

INSPECTION REPORT

THRIFTWOOD SCHOOL

Chelmsford

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115472

Headteacher: Mrs S Davies

Lead inspector: Mike Kell

Dates of inspection: 12th – 15th October 2004

Inspection number: 268661

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 – 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	118
School address:	Slades Lane Galleywood Chelmsford
Postcode:	CM2 8RW
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Ann-Marie Briggs

Date of previous inspection: 17th – 21st May 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Thriftwood is classed as a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, but it now has a significant number of pupils with other special educational needs. These include autism, speech and language difficulties, and social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. The designated roll of 120 pupils is approximately average for a school of this type and age range. There are more than twice as many boys as girls in the school, and all pupils have a Statement of Special Educational Need.

There are ten classes in total, arranged in three departments. The first school consists of two mixed-age classes of pupils in Years 1 to 5, who follow a Foundation Stage curriculum. However, the middle school also contains pupils in Year 5, as well as those in Years 6 to 8; there are three classes based broadly according to age, and a fourth group, of mixed age, that comes together for some teaching and additional support. Three classes in the senior school are grouped almost exclusively by age, for Years 9, 10 and 11 respectively. A fourth, transition group, has pupils in Years 10 and 11.

Because of the pupils' learning difficulties, their development, especially their attainment on entry to the school, is delayed compared with others of a similar age. The school has a broad socio-economic mix in keeping with its intake from a wide geographical area. The vast majority of pupils have a white British background, and all pupils have English as their first language. A number of pupils attend classes at local mainstream schools and colleges, in order to extend their learning and to encourage their personal development.

The school has received both local and national awards. It was awarded a School Achievement Award in 2003 and, in the same year, it received an Essex Schools Award. It achieved a School Curriculum Award in 2002 and Sportsmark in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
13101	Mike Kell	Lead inspector	Music French
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8810	Sue Aldridge	Team inspector	English Personal, social and health education and citizenship
23390	Mel Blackband	Team inspector	Science History Physical education
31106	Katy Khan	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Geography Religious education Special educational needs
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Thriftwood is a good school with some very good features. It is well led and managed. Good teaching promotes pupils' learning well, but their achievements over time are limited by the structure and content of the curriculum provided. The very good school ethos is supported by links with parents, other schools and the community and so pupils make very good gains in their personal development. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Relationships between pupils and with staff are an outstanding feature of the school.
- Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good and they are provided with very good support and guidance.
- Too little account is taken of the requirements of the National Curriculum for most pupils in Year 9, with the result that their curriculum is unsatisfactory.
- Pupils' learning and development are supported by excellent links with parents, very good links with the community and strong links with other schools and colleges.
- The curriculum is not challenging enough for a small number of more capable secondary-age pupils, as they are not enabled to build on prior achievements.
- The training programmes provided for mainstream staff, and the support the school gives to staff in these schools, are increasing strengths of the school.
- Provision in work-related learning is very good.
- Unsatisfactory accommodation limits the range of experiences that can be provided, particularly for secondary-age pupils.
- There is excellent provision for pupils to take part in sports activities.

Overall, there has been good improvement since the last inspection. In terms of the key issues and other weaknesses identified then, all statutory requirements for acts of collective worship, sex education and the information provided to parents are now met. There is a good homework policy in place and pupils now benefit from many opportunities to develop more initiative and independence. There have also been improvements in pupils' attendance, moral and social development and levels of care, welfare and support. In addition, improvement has occurred through the implementation of three innovations in provision; the establishment of the Acorn Centre, the successful, effective development of outreach provision to mainstream schools and the introduction of a very good work-related programme. Key issues and other weaknesses relating to aspects of the curriculum, such as ensuring that it meets all statutory requirements and is monitored effectively by the headteacher and governors, have not been fully resolved.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	In relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	Personal and social education
Year 2	Satisfactory	Good
Year 6	Satisfactory	Good
Year 9	Satisfactory	Good
Year 11	Satisfactory	Good

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

Overall, in relation to their prior levels of attainment and capability, **pupils achieve well in lessons but their progress over time is satisfactory.** Boys and girls make similar progress and those with additional learning needs achieve equally well.

Pupils' achievements in work-related learning are very good; they are good in English, information and communication technology, design and technology, physical education and personal, social and health education. They achieve satisfactorily in mathematics. Achievement in science is unsatisfactory. It was not possible to inspect other subjects in the same depth in terms of the number of lessons observed. Judgements of pupils' achievements in religious education, music, art and design, geography, history and French are not possible because too few lessons were seen.

Throughout the school, pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are very good. Attendance and punctuality are good. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Their moral and social development is fostered exceptionally well.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are **good with some very good features.** Teachers engage pupils in all activities, and the developing use of a variety of communication systems increasingly meets the needs of pupils with additional special educational needs. Strong teamwork means that learning support assistants make a very significant contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils are managed very well; adults' high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour are underpinned by the excellent quality of relationships and the use of praise. Lessons make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development, although on occasion, adults provide information and intervene to provide support too quickly. Assessment systems and procedures are inconsistent, although satisfactory overall, and occasionally lesson planning lacks sharpness and does not identify clearly what it is anticipated that pupils should learn.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, although there is a very good programme of work-related learning. However, the curriculum is not challenging enough for a small number of more capable secondary-age pupils and that provided for pupils in Year 9 is unsatisfactory; it does not take enough account of the requirements of the National Curriculum. There are very good opportunities for enrichment activities. Resources are satisfactory, but accommodation is unsatisfactory overall.

Provision for pupil's care, welfare, health and safety is very good. The support and guidance given to them is very good. Pupils are highly responsive to very good opportunities to have their say in the life of the school.

The school enjoys excellent links with parents and carers that contribute positively to pupils' learning and development. There are very good links with the community and strong links with other schools and colleges. The extended services and support provided to mainstream schools are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and deputy are good. Other key staff's leadership is satisfactory, as is the effectiveness of their management. The governance of the school is good and governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' satisfaction with the school is excellent. They are very positive about the education and care provided for their children. Pupils are very satisfied and enjoy everything the school offers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that pupils in all years are provided with a curriculum that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- Provide the most capable pupils with opportunities to build on their achievements as they progress through the middle and senior schools.
- Develop the accommodation to enable subjects such as science, art and design, music and design and technology to be taught more effectively.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, in relation to their prior levels of attainment and capability, pupils of all ages learn well in lessons and make good progress. Boys and girls make similar progress and those with additional special educational needs learn equally well. Pupils' achievements over time are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, pupils achieve well in lessons.
- The organisation of the curriculum for Year 9 pupils adversely affects their ability to build on prior achievements in some subjects.
- Pupils in all years achieve very well in their personal development.
- The restricted curriculum in Year 9 prevents more capable pupils from following accredited courses in some subjects in Years 10 and 11.
- Unsatisfactory accommodation and resources in some subjects restrict pupils' achievements.
- Teachers are adept at promoting the skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) through different subjects of the curriculum.
- Older pupils' achievements are extended well through the school's links with colleges and the community, particularly for work-related learning (WRL).

Commentary

1. Pupils' achievements in WRL are very good; they are good in English, ICT, design and technology, physical education and personal, social and health education (PSHE). They achieve satisfactorily in mathematics. Achievement in science is unsatisfactory. It was not possible to inspect other subjects in the same depth in terms of the number of lessons observed. Therefore, judgements of pupils' achievements in religious education, music, art and design, geography, history and French are not possible. Some features of the accommodation limit what can be taught. There is no specialist science room and no dedicated rooms for creative activities; art and design and resistant materials in design and technology have only a shared facility; there is no specialist music area; the hall is a multi-purpose area, and not suitable for secondary physical education.

2. Those subject areas about which judgements on achievement could be made, and in which pupils achieve well, or better, have certain common features. The subject is allocated an appropriate amount of teaching time in all year groups; planning provides a progressive curriculum that enables pupils to extend their skills and knowledge as they move through the school; effective assessment procedures are in place; pupils are generally able to receive recognition of their work through accreditation at the end of Year 11. Pupils' less good achievement in mathematics, and their unsatisfactory achievement in science, occur because some, or many, of these features are absent.

