

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **PATCHAM HOUSE SPECIAL SCHOOL**

Brighton

LEA area: Brighton and Hove

Unique reference number: 114679

Headteacher: Ms Sylvia Lamb

Lead inspector: Dr D Alan Dobbins

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> November 2004

Inspection number: 268611

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school: Special  
School category: Community special  
Age range of pupils: 5 -17  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 55

School address: 7 Old London Road  
Patcham  
Brighton

Postcode: BN1 8XR

Telephone number: (01273) 551 028  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of Mrs Evaline Banfield  
governors:

Date of previous June 1999  
inspection:

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Patcham House School is part of the provision of the Brighton and Hove Local Education Authority for pupils from five to 17 years with physical disabilities and medical conditions and, increasingly, autism, emotional and behavioural difficulties and physical and neurological impairments, although at this time the youngest pupil is seven years of age. The agreed number of places is 70. Fifty-five pupils currently attend, 42 boys and 12 girls. Most pupils are White-British. No one is learning English as an additional language and there are no traveller children. Twelve pupils take some of their lessons in mainstream schools or colleges and the school helps support 19 children in mainstream schools through its provision for outreach. Because of their learning difficulties and, for some, their irregular attendance at their previous schools, the attainment of many pupils on entry is below that expected for their age. All pupils have statements of special educational need. The school gained the achievement award in 2001, 2002 and 2003, and Beacon status was renewed in 2003 and the Activemark and Healthy Schools awards gained in 2004. The last inspection was in June 1999.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
27424	Dr D Alan Dobbins	Lead inspector	Mathematics Music Physical education
9710	Rosemary Burgess	Lay inspector	
12261	Kate Robertson	Team inspector	English Art and design Geography History Modern foreign language
20622	Ann Sydney	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Religious education

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Patcham House is a very good school.** The excellent leadership and management of the headteacher enable staff and pupils to do their best. Pupils make very good progress in their learning over a wide-ranging and relevant curriculum. They are being prepared very well for life after school because of very good teaching and excellent advice. The school provides very good value for money.

### THE SCHOOL'S MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES ARE:

- The very good levels pupils achieve in most of the subjects.
- The excellent way the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher and all staff fully support the headteacher and the work of the school.
- The very good attitude pupils have to their learning and their commitment to doing their best.
- The very good way in which pupils become mature and responsible.
- The teachers with specialist training and very good subject knowledge who teach most lessons and are given excellent support by skilled and committed teaching assistants.
- The very good curriculum that includes many extra-curricular opportunities, and makes very good use of local places and residential visits to extend pupils' learning.
- The very wide range of relevant awards through which pupils in Year 11 demonstrate the extent of their learning.

**Very good improvement** has been made since the last inspection. All the key issues identified then have been addressed. There is no provision for nursery-aged pupils. The accommodation is much better. The provision for promoting spiritual development is very good. Daily, pupils take part in an act of collective worship and the locally agreed syllabus makes a considerable contribution to the schemes of work for religious education. Information to parents meets statutory requirements and the policy document for child protection reflects the daily practice. There have been other improvements also. Leadership and management are better, as are teaching and learning. Each contributes to the levels achieved by pupils in most of the subjects being better than they were at the last inspection.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	In relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	Personal and social education
Year 6	Very good	Very good
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.*

**Overall, pupils' achievement is very good.** This applies to all pupils over all years, irrespective of the cause or level of their special educational needs. More pupils in Year 11 gain pass and better grades on more subjects of the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) than is the case for most comparable schools. In their learning, pupils

gain a very good start over the primary years and build on this very well as they move through the school. The standards achieved in French are excellent. They are very good in English, science, art and design, design and technology, physical education and personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). They are good in mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), geography, history, music and religious education. English media has been included as an examination subject for pupils in Year 10 and 11 for the first time this year. To date, pupils are achieving very good standards. They make very good progress in becoming mature and responsible and in developing their personal and social skills. They are being prepared very well for life after school, which for most means continuing their education at a mainstream college.

**Pupils make very good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.** They quickly learn that school is a place where they are expected to work hard to do their best. In most lessons, they achieve this because of their very good attitudes to learning and their good levels of behaviour. Attendance is good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is very good. The quality of teaching is very good** and this results in very good quality learning. Teachers with specialist knowledge of the subject teach most lessons. They set very high standards for behaviour and learning. The range of pupils' capabilities and their learning needs in any lesson is considerable, greater than at the time of the last inspection. Teachers deal with this challenge very well. They plan very well to ensure that all pupils are fully involved in learning over the duration of lessons. Teaching assistants are skilled and have been very well trained, especially in implementing the recommendations of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and the Key Stage 3 strategy. Some have specialist training, for example, in music and swimming. They are deployed very well by their teachers and make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning. Especially in English, but in other subjects also, homework is making a better contribution to learning than is the case in many other comparable schools. **The curriculum is very good.** It is planned and organised very well and regularly checked. It is supported very well by many lunchtime clubs and by regular visits to sites of local interest to reinforce learning. For example, pupils gain a better experience of physical education by visiting places such as Twickenham to watch rugby and the Eastbourne Tournament to watch tennis, and by taking part in competitions with other schools. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are able to demonstrate the extent of their learning by taking a wide range of nationally accredited awards. In all years, they are cared for very well. They receive excellent advice and guidance in dealing with issues that are important to them and, from Year 9 onward, very good guidance on the opportunities available on leaving school. **The partnership with parents and carers is very good.** Many make a considerable contribution to the progress their children make by diligently overseeing their homework and by following the same strategies at home that staff use in helping pupils achieve the targets in their individual education plans. **The links with the community are very good.** The outreach programme provides excellent support for staff in mainstream schools who teach pupils with a wide range of medical conditions.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are excellent.** The headteacher gains excellent support from the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher and all staff. She sets the highest

of standards and is helping staff achieve the same standards by furthering their skills, experience and competencies through the very good procedures for professional development. **The procedures for checking all the work of the school are excellent** and are used very well in the continuing development of the provision. **Governance is very good.** Statutory requirements are met. Finances are managed very well. Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and provide very good support to the headteacher. At this time, they and the headteacher do not have a clear vision for the future of the school, which will continue to be uncertain until the recommendations are made known of the local education authority's on-going review of provision for pupils with special educational needs.

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

**The views of parents are very good.** Parents are very appreciative of the work of the school. Pupils say they like school very much. They are pleased to be at the school and report that they no longer experience the difficulties and anxieties they did at their previous schools. They know they benefit from school because they are happy and realise how well they are doing in their learning and in meeting the targets in their individual education plans.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**The most important thing to do to continue to improve** is to keep checking the work of the school and carry on using this information to identify priorities for the improvement plan. In line with national expectations, governors should ensure that they are able to take a full role in this process.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in subjects and courses**

The range of pupils' attainment is considerable. Many enter the school doing less well than others of equivalent age, while a minority do better in some subjects. When their special educational needs are taken into account pupils achieve very well and make very good progress in many of the subjects. More pupils gain better grades over a greater number of subjects on the General Certificate of Education (GCSE) than do those in most other special schools.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good progress pupils make in their personal and social development helps make them become very effective learners.
- The standards pupils achieve have improved since the last inspection and the value added analysis of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) show that pupils learn more effectively than do those in most other schools.
- The very good range of nationally accredited awards pupils take in Year 11 to demonstrate the extent of their learning.
- All pupils make equivalent progress regardless of their gender or the cause or complexity of their special educational needs.

#### **Commentary**

1. Many pupils join the school after having difficulties in dealing with the routines and expectations of their mainstream schools. Some chose not to attend at all and many attended irregularly. Increasingly, pupils are entering with issues to do with anxiety and with their emotional development. Most have a poor self-image and lack in self-confidence. Some are frustrated and a small number are angry. They make very good progress in developing their personal and social skills and in becoming increasingly mature and responsible. Work in the lessons on personal, social, health and citizenship education is supported very well throughout the day. The tutorial sessions at the start of the day and at break and lunch times help establish and maintain very good relationships between staff and pupils. Through encouragement, advice and excellent support and guidance, staff are very effective in helping pupils become more self-assured and confident. Over the years at school, pupils gain a much better understanding of their emotions, learn to cope very well with many different social situations and achieve much greater control of their behaviour. As a consequence, they become better at learning and this helps them prepare very well for the demands of the next stage of their education or the world of work.
2. At the last inspection, pupils achieved well in most of the subjects, and very well in a small number of subjects. Now they achieve excellently in French and, over all the years, very well in most subjects, and well in the others. This represents very good improvement, especially given the changing learning needs of pupils since the last inspection. The very good standards pupils achieve, overall, are testament to the success of staff in meeting this challenge. During the primary years, pupils gain a

very good start. They build very well on this between Years 7 to 9 and in Years 10 and 11 and pupils are prepared very well for examination with a wider range of nationally accredited awards than is usually available to pupils in other special schools. The Department for Education and Skills' 'value added' analysis for the last year shows that pupils are very effective learners, more so than pupils in most mainstream schools. The table shows how well they are doing in each of the subjects.

