
12. The majority of teachers are consistent in their use of the school's behaviour management systems and, as a result, behaviour in most lessons is good. Where teachers are confident and well organised, lessons start quickly with brief reminders about expectations and the fast pace of learning keeps pupils on task very well. This was very evident in an excellent Year 9 mathematics lesson where the very high expectations both of behaviour and achievement, together with a very well judged level of challenge ensured that all pupils made excellent progress in their understanding of algebra. In a few cases, poor behaviour is not dealt with effectively. For example, in English the start of lessons is often not well focussed and the pace slows as pupils become more and more disruptive. Activities, although designed to hold pupils' attention, are not always successful because planning does not ensure that pupils are clear about what they will be doing and what they are expected to achieve.
13. There is very good team work between support staff and teachers which ensures that resources and pupils are managed well. Since support staff know pupils well, many are quick to identify where a pupil is struggling or an incident is likely to happen and deal with it before matters get out of hand. This is particularly evident in mathematics where the support assistant is very proactive and uses his very good relationships with pupils to keep them on task and involved in their work. Very occasionally, support staff are not sufficiently quick to spot or deal with a situation that is developing and this leads to pupils becoming very disruptive.
14. Assessment has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. There are appropriate procedures to assess pupils' abilities when they start school and in reading this ensures that their needs are quickly identified and supported. Teachers record the levels that pupils reach and the information is used to create targets for pupils and monitor their progress. However, this is inconsistent and is better in subjects, such as science, than in others. The marking of pupils' work is variable and is good in mathematics, science, religious education and PSHE where guidance is given as to how pupils might improve. In other subjects, such as English, pupils are not given clear guidance about how well they have done or what they could do better. As yet, assessment information is not being collated to give a clearer picture of overall trends and comparisons in the academic achievement of different groups of pupils.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum has been developed well since the last inspection and now meets statutory requirements.
- The school provides very good opportunities for learning outside the school day.
- Pupils are provided with a very good PSHE and work related programmes.
- The accommodation is poor and limits the activities pupils can undertake.

Commentary

15. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the school now provides a curriculum that meets the needs of pupils well. This is particularly evident in the effective links with a local college which are being used very well to enable pupils to attend vocational courses such as bricklaying whilst in Years 8 and 9. The curriculum has also been enhanced by the introduction of ASDAN accredited courses which provide good opportunities for pupils to gain accreditation. The very good opportunities for pupils to take GCSE science in Year 9 reflects the school's high expectations of what pupils can achieve. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunity to enjoy the range of curricular opportunities that are available and appropriate to their needs and interests. In most subjects, there are good plans in place for what pupils will learn, but, as yet, subject leaders do not plan to ensure that opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are planned for in their subjects. There are appropriate plans in place to develop the curriculum still further and ensure a consistent approach in all subjects through the appointment of a curriculum co-ordinator.
16. Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) is given suitable emphasis in all years and the programme meets pupils' needs very well. Emotional literacy sessions contribute very well to the curriculum for personal development. As a result of careful evaluation of the need to provide for citizenship, good provision has been made overall with very good links with organisations such as the "Prison, me? No way! Trust" which contribute significantly to the very good citizenship curriculum. Sex, relationships and drug education are dealt with well and handled sensitively.
17. The school organises a very good range of educational visits to several places of local and national interest, including local museums and art galleries. There are very good opportunities for pupils to experience residential visits abroad through the trips to France. Pupils are able to participate in a variety of sporting and creative activities, for example, sailing and visits to the climbing centre. A breakfast club offers a good preparation for many pupils before they start their lessons for the day.
18. Although the school site is clean and well maintained, there are serious shortcomings in the building which were recognized at the time of the previous inspection. Some improvements have been made since then, however, there are well advanced plans for the school to move to more appropriate accommodation in the near future. The school makes good use of the sports hall at the school to which they are moving and this enhances the physical education provision. There is very limited outdoor space and pupils often remain in doors all day. Specialist accommodation for subjects such as art and music are poor. The quality of resources is good overall with sufficient numbers of computers, although not all software has been loaded onto them. There is only one interactive whiteboard at the moment and this restricts the use that can be made of ICT, although some good use is made of video editing in English.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare and support and guidance of pupils is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good awareness of health and safety requirements.
- Pupils are confident when seeking advice from staff and the opinions of pupils are taken into account in planning and development.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The school values pupils views' and listens to their ideas and concerns.