3. Overall, pupils achieve well in English; the school has good strategies for developing pupils' speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. Year 11 pupils leave school with suitable, nationally recognised accreditation, and when pupils are given individual targets,

these are challenging and are generally achieved in the time scale identified. The use of additional communication systems such as the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and Makaton signs and symbols, for pupils with particular communication difficulties all contribute to pupils' overall good achievements. Even though they learn well in mathematics lessons, in the longer term pupils' achievements are not so good. This is because of a lack of detailed long-term planning, in terms of a progressive subject curriculum, and limitations in the assessment and marking of pupils' work. As a result, teachers sometimes fail to challenge pupils by planning work that gradually becomes harder. Pupils' learning in science lessons is satisfactory overall, but their achievements over time are unsatisfactory. This is because of deficiencies in the amount of taught time made available for learning science, the quality of the subject curriculum and the accommodation and resources. Pupils are encouraged to develop an interest in ICT from an early age. By the end of Year 11, most pupils have achieved a variety of ICT skills, including making videos, control and modelling techniques and basic word-processing skills. As a result, all pupils have the opportunity to receive accreditation for their work, through a Certificate of Educational Achievement (Entry Level) examination and the ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) Youth Award Scheme.

4. Pupils respond well to good opportunities to consolidate and extend their literacy skills in subjects other than English. Lesson plans identify key words, and terms are explained well and used correctly. Pupils benefit from good opportunities to speak and listen across the school, and the skills of reading and writing are integrated well into many lessons. Pupils have good opportunities to practice and extend their mathematical skills in other subjects of the curriculum. Subjects such as science, geography and history develop these skills, with the particularly good promotion of numeracy skills in the business enterprise projects and in the linked design and technology lessons. Information and community technology links across the curriculum are now a strong feature of the school. There are many activities in which pupils support their learning of ICT skills.

5. Pupils' achievements over time are currently being limited by the school's curricular organisation and structure, in terms of its decision to link specific elements to the three departments. This decision has a negative impact on standards of achievement in all three departments.

6. The first school currently contains pupils in Years 1 to 6, who follow a curriculum based largely on the Foundation Stage curriculum. Topic planning does not make reference to the National Curriculum, which some pupils in the first school should certainly be following, although pupils' work shows that relevant experiences are provided. Consequently, by the time they enter the middle school, which may be at the age of ten, 11 or 12 years, it is unclear which elements of the programmes of study of the different subjects have been studied. Although they are enabled to build on their knowledge, skills and understanding when they move from one department to the next, the absence of a clear audit makes it difficult for pupils to do this in the most effective way.

7. The disadvantage of the way in which the school organises the senior school curriculum, and the impact of this on pupils' achievements, is evident in two respects. Almost all Year 9 pupils are in the senior school and, consequently, they have very little science, art, geography, history or music and are not taught a modern foreign language. Pupils are not, therefore, able to build on prior achievements in subjects such as science, even though, in a number of cases, teachers' assessments of their achievements at the end of Year 8 show that they are quite capable of doing so. The restricted Year 9 curriculum means that when the more capable

pupils enter Year 10, they are denied the opportunity of following accredited courses in subjects such as science, art, history and geography.

8. The WRL programme is very good. Pupils achieve very well because teachers plan a very good range of experiences, through which pupils learn about the world of work and develop key skills in meaningful contexts. Very good young enterprise schemes, supported by work experience placements in the community and a careers education programme, enable pupils to develop independent skills as well as putting them into situations where teamwork is important. The programme also enables pupils to benefit from a very well planned link with Writtle Agricultural College, which emphasises the elements of teamwork and independence training.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their personal development, through the provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. Attendance and punctuality are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and participate very well in everything they do.
- Pupils behave very well, because they are very well managed, interested and supported.
- Relationships between pupils and with staff are an outstanding feature of the school.
- Pupils' moral and social development is fostered exceptionally well.

Commentary

9. Pupils' attendance is good and has improved steadily since the last inspection. There are very few unauthorised absences, because parents value the school highly and want their children to attend as much as possible. Punctuality is good, and any lateness is due to pupils' transport being delayed by local traffic problems in the morning. During the day, punctuality to lessons is very good. Registration periods are used effectively to settle pupils at the start of the day and to promote their social skills, for example, when questioning a pupil in the 'hot seat.'

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.7	School data	0.2
National data	8.2	National data	1.8

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

10. Pupils' attitudes to lessons, and to other activities, are very good. They arrive at school happy, calm and ready to learn. They listen well to instructions, try hard with their work and take pride in their achievements. They talk enthusiastically about their extra-curricular activities, like horse riding on a residential trip in Wales. Pupils enjoy running their own lunchtime clubs, such as the aeroplane club, and attending sports coaching camps in the holidays. Parents are delighted that their children like coming to school.

11. Pupils' behaviour is very good, both in and out of school. They respond very well to adults' very high expectations of them and develop increasing responsibility for their own behaviour as they mature. Pupils who have more challenging behaviour, such as some of those with autism, learn to improve their behaviour because of the school's very good management strategies and caring guidance. The Thriftwood Code, which highlights pupils' responsibilities, is very well established and is used by staff very effectively, and consistently, to reinforce expectations and to remind pupils when their behaviour slips. The small number of fixed-term exclusions that were applied last year was used appropriately to reinforce the school's expectations of behaviour.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	112	10	0

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

12. Pupils have excellent relationships with their teachers and other adults in the school and get on extremely well with each other. They learn to understand and accept that others have different needs to their own and willingly help them, for example, by pushing a wheelchair. Pupils are very positive when sharing their work with others and are happy to celebrate each other's successes as 'stars of the week.' The school is a happy place, where adults and pupils have mutual respect for one another.

13. Pupils' personal development is very good, because the school cares for them as individual young people. It encourages them to develop a clear understanding of right and wrong, to take responsibility and to develop independence. There are very many opportunities for pupils to work together; in physical education they co-operate very well with others and join in as part of a team; Young Enterprise activities and work experience placements are very effective in developing pupils' team work and independent skills. The Social Use of Language Programme (SULP) teaches pupils to listen carefully and react positively to others' views. Very good assemblies are used very effectively to reinforce moral and social expectations and to promote spiritual development. Pupils enjoy these very much and have a genuine 'sense of occasion' as they meet together and reflect on what they see and hear, as they participate in song and role-play. Pupils' cultural development is good and is reinforced through many visits out of school and by visitors into school, although opportunities for them to explore cultures other than their own are more limited.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Pupils benefit from good teaching and a very good level of care. Pupils' learning is supported by excellent links with parents, very good links with the community and good links with other schools and colleges. The school provides a very good outreach support service to mainstream schools. The curriculum is satisfactory overall.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good overall, with some very good features. Therefore, pupils learn well and make good progress in developing new skills, knowledge and understanding. Assessment procedures are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers engage pupils in all activities and manage them very well.
- Adults' high expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour are underpinned by excellent relationships and the appropriate use of praise and encouragement
- Lessons make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Strong teamwork means that learning support assistants make a very significant contribution to pupils' learning.
- Occasionally, lesson planning lacks sharpness and does not identify clearly what it is anticipated that pupils should learn.

Commentary

14. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, and many lessons have very good features. All pupils, including those with additional special educational needs such as autism, learn equally well. Teachers are well prepared and classrooms and lessons are generally well organised and structured. Lessons proceed at a good pace, resources are at hand and pupils follow well-established routines, such as moving into group work and helping to tidy away at the end of practical lessons. Consequently, time is used well and lessons are busy sessions, during which pupils are enthusiastic and display very good attitudes and behaviour.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 50 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	15 (30%)	27 (54%)	8 (16%)	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.

15. All adults know the pupils and their needs very well; excellent relationships and encouragement feature in all lessons and so they are generally rewarding experiences for pupils. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, both in terms of the work they produce and their behaviour. In the best lessons, they present their pupils with a good degree of challenge, with activities carefully chosen to build on prior learning and matched to the needs of different groups of pupils. At these times, very well chosen and targeted questions are also used to prompt and challenge individuals. Therefore, all pupils are included in the activities provided and they remain involved throughout the lesson. This is because, in addition to the interesting activities that are provided, teachers manage pupils' behaviour quietly, quickly and efficiently.

16. In addition to providing opportunities for pupils to develop new skills, knowledge and understanding, teachers make conscious efforts to enhance their personal development. Therefore, they use strategies that require pupils, at different times, to work independently, in pairs and in small groups. Pupils work well independently, particularly older ones, in activities such as using a computer, practising basketball skills, weighing in food technology and doing artwork. They collaborate well when working together, such as when carrying out an investigation in science, doing role-play in religious education and making paper 'work clothes' in WRL. They are also given opportunities to participate in large group activities, like whole-school assemblies, which many join in with willingly.