## STANDARDS ACHIEVED IN THE SUBJECTS\*

Subject	Standards achieved		Subject	Standards achieved
English	Very good		French	Excellent
Mathematics	Good		Geography	Good
Science	Very good		History	Good
ICT	Good		Music	Good
PSHE	Very good		Physical education	Very good
Art and design	Very good		Religious education	Good
Design and technology	Very good		**English media	Very good

\* For each subject the standards achieved are the same over all the years.

\*\* Taken for the first time this year by pupils in Years 10 and 11.

- All pupils leave school with relevant nationally accredited awards that reflect their capability in the subjects. These reflect the quality of their learning over their time at school and are a good statement of their capabilities for admission officers of local colleges and prospective employers. More pupils leave with more GCSE passes over a greater number of subjects than is the case for most special schools. Those who are not entered for the GCSE examination take the Entry Level examination, Key Skills or the National Skills Profile. The range of awards that pupils can take is broader than is the case in most special schools, is greater than at the time of the last inspection and matches well with the increased range of capabilities shown by the current pupils. Pupils do well on work-related learning courses and on a range of college link courses. These, and the work experience pupils gain within the locality, help prepare them very well for life after school, which for most pupils usually means enrolment at a Sixth Form college.
- There are a number of contributors to the very good standards pupils achieve. They quickly learn that staff expect them to work hard at their learning and in most lessons they do. More lessons are taught by teachers with specialist knowledge than is the case in most comparable schools. This is because of the deliberate policy of employing some teachers part-time to extend the range of specialist skills and knowledge of staff. These are used very effectively in planning lessons that are made up of tasks that match the learning needs of all pupils. In this way, all pupils make equivalent progress against their targets for learning. All aspects to do with teaching and learning are monitored very well. Classroom observations and the analysis of pupils' work and of teachers planning all contribute to increasing the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Also, the on-going programme of training for teachers and teaching assistants keeps them abreast of current thinking and helps them meet the changing needs of pupils. Teaching and learning are aided by the implementation of the recommendations of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and the Key Stage 3 strategy, especially in English. The homework programme supported by lunchtime clubs in some of the subjects also contributes to the very good progress pupils are making. But the most important contributor to pupils' progress is the work of the teaching assistants. As a group, they are highly trained and are deployed very effectively in most of the lessons. Their contribution to the quality of teaching and learning is considerable. Their work is of primary importance in ensuring that all pupils make very good progress in most of the subjects, irrespective of their gender or the complexity of their special educational needs.

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

Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are very good. Their personal and social development is very good. Attendance is good and has improved since the last inspection. Overall, the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The ethos for achievement motivates pupils to learn and to take part in all the school's activities.
- The very good attitude pupils have to their learning and their very good behaviour in and outside of lessons.
- The good provision for promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The excellent improvement in attendance.

## **Commentary**

5. The ethos for achievement is very visible and is underpinned by strong pastoral care that promotes very good relationships that help foster personal and social development very well. This is a strength of the school and enables pupils to attend to their learning very well. Pupils feel safe and secure. They are given clear expectations for their behaviour and respond very well. They show great enthusiasm for learning and for being involved in all the activities, including lunchtime and after-school clubs, out-of-school trips and visits abroad.
6. In almost all lessons, pupils' attitude to learning is very good. This is especially so for pupils in Years 10 and 11, who make a great effort to do as well as they can in preparing for their examinations. Behaviour in lessons is very good, as it is around the school. The strategies for improving behaviour are very good and are well understood and accepted by pupils. When pupils become over-excited or disruptive and behave inappropriately, they accept the consequences very well. Those who feel unable to cope at certain times, or who cannot co-operate in a lesson because they are troubled, take time out in a quiet room and do not disrupt the learning of others. Incidents of bullying are rare and are dealt with quickly and effectively. There is a no-blame approach, which involves all concerned in helping sort out the issues leading to bullying. Tutorial sessions and lessons in PSHCE enable pupils to understand the need to consider others and the consequences of bullying on their lives. For example, in one lesson pupils showed a good understanding of how bullying can lead to low self-esteem and, in extreme cases, to suicide.
7. The provision for developing spiritual awareness is much better than was the case at the last inspection. Spiritual development and moral, social and cultural education are very carefully planned. Pupils are afforded many opportunities to reflect upon their place in the school and local community, as well as in the wider world. In assemblies, for example, they show empathy with the sufferings of others. Over the inspection, which was during Remembrance Week, they gained an understanding of the horror of war from discussing and reflecting upon the effect of war on individuals, families and communities. Also, in an English lesson, Year 10 pupils showed excellent insight in a discussion of war poetry. Pupils of all ages understand the principles of right and wrong and know when their actions, or others' actions, are unacceptable. As pupils move through the school, they become increasingly mature and learn to take greater responsibility and to co-operate with others, for example, in small groups. They appreciate the many opportunities provided to learn about different styles of music and art, and develop a very good understanding of the similarities and differences of peoples and cultures. They have good knowledge and understanding of the traditions

and customs of others through special event weeks, visitors to school and visits to the local and wider community.

8. There has been excellent improvement in the rate of attendance since the last inspection as a result of the very good procedures to promote attendance and punctuality. Attendance is now at levels similar to those found nationally in all secondary schools and is better than is the case for most special schools. Nearly all absence is due to illness or medical need. Last year there were 42 fixed term exclusions involving 17 boys. Exclusions are being used very well as an element of the behaviour policy.

## Attendance

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	92.0	School data	1.0
National data	*	National data	*

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

*\* There is no information on attendance rates of comparable schools.*

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of teaching is very good, as is the quality of learning. Both are better than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils in all years work very hard to do their best and present their work neatly over a wide-ranging and relevant curriculum. They gain excellent advice, have excellent opportunities to say what they think about the school and gain considerably from the excellent links established with other schools.

## MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- The very high number of lessons that are taught by teachers with specialist skills and knowledge.
- The excellent work of the teaching assistants, who make a significant contribution to the very good standards pupils achieve.
- The very good effort pupils make to do their best.
- The very good range of resources available in most subjects to support teaching and learning, although ICT is not used sufficiently in a small number of subjects.
- The very good way in which the progress pupils make is recorded and used in planning lessons.
- The good contribution homework makes to pupils' progress.

## Commentary

9. The staffing structure includes a number of part-time teachers. This can be disadvantageous because the contact these teachers have with pupils is less frequent than would be the case if they worked full-time. Also, when teachers are not in school every day they could find difficulty in fully meeting the responsibilities of leading and managing subjects. Neither is the case. Pupils are advantaged because most lessons, more so than in many special schools, are taught by teachers with specialist knowledge and training in the subjects with very high expectations for learning. Throughout the school, teaching is characterised by a rigour that results in all pupils being challenged at the level of their capability. Routinely, lesson tasks are carefully planned to match with pupils' learning needs and very good use is made of the wide range of good quality resources available in most subjects. As a result, all pupils are fully engaged in their learning over the full duration of lessons and all make equivalent progress, despite the cause or level of their special needs.
10. Teaching assistants and others with specialist skills who regularly visit the school, such as the school sports co-ordinator, make an excellent contribution to the very good quality of teaching and learning. As a group, the teaching assistants are very talented and highly trained. They know their pupils very well and have very good

relationships with them. Their teachers deploy them very well. They work equally well with individual pupils and with small groups of pupils. Some have specialist skills in, for example, music, swimming and gymnastics, and in teaching according to the recommendations of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and the Key Stage 3 strategy. For example, in lessons in physical education, pupils are especially advantaged because of the close link with the school's sports co-ordinator. He is an advanced skills teacher who brings experience and enthusiasm, and provides excellent support for the work of the subject teacher.

11. Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning. They enjoy coming to school. They fully accept their responsibilities as learners and in most lessons immerse themselves completely in their work. They take pride in their achievements, whether pointing out to visitors their work in displays throughout the school, explaining their learning or, for the younger pupils, spelling a new and difficult word. They quickly learn that school is a place in which they are expected to work very hard to do their best. Invariably they do so over the full duration of lessons. They behave very well. In only a few lessons is there a need to remind pupils of their responsibilities as learners. The very good relationships with the teachers and teaching assistants enable them to have fun with them, to listen respectfully when they are in lessons and to provide advice and counselling outside of lessons.
12. Subject co-ordinators are expected to conduct annual audits of their subjects. Over time, this has helped build up relevant resources through identification as priorities in the school improvement plan. As a consequence, subjects are, generally, very well resourced. For example, in music the range of keyboards, guitars and percussion and shaking instruments is greater than that seen in most comparable schools. The programmes of study for each key stage can be taught in full in physical education because there is sufficient equipment, including fitness equipment, such as a rowing machine and an exercise bicycle, not typically seen in many special schools. It is the same in most of the other subjects, especially the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Many classrooms have electronic white-boards, which teachers are beginning to use well in supporting learning. Teachers in some subjects, such as English and French, make very good use of dedicated computer programmes and CD ROMs, but this is not the case in all subjects. For example, too little use is made of computers in supporting learning in mathematics and no use is made of computers to compose and produce music.
13. The procedures for assessing what pupils know, understand and can do are very good. In most subjects, information gained is recorded very well and is used very well in planning lessons to ensure that tasks are relevant to pupils. Assessment information on individual children is transferred to computer so that targets can be set and analyses can be quickly carried out, for example, to check that targets are being achieved, that progress is equivalent over all the subjects or to check the rate of progress against any relevant national criteria such as 'P' scales and National Curriculum levels. This very good use of this information means that new learning is most often based on prior learning and pupils learn the skills and knowledge of a subject in a sequenced and ordered way. Teaching and learning are more effective because of this, especially for pupils of primary age.
14. Homework and booster clubs for pupils in Years 8, 9 and 10 run after school on Mondays and Thursdays and lunchtime clubs operate for mathematics, information



and communication technology and music. These provide additional support to the regular homework pupils receive, mostly for English, mathematics and science. The homework programme provides a planned and organised opportunity to further the progress of pupils by linking the home with the school. The procedures are well established and are working very well in supporting learning, as many parents are fully involved in helping their children at home. Even so, a small minority of parents feel their children would benefit from a greater amount of homework.

### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 36 lessons***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
5 (13.8%)	18 (50.0 %)	11 (30.6%)	2 (5.6%)	0 (0.0 %)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)

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

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is very good over all the years. Opportunities for enrichment are very good. The accommodation is satisfactory. Resources to support teaching and learning are very good.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good quality curriculum enables pupils to achieve very well over a very wide range of learning experiences and meets their additional needs.
- The very good provision for developing pupils' personal and social skills and for making them mature and responsible.
- The very good range of extra-curricular activities that extends and enriches pupils' learning.
- The improved accommodation is satisfactory, but continues to compromise the learning of secondary pupils in some subjects.
- The good improvement in the provision for developing spiritual awareness since the last inspection.
- The very good opportunity pupils in Years 10 and 11 have to find out about the world of work.

### **COMMENTARY**

15. The curriculum is very good. It meets all statutory requirements. It has been carefully designed to meet the wide range of pupils' learning needs, to address their additional needs and to prepare them very well for life after school. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 are examined on many nationally recognised qualifications, such as the GCSE, Entry Level, Key Skills and the National Skills Profile that demonstrate their learning. These, and the very good provision for work-related learning and careers, help prepare pupils very well for transition into further education, training, the world of work and life in the adult world. In addition, pupils take other qualifications, such as the Duke of Edinburgh's Award and awards of the Amateur Swimming Association. The primary curriculum is innovative. It includes French, nurture groups and includes a half a day each week learning with pupils at a mainstream primary school. It prepares pupils very well for their work in Year 7 and onward. All staff support the ethos of the school, which includes enabling all pupils to experience high quality

education that extends over the full range of the National Curriculum and meets their additional needs.

16. For some pupils, developing their personal and social skills is a priority before they are able to fully attend to learning in the subjects. This is done very well in a number of ways, through the very good planned programme for PSHCE and, especially, through targets in pupils' individual education plans (IEPs). These are very effective because they are well thought out, relevant to pupils' primary needs and known by them, parents and carers and all staff. The strategies for helping pupils achieve their targets are sensible and many pupils gain additional benefit because their parents and carers follow similar strategies at home. The relationships staff have with pupils are very good. Pupils listen to staff and invariably take their advice. The tutorial sessions that begin the day, lunch and break times and the after-school clubs and residential visits are all used very well to provide excellent advice and guidance in supporting the planned programme of PSCHE. Developing pupils' personal and social skills, and improving their behaviour, self-esteem and self-confidence are helping pupils grow in maturity and allows them to take greater responsibility for their learning and their futures. This is a strength of the curriculum.
17. Many additional learning opportunities are provided for pupils. These include lunchtime and after-school clubs, regular visits to local places to reinforce classroom learning, residential visits to France, an exciting programme of sporting activities and the very good programme of homework. Visits are for many purposes. For example, pupils visit Canterbury Cathedral to learn about Chaucer, the Theatre Royal to watch the plays of Shakespeare and the local ASDA store to find out about work. They visit museums and art galleries to broaden their understanding of art and artists from different cultures and traditions. They visit Twickenham to watch the final of the British Universities Rugby Tournament, the Eastbourne professional tennis tournament and many local festivals of sport for football, rugby and trampolining. These activities, and others, provide very rich opportunities for pupils to explore the outside world, building their self-confidence and extending their learning.
18. The accommodation is satisfactory and is better than at the time of the last inspection. It is very clean and well maintained. Classrooms are very well resourced, for example, many have white-boards and are furnished well with good quality tables, chairs and desks. The very good standard pupils achieve in their work is celebrated through the many displays that are located throughout the building. These are impressive to visitors and motivate pupils to achieve their highest standards. Pupils with movement difficulties or who have poor vision have better access to all areas of the school than was the case at the last inspection because of the installation of additional lighting and automatic doors. The specialist areas for ICT and design and technology and the swimming pool are very good. The hall is too small for secondary physical education and the hard-top space outdoors is very limited. Overall, the school is very well resourced, with some subjects such as English, ICT, music and physical education having a particularly wide range of very good quality and relevant resources. The library is small and has a major walkway running through it. It is used regularly by pupils, but limitations in size and location mean that it is not a fully effective base for developing the skills of investigative learning, or for supporting learning in English, especially. Pupils treat both the accommodation and resources with respect. Since the last inspection, issues to do with staffing have been handled

very well. More teachers work part-time than is the case in many comparable schools. This is seen as an advantage because the range of specialist skills and training covers most of the subjects. As a result, many lessons are taught by teachers with specialist knowledge and this contributes to the very good levels pupils achieve. Excellent procedures for checking the work of and supporting subject leaders mean that the development of the subjects is not compromised because some teachers are at school for less than a full week.

19. Provision for the spiritual development has improved considerably since the last inspection. Religious education, citizenship, tutor times and assemblies, as well as lessons in other subjects, are carefully planned to provide opportunities for pupils to learn about the beliefs of others and to reflect upon their own place in society.

### **Work-related learning**

20. The work-related curriculum is managed very well. As a consequence, pupils are prepared very well for their move to the world of work. The programme is planned in detail and the range of resources, including relevant software, to support learning is good, as are the procedures for recording pupils' progress. Work placements are well organised and, for most pupils, are successful. Especially for pupils in Years 10 and 11, visits to places in the locality provide good support for learning about work. For example, as part of their studies in design and technology, pupils spend a day at *Pizza Express* learning about how it operates. Pupils are well supported by a range of agencies such as Connexions and these contacts help the pupils to develop the key skills for the transition from school to work or college. Emphasis is placed on the recognition and celebration of success and many pupils are justifiably proud of the progress that they make in dealing with the demands of the adult world.

### **Care, guidance and support**

The quality of guidance and support is excellent. The provision for care, welfare, health and safety is very good. Pupils have excellent opportunities to present their views.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The attention given to ensuring pupils are safe and secure at school.
- The excellent arrangements for meeting the regulations for statemented pupils, although some parents feel their children would benefit from more speech therapy.
- The excellent advice and guidance provided to pupils.
- The excellent opportunity pupils have to tell staff what they think of the school.
- The very good way in which pupils enter the school.

### **Commentary**

21. The health, safety and security of pupils have a high priority. The vigilance of staff, including the site manager, ensures that pupils are safe and are looked after. Since the last inspection, changes to the entrance area have made the school more secure. The arrangements for unloading and loading pupils from the transports will always be complicated because of very limited turning space. The school is well aware of this and regularly monitors the effectiveness of the arrangements to ensure the safe

arrival and departure of pupils. The school has been awarded Healthy Schools status and school dinners provide a good range of healthy options. Lessons, visits and school journeys are carefully planned with due regard to risk. The child protection procedures are known by staff. They are well established, supported by clear guidelines and regular training keeps staff up-to-date with new initiatives. The tutorial system is working well and ensures that pupils know an adult who would support them if they have a problem or concern.

22. All the pupils have statements of special educational need and the administrative procedures relating to the requirements for statemented pupils are excellent. A Connexions adviser attends the transitional reviews for pupils in Year 9. Pupils take a full part in their annual reviews, as do most parents or carers. The annual review targets link closely with those in pupil's IEPs, to which pupils also contribute. Individual education plans operate very effectively in guiding teaching and learning and are formally reviewed twice yearly. The additional needs of pupils are met very well. Specific services, such as speech therapy, physio- and occupational therapy, are provided by specialist therapists. They deal directly with pupils and train teachers and teaching assistants to follow the programmes they develop for pupils in their absence. This is working well, although a small number of parents are of the opinion that their children would benefit from more speech therapy.
23. Pupils' personal and social development is supported very well over the whole day and adds to the effectiveness of the planned programme. Primary-aged pupils take part in a nurture group for one afternoon a week in which mainstream primary pupils join them. This is an innovative and very effective strategy for promoting social development through observing the behaviour of the mainstream pupils. It is working very well. Pupils in all the years gain excellent advice and guidance in tutorial sessions and at other times throughout the school day. The school's counsellor is readily available and sometimes the close links between the school and numerous outside agencies, such as the education other than at school team and from CAMHS, means that action can be taken quickly. Because of the very good provision for supporting personal and social development, pupils take increasing responsibility, and act with increasing maturity, as they move through the school. By the time they leave school, most are sufficiently confident and mature to anticipate success in the next stage of their education or when they begin employment. Guidance and support for learning in the subjects are very good. The audits for a small number of subjects, notably music, geography and history, recognise the need for improving the way in which the small steps pupils make in their learning are recognised, recorded and used to help in planning lessons. However, in most of the subjects, especially English and science, this is being done very well.
24. Pupils have excellent opportunity to tell staff of their views of the school. In lessons, in many subjects, especially art and design, English media, design and technology and in the lessons in PSHCE, they are able express their choices and learn to respect other people's beliefs and opinions. The School Council and the Eco School Council provide excellent opportunities for pupils to present and discuss issues to do with the school. For example, pupils on the Eco Council regularly raise ideas about the school's use of paper and electricity. The minutes of the School Council are accorded a prime position in the foyer and are read by many pupils. Pupils take responsibility for their learning by helping identify targets for their IEPs and in reviewing the extent to which

they have achieved the targets. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 gain from the clear advice of the careers officer and Connexions personnel on career prospects and courses in local colleges that might interest them.

