

INSPECTION REPORT

LARCHES HOUSE SCHOOL

Ashton-on-Ribble Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119112

Headteacher: Mr Alan Banes

Lead inspector: Ross Maden

Dates of inspection: 24 – 26 May 2005

Inspection number: 268693

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

© Crown copyright 2005

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Emotional, behavioural and social needs
School category:	Pupil referral unit
Age range of pupils:	11 – 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	68
School address:	Larches Lane Ashton-on-Ribble Preston, Lancashire
Postcode:	PR2 1QE
Telephone number:	01772 728567
Fax number:	01772 723294
Appropriate authority:	The local education authority
Name of responsible officer	Mr Neil Scanlan
Date of previous inspection:	8 January 2001

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Larches House School has changed in character since the last inspection and now provides for permanently excluded pupils or those who are at risk of permanent exclusion and for pupils who are long-term non-attenders. There are 68 pupils on roll (50 boys and 18 girls). The majority of pupils are in Years 9, 10 and 11 but there are also 10 pupils in Year 8. Five pupils are registered with both Larches House and their home high school, but only one of these is full time at the Larches House School. A few pupils are taught at home, a smaller number in further education or in other off-site work experience or other provision.

Attainment on entry is well below the national average. Many pupils come from disadvantaged homes and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. All pupils in the school have special educational needs, but there is one pupil with additional specific learning difficulties and six pupils with statements of special educational need which set out the extra provision that they need. One of these statemented pupils has additional speech and language needs. Altogether there are four pupils in public care and some of these are statemented. References throughout the report to pupils with special education needs are referring to these seven pupils.

Over half the pupils who left Larches House School re-entered other high schools. A small number went into further education or employment. Nearly a quarter of those who left last year went into neither employment nor education.

The vision statement for the school is 'to provide a safe, secure, and welcoming learning environment in which skilled staff provide challenging, yet, vulnerable, young people with high quality personalised educational programmes based on their individual needs'.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2793	Ross Maden	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology
32741	Ian Stewart	Lay inspector	
17530	Mary Cureton	Team inspector	English Art and design English as an additional language
20055	Sheila Entwistle	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Citizenship
20622	Ann Sydney	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education Special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES	17
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Overall Larches House School provides a satisfactory level of education within an ambitious programme of improvement. Pupils make satisfactory progress across most subjects. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but are good in Years 8 and 9. The leadership and management of the school are good. The effectiveness of the school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. Some pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory. Some pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are very good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils receive very good careers education which effectively prepares them for life after school.
- Pupils are well served by the high quality of support provided by teachers and especially from support assistants.
- Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good.
- The leadership from the headteacher, ably supported by his leadership team, provides a clear direction for raising standards.
- Standards of attainment are low.
- Many pupils have poor self-esteem and lack self-confidence.
- Attendance for some pupils is low and punctuality to lessons is unsatisfactory.

Although the school was inspected in 2001 the nature of the school and the type of pupils it serves have changed since that time. It is therefore not possible to make valid comparisons between this inspection and the last one.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 9	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Year 11	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards are below average, but some pupils achieve well in lessons. Standards on entry are usually well below those expected for the pupils' age as many have had a disrupted education, often with poor patterns of attendance. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Standards are below average because many pupils have difficulties in retaining information over a period of time and are often not able to build upon previously learned skills and knowledge. Achievements in personal development have increased pupils' confidence. There are few opportunities for pupils to take nationally accredited qualifications.

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory but their punctuality to lessons and their ability to remain in lessons are unsatisfactory. **Pupils' personal development including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.** Attendance is improving for many pupils when compared with their attendance at high school but overall attendance is unsatisfactory.