17. The quality, range and expertise of the many adults who work with pupils contribute much to their good learning. Classroom teams work very well together and all adults know exactly what they are to do. Skilled and well-briefed learning support assistants contribute greatly in helping to manage pupils' behaviour. They ensure that those with additional special educational needs participate fully in lessons and are included in all activities. Both teachers and learning support assistants are generally adept at knowing when to intervene and when to wait and let pupils seek out answers for themselves but, on occasion, adults do not give pupils sufficient time to work through problems. Providing too much information is also occasionally evident, when teachers make suggestions to pupils, rather than asking them questions encouraging them to make suggestions. Links with other colleagues such as physiotherapists and speech and language therapists identify specialist support and activities, and trained learning support assistants carry out these procedures. In addition, the music therapist and staff additionally trained in aspects such as Early Reading Research (ERR) and Sulp contribute significantly to pupils benefiting fully from their time in school.

18. The school has good strategies for developing pupils' speaking and listening, reading and writing skills and for enabling them to consolidate and extend these skills across the curriculum. Their successes in learning these skills owe much to the communication expertise shown by adults, as pupils with additional special educational needs are supported well by a developing range of alternative and augmentative communication systems. The school is making increasingly effective provision for pupils with particular communication difficulties through the use of PECS, Makaton signing and symbols.

19. Most lesson planning is detailed, crisp and with a clear indication of what, it is anticipated, pupils will learn. At these times, planning is based on teachers' detailed assessment information of pupils' achievements. At other times, lesson plans are less effective, as they do not identify these anticipated learning outcomes and consequently, teachers' assessment of pupils' progress is more problematic. However, even on these occasions pupils generally achieve well, because teachers' knowledge of their pupils means that they can reinforce and extend their learning.

20. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. There is frequently very good ongoing evaluation of pupils' learning during lessons, through effective questioning and plenary sessions. In addition, many teachers' records of pupils' achievements are up-to-date and comprehensive and the pupils themselves carry out evaluations of their own work, as in physical education. However, marking and annotating pupils' work is carried out inconsistently. Some is good and useful in showing pupils how they can improve but, in other instances, marking does not take place routinely or it is scant to the extent of being simply ticks or crosses. This is not sufficiently informative, as it does not identify strategies that show pupils how to move forward.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory. There are very good opportunities for enrichment activities. Resources are satisfactory, while the school's accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Too little account is taken of the requirements of the National Curriculum for most pupils in Year 9, with the result that their curriculum is unsatisfactory.
- The curriculum is not challenging enough for a small number of more capable secondary-age pupils.
- The creative use of staff skills helps to enrich the curriculum and ensures that pupils' additional special needs are met well.
- There is a very good programme of WRL, and good provision for personal, social and health education.
- There is excellent provision for pupils to take part in sports activities.
- Inadequate accommodation limits what the school can provide, particularly for secondary-age pupils.

Commentary

21. There has been satisfactory improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection. Staff have given a great deal of thought to ways of making the curriculum relevant to the pupils and preparing them for the challenges of adult life. In each department of the school, a distinct curriculum is planned. However, the organisation of pupils into three departments means that not all pupils receive their entitlement to National Curriculum programmes, and pupils in the same year group do not all have the same opportunities to learn. For instance, almost all pupils in Year 9 are in the senior school, where the curriculum takes advantage of the flexibility allowed for pupils in Years 10 and 11. As a result, these pupils in Year 9 have very little science, art, geography, history or music. In addition, they are not taught a modern foreign language or music. Although there is currently only one Year 9 pupil in the middle school, any

pupils of this age in this department do learn French and music. Similarly, any Year 9 pupils in middle school classes do not have WRL, while those in the senior school do.

22. There is a similar lack of equality in Year 5. While most pupils in this year group are in the middle school, there are a few in the first school, where the curriculum is based largely on the Foundation Stage curriculum. Topic planning for the first school does not make reference to the National Curriculum, although pupils' work shows that many relevant experiences are provided. While staff from the first and middle schools do liaise and plan together to ensure that pupils continue to build on their knowledge, skills and understanding when they move from one department to another, the lack of a clear audit makes it very difficult for governors to see whether requirements are met. For the first time, there are now some Year 5 pupils in the middle school, but current planning is based on a three-year rolling programme of topics. The school is aware, therefore, that there is a danger that topics will be repeated unless planning is reconsidered, because it does not yet take account of the fact that there are now four year groups.

23. The school takes advantage of the flexibility that allows special schools to teach National Curriculum content prescribed for pupils in a lower age range. Although this is appropriate for some pupils, it is not always appropriate for the more capable ones, as it does not enable them to reach their full potential. This is most noticeable in science, where the curriculum suddenly narrows in Year 9, although some pupils at the end of Year 8 last summer were at levels indicating that they would be capable of entering for General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) examinations in Year 11. There is no accreditation on offer in science, and too little time is allocated to the subject in the senior school for this to be a realistic goal.

24. In its quest for a relevant curriculum, the school has established a very good programme of WRL for pupils in Years 9 to 11. Much time is allocated to WRL, and this leaves less time for other aspects of the curriculum. The WRL programme forms an integral part of the school's good provision for personal, social and health education, including citizenship, and both of these make a significant contribution to the pupils' very good personal development. College links are effective in helping to prepare older pupils for the next step, and last summer 15 of the 17 leavers went on to further education, employment or training.

25. There is good liaison with other professionals, and the school is responsive to the additional needs that pupils have. A careful watch is kept on pupils' existing and emerging needs. Staff training has enabled the school to provide a good range of programmes, despite occasional gaps in the availability of therapy services. For instance, learning support staff are trained to carry out physiotherapy, as well as speech and language therapy programmes, and one colleague co-ordinates the provision for pupils with behaviour difficulties. The school has had considerable success in improving the behaviour of pupils who have been excluded from mainstream schools. Music therapy is a very effective provision for a small number of pupils, and the school is developing the use of specific programmes such as PECS, to support pupils with communication difficulties. The school's literacy strategy is good, and addresses the specific difficulties of certain pupils. For a small number of pupils with complex difficulties in the first school, additional needs are met satisfactorily. In a few lessons, inspectors found that there were too few staff for such a complex group, some of whom are considered by the school to be incorrectly placed.

26. The school's accommodation overall is unsatisfactory. There are some particularly impressive areas, such as the new foyer, the ICT suite, the food technology area and the

bungalow, which some senior school pupils use as part of the work-related programme, but other areas limit what can be taught. Inadequate accommodation certainly restricts what can be provided for secondary pupils in science. In addition, there are no dedicated rooms for creative activities; art and design and resistant materials in design and technology have only a shared facility; there is no specialist music area; the hall is a multi-purpose area, and not suitable for secondary physical education. The school attempts to compensate for this by making good use of external facilities such as a leisure centre and swimming pool, and is trying to develop links with some secondary schools in an attempt to access specialist rooms at these sites. There is a marked lack of storage space in the school, and some of the classrooms are cramped, particularly when pupils are split into groups or doing practical activities.

27. There is very good provision for supporting pupils in continuing learning after school. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, many of which are run by learning support staff. Pupils themselves initiate and run a few of the lunchtime clubs. Home / school books contain challenges that enable parents to support their children's learning at home. Well-planned residential school journeys widen the experiences that pupils have. There is an excellent range of sporting activities, as well as team competitions in sports such as hockey and football, and there are even sports activity days provided during the school holidays. The very high quality of the school's provision was acknowledged by the renewal of the nationally recognised Sportsmark in 2004. Enrichment activities also include a good number of visitors coming into school and visits for pupils. For example, pupils have visited concerts, theatres, museums, art galleries, and the Royal Opera House. There are three school musical productions each year and, during Book Week, pupils collaborated with poets to create original work.

Care, guidance and support

Provision for pupil's care, welfare, health and safety is very good. The support and guidance given to them is very good. Pupils are provided with very good opportunities to have their say in the life of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school cares very well for all its pupils, whatever their needs.
- There are excellent and trusting relationships between pupils and adults.
- The support provided by teaching assistants makes a very significant contribution to pupils' learning and well-being.
- Individual pupils are supported very well by the work of therapists and therapy assistants, input by the behaviour co-ordinator and through specialist language sessions.
- The school council is a very effective forum for pupils to contribute to the life of the school.

Commentary

28. This is a very caring school, where pupils are happy and very well looked after by all adults. Parents are very appreciative of this and say that they have every confidence that their children are happy and safe. Staff understand pupils' needs and backgrounds very well, and have excellent relationships with their parents and carers. Child protection procedures, and provision for pupils who are in public care, including liaison with key workers, are followed carefully. The system of 'pupil watch' is very effective and means that the involvement of

outside agencies in pupils' care is monitored well. Health and safety procedures are very good.

29. Pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) are satisfactory. Most are concise and contain meaningful targets that enable pupils' academic and personal development to be tracked. However, in other plans there are far too many targets and academic targets are worded imprecisely. Consequently, it is difficult for teachers to determine pupils' progress towards achieving them.