25. The induction procedures for pupils are very well managed, with a smooth transition arranged from the main feeder primary school into Year 7. Pupils who enter in Year 7 visit with their parents and become familiar with the school through visits during the preceding summer term. Transition arrangements for those who enter at other times are worked out between the mainstream school, parents, pupils and staff to ensure smoothness. Staff are prepared very well to meet the requirements of incoming pupils. As a consequence, they are into their learning very quickly and readily accept the very high expectations of staff for behaviour and learning.

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

The links with parents are very effective. The links with the community are very good. Those with other schools and colleges, and especially the provision of outreach services, are excellent.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good ways in which parents are able to contribute to the work of the school.
- The excellent information provided to parents on the progress their children are making.
- Procedures to ensure parents' concerns are met are excellent.
- The very good links established with a wide range of businesses and places of local interest.
- The excellent help and support provided by outreach staff for those teaching pupils with particular special educational needs in mainstream schools.

### **Commentary**

26. The school is held in high esteem by the parents and carers of current and past pupils. They are welcomed as partners in the education of their children. The arrangements to discuss the work of the school and progress of pupils and the way in which targets in IEPs are formed are excellent. Annual reports for parents and carers on their children's progress are also excellent and better than at the time of the last inspection. There are formal opportunities each term for parents and carers to meet teachers, and staff are always willing to discuss matters which concern them at these and other times. Parents and carers are happy to visit to discuss problems or concerns about their children. Many play a full part in the life of the school.
27. Documents provided to parents and carers, such as the prospectus and governors' annual report, are very well written and provide excellent information about the school, its values and routines, and what is expected of parents and pupils who attend. In addition, parents and carers receive regular informative newsletters of events and of the achievements of pupils. The use of homework diaries as a means of communication with parents is satisfactory, although this varies from one class to another.

28. Very good links have been established with the community. Links with businesses enable pupils in Years 10 and 11 to undertake periods of work experience, which provides them with some knowledge of the routines and expectations of working. Pupils in all the years gain in their personal development and in understanding their own culture from the many visits they make to local sites, including museums, galleries and places of sporting interest.

### **Outreach provision**

29. The local education authority gives money to provide outreach support for pupils with physical and neurological impairments in local mainstream primary and secondary schools. The outreach service began in 1999 and has grown since then. Currently, 14 pupils are being supported in primary schools and five in secondary schools. They have a variety of physical disabilities and medical conditions, including severe eczema, chronic juvenile arthritis, epilepsy, heart and neuromuscular conditions, cerebral palsy and dyspraxia.
30. The outreach programme is lead and managed excellently by the assistant headteacher. She has established close and trusting relationships with the special educational need co-ordinators and teachers in the schools in which pupils are supported. They speak very highly of the quality of the advice and support offered to them. They appreciate the training, guidance and especially the use of specifically chosen resources, such as the special chairs that allow pupils with movement difficulties to sit comfortably when they are learning. Regular training is well received by the mainstream staff. In the recent past, this has included training in Handwriting without Tears, lifting and handling children, learning about the specific special educational needs of pupils and the specific difficulties they have in accessing the curriculum. Training in writing targets in the IEPs of pupils and in suggesting strategies that teachers can use to help pupils achieve the targets has been particularly valued.
31. The expertise and the experience of the teachers and learning support assistants at Patcham House School are being used very well in maintaining pupils in mainstream schools, who in other parts of the country may well attend special schools.

### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher is committed and accomplished, visible throughout the school, and knows about all aspects of the work. She receives excellent support from the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher and all staff.

### **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The headteacher and senior managers inspire staff to do their best and operate procedures to enable them to routinely achieve this.
- Uncertainties in the school's future undermine the school's long-term planning.
- The excellent day-to-day management realises optimum opportunities for learning.
- The very good procedures for ensuring the continuing professional development of staff.

- The very good use made of information gained on pupils' progress in planning for learning.
- The very good way in which governors support the work of the school.
- The very good way in which the school's money is used.

## COMMENTARY

32. The headteacher is committed to fully meeting the learning and additional needs of pupils by ensuring provision of very high quality. She inspires, encourages and motivates staff to achieve their best. She, and the deputy and assistant headteacher, form a senior management team that provides excellent leadership and management. They are excellent role models for staff and pupils alike because they set the highest of standards in discharging their own duties. Staff are very effective in meeting the common purpose of preparing pupils for life after school as well as they can because the headteacher and the senior managers provide conditions that allow them to do this.
33. The headteacher is very capable of establishing a detailed vision for the future of the school. However, she is having difficulties in doing this. The learning and additional needs of those entering the school are changing in cause and level. For example, there are many more pupils in school with autistic spectrum disorders and anxiety disorders and fewer pupils with physical disabilities than was the case at the last inspection. Also, the local education authority is undertaking a review of provision for pupils with special educational needs. Both are creating uncertainty as to the future of the school and cause difficulties in forming a precise long-term plan for development. When the remit for the school is firmly established, then the headteacher and governors will be able to identify detailed strategies for identifying the role of the school within the local authority's provision for pupils with special educational needs. It is testament to the quality of the leadership that the award of Beacon status has been gained over this time of uncertainty.
34. Excellent management by senior managers and the very good work of the co-ordinators of some of the subjects mean that day-to-day procedures operate very effectively. There are many strengths. The school is calm, ordered and well organised. Routinely, pupils are stimulated to learn over a wider curriculum than is available in most comparable schools. Pupils' additional needs are met very well and they feel safe and valued at school. The quality of teaching is very good, as are the curriculum planning documents for many subjects. The advice and guidance offered pupils are excellent, as are the links with parents and carers. Each contributes to adding considerable extra value to the progress pupils make, much more so than is the case for most other schools.
35. The continuing professional development of staff is managed very well and has made a very good contribution to increasing the effectiveness of the school since the last inspection. Targets for teachers, teaching assistants and the administrative and buildings staff are linked to the priorities outlined in the school improvement plan. By doing this very well, including providing appropriate training opportunities, the expertise of staff continues to grow and be sufficient to meet the changing needs of pupils. The procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and for checking the planning for lessons are very good. It is no coincidence that teaching

and learning are better than at the last inspection because teachers and teaching assistants have taken part in many well-chosen training opportunities that have been linked to the targets in their individual training plans. At the end of the year, targets are judged as to whether they have been achieved. In order to meet the changing needs of pupils, staff have taken part in a wide range of training. For example, teachers have gained further qualifications in specific learning difficulties/dyslexia, in speech and language disorders and in ways to improve attendance. Others, and some teaching assistants, have studied anxiety-related disorders and ways in which the behaviour of pupils can be monitored and improved. Establishing the professional enquiry groups made up of teachers and teaching assistants is an innovative way in which topics of direct relevance to the school are studied and the findings reported to other staff. By providing opportunities for staff to take part in relevant training, the very good programme of performance management has contributed to the very good standards pupils achieve and the very good progress they make, recognised between 2001 and 2003 by the granting of the School's Achievement Award.

36. The school makes use of information on the progress of pupils better than is the case for most other special schools. The quality of pupils' learning is known in detail in most subjects because the progress they make is recorded very well and is carefully analysed for each pupil. Each year, targets and 'P' or National Curriculum levels are identified in each subject for each pupil. National Curriculum levels are divided into three to take better account of the small steps some pupils make in their learning. At the end of each year, all the information collected against the targets is analysed and discussed by the senior managers. The progress of each pupil is judged for each subject and any anomaly in the progress they make is noted and explanations offered. For example, if a pupil is making only a little progress in one subject but much better progress in the other subjects, then an action plan will be formed to improve performance in the weak subject. By carefully observing the progress of pupils, those who suddenly find difficulty with their learning are quickly recognised. When this happens, sometimes the planning documents for subjects or the deployment of teachers and teaching assistants will change or additional specific resources will be purchased. Over the last few years the results of year 11 pupils with autism on the GCSE examination in English Literature were not in line with their capabilities. It was judged that the increasing number of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders were finding great difficulty in dealing with the particular demands of learning English literature for examination. This year's cohort is studying the English media syllabus, which is better suited to their learning needs. Careful attention to the progress pupils make and making quick decisions when issues occur is helping staff maintain very good standards and very good progress, even over a time when the learning requirements of pupils are changing. The value-added information in the school's Autumn Package from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) annually shows how successful this is because pupils are doing much better relative to those in mainstream schools.
37. Governance is very good. Statutory requirements are met. Governors offer a wide range of experience and wisdom to the headteacher and to the school. They are led very well by an experienced chairperson, who has provided valuable personal and professional support to fellow governors and to the headteacher. Their stand against the use of the house on the site and against taking pupils whose learning and additional needs they judged cannot be met by the school helps in maintaining the very high quality of the provision. They are moving well towards meeting their



responsibilities under the new constitution. However, many of the most recently appointed governors will need to take part in more training events before they are able to make a full contribution to the governing body.