The number of fixed period exclusions is high but since the new headteacher was appointed there has been a sharp reduction in the number of exclusions in 2005.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. Accommodation and resources are good as are the quality of the school's links with the community and with other schools and colleges. The school is good at seeking and acting on pupils' views. **The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall**, but it is good in Years 8 and 9. The curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils are receiving sufficient teaching time, and this is having an impact on standards, especially in science. The curriculum fulfils the LEA's curriculum policy.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are good. The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good and he is well supported by his leadership team and the LEA. The governance provided by the LEA and the management committee is good. The vision for improvement and the commitment to inclusion from the headteacher are particular strengths. There are weaknesses in the leadership provided for special educational needs, design and technology and religious education. Management is good. The well-written and detailed policies effectively identify a clear vision for improvement and raising standards. The school improvement plan for the current year is based on a realistic evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses at the school and is a good framework for raising standards even higher.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Very few parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire and none attended the parents' meeting. Most parents who replied were positive about the school, with most stating that staff treat their children fairly. They believe that staff expect their children to work hard. Only half believed their children enjoyed school; a majority that pupils did not behave well. These views were mirrored by the pupils' responses. Most pupils thought they were well taught and that staff treated all pupils fairly and with respect. Most thought pupils did not behave well and the majority thought it was a good school to be at.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

Raise standards by:

- Increasing the level of challenge for pupils in lessons;
- Increasing the use and range of externally accredited examinations;
- Providing individual programmes for all pupils, especially those in Years 8 and 9.

Raise pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem by:

- Increasing the opportunities for independent and collaborative learning.

Continue to improve attendance and punctuality by:

- Identifying strategies to ensure that pupils arrive at lessons on time and concentrate on their work in the classroom for the whole lesson.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in subjects and courses

Standards are below average. Pupils' achievements in lessons are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are making satisfactory progress in most subjects. Their progress is good in outdoor pursuits, ICT and art and design.
- Standards in speaking, reading, writing and listening are below average.

Commentary

1. Pupils' standards on entry are well below average. In part this is because many of the pupils have suffered prolonged absences from schooling in the past. Pupils' achievements in lessons are satisfactory. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls in the school. Achievement over the long term is not as impressive because of two factors. Firstly, many pupils have difficulties in retaining information over a period of time and are often not able to build upon previously learnt skills and knowledge. Secondly, many pupils have poor patterns of attendance. This issue is recognised by the school, within its improvement plan, and staff have already started to make an impact on improving pupils' attendance. Few pupils take external examinations because most pupils at the school have short-term placements prior to their re-integration into mainstream schools or colleges.
2. In English, standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening are generally below average. Pupils' standards of literacy are below average. They lack confidence to speak out and be heard in lessons, and some have to be coaxed to do this. When pupils gain confidence, they speak clearly and well. All are capable of careful listening when they are interested in the lesson. Membership of the school council allows pupils to address others and enter into more formal discussion and debate. Girls have good independent opportunities for group discussion. Keywords help pupils' reading in a range of subjects including mathematics, English, science, personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship. Word frames and prompts, well adapted to pupils' needs, help the writing process in a range of subjects. Pupils have good access to computers to draft their writing and to present it in striking and original ways.
3. In mathematics standards are below average. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of mathematical skills and frequently have wide gaps in their knowledge and understanding. The progress that pupils make in lessons is satisfactory; however, their long-term gains in knowledge and understanding are weaker. Their achievements overall are restricted because many pupils are unable to build upon and extend their understanding of what they had previously learnt. Work is not carefully individualised to support pupils' needs.
4. Standards in science are below the national average but achievement is satisfactory and is improving. This is as a result of the very good teaching by the newly appointed co-ordinator.
5. Pupils are making good progress in their understanding and use of ICT as a result of good teaching. The combination of very good relationships and interesting challenges ensures that pupils achieve well. Some pupils are able to work well without constant supervision.
6. In PSHE and citizenship pupils are achieving satisfactorily. In other lessons observed, which included geography and history, pupils made good progress. Pupils are achieving well in art and design and in outdoor pursuits.

7. Pupils with additional special educational needs do not achieve as well as the rest of the pupils. For some, their behaviour has led to working off-site ('distance learning' or in a care home) or their attendance is poor. One pupil has been on roll for over a year although a short-stay school is not the educational provision named in statements. There is no specialist teaching for specific learning difficulties or for speech and language difficulties and the present provision is unsuitable for these pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attendance and punctuality at school are unsatisfactory. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although attendance is unsatisfactory, new measures are having a significant effect on improving it.
- The school's ethos is of a very positive behaviour policy linked to an effective rewards scheme.
- Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are generally low.
- Spiritual awareness is unsatisfactory although pupils' understanding of how they should live in a community is good.
- The school promotes good relationships between pupils.