Commentary

19. The health and safety procedures in the school have improved considerably from the previous inspection. Much work has been done by the school to ensure that systems are in place for the safety of the premises and action is promptly taken to address any concerns. These include improving arrangements for risk assessments which are now conducted within school and for all journeys, and the procedures for supporting such visits are all in place. Child protection issues are dealt with very well and procedures are correctly followed. There are efficient recording systems to ensure any accidents are properly monitored and parents informed as appropriate. Parents are very pleased with the levels of care their children receive and pupils confirm they feel safe and well looked after.
20. The school places a high priority on pupils' personal development needs. Pupils are set appropriate social and behaviour targets to enable them to better cope with, or respond to, situations. Effective monitoring ensures that any success pupils have in meeting their targets is acknowledged and new, more challenging targets are set as soon as possible. This is reinforced through the PAW (punctuality, attitudes, work) system which pupils understand and value. The daily end of day meetings for staff enable everyone to discuss all pupils and provides senior staff with an effective picture of how pupils' are progressing, particularly in terms of their behaviour. The monitoring and support for pupils with additional special needs is very good.
21. The support provided for pupils to improve academically is good. Targets in individual education plans are relevant and are used to address both learning and behavioural difficulties well. Progress against targets is checked regularly and pupils' progress is assessed effectively through the use of appropriate and relevant records and meetings with pupils. At times, the quality of learning targets varies and they are not always as clear and specific as behaviour targets. The school has appropriate plans in place to improve assessment which will ensure that learning targets will be better focused.
22. Careers education and work experience are well organised. In partnership with the Connexions Service, the school starts to provide older pupils with good guidance about the options available to them when they move school. An effective careers education programme, taster courses at local colleges and staff involvement all combine to give pupils as much information as possible. Induction arrangements for pupils new to the school are very good so that they settle in quickly and smoothly. The school has had good success in integrating pupils back into a mainstream education setting and so pupils who could benefit from curriculum opportunities, such as GCSE courses in specific subjects, are able to do so.
23. The school involves pupils well in school life. They are consulted at review time and have an input to any targets they have to achieve. The school council considers many issues about the life of the school and the school does act on some of its suggestions, for example, in relation to the rewards for achieving behaviour targets.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents find the school approachable and supportive and have established good relationships with staff.
- Reports to parents do not always contain sufficient detail about academic progress.
- Links with colleges and the community are used well to support pupils' learning.