30. Staff are sensitive to pupils' needs and know them all exceptionally well. The quality of relationships between pupils and adults is an outstanding feature of the school and is evidenced in the positive atmosphere throughout and the way in which pupils are treated with care and respect. Pupils are confident to talk to adults, to share their experiences and to convey any worries that they might have. This quality of care makes pupils feel happy, confident and ready to learn. Induction arrangements for pupils who are new to the school are very thorough, which means that pupils settle very quickly into school life, no matter at what age they start.

31. Pupils benefit greatly from the high quality support provided by learning support assistants. They are very well managed by teachers and work together with them, as a team, to provide pupils with continuity of care and support. They have the best interests of the pupils at heart and are very willing to attend training, in order to improve their skills and to better understand pupils' needs. Pupils benefit very well from speech and language therapy, music therapy and physiotherapy programmes. Learning support assistants play an important role in implementing and managing the programmes, on a day-to-day basis, once they have been drawn up by the therapists. This is an important element of provision for those pupils with additional special needs. A learning support assistant has a specific responsibility as the behaviour support co-ordinator, working with individual pupils who may experience difficulties during the day. This is an increasingly effective aspect of provision, as it is encouraging pupils to become more aware of their actions and the implications of what they do.

32. Pupils have a very good say in what goes on in school and are confident that adults will listen. They are very willing to give their opinions on how the school is run and what might be improved. Pupils use the school council as a very effective forum to decide which charities to support, to organise events such as a family picnic and to devise a rota for sharing playground equipment. They appreciate the headteacher's role as their 'adviser' and are proud of their responsibilities when acting as the chairman, or feeding back to their classmates, on decisions made by the council.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school enjoys excellent links with parents and carers that contribute positively to pupils' learning and development. There are very good links with the community and strong links with other schools and colleges. The extended services and support provided to mainstream schools is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents are delighted with all areas of the school's work.
- The quality of information provided for parents is very good.
- The training programmes provided for mainstream staff, and the support the school gives to staff in these schools, are increasing strengths of the school.

- Links with other institutions are good and have a very positive effect on the learning and personal development of older pupils.
- The school makes very good use of many volunteers, agencies and facilities in the area, and it also provides a valuable resource for the community.

Commentary

33. The excellent home-school partnership results in families and carers having a very high regard for Thriftwood School. They say that the family environment and its strong sense of community, engender a feeling of extreme pride in their children. Parents are particularly positive about the quality of teaching and support from staff and the communication between home and school that helps them to feel fully involved in what is going on. They say that any worries or questions they may have are dealt with very well. Parents lend excellent support to the school and their children's learning and participate very actively in homework challenges for pupils, family workshops and at Annual Reviews of their children's Statement of Special Educational Need. The whole school community supports regular fundraising and social events very well.

34. There are frequent opportunities for parents to talk to staff about their children's progress. Annual reports are very detailed and give parents a very clear picture of what their children have been learning, how well they have progressed and what they need to do next to improve. Attractively presented half-termly newsletters keep parents up to date with school activities and are very well illustrated with samples of pupils' work and photographs.

35. The school is beginning to develop very effective links with other schools and colleges. In particular, pupils in Years 10 and 11 benefit from a link with Writtle Agricultural College. This new venture is fully funded by the school and employs the expertise of college lecturers to teach the pupils on their weekly visits. The link has been very well planned to emphasise the elements of teamwork and independence training. While at the college, pupils are given a high degree of responsibility for their own work and they are given every opportunity to integrate into the life of the college, such as mixing with other students in social areas. Staff use pupils' experiences at the college very well; they incorporate their work into their ASDAN portfolios and the results of their work form a very positive addition to their Record of Achievement.

36. The school has had limited success in providing opportunities for pupils to learn in mainstream schools. Schools have been reluctant to enable significant inclusion opportunities for pupils to be planned, but other, recently established links have maintained the impetus for working in partnership. A specialist design and technology teacher from a local secondary school works in Thriftwood one day each week, and plans are being developed to extend this link by allowing pupils to undertake work within the high school, taught by the same teacher. Such a development will enable pupils to work in specialist accommodation and use high quality resources, as well as having a very positive effect on pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

37. The school's leadership team has recently developed an on-site facility called the Acorn Centre, which is used for delivering training to teachers and support staff in mainstream schools. Schools purchase places on these courses. The deputy headteacher manages this resource and has planned and prepared a series of training events on topics such as behaviour management and the recognition of pupils with special educational needs. Mainstream staff have received these training sessions enthusiastically; they are fully booked and course members regularly give very good evaluations of the sessions. Staff deliver the

training very professionally and course content shows that topics have been researched very thoroughly.

38. Through the professional contact made in training sessions, teachers from other schools have been able to refer pupils about whom they have concern. They are then able then to make use of the school's very good outreach support service. The development of this support service has been very well managed, and the initiative is now partially funded by the local education authority (LEA). This enables teachers to arrange a series of visits to other schools. Exemplary practice has been demonstrated by the school staff in developing a system of observations of pupils and also in devising and demonstrating interventions. Parents are kept fully informed of the methods used and the progress that their child has made. Mainstream teachers' evaluations of the quality of support provided by Thriftwood staff show that their input is highly regarded by schools and parents. Monitoring and evaluation of the project by the LEA has praised the positive effects on pupils' progress and the increased awareness and confidence of the staff in other schools. The service has only been operating for two years, but is developing very well in the clarity of its operation and in the effectiveness of its work. It has become a strength of the school

39. Many people come into the school to provide additional activities such as yoga, athletics and judo, as well as professional cricket, football and rugby coaching. Pupils also go out to some of the clubs' home grounds for additional coaching, and they also visit the leisure centre for swimming and to use the resources of the fitness centre. Many other visits take place to support pupils' learning in particular subjects, such as going to the Natural History Museum, a Victorian 'living' museum, the zoo, and the Planetarium. Many pupils have very worthwhile residential trips away from home; pupils generally have two trips locally whilst they are in middle school, and one that is longer and more distant when they are in the senior department. These residential experiences are used very well to promote personal development and to develop learning in areas such as outdoor education.

40. The school's very good WRL programme makes extremely good use of the community. Work experience placements are found for many pupils in a host of very good settings. They very much enjoy their time as, for example, shop assistants, boatyard workers, care workers and nursery assistants and come away with a very good idea of what they would, or would not like to do in the future. The Young Enterprise scheme introduces pupils to many facilities in the community; they make a range of goods in school, such as greeting cards, and sell them to staff, parents and the public, often at craft fairs. The enterprise scheme brings them into contact with many local shops and other suppliers, the post office and the bank, to manage their accounts. In addition, local companies support the school by giving employees time to provide, for example, financial advice to the enterprise teams. Pupils also make a significant contribution to the community; they have assisted in a home for elderly people, worked in a charity shop, helped with cleaning out a canal and cleared litter from a local park.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and deputy are good. Other key staff's leadership is satisfactory, as is the effectiveness of their management. The governance of the school is good and governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has shown very clear vision in innovating developments in the school's provision since the last inspection.
- Other key staff share the vision for the school's development, which is enthusiastically endorsed by staff and governors.
- The headteacher has a very clear view of how the budget needs to be managed, in order for the school to achieve its priorities, and is supported by very efficient financial management systems.
- There are shortcomings in the arrangements for developing and monitoring the curriculum.
- Very good systems are in place for inducting new staff and for their performance management and ongoing professional training.
- Good management procedures track pupils' progress, and the data obtained is being increasingly well used to target areas for development.

Commentary

41. A hard working and committed governing body supports the school well. Since the last inspection, liaison between the headteacher and governors has strengthened, and governors are becoming increasingly involved in helping the school to achieve its aspirations. They do this through receipt of headteacher reports and by making formal and informal visits to the school, which are recorded and reported upon. Consequently, governors are beginning to develop insight about the school and are, therefore, better informed to challenge and question proposed developments. The governing body fulfils its role as a 'critical friend' of the school well.

42. The headteacher has shown very good leadership, both in identifying the need for such provision, and in subsequently implementing three extremely good aspects of the school's work. The establishment of the Acorn Centre, the development of outreach provision to mainstream school staff and pupils and the introduction of a very good WRL programme are all testament to very clear vision and skills in managing change. Identifying the potential for future developments is equally strong, for instance for establishing post-16 provision.