38. There are clear procedures for school improvement planning involving senior management and the governors. The principles of best value are important to the headteacher and governors. For example, they analyse carefully their results in the Autumn Package to judge the effectiveness of learning. The financial implications of best value are evident in budget planning. Spending against strategic aims is carefully monitored to ensure that the school gives very good value for money. Expenditure per pupil appears high, but includes some exceptional one-off costs for improvements to premises and staff redundancy in 2003-4, money from initiatives such as Beacon and money for outreach services for 19 pupils in mainstream schools.

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	911,435*	Balance from previous year	58,974
Total expenditure	938,443	Balance carried forward to the next year	3,599
Expenditure per pupil	15,384		

\* Total income includes extra money gained from other sources such as Beacon Status and for outreach provision.

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

### **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2 TO 4**

#### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (FRENCH)**

##### **English**

Provision for English is **very good**.

##### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good quality of teaching enables pupils to make very good progress.
- The excellent relationships between staff and pupils help to make pupils confident learners.
- All pupils leave with an accredited award that reflects the extent of their learning.
- The excellent leadership and management.
- The library is too small to provide sufficient support for learning in English.

##### **Commentary**

39. In all years, the standards pupils achieve and the progress they make are very good. At the end of Year 11, many pupils attain in line with national standards for pupils in mainstream schools. The examination results for pupils who left last year exceeded predictions, with 'B' being the best grade gained.
40. Teaching is very good. Teachers have specialist training in English and they use this very well to assess what pupils know, understand and can do and in planning very carefully and sensitively to meet the learning needs of all pupils. The recommendations of the National Literacy Strategy and the Key Stage 3 strategy have been adapted and are implemented in lesson planning very well. Because of this, lessons are focused and pupils are interested. Consequently, they attend very well, work very hard to do their best and make very good progress. All pupils use ICT effectively in the presentation of their work and in undertaking research on particular topics. For example, as part of the recently introduced GCSE media studies element, pupils in Year 11 used 'Storyboards' very effectively in producing a multimedia presentation of video clips supported by music.
41. Many pupils enter school with very little confidence in expressing themselves, either verbally or through writing. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at reducing pupils' anxiety levels even though it is clear to pupils that staff expect them to work hard. The relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and this helps pupils become confident learners with very good attitudes to learning English. In the primary years, they are given a very good start. They become familiar with a wide range of literature, from *The Secret Garden* to Brian Patten's poem, *Geography Lesson*. They understand rhythm and rhyme and enjoy writing poetry of their own. In developing their reading skills, they show very good progress in using appropriate techniques to read and understand complex words. They are confident learners and do not worry about getting things wrong, even when they read out loud to the rest of the class.

42. In Years 7 to 9, they learn to write very well, with increasing confidence, often through computer use, for example, in expressing their thoughts on the books they have read. Teachers engage pupils in lively discussions about topics that capture their imagination, focus their attention and motivate them to contribute their opinions. This leads to pupils having to justify their points of view, listen to the arguments of others and respect the fact that opinions different to theirs can also be valid. They learn to offer opinions more readily and to share and develop their thoughts in conversation with staff and their friends. They also learn to listen very well. For example, pupils in Year 9 gain a very good understanding of the relationships between the characters in *Macbeth* and one pupil commented that Lady Macbeth could be considered '*unwomanly*' because '*you don't expect women to behave like that*'. They continue to make very good progress in Years 10 and 11. For example, in an excellent lesson, pupils in Year 11 found a particularly poignant Vietnamese War poem disturbing, and in so doing recognised the skill of the poet in using language and imagery. Over their last two years in school, they are prepared very well for their examinations. All pupils leave school with an accredited award. The best in English take the GCSE examination. Others take Entry Level or Key Skills, as is appropriate to their learning.
43. Leadership and management are excellent. Both the English and English media co-ordinators are experienced teachers with a very good subject knowledge. Checking on all aspects of the subject is very thorough. The current emphasis on improving writing for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is the result of the careful checking and comparison of progress in each aspect of English, and is testimony to the ongoing drive to improve standards. The very wide range of accreditation, from GCSE to Key Skills, gives all pupils appropriate opportunities to demonstrate the extent of their learning in English. The library is satisfactory, but is too small in size and holds too few books to make a significant contribution to learning in English. Appropriately, it has been identified as in need of further development.

## **LANGUAGE AND LITERACY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

44. Provision to develop pupils' language and literacy skills in other subjects is good and pupils make good progress in applying these skills to their work. Common approaches are evident throughout the school. For example, new vocabulary is regularly reinforced in lessons in the other subjects. Great care is taken to ensure that pupils have suitable equipment to help them record their learning. For example, a pupil with visual impairment was able to take a full part in a lesson in history because the text was magnified.

### **French**

Provision in French is **excellent**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The emphasis in the early years on learning to speak French.
- The very good way in which the teachers conduct most lessons only in French.
- The extra opportunities pupils have to learn the language and to find out about France.

- The excellent leadership and management.

## Commentary

45. The school was the only special school in the country to pilot the Key Stage 3 strategy for teaching languages to pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. Primary-aged pupils are part of the Pathfinder Project for modern foreign languages. Two teachers with specialist knowledge who are proficient in the use of French share the teaching over Years 7 to 11. The teacher of pupils of primary age is a leading teacher, and a trainer for the Centre for International languages Teaching (CILT). Currently she is strengthening the school's links with a local mainstream language college by developing transition units for the pupils' transfer into secondary education. The considerable expertise of these teachers helps pupils to achieve excellently and to make excellent progress, both being better than at the time of the last inspection.
46. Up to Year 9, the emphasis is on speaking and listening. In Years 10 and 11, teaching places a greater emphasis on reading and writing in French in preparation for the GCSE and Entry Level examinations that pupils will take according to their capability. Even so, pupils continue to develop their conversational French because lessons are taught almost completely in the language. Only occasionally will English be used, for example, when there is a need to explain a technical point of grammar. By this time, pronunciation is very good and discussions in lessons are characterised by the confident and fluid use of French. Last year's leavers did excellently on the GCSE examination. One pupil gained the 'B' grade, four the 'C' grade and four distinctions at Entry Level.
47. The two principal teachers have specialist training in French and use the language very well. Their lively and energetic approach and the well-planned, stimulating activities that make up lessons help maintain pupils' interest and involvement over the full duration. The excellent relationships between staff and pupils help make pupils confident learners who are always prepared to speak in front of the class, even though they may not always have the correct pronunciation. Lesson tasks are carefully matched to pupils' capabilities and provide many opportunities to practise emerging language skills in many different situations. The expectations for learning are very high. This and the very good planning that is supported by excellent relationships make pupils want to work very hard to improve their knowledge of French and their ability to use French. The very good deployment and considerable contribution of the teaching assistant helps ensure that all pupils work at appropriate levels. The range and quality of resources, including the use of information and communication technology, are better than at the last inspection and are being used well to maintain interest and enjoyment to lessons.
48. Learning in French benefits from a number of additional opportunities. The link that is being established with a mainstream secondary school in Le Havre will give pupils additional opportunities to speak with French school children of similar age. They will be able to speak more regularly when the video conferencing link, which is in the last stages of completion, is finally established. Volunteers, who are native French speakers, visit regularly to speak with pupils and this helps them improve their pronunciation and build their vocabulary. The residential trips to France offer very

good opportunities to practice speaking and listening. These make an important contribution to learning the language and also in learning about France.

49. Leadership and management are excellent. The well-chosen curriculum has been suitably adapted to meet the learning needs of pupils. They have many opportunities to practice, consolidate and develop their skills in using the language without undue repetition. Clear and detailed planning documents and meticulous preparation for lessons provide a very good structure for teaching. Progress is recorded in detail and this information is used very well in checking all aspects of the subject, from the quality of teaching and learning to the need for purchasing particular resources. French is making a substantial contribution to broadening the curriculum and making it interesting to pupils.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching assistants make a substantial contribution to pupils' good learning and progress.
- Lessons are planned very well to meet the learning needs of all pupils.
- Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently to support teaching and learning.
- Homework makes too little a contribution to pupils' progress.
- Since his recent appointment, the co-ordinator has made a good start in leading and managing mathematics.