Commentary

24. Responses by parents to the inspection questionnaire were very positive and were confirmed by the small number of parents at the parents' meeting. Parents are particularly pleased that their children like school, that communication between home and school is good and they can contact the school at any time. This was very well illustrated during the inspection when parents frequently came into school to talk to staff and receive help and support. Parents commented on the fact that they were involved in supporting their children because the school always talked to them about strategies to try and improve the behaviour of their child. The only concern raised by parents relates to behaviour, but the inspection team judged that behaviour is good overall.
25. The school rightly sees the relationship it develops with the parents and carers as crucial to the success of their work with the pupils. It goes out of its way to build these relationships through visits to pupils' homes and its open door policy. Parents thus find the school as a place which understands their children well and it is approachable, welcoming and non-confrontational. Relationships with most parents are very good and help the school to provide the pupils with a united approach. Very good contact is maintained over the telephone and written information is satisfactory. Regular written reports have a good format, but the information is variable between subjects and often gives insufficient detail of what a pupil knows and can do; this was also commented on in the previous report.
26. The school has a good link with a local college which helps it provide pupils in Years 8 and 9 with practical work related experiences. The school has made a sensible change recently in offering these opportunities to pupils who want to take them rather than all Year 9 pupils taking part. This provision has a positive effect on pupils; one student with poor attendance nearly always attends on college days and would like more of such opportunities. Links with other schools are good and have enabled twelve pupils to return full time to mainstream education. The school offers much appreciated outreach support and advice to mainstream schools in a variety of different ways.
27. Links with the community are good and provide the pupils with an increased breadth of experiences. Relationships and living as part of a community are promoted well through residential experiences and activities such as sailing which develop co-operative working. The curriculum is enhanced through visitors such as an animal expert from Zoolab, which gave Year 9 pupils first hand experience of spiders and snakes.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **good**, as is governance.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The head teacher has a very clear vision of how the school can be successful and is committed to its development.
- Responsibilities within the senior management team are allocated effectively and this ensures that tasks are carried out well.
- There is a comprehensive school development plan, but links between this and the school's budget are not always clear.
- Governors are very supportive of the school and have contributed effectively to its improvement.

Commentary

28. The headteacher has shown determination to deal successfully with the previous inspection's key issues and continuing to develop all aspects of the school's provision. He is well respected by governors and his colleagues and his leadership style has ensured good relationships amongst both new and established staff. There is a very inclusive family atmosphere in the school and most pupils feel they are trusted, listened to and treated fairly. The headteacher is well supported by his deputy and other key staff, who all carry out their roles and responsibilities well and play an important part in the development of the school.
29. The day-to-day management of the school is good. The head teacher meets frequently with different groups of staff, providing opportunities for him to monitor developments and encourage discussion. In this way, staff are becoming more involved in making decisions about how the school is run and in the establishment of priorities for development. All staff meet at the end of the school day to discuss any issues that have arisen and identify any pupil support required for the forthcoming day. Staff carry out their subject responsibilities well and know the strengths and weaknesses of their subjects well. However, planning for improvements is inconsistent and not all subjects have development plans. Arrangements for performance management of staff are in place and good training opportunities have been provided for all staff. However, induction arrangements for new staff are in place, although they are not yet formalised and, as a result, new staff are not always as well informed about the school's systems as they should be.
30. Planning for future developments has been appropriately focused on addressing the key issues for improvement identified during the previous inspection in 2003. However, not all aspects of the plan are costed and there is not sufficient detail for development of subjects. The school makes good use of the data it has on pupils' achievements to consider how it can improve and move forward. Plans are also in place to extend provision at the school to include Key Stage 4 pupils and for moving the school to a far more appropriate site.
31. The governing body is very supportive and has been fully involved in developing the school. Good progress has been made in governors' awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The chairperson spends a good deal of time in the school and displays very good understanding of pupils' individual needs. Governing body committees meet regularly to discuss plans for improvements and future developments. However, they recognise the need to formalise their monitoring role, for example, by ensuring that they approve all school policies.
32. The school's financial affairs are managed well. Detailed spreadsheets for governors are produced which show clearly where expenditure occurs and the principles of best value are applied. The governing body is fully involved in allocating finance, monitoring spending patterns and evaluating spending decisions for cost-effectiveness.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	851,482
Total expenditure	864626
Expenditure per pupil	21,616

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	140,910
Balance carried forward to the next	127,766*

*The large carry forward figure has been identified to support the move to the new site and the inclusion of Year 10 and 11 pupils.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Three lessons were seen in English. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work in all year groups and held discussions with pupils about their work. No lessons were seen in French and, therefore, no judgement can be made on provision. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work.

FRENCH

33. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that they are developing a good vocabulary in a range of areas, including knowing numbers up to 100 and various objects in the class. There are high expectations that pupils will write in French, for example, they write the full date at the top of their work. By Year 9, pupils write in sentences such as "J'ai une soeur", they show a knowledge of the months of the year in French, can do brief descriptions of their town and know the points of the compass in French. The teacher supports their understanding of French well by writing her comments about their work in French.