43. The quality of leadership is also evident in other aspects of the school's work. While there has been reluctance from mainstream schools to provide integration opportunities for pupils, the school's internal provision is good; all pupils with additional special educational needs are fully included in all activities. Some creative groupings of pupils have proved very effective. The transition class of pupils in Years 9 to 11 has been well chosen to provide them with a particularly effective curriculum; arrangements for small groups of pupils from different age groups to come together for additional support during literacy and numeracy sessions has had an impact on improving these skills. However, other features of leadership have proven less effective. For instance, the decision to structure the school into three departments, with a different curriculum emphasis in each department, has had implications which have not been fully addressed. In particular, the lack of full National Curriculum entitlement to some Year 9 pupils and the different curriculum provision available to pupils in the same year group are unsatisfactory outcomes.

44. The good level of management in the school is evident in many aspects of its work. Very good induction procedures, equally beneficial performance management arrangements and a focused programme of staff development have all combined to bring about change since the last inspection. The school is committed to the continuing professional development of its

entire staff; the training programme is equipping them with the new skills they require to meet the widening range and increasing severity of the learning needs many pupils exhibit. In addition, the leadership team has begun to develop effective systems for tracking pupils' progress and carrying out whole-school analyses of pupil performance. The performance of different groups of pupils and their achievements in different subjects are compared, and these compare well with the data that the LEA has just begun to publish about the comparative performance of different groups of pupils with special educational needs in its special schools. However, this data is incomplete, newly established and involves relatively few pupils, so it has only limited value.

45. The effectiveness of other key staff is satisfactory. The deputy headteacher complements the headteacher very well; they work extremely well together. Other members of the leadership team subscribe fully to the school's philosophy and carry out their work efficiently. The effectiveness of curriculum leaders is variable. Many carry out their duties well; they have a good idea of how they want the subject to develop, they liaise closely and plan efficiently. In other subject areas communication between staff is much less efficient. In these cases, members of subject teams do not have a comprehensive overview of the subject covering pupils' whole life in the school, and therefore, pupils are not enabled to follow a carefully structured subject curriculum.

46. The school's budget and financial planning are managed and controlled very well, in accordance with local authority recommendations; the last full audit found no significant areas for improvement. The budget is organised very capably on a day-to-day and long-term basis by the head teacher and governors, working closely with the school bursar and administration staff. The headteacher has a very clear view of how money needs to be spent, based on an accurate identification of the school's priorities. Major decisions are taken with very good consideration being given to pupils' needs in personal, work-related and academic areas of learning. Staff training is a particular priority for financial spending, and the school's resources are generally used effectively and efficiently. The school has planned, successfully, to save sufficient money to fund some major spending projects over a period of several years, such as improvements to the foyer and office area and the computer provision. The funds that are currently being carried forward represent a deliberate and planned saving strategy.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1038699
Total expenditure	1046705
Expenditure per pupil	9101

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	24505
Balance carried forward to the next year	16499

47. Best value principles are well established. Priorities are decided in consultation with the governors and members of staff, parents, pupils and outside agencies with which the school has close links. Value for money is sought in all of the school's spending. In its turn, the school makes a good effort to give a valuable and effective service to the people that it serves. The school provides good value for money.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

Provision in work-related learning is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Key skills are developed effectively and applied in work-related activities.
- Pupils receive nationally recognised accreditation for their achievements.
- This area of the curriculum makes a particularly strong contribution to pupils' personal development.
- The provision is allocated a generous amount of time in Years 9 to 11 in the senior school, although it is not available to Year 9 pupils in the middle school.

Commentary

48. Work-related learning is well established in the senior school, where it occupies almost two days of each week in Year 11. The provision has been developed well since the school was last inspected, and further improvement is formally identified in the school's improvement plan. The requirement for schools to provide older pupils with experience of the world of work is met not only in Years 10 and 11, but also by including most Year 9 pupils. Therefore, preparation begins early.

49. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers plan a very good range of experiences, through which pupils learn about the world of work and develop key skills in meaningful contexts. Skills are carefully assessed so that they can be formally recognised through external accreditation. The school piloted the ASDAN Key Steps accreditation for key skills, which is now used for all pupils who experience WRL. Through this, pupils' progress is carefully monitored.

50. During the inspection, a very successful lesson saw Year 10 pupils being introduced to teamwork. The challenge was to design and make a uniform, using only newspaper and sticky tape, suitable for wearing when carrying out a particular job. This session culminated in a fashion show to music. Pupils demonstrated considerable confidence and self-esteem during this task, which was carried out sensibly and maturely. As each uniform was modelled, other pupils had to guess which job it was linked to, and they made thoughtful, sensible suggestions. The teacher and Connexions adviser prompted well, by asking questions, and they encouraged the development of suitable vocabulary, such as *tabard* and *hard-hat*, by using this well themselves.

51. Pupils are very well motivated. As they tackle tasks such as enterprise activities, they show a keen sense of responsibility. For instance, with support from school staff and business advisers, they take on the running of a small business, such as *Thrifty Bags*. They sell shares, open a bank account, elect a board, work hard to manufacture products to a high standard, and market these widely in the local community, as well as through the school. All pupils are paid a basic salary, and there are additional allowances for those in positions of responsibility, or those who make an extra contribution, such as working on production at home. The enterprise culminates in a presentation event with other schools, and this represents a considerable challenge for pupils, who need to speak into a microphone in front of a large audience.

52. Understanding of jobs and the world of work are developed from an early stage. For instance, pupils in the first school, as part of their topic on *Day and Night*, learn about people who work at night. Further up the school, there is careful preparation for work experience. In

Year 9, pupils make a series of visits to a good range of workplaces. They consolidate their literacy skills very well when they telephone companies to ask whether they might visit; later they write letters of thanks, and record their experiences. Work experience in Year 11 is accredited as part of Project Trident, and reports from employers testify to the success of the preparation that goes beforehand. Employers have described pupils as 'hard working', 'extremely helpful and polite, 'a pleasure to have in our store', as well as having 'lifted our spirits on numerous occasions'. Pupils' own written accounts show that the experiences have helped to shape their career preferences and plans.

53. Leadership of WRL is very good. A number of staff, including one part-time teacher, work most effectively as a team to implement the programme. Good liaison with external agencies supports the success of the programme well, and there are clear plans to further develop WRL as a key feature in achieving the school's vision statement.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 1 – 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's arrangements for supporting pupils with particular literacy difficulties are good.
- Teaching and learning are good and so pupils achieve well.
- The curriculum is relevant and strongly related to pupils' own experiences, but pupils in Years 7 to 9 do not study Shakespeare plays.
- Good screening arrangements help to identify pupils who need additional support, even though there are occasional inconsistencies in assessment.

Commentary

54. Overall, pupils achieve well in English. The school has good strategies for developing pupils' speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. Consequently, achievement in each of these is good overall, and Year 11 pupils leave school with suitable, nationally recognised accreditation. When pupils are given individual targets, these are challenging and are generally achieved in the time scale identified.

55. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise the important skills of speaking and listening in different subjects of the curriculum, and a good range of strategies to ensure that those with communication difficulties are catered for. The Social Use of Language Programme is used to good effect. A skilled member of the learning support staff leads small groups, and pupils across the school soon become aware of what constitutes 'good sitting' and 'good listening'. For instance, they soon learn that they should not interrupt others who are speaking; the most skilled pupils are able to interpret facial expressions and body language.

56. The school is making increasingly effective provision for pupils with particular communication difficulties. It has started to introduce PECS in the first school, so that pupils with little speech, or who speak indistinctly, are encouraged to present cards, on which symbols and text appear, to adults, when they wish to communicate a need, such as going to the toilet. Makaton signs are used well in the first school too, and a few pupils learn to sign themselves. During their time at the school, pupils acquire confidence and skill when speaking and listening. Several junior pupils already have the confidence to make announcements in a whole-school assembly, for instance. Senior school pupils experience preparing and conducting interviews with adults outside school, and making telephone calls. Year 11 pupils learn about the conduct of meetings, including following an agenda and taking minutes, as part of their enterprise work. They even make an oral presentation to a large group at the end of the project. They leave school as confident and competent communicators.

57. Pupils' generally good achievement in reading is associated with good screening procedures, and an effective whole-school approach to the teaching of reading skills. In Years

7 to 9, achievement in reading is satisfactory. They read a good variety of material to help them cope as adults, such as newspapers and catalogues, and a suitable range of fiction and non-fiction texts, but they do not read any Shakespeare plays. All pupils are screened when they arrive at the school, and while this procedure is generally accurate, on occasion learning support staff's inexperience results in some inconsistency. Generally, however, procedures are effective in identifying pupils with particular difficulties and so they have additional sessions to give them an extra boost. Results of retesting show that pupils generally make quite dramatic gains in their reading ages and comprehension scores. A particularly skilled member of teaching staff has led the introduction of ERR. This is a short daily programme, for all pupils, which gives them practice in the recognition of common words and letter sounds, as well as improving their ability to blend sounds together or break words up into their component sounds. Pupils are tested at the end of each week, and records show that they make good progress in acquiring skills.