### **Commentary**

50. Pupils in all years achieve well in all the attainment targets. By the time they reach Year 11, most have sufficient knowledge and skills to do well on the GCSE examination. Of the eleven pupils who left last year, eight gained grades from F to D and one pupil gained the C grade. Those for whom the GCSE examination is too demanding take the Entry Level award and they also did well last year. Primary-aged pupils begin learning mathematics, for example, by adding and taking away small pieces of equipment and by grouping by shape, size and colour before learning about time, distance, weight and angles. They build on this good start in the older years so that by the time they leave, all pupils have sufficient skill and knowledge to use mathematics well in functional situations, such as shopping, planning journeys by reading bus timetables or an evening of television watching. The best are at ease using mathematics to help in learning other subjects such as science, when they learn about the transfer of light, and geography, when they make sense of latitude and longitude.
51. The quality of teaching is good. Teaching assistants are deployed very well and make a significant contribution to pupils' progress because they are skilled and competent. In the best lessons, the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy are used well and the lessons hurry along. In a small number of lessons, this is not the case and because of this, pupils do not learn as much as they should. The ten-minute

mental arithmetic starter is liked by pupils, provides an interesting and controlled start and a good opportunity to assess what pupils know and can do. The main activities have clear objectives and putting pupils into small groups of like attainment helps ensure that all are equally challenged as learners over the duration of lessons. Generally, the plenary session is used well in reinforcing new learning, although in a small number of lessons, this is not so. When this is the case, staff miss a good chance of judging how well pupils have done.

52. Information and communication technology is not used sufficiently in supporting teaching and learning. The white-board in the good mathematics room is generally used well in demonstrating new procedures, but there are too few dedicated programmes that focus directly on practising specific skills, for example, simple addition and subtraction, in a way that interests pupils. Some lessons rely too heavily on worksheets. Although these are created to challenge pupils of all abilities, pupils with the greatest difficulty in maintaining their attention do not find them sufficiently stimulating to routinely work hard toward their completion.
53. The school's very good procedures for supporting learning through a planned programme of homework do not work as well as they should in mathematics. Homework is provided too inconsistently. This limits its usefulness in supporting learning by reducing opportunities for parents, carers and siblings to reinforce learning at home.
54. At the time of the last inspection, the provision in mathematics was judged as good for pupils up to Year 6 and satisfactory thereafter. Now it is judged as good over all the years. Since the last inspection, changes in staffing have resulted in different co-ordinators leading the subject. The current co-ordinator was appointed in September 2004 and has made a very good start. Planning is detailed and the assessment procedures are good. He has a clear overview of how the subject should develop. Since his appointment he has gained very good support from his teaching assistants, especially in how to deal with the wide range of learning difficulties seen in all the classes.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

55. Numeracy skills are consolidated well in other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils count in French, weigh and measure in lessons in food studies and check their pulse rates when they take part in aerobic exercise in lessons in physical education. However, planning to reinforce numeracy skills does not feature in subject policies. The standards pupils achieve and the progress they make in mathematics can be improved through the use of planned opportunities in the lessons in other subjects.

## SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

### MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

- Very good teaching provides pupils with many opportunities to find out for themselves through conducting their own experiments.
- The very good way that science is made relevant to pupils.
- The excellent leadership and management.
- Too little use of computers to support teaching and learning.

### Commentary

56. Over all the years, the standards pupils achieve and the progress they make are very good. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 11 consistently gain very good grades on the single science GCSE examination. For example, five out of the eleven pupils (who left) last year gained either the 'C' or 'D' grades. Three others gained distinction grades on the Entry Level examination. A pupil who entered the school in Year 10 achieved a pass grade on the GCSE examination in human physiology.
57. The quality of teaching is very good over all the years. The foundations for the very good standards pupils achieve are very firmly set in Years 4 to 6, in which science is taught as part of the termly topic to the equivalent of one lesson a week. The specialist knowledge of the teacher makes an important contribution to the very good progress pupils make. Pupils have fun learning science because very good planning results in pupils spending considerable time finding out for themselves through their experiments. As a consequence, they work very hard and rarely misbehave. The very good progress continues through Years 7 to 9, and into Years 10 and 11. In these years, they are prepared very well for their examinations. Very good formal and informal assessment procedures, including the use of Testbase and New Scientific Enquiry assessment sheets for pupils in Years 7 to 9, record progress very well. This information is used equally well in ensuring lessons are planned very well to meet the learning needs of all pupils. This helps because pupils know the learning objectives and at the end of the lesson are able to recognise whether they have achieved them or not. The specialist teaching assistant is very capable and is deployed very well. Through her classroom practice and by leading the Eco School Council and the gardening and Eco School clubs, she is making a significant contribution to pupils' very good progress. Staff cater very well for pupils' learning needs because they know them very well. They are good at encouraging pupils 'to find out for themselves' and because of this, pupils quickly learn the basic skills associated with investigative learning. In Years 10 and 11, they develop these skills very well and work happily on experiments on their own, with very little oversight from staff. In lessons, attention to health and safety is very good. Pupils are required to wear appropriate clothing and protective wear and abide by the safety rules at all times. They enjoy lessons in science. In part, this is because they are often active in their learning and are made to think to establish links, for example, between temperature and the speed of molecules, and are often intrigued by their experiments. They complete homework well and on time, and this makes a good contribution to reinforcing learning.

58. Every attempt is taken to make science a subject that is relevant to pupils and many opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about the application of science in everyday life. In line with this, the school has successfully applied to become an Eco School. Gaining Eco School status has fostered a real respect for the environment and many pupils have a very good understanding of how precious is a balanced eco-system. Close links exist with other curriculum subjects, especially geography.
59. Leadership and management are excellent. Over all the years, the recording and analysis of pupils' progress are very good. Coursework marking for last year's pupils taking the Entry Level award was judged as 'exemplary' by assessors from the Assessment and Qualification Authority (AQA). Forward planning is very good and is helped because of the regular involvement of the local authority's specialist science adviser. Links with other teachers ensure that they build on learning in science in lessons in other subjects. The range and quality of resources are better than at the time of the last inspection. The specialist room for science is much better. Although pupils are adept at using electronic microscopes and data-loggers, inspectors agree with the co-ordinator's judgement that too little use is made of CD ROMs and the Internet in supporting teaching and learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good opportunities for pupils to learn about information and communication technologies.
- The good lesson planning, especially in lessons for pupils in Years 10 and 11, that results in pupils working on tasks relevant to them.
- The opportunities for pupils in Year 11 to demonstrate the extent of their learning are too few.
- The improved accommodation advantages pupils' learning but the arrangements for leading and managing the subject over all the school are not best suited for its development.
- In some subjects, including mathematics and music, ICT is not used well in supporting teaching and learning.

### **Commentary**

60. Pupils achieve well and make good progress over all the years. The recently appointed co-ordinator is re-developing the curriculum, especially for pupils in Years 10 and 11. This is having a positive effect on the progress they are making. No lessons were observed for pupils in Years 7 to 9, but an analysis of completed work showed good progress for all pupils, irrespective of their capability.
61. All pupils have a dedicated lesson in ICT each week. The use of resources to support teaching and learning in these lessons is very good. As well as the ICT suite, many of the other classrooms have a very good range of ICT equipment, including computers and other equipment, such as scanners and digital cameras. Five classrooms have



interactive white-boards and sufficient laptop computers for two classes to use them at the same time. The Internet is accessed fairly easily. Teachers have very good opportunities to use new technologies to support their teaching. Some do this better than others.

62. In the dedicated lessons, teaching is good overall and often better for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Teaching assistants work effectively with the pupils. In Years 10 and 11, the curriculum embraces issues in design and technology and art, helping make them relevant to pupils. The disadvantage is that control technology is not covered as thoroughly as are the other elements that make up the subject. Progress is assessed and recorded very well. This is helped by the use of the procedures that enable pupils to set and evaluate their own targets for learning. Good planning means that lesson tasks match well with pupils' learning needs and capabilities.
63. The range of accredited awards available to pupils is not sufficient to reflect their capabilities and the extent of their learning. In the past, pupils were entered for the Key Skills level one examination. The success rate was very high. Most pupils who are now in Years 10 and 11 are well capable of succeeding at the more challenging level of the GCSE.
64. Until recently, leadership and management of ICT have been disadvantaged because of difficulties in staffing the subject. The present arrangement, which gives the specialist teacher responsibility for the subject for the secondary-aged pupils only, is not the best arrangement for developing the subject over all the years. Even so, ICT is better than at the time of the last inspection, especially the accommodation and resources, including hardware and software. However, even though the provision is judged as good, it is not a strength of the curriculum because it is not making the contribution to teaching and learning that is desirable. Stabilising the leadership and management is a very good first step towards increasing the overall quality of the provision.

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

65. Although staff have had some training, not all of them are fully exploiting the possibilities of new technologies in their lessons. In many lessons computers are used for word-processing and the Internet is used for researching topics. However, too little use is made of CD ROMs to bring animation and action into lessons. Symbol software is being used well for the primary-aged pupils but, generally, too little use is made of dedicated software to support specific learning, for example, in English, mathematics and music. Pupils with physical difficulties would gain easier access to the curriculum, for example through the use of specialist switches and touch-sensitive screens.