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress in their reading because of the good systems that have been established.
- Teachers do not give pupils sufficient encouragement to develop their skills in writing.
- A wide range of strategies are used to try to hold pupils' attention.
- There is an appropriate understanding of strengths and weaknesses in the subject and this has ensured that standards have remained similar to the previous inspection.

Commentary

34. Most pupils arrive at the school with low levels of ability in communication, reading and writing, but, by the time they leave, they have made satisfactory progress. The best progress is in reading because pupils are well supported to improve their skills. When pupils start school their skills in reading and spelling are assessed to check what they can and cannot do. They benefit from one to one work and, as a result, many improve their reading age at a fast rate. In English lessons, pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of different texts and have read simplified versions of Jekyll and Hyde and Frankenstein as well as studying the plot of Macbeth. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their communication skills. The use of role play helps them develop an understanding of talking to different audiences. In lessons, pupils' ability to listen and respond appropriately is very variable. When interested, they listen well and can be very attentive, however, if they are not involved, their attention is very limited and their language is inappropriate.
35. Pupils have little confidence in their writing ability and there is insufficient support for them to improve their skills. There are few opportunities for pupils to write at length, although on occasions, they have written detailed stories. Many of these are word processed and displayed well to promote other pupils' interest. The overuse of worksheets, many of which are not age appropriate, reduces pupils' opportunities to improve. By Year 9, more able pupils produce detailed work on, for example, The Day of Triffids and recount the story well. Spelling skills have clearly improved and there is a good understanding of grammar. However, less

able pupils often do not complete work, but will attempt imaginative stories, although these lack punctuation and spelling is weak.

36. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers work hard to provide imaginative tasks that hold pupils' attention and develop their skills. Several such as making a film using clay figures to tell the story of "The Day of the Triffids", are very good, as was a project based on "If I was Prime Minister ...". Role play is used a lot to encourage pupils to express their ideas and develop an understanding of books or films such as re-enacting the arrest of Bentley for shooting a policeman and the ensuing court scene. However, the pace of these activities slows because pupils' behaviour is not managed well and there are constant interruptions. ICT is used well, such as in word processing and editing films, and where pupils' imagination is captured, for example, in film-making where the theme is based on bullying. Pupils work hard, listen to each other and co-operate well with staff. Often, the themes for these activities are limited and many are based around horror, such as "School zombies", and opportunities are missed to give pupils a wider breadth of experiences.
37. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Much work has gone into developing the resources and the focus on improving pupils' reading has been effective. There is an appropriate recognition of the strengths and weaknesses within the subject. However, assessment of pupils' progress, although good for reading, is not well developed and the curriculum does not provide pupils with a wide enough range of experiences in reading and writing.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

38. Although there is no whole school approach to developing pupils' literacy skills, these are promoted satisfactorily. This is evident in several subjects such as history and religious education where there are high expectations that pupils will contribute to discussions and write in detail. However, because of the overuse of worksheets in a number of subjects, pupils lack opportunities to improve their writing skills.

MATHEMATICS

Three lessons were seen in mathematics. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work in all year groups and held discussions with pupils about their work.

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in a good range of mathematical aspects.
- Teaching is well organised and pupils' behaviour is managed well.
- The new subject co-ordinator has made good progress in developing the subject.