58. Writing skills are taught carefully. Pupils in the first school steadily acquire skills in making marks, joining dots and forming letters. Letter formation forms part of the daily ERR sessions too. Where it is appropriate, pupils use computers for writing, including the use of a software package that generates symbols and text. Pupils write for a good range of purposes. Younger pupils write their weekend news and short pieces associated with the topics they study; older ones write lists, letters, reports and creative pieces, such as poems. As they approach school leaving age, pupils practise filling in forms, signing cheques and keeping diaries. By the time they leave school they are competent to write in a range of situations.

59. In lessons, pupils are managed well and they behave well. Good support from learning support staff helps pupils to remain productive throughout lessons. The good progress that pupils make in lessons results, in part, from teachers' use of accurate assessment. This enables them to place pupils in ability groups, and to provide tasks that present a suitable challenge. In addition, ongoing assessment is helpful, as pupils are given good feedback from staff. However, overall assessment procedures are just satisfactory. On a small number of occasions, work that is incorrect is marked as though it is correct, and in one instance a member of support staff corrected a pupil when the response given was correct. The curriculum leader has put together a portfolio of pupils' writing, that has been assessed and moderated by other staff, but there is not yet anything similar for speaking and listening or for reading.

60. The subject is led and managed well. A team of staff work together well to combine their areas of expertise and develop the subject for the benefit of pupils. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, as pupils now make good progress. Staff are well trained in the various approaches used, and they usually implement them well. Resources are satisfactory; the library is used well by pupils, and has a reasonable stock of books, including popular talking books. However, the library is used as a thoroughfare and it does not have a listening station, newspapers and magazines are well out of date, and the recently appointed librarian has identified a need for a greater range of age-appropriate texts for less proficient older readers.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

61. There are good opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend their literacy and language skills in subjects other than English. Lesson plans identify key words relevant to subjects being taught, and terms are explained well and used correctly. There are good opportunities for pupils to speak and listen across the school, including in assemblies and

school council meetings. The skills of reading and writing are integrated well into many lessons. Literacy skills are particularly well developed in work-related learning activities.

French

62. Insufficient teaching was seen for judgments on learning and achievement to be made. However, a number of factors suggest that provision in this subject is unsatisfactory. French is only taught to two of the four classes that have pupils in Years 7 to 9 and, therefore, some pupils are not receiving the full National Curriculum to which they are entitled. In particular, the current class that contains only Year 9 pupils has it in it some higher attaining pupils but they are not provided with the opportunity to study the subject. No one has responsibility for co-ordinating the subject and, as a result, planning in the two classes who are taught French tends to be carried out in isolation. In addition, the limited teaching that was seen showed that the teacher's subject knowledge is very insecure, to the extent that pupils were taught inaccurate vocabulary. If the school continues to offer this subject, significant development needs to be carried out.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some lessons are very well taught, although teaching and learning are satisfactory overall.
- A lack of improvement since the previous inspection reflects shortcomings in leadership and management.
- There is good provision for less capable pupils and for those with additional learning needs.
- Clear plans of what is to be taught in the long term do not underpin the work provided for pupils.
- Mathematical skills are broadened and reinforced well in other subjects of the curriculum.

Commentary

63. Throughout the school, much good teaching is well focused on pupils of different ability levels, and pupils often make good progress in lessons. Teachers have positive relationships with their pupils, and often set a good pace and high level of challenge in the activities they provide. They have a good understanding of the subject and know their pupils well. Consequently, some teachers are able to teach well-targeted lessons from one day to the next, even though they rely on very informal assessments of pupils' short-term progress. Resources are used well, and learning support assistants are effective in supporting individual pupils who need extra help. Less capable pupils, and some with autism, often receive valuable additional support in a separate group for part of lessons. Pupils' behaviour and attentiveness are managed well, and they have good attitudes and learn at a good rate.

64. At other times, learning is less effective because of deficiencies in planning. Some lessons are a series of activities to be worked through, rather than a clear identification of what it is anticipated pupils will learn. Lessons are generally structured in line with the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy, but the mental 'warm up' sometimes continues too long, and the final plenary session is often simply a different activity, rather than being used as an opportunity for assessment through reviewing what pupils have learned.

65. Even though they learn well in lessons, in the longer term pupils' achievements are not so good. Their progress over time is satisfactory because there are limitations in other aspects of teaching, most notably in the assessment and marking of pupils' work. As a result, teachers do not always challenge pupils by planning work that gradually becomes harder. As a result, pupils may go from some difficult, high level work, to very easy work in the same area of learning a few days later. This slows down their overall rate of progress. In addition, the lack of detailed assessment information makes it difficult for teachers to judge accurately how much progress pupils have made in the longer term. When teachers create targets for pupils, and put them together in IEPs, there are usually far too many. They are often statements, taken directly from national schemes, of what pupils should be able to do if they are at a particular level, rather than being real targets for individual pupils. There is little sign that teachers are working towards them specifically, or assessing pupils' progress with them in mind.

66. The improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory, because the level of achievement in Years 1 to 9 has declined from good to satisfactory. The long-term plans of what should be taught are still not sufficiently well developed. Year 11 pupils can receive accreditation through Entry Level examinations, but, generally, the courses that lead to nationally recognised qualifications are limited. The subject has not been led and managed well enough to bring about the necessary improvements. The major shortcoming in management of the subject relates to the lack of detailed long-term planning, in terms of a progressive subject curriculum, of what should be taught to pupils as they move through the school. The outline plans are only for one year, and do not cover all the different aspects of the subject; they do not constitute a progressive programme that covers all the time that pupils are in a particular department, such as the first school. This means that pupils in Years 1 to 5, for example, are all learning the same things at the same time. They repeat them each year for the whole time they are in that stage of the school, perhaps four or five years. The same applies to the middle and senior parts of the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. Pupils benefit from good opportunities to practice and extend their mathematical skills in other lessons throughout the school. They are particularly evident in subjects such as science, geography and history. Particularly good promotion of numeracy skills is seen in the business enterprise projects involving some classes in the middle and senior schools, and in the linked design and technology lessons. There are many very good examples of pupils buying ingredients for cookery projects, measuring and weighing ingredients for different amounts, deciding the cooking times and temperatures, working out the costs, selling the finished meals (and many other technology items), paying the proceeds into their bank account, and donating good amounts to charities.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The amount of time made available for teaching in Year 9, and the curriculum provided, are inadequate.
- There are many good features in the quality of teaching and learning.

- The expectations of pupils' achievements in the middle and senior schools, particularly higher attaining pupils, are unsatisfactory
- Accommodation and resources are unsatisfactory.
- Pupils' attitudes to science are very good.

Commentary

68. Although pupils' learning in lessons is good, their achievements over time are unsatisfactory. This is because of deficiencies in the amount of taught time made available for learning science, the inadequate nature of the subject curriculum and the accommodation and resources.

69. Pupils in the first school make satisfactory progress; they are taught science through a topic approach, such as 'Water' and 'Light and Dark'. Teachers are successful in adapting National Curriculum requirements to the needs of the pupils and, therefore, they make good progress in developing their investigative skills. They have researched projects such as making dirty water clean and have completed work on floating and sinking to investigate the density of different materials. This progress is maintained in the middle school. Pupils in Year 8 show great interest in their work, and were fascinated by their experiments with mirrors and filters to explore some of the properties of light. As a result, they develop well their growing ability to question and hypothesise about the results of their experiments. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions and to provide their own solutions.

70. The provision for pupils in Year 9 is unsatisfactory; the curriculum is unsatisfactory and, therefore, pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory. This is because the organisation of the school means that this age group is provided with a flexible upper school curriculum that is more in keeping with that followed by pupils in Years 10 and 11. Therefore, their timetable provides for very little science teaching and so they are denied the opportunity to study the subject in any depth. This is particularly unsatisfactory for the current cohort. The school's assessment records show that some of these pupils' attainment levels are such that if they continued learning the subject in Year 9 they could certainly benefit from following an accredited course when they are in Years 10 and 11.

71. Pupils in the senior school are very restricted in the amount of time available to study science. The school has chosen not to offer science as a specific area of study for this age group. Science in Year 11 is taught only as a small part of the curriculum, and pupils' learning is restricted to work on the local environment. Therefore, they are unable to follow courses leading to external qualifications in science at the end of Year 11. The expectations made of the higher attaining pupils in this age group are unsatisfactory.