### **HUMANITIES (History, geography and religious education)**

#### **HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good planning documents ensure good coverage of the relevant programmes of study.
- The good quality of teaching and learning.
- The good start made by the co-ordinator in leading and managing the subjects.

## **Commentary**

66. The standards pupils achieve in history and geography are good. They have been maintained at this level since the last inspection, despite difficulties in staffing the subjects with teachers with specialist knowledge. Six of the eleven of last year's leavers gained a pass grade on the GCSE examination, the best being 'D'. Since the last inspection, the addition of the Entry Level award for pupils for whom the GCSE examination is not appropriate, is a very good development.
67. For both subjects, the recently completed schemes of work for pupils up to Year 9 and adopting the syllabus of the AQA humanities course for the GCSE examination for pupils in Years 10 and 11 provide a good range of learning experiences over all the years. Most topics in the relevant programmes of study are covered. For example, in history, primary-aged pupils gain an understanding of chronology by learning about important events in the past. By the time they get to Year 9, they know how British history is linked with the history of other countries, including knowing Britain's involvement in the slave trade from Africa to the Caribbean countries and America. In geography, prior learning for pupils in Year 11 gives them a good base to gain an understanding of the economic benefits that tourism brings to countries such as Kenya.
68. Teaching in geography and history is good. Pupils enjoy both subjects, have good attitudes to their learning and in each have produced a good range of written work, supported by many illustrations. They behave well in lessons because they are planned well and are made up of topics that are interesting to them. For example, pupils in a Year 8 lesson in history were excited when they learned about the changes made by Edward to English churches because the teacher set the scene very well and made the topic relevant. The range and quality of resources to support teaching and learning are good and teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. They know the pupils very well and their deployment is very good. The use of ICT is developing well. Computer discs are regularly and effectively used to provide an extra dimension to teaching. Digital cameras are used well in recording features seen during visits to local places of geographical and historical interest, and the Internet is used well for research in lessons.
69. The recently appointed teacher with specialist knowledge of geography is developing the subjects very well. Much thought has been given to the curriculum in each subject. Both subjects are now supported very well by very good quality planning documents and assessment procedures. Geography and history have a sound foundation for further development. Literacy and numeracy skills are reinforced systematically in the lessons in both subjects. For example, in a lesson for Year 8 pupils, they were encouraged to use appropriate adjectives and nouns with greater accuracy in showing their understanding of the differences between the Catholic and Protestant churches.

## **Religious education**

Provision in religious education is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum incorporates the locally agreed syllabus acceptably well.
- The good quality teaching means that pupils gain a good understanding of difficult topics such as belief and trust.
- The subject needs further development to make the same contribution to the school's curriculum as other subjects do.

### **COMMENTARY**

70. At the last inspection, religious education was not taught in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. This is now being done. Overall, the improvement since the last inspection has been good.
71. No religious education lessons were seen during the inspection. Religious education is taught as a block of lessons during the Spring Term. The judgements made are based on analysis of completed work, discussions with teachers and the co-ordinator, and from looking at the policy and planning documents.
72. The curriculum incorporates the locally agreed syllabus, but is at an early stage of development. The policy documents ensure that the same topics are not taught in different years, as was the case last time. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 learn religious education as part of the humanities GCSE syllabus. This is an appropriate qualification for most pupils. Those for whom it is not relevant take the Entry Level examination to show the extent of their learning.
73. The quality of teaching is good over all the years. Primary-aged pupils gain a very good start. The work of the older pupils shows that teachers plan their lessons to meet their specific learning needs. They use writing frames well and techniques such as mind-mapping to help pupils record events and abstract concepts, such as 'belief' and 'trust', more easily. The highest-attaining pupils are expected to write in greater detail and accuracy through clearly defined extension tasks. Teachers are reflective and evaluate pupils' work quickly. They are good at finding ways in which complicated concepts such as 'suffering' can be made relevant. In this way, difficult topics, including disability, abortion and global inequality, are dealt with well.
74. The co-ordinator is newly appointed. The quality of the overall provision is good, and pupils' spiritual awareness is developed well through assemblies and in the lessons in other subjects. However, more development is required before religious education makes as significant a contribution to broadening the school's curriculum as other more developed foundation subjects are doing, such as French, art and design and physical education.

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

## Art and design

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The vigour and energy shown in completed work over a very wide range of art.
- The very good quality of the teaching that enthuses pupils to be creative and to do their best.
- The very good leadership and management and the contribution art makes to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

### Commentary

75. Art and design has a high profile. No lessons were observed during the inspection, but it is very clear from the range, quality and quantity of completed work that the standards pupils achieve are very good and have been maintained at this level since the last inspection. All of last year's pupils achieved pass grades on the GCSE examination. Two pupils excelled with 'A' grades and five gained the 'C' grade.
76. Pupils gain a very wide experience of art and design. The displays in the art room show lively and vigorously drawn and painted work in many styles and techniques, including computer-generated images, mixed-media collages and batiks. There is an energy and vibrancy in the work. Sometimes work is inspired by the style of famous artists and by the traditions of other cultures. For example, pupils in Year 8 produced boxes based on the Hunderthasser's organic forms. Pupils in Year 9 use watercolours and oil pastels to complete work in the style of Picasso, after studying his portrait of a weeping woman. Masks, textiles and three-dimensional art are well represented by small and large sculptures produced by individual pupils and small groups.
77. Teaching is very good. The specialist skills and knowledge of the teacher are used very well in providing a very broad range of learning experiences over the full range of the subject. Her relationship with the pupils is excellent. Pupils simply want to do their best for her. Very good planning, allied to an ability to motivate pupils, enables all pupils to make very good progress in their vision of art and in their ability to use a wide range of different media. Visits to museums and art galleries help stimulate interest in art and broaden pupils' vision of art. The annual residential visit to France provides a cultural dimension to the art and design curriculum. New technology is beginning to be used effectively in exploring art forms for researching, for example, the history of well-known artists. Pupils' achievements are carefully recorded and this information, and pupils' own evaluations of their learning, is used very well in planning further work. The relaxed atmosphere in lessons in art and design realises many opportunities for pupils to discuss their work with staff. These are used very well in helping develop pupils' speaking and listening skills.
78. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator is innovative and happily investigates all possible ways to enrich pupils' learning. The art room is not solely dedicated to the subject but very good use is made of the available space, both for storage and to support learning. The co-ordinator is clear about the strengths of the provision and about how the subject should be developed. By studying the work

of famous artists and art from different traditions and cultures, lessons in art and design make a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very effective way in which pupils learn over all elements of the subject.
- The very well thought out curriculum that is relevant to all pupils.
- The very good leadership and management, including the realistic assessment of pupils' work.
- The inability of pupils in wheelchairs to gain easy access to all parts of the food studies room.

### **Commentary**

79. The achievements of pupils over all the years are very good and are better than was the case at the last inspection. Pupils' very good start over the primary years is built on very well in Years 7 to 9 and this contributes to the very good grades that pupils gain on their Year 11 examinations. Five of last year's leavers gained 'C' or 'D' grades on the GCSE short course examinations in food technology and textiles, and three gained distinction grades on the Entry Level examination. This represents very good progress.
80. Teaching is very good. Teachers with specialist knowledge have very high expectations for learning and give very clear demonstrations. They, and their teaching assistants, work well with each other in developing pupils' confidence and skills. The very good relationships they have with pupils are especially clear during practical activities. Pupils enjoy their learning very much because staff are friendly and supportive. Pupils are very effective learners because they know what they should be learning, lessons are planned very well and the equipment to support learning is of good quality. Completed work is characterised by the obvious link made between the design and making phases. In much of the finished work there is clear evidence of evaluation leading to improvement. Over all the years, lessons provide many opportunities for pupils to work independently and to make decisions for themselves. As a consequence, most pupils in Year 11 have skills, knowledge and confidence in choosing and preparing food sufficient to be able to do this on their own on leaving school. In lesson, teachers, teaching assistants and pupils pay very good attention to matters to do with health, safety and hygiene.
81. The curriculum is thought out very well and is relevant to all pupils. Varied and carefully planned learning experiences provide pupils with opportunities to develop skills and techniques and to learn about particular processes. As pupils move through the school, their projects become increasingly complex and they are expected to take more responsibility for decisions in both designing and making phases. They do this very well and are very good at evaluating the quality and finish of their work. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are taught in half-term blocks that rotate with art and design. This is a

good idea because gaining timetable time from art and design functionally means double-length lessons and more time to complete work.