Commentary

39. Pupils have good opportunities to study all strands of the mathematics curriculum, such as data handling and algebra. Younger pupils in Year 7 undertake regular work on improving their skills in multiplication. They learn to handle data well in a project examining natural disasters. Pupils also show a good understanding of factors, fractions and decimals and more able pupils are working at similar levels to their mainstream peers. By the end of Year 9, many pupils are recognising and calculating angles and can complete linear equations.
40. Teaching and learning are good. Effective lesson planning together with very effective team work between teachers and support staff ensures that pupils achieve what the teacher wants them to learn. This was very evident in a Year 7 lesson when the support assistant assists teaching by providing very good explanations and helped to enable pupils to work out the value of 'n' in a code-breaking exercise in algebra. In an excellent Year 9 lesson, pupils are

challenged to participate at every stage of the lesson. The work is very well matched to the ability of the pupils and the teacher regularly adapts the tasks so that pupils remain focussed throughout the lesson. In all lessons, there are high expectations that pupils will participate in a meaningful manner because the teacher checks that pupils are clear about what is expected of their behaviour through a thorough coverage of the PAW marks. This leads to very good attitudes and relationships between all of the people in the classroom.

41. The new subject co-ordinator leads the subject well and this has ensured that the subject has improved well since the previous inspection. She is enthusiastic and this is leading to an innovative approach to developing the curriculum. This, although still being introduced, helps to motivate the pupils so that they find mathematics interesting. However, at present, there is insufficient monitoring of the subject through a scrutiny of pupils' work or identification of strengths and weaknesses based on an analysis of pupils' achievement. As a result of the limited ICT resources, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use ICT for research and handling mathematics throughout the subject. The co-ordinator has recognised that there is an over-use of worksheets.

Mathematics across the Curriculum

42. Overall, there is satisfactory use of mathematics in most subjects of the curriculum, for example with the use of co-ordinates in geography and timelines in history. There is good use of mathematics in science and design technology, involving measurement and calculation.

SCIENCE

Three lessons were seen in science. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work in all year groups and held discussions with pupils and staff.

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils achieve very well in the various elements of science.
- The teacher plans a very good range of practical activities which are very successful in motivating the pupils.
- Assessment procedures are very good and the curriculum is very well planned.
- Greater use could be made of computers to aid pupils' learning and progress.

Commentary

43. Pupils enjoy science. By the time they leave in Year 9, pupils have made very good progress in their skills with several achieving passes in GCSE. They gain a very good understanding of how to undertake experiments and evaluate the work they have done. Pupils' end of unit tests show that they know how to measure friction and how forces work and explain what is meant by refraction and the effect of sound waves. Pupils are sensible when carrying out experiments, for example, when testing chemical reactions and respond well to the responsibility they are given.
44. Teaching and learning are very good. The teacher uses his subject knowledge very well to enable pupils to have a wide range of practical investigations. Planning is very detailed, catering for individual needs, and is linked to well-prepared experiments. Explanations in lessons are clear and scientific terms are used appropriately in context. The teacher is very well supported by an experienced and efficient teaching assistant who also acts as the science technician. They use the very good relationships they have with pupils to encourage them to work hard and achieve their full potential.
45. Leadership and management of the subject is very good. There is a very good programme of work carefully linked to the National Curriculum. Assessment systems are very well used to track attainment and progress and address weak areas. However, pupils do not have enough

planned opportunities to use computers to help them to learn in science lessons. Science resources are good and carefully stored and maintained. The very high standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

One session was seen and inspectors also noted where they observed information and communication technology used during lessons in other subjects.

Provision in ICT is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is no long term planning in place to support teaching and learning.
- The temporary subject co-ordinator is working hard to improve provision for the subject.
- The use of ICT in other subject areas is underdeveloped.

Commentary

46. Pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching in ICT are unsatisfactory across all year groups. This represents a decline since the previous inspection when provision was judged to be satisfactory. There are no plans in place for what pupils should learn and there are no systematic records of ongoing assessments. The limited evidence shows that Year 7 pupils have researched Logos on the internet and Year 8 pupils can ungroup and re-colour examples of clip art. There are many examples on display of word processed work such as the election leaflets that Year 9 pupils completed for an English project which are well presented.
47. The development of this subject has been held back by staffing difficulties. The school is currently addressing this by accessing training for the currently unqualified co-coordinator who has only been in charge of the subject for a few months. He is, however, a qualified technician and has ensured that resources are maintained well. The school is aware of the deficiencies in the subject and has now developed resources in the ICT suite very well. It is also in the process of updating the computers and software in classrooms.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

48. The use of information and communication technology to support the work of other subjects is not co-coordinated. There are a few good examples of where it is used, such as in the use of the Internet to research information for projects and its use during film making in English. However, the use of ICT to support learning is not always identified in all subjects.