72. Teaching and learning in lessons is good. Teaching throughout the school is characterised by very effective pupil management and the pupils, in turn, respond very well to the brisk pace of lessons and the well-chosen activities. Generally, teachers have good knowledge of the subject. They are skilled in reminding pupils, through effective questioning, about what they have learned and in encouraging them to think more deeply about their work. In particular, teachers are very effective in organising activities which build on the pupils' prior knowledge and understanding of the subject. For instance, small groups of Year 8 pupils were fully engaged in investigating some of the properties of light. They worked together very confidently and harmoniously and were very well supported by the teacher and learning support assistant, who encouraged them to question each other and to work collaboratively to test

theories. They remained totally absorbed in the work, even when unsupervised, and were happy to encourage each other's efforts.

73. The overall management and leadership of the subject are unsatisfactory because of the curriculum shortcomings and the limited opportunities for pupils in the senior school. However, the work in the lower and middle schools is well co-ordinated and the two curriculum leaders work together effectively. They exert a strong influence on the quality of teachers' planning and they have begun to develop the process of monitoring achievements and teaching, although at present this is largely informal and unstructured.

74. The accommodation for teaching science is unsatisfactory. There are inadequate facilities for teaching the subject to older pupils and plans to use teaching rooms and equipment at local high schools are at a very early stage. The creation of the wildlife garden has been innovative and has had a very positive effect on pupils' learning; younger pupils in particular have very good opportunities to work in an attractive and well-maintained real life environment. Resources for younger pupils are satisfactory but are not adequate for teaching older pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching results in pupils learning well in lessons; they make good progress.
- Good leadership and management have developed provision well since the last inspection.
- Very good quality accommodation and resources are used effectively.
- Pupils are provided with good opportunities to rehearse their skills, and to develop new ones, through other subjects of the curriculum.

Commentary

75. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Provision has improved across the school as a result of the strong teamwork between the curriculum leader and a specialist learning support assistant; they work very well together, sharing expertise and subject knowledge.

76. Pupils are encouraged to develop an interest in ICT from an early age. They are presented with activities that enable them to begin to understand the idea of cause and effect; they press buttons, switching electrical equipment on and off, and use computers to develop simple ICT skills. More capable pupils sequence sounds and symbols, using a mouse to click and drag objects, and the most competent use a graphics program to improve their work. During their time in the middle school, pupils use specific programs to consolidate their keyboard skills and, in so doing, they learn appropriate subject-specific vocabulary such as 'delete' and 'enter'. By the end of Year 11, pupils have achieved a variety of ICT skills, including making videos, control and modelling techniques and basic word-processing skills. As a result, all pupils have the opportunity to receive accreditation for their work, through an Entry Level examination and the ASDAN Youth Award Scheme

77. Some teaching is carried out by a specialist learning support assistant and, overall,

pupils are taught well. Adults have good subject knowledge and have the benefit of having access to very good quality resources and accommodation. Therefore, they are able to present pupils with appropriately challenging activities. Those with additional special educational needs are fully included, because adults provide them with specialist programs and adapted hardware, such as touch screens. The appropriateness of the activities is evident in pupils' interest and attitudes in lessons. They behave very well, many work independently, and they wait patiently for adult support if it is not immediately available. Relationships are extremely strong in all lessons.

78. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The curriculum leader has produced detailed planning documentation, with all strands of the National Curriculum now included, and an effective subject action plan. However, routine monitoring and evaluating procedures are still at an early stage.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79. Links across the curriculum are now a feature of the school. Teachers provide pupils with many good opportunities taken to support the learning of ICT skills. These include activities such as Year 9 pupils using a laptop computer to write up their work, and those in Year 6 using an interactive mathematics program to consolidate their learning. These skills are developed through more creative activities, too. Older pupils produced labels for the containers for the chicken curry they had made in WRL; they made a film about the book they had read, *The Mousehole Cat*; and Year 9 pupils used a program to compose a simple piece of music.

HUMANITIES

History

80. It is not possible to make judgements on pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching and learning, as too few lessons were observed during the inspection. In the teaching that was observed, pupils achieved well, because the teacher used questioning well to remind pupils of their previous learning and to challenge their thinking about the next steps. A good pace to the lesson ensured that pupils maintained their interest so that they were able to contribute enthusiastically in a discussion about the introduction of postage stamps and why they became necessary. In well-planned group activities, pupils gave a high level of support for each other's efforts and the teacher and learning support assistants supported all pupils very well.

81. Pupils in the first school and Years 7 and 8 learn about history through topics, such as 'space'. This reinforces their knowledge and understanding about significant events in their lives and they begin to learn about the differences between the past and the present, through interesting visits to local museums and places of historical interest. These older pupils are encouraged to look at original evidence about historical events, such as the sinking of the Titanic during an interesting topic on 'disasters', and the effects of volcanic eruptions. Resources and visits into the community are used well to enhance pupils' learning. For instance, their learning about Victorian times has been enhanced by the displays of Victorian artefacts borrowed from the local authority library service and a visit to the Braintree 'living' museum, where they had the opportunity to dress in Victorian costume and to look at aspects of everyday life, such as children at work and the different clothes people wore.

82. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Although there is no overall curriculum leader of the subject, teachers jointly, and effectively, plan an appropriate curriculum. However, the organisation of the school means that the majority of pupils in Year 9 do not have the opportunity to study history and this means that they are not receiving all subjects of the National Curriculum. Consequently, they are unable to access an accredited course in Years 10 and 11, although some history skills are developed in their ASDAN work.

Geography

83. It was not possible to observe lessons during the inspection and, therefore, no judgement can be made on pupils' achievements or on overall provision for the subject. Pupils in the first school and Years 7 and 8 learn about geography through topics, such as 'water'. For the younger pupils, this involves using community facilities such as visiting a local launderette to watch the action of washing and drying, while those in Years 7 and 8 went out to observe streams, water hydrants and signs. However, the way in which the school is organised into departments, and the subsequent change in focus of the curriculum in Year 9, result in the majority of pupils in Year 9 not having the opportunity to study geography. This means that they are not receiving their entitlement of all subjects of the National Curriculum. As a result, they are unable to do an accredited course in Years 10 and 11, although ASDAN work does develop some geography skills, such as map work.

84. A feature of the geography curriculum is the use of local facilities to bring the subject to life. Pupils' learning is enriched through visits to the River Chelmer, Danbury Hills and the Mount Nessing Windmill. Work in Blackmore village and Chelmsford town contributed very well to promoting numeracy skills, as pupils completed people surveys. In addition, residential trips are used very well to widen pupils' experiences of Great Britain, such as a stay in Wales, when they consolidated their knowledge of maps as well as participating in a wide variety of activities like kayaking, mountain cycling and caving

Religious education

85. Too few lessons were observed for judgements to be made on pupils' achievements, the overall quality of provision or on improvement since the last inspection. In the teaching that was observed, pupils learnt very well. The teacher's very good subject knowledge, and her use of good quality resources and artefacts based on the Seder plate, developed pupils' knowledge of Judaism very well. An interesting range of activities maintained pupils' interest. These included role play to get pupils to empathise with how the Israelites felt about their experiences of the plagues. Subsequent follow-up work was matched well to individual pupils' needs and therefore their attitudes and behaviour were very good throughout. Relationships were very good.

86. The subject curriculum is in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus, and so pupils gain knowledge and understanding of all major world faiths as they progress through the school. As a result, pupils' work in the subject in Years 10 and 11 contributes to their ASDAN module on appreciating the values and beliefs of others. Pupils' understanding is further promoted through visits to places of worship like a mosque, synagogue and church and school activity weeks. During these activity weeks, pupils have experienced the features of both Christian and Hindu weddings, at which both staff and pupils dressed accordingly.

TECHNOLOGY

Art and design

87. Insufficient lessons were observed to make judgements on pupils' achievement and overall provision for the subject. In the lesson that was observed, teaching and learning was very good, linking with the class's history topic of the Victorians through a study of the Victorian art of découpage. Displays around the school show that much of the artwork is similarly linked to other subjects, such as English, design and technology and science. For instance, pupils have created a beautiful reproduction of Vincent van Gogh's "*Starry Night*" picture as part of their work on the theme of space and the moon landings.

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress because they are taught well.
- There is good support for pupils' computer and communication skills.
- Pupils' mathematical skills are very well reinforced and extended.
- The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- There has been a good improvement since the previous inspection.

Commentary

88. Pupils gain skills well in both food technology and when working with resistant materials. They design, make and evaluate many items, from model bridges to chicken curries. In addition, many of the activities help pupils in their learning of wider life skills, such as food preparation, budgeting, hygiene, using tools and kitchen utensils safely, and working co-operatively.