82. Leadership and management are very good. Information on how well pupils are doing is analysed in detail and is used in target setting and for planning lessons. The use of a 'stretch' target to extend the pupils' learning is an innovative idea and is working well. Planning is monitored regularly and resources are audited annually. Each makes a contribution to improving the quality and range of pupils' learning experiences, which are better and more relevant than at the last inspection. For example, the choice of which accredited award, GCSE or Entry Level, pupils will take is flexible and is judged on the detailed information recorded on pupils' performance over many years. Resources have been built up and are now very good, but information and communication technology is not being used as effectively as is possible in learning about design and in controlling processes. Realistic assessment of finished work is a strength of the subject.
83. The teaching rooms for design and technology have been improved since the last inspection. The use of background classical music and soft lighting in the specialist teaching room when pupils are preparing and cooking food, or working on their project in textiles, helps make the classroom calm and comfortable. As a consequence they attend very well, work confidently at their tasks and produce work that is vibrant and energetic. The new food studies room works very well for most pupils, but is not fully adapted for wheelchair users. Some parts are inaccessible and pupils' independence and learning are constrained.

## **MUSIC**

Provision in music is **good**.

## **MAIN STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES**

- The specialist skills and knowledge of the teacher and the teaching assistant.
- The very good range and quality of instruments, especially electronic keyboards.
- The good opportunities to learn about music outside of lessons.
- The planning documents and the procedures for assessing the gains pupils make are not precise enough.
- Too little use is made of computers in learning music.

## **COMMENTARY**

84. Over all the years, the standards pupils achieve are good and they make good progress. Primary-aged pupils explore sounds by learning about 'loud' and 'soft', 'long' and 'short' and 'higher' and 'lower'. They identify music played by different instruments, such as woodwind, brass and string. They learn to start and stop on time and take pleasure in selecting percussion and shaking instruments to play together. Pupils make good progress so that by the time they are in Year 11, the best play instruments such as the guitar and keyboard very well and gain very good grades on the GCSE examination. The good progress reported in the last inspection has been maintained.

85. The quality of teaching is good. The newly appointed teacher has specialist skills in the subject and extensive experience in teaching music in mainstream secondary schools. She is gaining very quickly the skills and knowledge required in teaching pupils with learning difficulties. In this, she gains excellent help from the teaching assistant, who is a talented musician. A wide range of very good quality instruments, especially electronic keyboards, supports teaching and learning. These are used well in providing pupils with very good opportunities for realising the importance of the link between composing and performing, and in understanding some of the characteristics of a good composition. For example, in one lesson Year 10 pupils learned how Paganini adapted a primary theme for repeat throughout a composition by doing the same thing to tunes they composed and played on keyboards and guitars.
86. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about music outside of music lessons. Through singing rhymes and action songs primary-aged pupils learn about numbers and words such as 'up' and 'down' when they sing *The Duke of York*. Older pupils especially enjoy the visits of local musicians, such as Music Life and Jazz 33. They take part in the music lunchtime club, learn to play a range of instruments from visiting peripatetic teachers, and a small number of pupils are members of the school's rock and roll band.
87. Music is beginning to be led and managed well and some of the provision is very good, most notably the number and range of instruments that are available to pupils. The co-ordinator is aware that the policy and planning documents require updating and is working on this. Developing assessment procedures to recognise the small gains pupils make in their learning and using this information in planning lessons to meet the learning needs of all pupils will result in better standards and progress. Using computers to generate and to compose music will also help raise standards.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good subject expertise of the teacher brings high expectations, enthusiasm and rigour to teaching and learning.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and includes many extra-curricular opportunities that enable pupils to experience a wide range of sports and activities.
- Pupils are excited about lessons in physical education and work hard to do their best.
- The very good leadership and management result in physical education being a visible and important element in the school's curriculum.

### **Commentary**

88. Pupils in all years achieve very well and make very good progress over the full range of the subject. This represents very good improvement since the last inspection when progress was judged as satisfactory. The recent award of the Activemark confirms the high quality of the provision.

89. The quality of teaching is very good. The main teacher has specialist knowledge and teaches most of the lessons. The local school sports co-ordinator brings advanced skills and knowledge to teaching games and a teacher with specialist training takes lessons in swimming. All have very high expectations for learning and behaviour. They are excellent role models and share with the pupils their enthusiasm for physical activity. They pay due regard to safety, manage behaviour and demonstrate skills very well. Lessons are very well organised and teachers expect pupils to work hard. Teaching focuses on skill gains and not only on the experience of taking part. Consequently, teaching is detailed and precise and lesson tasks and activities are carefully thought out. They take great care to ensure that all pupils, irrespective of their capability or their difficulties with movement are included in all activities. For example, games of football are adapted so that wheelchair users and those with good skills compete with each other. As a consequence, all pupils are equally challenged as learners, even though the range of capability in any lesson can be substantial, and all make the same very good progress.
90. The curriculum is made up of a very broad range of activities, more so than is the case for pupils in many equivalent schools. For each of the three key stages, the National Curriculum programmes of study are covered in full. These include the major games at appropriate times of the year, fitness training, dance, gymnastics, swimming and outdoor activities. Pupils' learning experiences are considerably extended by the many additional opportunities arranged by the school sports co-ordinator. These include visits to Twickenham to watch the final of the British Universities Rugby Tournament, the Eastbourne professional tennis tournament and to many local festivals of sport for football, rugby and trampolining. In addition, pupils regularly take part in mini-tournaments against teams from other schools and, during the appropriate seasons, in football, hockey and tennis matches.
91. Pupils are excited about their lessons in physical education and this contributes to the very good standards they achieve. They respond very well to their teachers, work hard to do their best and have fun doing so. Their attitudes to all aspects of the subject are very good. They dress appropriately for lessons and understand the importance of warming up and recovering from exercise. They observe the conventions of fair play, honest competition and good sporting behaviour. As a consequence, they behave co-operatively and participate fully. They enjoy their successes and those of others equally well, either as individuals or when they are part of a team. The older pupils improve their strength and stamina through following their own fitness programme. Lessons in physical education make a very good contribution to personal, social and moral development.
92. Physical education is a visible and buoyant element of the school's curriculum and is led very well by an enthusiastic and energetic co-ordinator. The hall makes a satisfactory, if small, gymnasium and the pool is very good for developing water confidence, for teaching pupils the four basic strokes and for preparing them for the Amateur Swimming Association awards at levels 1 to 3. The changing facilities are small, but satisfactory. Resources are very good. They include fitness equipment, such as a rowing machine and exercise bicycle, exercise bands and resistance tubes and many balls of different shapes and sizes, as well as very good quality equipment for athletics and games, including equipment for specialist games such as Boccia and curling.



## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision for personal and social development permeates all the work of the school and is supported very well in the lessons in the other subjects.
- The very good quality of teaching is sustained by the very good relationships between the teacher, teaching assistants and pupils.
- The planned programme is broad and is supported very well by initiatives such as the School Council, the Eco Council and the work experience placements.
- Pupils are not able to take any accredited award to demonstrate their learning.

### Commentary

93. Pupils' make very good progress in their personal and social skills, in recognising the importance of healthy living and in learning about citizenship. At the last inspection, pupils' personal development was judged as good, although PSHCE was not reported on as a subject. In this inspection, personal development is recognised as very good and this represents an improvement since then.
94. The planned programme for PSHCE is very good. It includes sex, relationship and drugs education and many important elements of citizenship, including the importance of using voting rights. Learning in the lessons in PSHCE is supported very well over all the school day, but especially during tutorial time at the start of the day, at lunchtimes, in the homework and other after-school clubs and when pupils make visits off site. For the younger pupils, especially, circle time provides a very good opportunity to say if they are troubled. Staff take every opportunity to increase self-esteem and self-confidence through recognising pupils' successes. Staff are friendly and caring. In lessons and throughout the day, they offer advice and support on learning and on other matters. The very good relationship they have with pupils makes it easy for pupils to readily accept the advice and guidance they receive. Lessons in the other subjects help also reinforce learning in the planned programme very well. For example, lessons in physical education emphasise the importance of good physical health and promote personal and social skills, for example, through changing with each other and by helping each other as players on the same team. In lessons in geography, pupils learn about issues to do with the environment. In food studies, they learn about healthy eating and practise healthy eating at lunchtimes because of the school's designated status as a Healthy School.
95. The quality of teaching is very good. Lessons are planned very well and the wide range of relevant resources is used very well. Pupils react confidently and maturely even when lessons focus on sensitive issues, such as contraception. A number of other initiatives provide very good support for the planned programme. For example, the School Council provides a small number of pupils with opportunities to be involved in debate and discussion that leads to decision making. Records of meetings are kept assiduously and reports of the meetings and the decisions that are made are posted promptly on the dedicated notice board in the school's foyer. The Eco-Council

provides similar opportunities. The work experience programme provides especially good support. It is very well established and a good range of placements is available to pupils in Years 10 and 11. Some pupils gain considerably from the work experience programme because it confirms the type of work they want to be involved in when they leave school.

96. Leadership and management of the subject are very good from a teacher with specialist training. This shows in the detailed planning of the programme over all the years and the wide range of relevant resources that have been built up to match with the learning needs of pupils. Clear and precise targets in pupils' individual education plans provide very good guidance for all staff in dealing with the specific behaviours. The priorities identified for future development accurately reflect the needs of the changing population of pupils. Pupils are not able to demonstrate the extent of their learning in PSHCE by taking a nationally accredited award.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	1
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	1
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

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>1</b>
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	1
The effectiveness of management	1

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