HUMANITIES

Religious Education

Two lessons were seen in each of the following - religious education, history and geography. Discussions were held with the subject leaders and pupils' work was scrutinised.

Provision is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good curriculum enables pupils to develop a good understanding of different religions.
- There are high expectations of pupils and how they should behave.
- The subject has been developed very well since the last inspection.

Commentary

49. Pupils make good progress in religious education. By Year 9, they have studied a number of different religions and show an understanding of Islam and Judaism. Through their work on the life of Gandhi pupils are able to write about the caste system and explain what is meant by "Nirvana". Pupils have a good knowledge of parables from the Bible, for example, they remember the events of the story of the "The Good Samaritan". There are good opportunities for them to link events to real people such as the problems faced by the Jews through the life of Anne Frank.
50. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and organised and the very good management of behaviour ensures that pupils work hard throughout lessons. Tasks are matched well to pupils' ability to ensure that they make progress and there is a good work ethos in lessons. The high expectations of pupils ensures that they have good opportunities to write in detail and, because of the very good knowledge of the pupils, appropriate support is put in place for those that need it. Relationships are very good and humour is used very well to keep pupils on task. Marking of pupils' work is effective in giving encouragement and helping pupils to improve.
51. Good leadership and management have ensured that the subject is now taught on a regular basis and is well resourced. The subject leader has made good use of the advisory staff and is putting in place assessment criteria which will enable close monitoring of pupils' progress. There is a good focus on how the subject is to be developed further.

Geography and history

Provision in geography and history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High expectations ensure that pupils learn well.
- Teachers use their subject knowledge well to make lessons interesting.
- Leadership has ensured that there have been good improvements since the last inspection.

Commentary

52. Pupils show considerable interest in both history and geography. For example, Year 9 pupils are keen to ask about World War 2 and the bombs that were used. They show good recall of the facts about the war, such as, knowing the dates when it started. They have studied various aspects of English history and clearly enjoy the practical aspects of the subject. In a good year 8 lesson, pupils show a good understanding of how Cromwell dealt with the Levellers. In geography, pupils have looked at the different types of settlements, including hamlets and towns and considered how the population is distributed. They have a good understanding of how the weather is affected by the ocean and how the weather gets colder and conditions change as you climb higher up a mountain. More able pupils are able to recall the name of the Himalayas as a stretch of mountains in Asia.
53. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers use their subject knowledge well, particularly in history to answer pupils' questions with confidence and provide activities that hold their attention. For example, in history, the teacher is able to give good examples and comparisons so that pupils understand the actual size of the different bombs dropped on Britain. Resources are used well so that pupils have photographs and opportunities to act out scenes in history. The making of historical artefacts also supports pupils' learning well. At times, behaviour is not always managed well, but where there is good teaching support pupils respond well and are very attentive. There are high expectations of what pupils can do, for example, in a Year 8 lesson, more able pupils work quickly through the worksheets and use data to get the answers to questions. At times, there is an overuse of worksheets which reduces pupils' opportunities to develop their writing skills.

54. The subjects are led well. A new co-ordinator for geography is in place and is keen to develop the subject. Although teachers are clear about how they want to develop their subjects, plans to carry these out have not been updated recently. In both subjects, resources have been developed well and are used effectively.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

No overall judgement can be made as no full lessons were observed. Discussions were held with staff and pupils.