89. The overall good quality teaching and learning is based on clear planning that builds well on pupils' previous learning. Pupils learn well because they have good relationships with all staff, and teachers choose work that challenges pupils to try their best. Teachers are able to do this because they have very good knowledge of the subject and this is evident in their teaching, which is imaginative and enthusiastic. For instance, a group of pupils in Years 4 and 5 derived great fun from making pizzas in a well-organised lesson that was a very good social occasion, as well as being effective in teaching pupils about hygiene and kitchen safety skills.

90. Pupils' use of computers during lessons is appropriate and effective in enhancing the quality of their work. Pupils use them to plan their work, to write about what they have made, and for activities such as designing labels for the food they have prepared. These activities develop and strengthen their computer skills well. Teachers also use lessons as opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. They encourage the use of a wide range of technical words and subject vocabulary; they challenge pupils to follow increasingly complex instructions; and pupils are required to write about their findings after a design project. Mathematical concepts and skills are reinforced very well, through activities like measuring lengths of wood and plastic, measuring millilitres of flavouring for a curry, and weighing the sugar and flour. Pupils work out the costs of ingredients, and the price to charge for the meals that they sell to staff and parents.

91. The good improvement since the previous inspection is seen in a much broader range of learning experiences. There is now a greater level of challenge for pupils, and improved assessment of pupils' progress, including the introduction of coursework that leads to nationally recognised qualifications in Year 11. A teacher from a local secondary school teaches some lessons at Thriftwood, and his specialist input has been another factor in raising pupils' levels of achievement.

92. There is currently not a co-ordinator for this subject; individual teachers do their own planning and organising. This is not an acceptable long-term arrangement, although it is working satisfactorily at the moment.

Music

93. The subject is taught to all pupils in the first school but only to some in the middle school. Year 9 pupils do not have the opportunity to learn music, and this means they are not receiving the full National Curriculum. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not study the subject. Other aspects of the school provide pupils with good musical experiences. School assemblies make good use of music to establish an appropriate atmosphere, and it is used effectively in lessons including physical education, such as when a first school class worked on a simple dance routine to the theme from *Star Wars*.

94. Not enough lessons were observed to enable judgements to be made on teaching and learning and pupils' achievements. In the teaching that was observed, pupils achieved well, because the lesson was well planned and the activities built on pupils' prior learning. Appropriate resources were readily to hand and pupils handled instruments carefully and sensibly. Pupils were managed well as the teacher set out the 'rules' early and effectively. Pupils were required to stop playing instruments when the teacher told them to and raised his hands; they responded to this very well. Such activities encouraged pupils' listening and watching skills very well so that they were able to develop their musical skills too, playing and recognising loud and soft sounds.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well and make good progress.
- A very good subject curriculum provides pupils with a very good range of progressive experiences.
- A very good range of out-of-school activities and community links support learning.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Commentary

95. Pupils' achievements in physical education are good; pupils in each department of the school make good progress and build on a range of skills in gymnastics, swimming and games. Over time, pupils make significant gains in their confidence in physical education as they continue to improve their fitness and their abilities in the basic skills of co-ordination and balance. In Years 1 to 5, pupils learn to work in teams, supporting each other in floor exercises and dance, while older pupils learn more advanced skills in a variety of games. Pupils in the senior department are encouraged to take part in structured fitness training, which they enjoy and participate in enthusiastically. Assessment procedures are used well at these times, as pupils keep their own records of their gains in strength and fitness and they work hard to improve their scores. All pupils in Year 11 have the opportunity to gain accreditation in Entry Level examinations.

96. Teaching of the subject is good and, therefore, pupils learn well. All lessons have some very positive features. Teachers expect pupils to do their best at all times, and they respond very well to the challenge. Teachers make very good use of praise and encouragement, and the careful observations they make of pupils as they work enable them to intervene appropriately to support each individual pupil. As a result, the pupils remain motivated as they experience success throughout the lessons. Although they are not subject specialists, teachers in the first school teach well-organised lessons and this enables pupils to develop new skills and understanding.

97. Pupils in the middle and upper schools benefit greatly from specialist teaching. The teacher's considerable knowledge and understanding of the subject have a very positive effect on the pupils' progress. Lessons are well planned and proceed at a brisk pace. The pupils' involvement in activities, and their work rate, is constantly monitored. For instance, pupils in Years 6 and 7 were taught the basketball skills of bouncing the ball, catching and passing and as they gained in confidence they were encouraged to move around the hall while using these new skills. 98. The teacher's well-timed interventions enabled each pupil to achieve very well. Pupils' personal development was also promoted very well, so that, eventually, they were able to co-operate successfully with a partner and they supported each other confidently. In very well managed fitness sessions with senior school pupils, the teacher structures groups effectively so that pupils record each other's scores and give valuable support and encouragement to each other.

99. A very enthusiastic curriculum leader manages the subject well; the school has recently been awarded the nationally recognised 'Sportsmark'. Simple but effective records are kept of pupils' involvement, achievement and attainment and older pupils discuss their interests and progress with the teacher, who is then effective in adapting work for them. Detailed long and short-term planning provides teachers with a comprehensive variety of activities. These enable pupils to experience a range of activities that develop their skills progressively. An impressive range of extra-curricular provision and links with the community support the curriculum very well; players from local amateur teams and professional clubs coach pupils in football, rugby and cricket. Accommodation is unsatisfactory, particularly for older pupils, such as a multi-purpose hall rather than a specialist facility, but this is enhanced considerably by the well-planned use of outside facilities. Pupils are given many opportunities to use resources like the leisure centre, a local sports college, and a centre for riding for the disabled. Pupils are actively encouraged to join lunchtime clubs for sports and for fitness training, and there are many opportunities for them to take part in sporting events with other schools. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for PSHE meets statutory requirements and is very broad and relevant.
- Good teaching and learning result in good achievement across the school.
- Good use is made of community resources.

Commentary

100. This aspect of the school's provision permeates all aspects of its work, in addition to the planned programme of activities. A very wide range of experiences offered in this subject includes a planned programme of PSHE, including citizenship, WRL, and ASDAN's Youth Award Scheme in Years 9, 10 and 11. Elements are also taught through tutor time, physical education and assemblies. The subject was not reported at the last inspection so it is not possible to judge improvement.

101. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers plan a very wide range of real and relevant experiences, and they make good use of external agencies, the local community, visits and visitors to bring the subject to life. The curriculum reflects the non-statutory guidance for personal, social and health education, as well as the requirements for citizenship and WRL.

102. At an early stage, pupils become acquainted with the Thriftwood Code, and there are frequent reminders of what is expected of them as members of the school community. In the middle school, pupils learn about rules and government, while those in the senior school use the *Make it Real* game to create a simulation of a town, in which they extend their learning about rights and responsibilities in a society. The school council offers pupils a real experience of how individuals can exercise their democratic right to vote, in order to bring about change. The school also allows pupils good opportunities to influence the overall curriculum, and they take advantage of these by running lunchtime clubs that reflect their interests and hobbies.

103. Pupils' individual needs are met well. All pupils are assessed accurately, using the 'p' scale¹, and records show that they make clear progress. For older pupils, there is suitable accreditation, such as Project Trident, the ASDAN Youth Award Scheme and Key Steps, and there are plans for the introduction of a further accreditation next year. In addition, suitable targets are set for those individual pupils who need them, for example to improve their behaviour. Targets are usually met within the timescale set.

104. Sex and relationships and drugs education form an important part of the planned programmes for pupils in all departments. This programme is progressive and relevant to pupils' ages. For example, Year 11 pupils learn first hand about the responsibilities of looking after a small baby when they care for a virtual baby, electronically programmed by staff to cry at certain times. They also visit high street chain stores to find out about the clothes and equipment that are needed. Similarly, careers education starts early in the school, so that

¹ P levels give performance indicators for pupils with special educational needs. There are eight levels leading into the Level 1 descriptors of National Curriculum subjects.

older pupils know about career choices, how to apply for jobs and courses, and about relationships, behaviour and practices in the workplace.

105. All pupils are encouraged to take responsibility, and they are keen to do this. Younger pupils learn about gardening in the school grounds, so they are well prepared for later responsibility such as maintaining the school's very good wildlife area. By the time they are in Year 11, pupils do voluntary work in charity shops and take part in environmental projects and luncheon clubs, for instance. This is accredited as part of Project Trident.

106. Leadership of the subject is good; it contributes well to the overall vision for the school, and there are plans to extend several areas, despite their already high quality. Management is satisfactory; it is at an early stage of development, since an overall curriculum leader has only recently been appointed.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
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	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	1
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7). In a special school such as this, **standards achieved** are judged against individual targets and not national standards.*