55. Displays of pupils' work show that they have developed an appropriate range of practical skills in a traditional workshop environment. They have made a range of items such as clock faces and containers as well as a boat that they have used for sailing. Pupils gain good practical skills in using a range of hand-held tools and fixed power equipment.
56. Pupils use the food technology area to prepare, cook and consume a good range of foods, including ethnic foods from Africa and Europe. They learn to move safely in the kitchen area, organising their tools and ingredients. Food technology lessons make an important contribution to encouraging pupils to become independent because there is a good focus on developing their practical skills and encouraging them to think about healthy eating. They learn to share and take turns and to work both independently and as part of a group.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and Design

No overall judgement can be made in art and design or in physical education as no lessons were observed. Discussions were held with staff and pupils.

57. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils have been exploring several painting styles, including Egyptian hieroglyphs. There are also examples of 3D papier-mâché sculptures and mask making. Sketchbooks show research of work based on that of Matisse and current work based on graffiti. However, the curriculum is limited and does not sufficiently challenge pupils to develop skills. Resources for the subject, including several very good reference books, are adequate for the work undertaken, although the current teacher has needed to provide some of his own resources in order to complete the work. The accommodation is small, pupils' work cannot be put out in display and there is limited space for teaching.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

58. Although the facilities for physical education on the current school site are poor, teachers use off site facilities to provide meaningful and productive experiences in a wide range of physical activities. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to take part in sports events with other special schools, such as football matches. Pupils also benefit considerably from the outdoor activities on offer during their residential educational visits.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE) AND CITIZENSHIP

Five lessons were seen in personal, social and health education and citizenship. Pupils' work was scrutinised and discussions held with staff.

Provision in pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A broad and appropriate curriculum of high quality ensures that pupils achieve well.

- Very good relationships and skilled teaching support pupils personal development very well.
- Very strong links with community resources support learning.
- There are very good planned opportunities for pupils to develop their ability to cope in challenging situations.
- The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and very keen to develop the subject.

Commentary

59. Pupils achieve very well in PSHE and citizenship. They study a range of topics that are based on aspects meaningful to all pupils. For instance, a project using poetry relating to bullying. This leads to a very high quality publication of the poems. A great deal of importance is placed on pupils' developing self-awareness and then progressing to an understanding of their immediate world, the wider world and their relationship to the others who share it. The very good use of visits and visitors is paramount in ensuring pupils' have a good understanding of issues such as crime and punishment so that, by Year 9, pupils have made very good progress in recognising anti-social or criminal behaviour. This is supported very well by the partnership work with the "Prison, me? No way! Trust" in which prison officers deliver, with school staff, a nationally recognised programme.
60. There is a very appropriate emphasis in the PSHE programme on supporting pupils develop their skills in coping with different situations (emotional literacy) which is augmented very well by daily sessions to examine their feelings and how they need to deal with them. Pupils have opportunities to work independently as well as collaboratively with others in pairs or small groups. Therefore, their social competence and confidence improve as they move through the school. Pupils learn about taking turns and understand aspects of sex education, relationships and drug awareness. The development of good relationships and respecting the differences between people is a strong feature of the achievement of all pupils. Careers education and guidance is well supported through links with the school's Connexions personal adviser.
61. Teaching and learning in the subject is very good. The member of the support staff who leads and teaches most of the subject is highly motivated. The lessons are very well planned and provide challenging yet interesting content. For example, in a whole school assembly she led an emotional literacy session in which both pupils and staff had to investigate unknown objects in boxes and reveal their emotions before, during and after the experience. The response from pupils was outstanding – they were very keen to participate and listened to each other and staff very well. Marking of pupils' work is very good and provides pupils with guidance as to how they might improve.
62. The subject is very well led and managed well, and this is evident in the quality and diversity of the curriculum. Delivery of the programmes is monitored and this leads to the identification of areas that need attention. The co-ordinator is well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the subjects and is developing systems for assessment which will allow for analysis of where pupils are succeeding or otherwise.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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