Commentary

8. Overall, pupils' attitude to work is satisfactory, although in some classes observed it was at least good. Behaviour of pupils in and around school is satisfactory but is often good in class and reflects the continuous encouragement of staff for pupils to be well mannered and behave properly. The positive behaviour policy of the school, which engenders an ethos of self-discipline and self-control, is reflected in the achievement awards scheme, which is celebrated each week in assembly and is a big motivator in the improvement of pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Pupils value this scheme highly. The 'girls' group' that has been formed decided on its own rules for joining, which include 'no put downs', 'listen to others' and 'respect others'. It has had a positive effect in resolving breakdowns in relationships and improving behaviour. The number of serious incidents of bad behaviour recorded by the school has been progressively dropping, with a significant reduction in February and March 2005. This indicates that the promotion by the school of its positive behaviour policy is beginning to have a significant impact.
9. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Spiritual awareness is unsatisfactory; moral and social development is satisfactory, with the element of taking responsibility for their actions as a member of a community being good. Pupils' appreciation of their own and others' cultural traditions is satisfactory. Except for the few who form the school council, pupils' willingness to be enterprising and take on responsibilities is generally poor, in spite of the school's efforts to encourage this in order to cultivate pupils' personal development. Pupils' confidence and self-esteem are low, although there are signs that policies introduced by the new headteacher are beginning to have a beneficial effect in this area, such as with the confidence boosting impact of being a member of the school council. Pupils are effectively being prepared for living in a multi-cultural society.
10. The school promotes good relationships between pupils, as exemplified by the fact that they know the difference between right and wrong – "it is wrong to 'take the mickey' out of people with disabilities and right to be polite, understanding and show respect".

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2003/ 2004

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	7.0	School data	16.0
National data	7.2	National data	1.1

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

11. Attendance has been poor, at 77 per cent for 2004 and 75 per cent for the Spring term 2005. However, in the current term it has improved to 89 per cent as a result of policies introduced by the new headteacher. Also, the attendance rate for recently admitted pupils has improved from 41 per cent, for the six weeks prior to admittance, to 80 per cent. Whilst the difficulty with taxis not always delivering pupils to school on time is a recognised problem, pupils often come late to classes, making punctuality unsatisfactory. Not all pupils are able to concentrate, nor can they remain in the classroom for the whole of the lesson.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	64	35	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	3	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0

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

12. The number of exclusions in the last school year was high. Since the new headteacher started in post in January 2005 the number of exclusions have been dramatically reduced.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are very good. Accommodation and resources are good as are the quality of the school's links with the community and with other schools and colleges.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. It is good in Years 8 and 9. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are stronger with younger pupils and in science, mathematics, art and design, careers and ICT.
- Support assistants are very effective in dealing with incidents of challenging behaviour.
- A good use is made of ICT to support teaching.
- Expectations are not always high in lessons.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	6 (18%)	15 (46%)	9 (27%)	3 (9%)	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.

13. Teaching and learning are stronger with the younger pupils than they are with the older ones. Teaching and learning are very good in science, good in mathematics, art and design, careers and ICT and satisfactory in all other subjects.
14. In many lessons teachers create a learning atmosphere that is both challenging and supportive. A balance of learning opportunities that include practical activities and discussion gives pupils the confidence to attempt new work. However, as a result of their previous educational experiences many pupils lack confidence and have low self-esteem and give up too easily when faced with appropriate levels of challenge. Lessons are well planned with an appropriate variety of tasks. Pupils do not always respond appropriately to the teaching that is offered and on occasions the quality of their learning does not match the quality of teaching. Teachers are skilful in managing pupils' behaviour and learning support assistants in particular are very effective in dealing with challenging behaviour very effectively. On occasions the level of challenge is not always high enough, which contributes to pupils losing concentration and becoming disruptive. The positive nature of the teaching ensures that pupils can gain the confidence that breeds success. This is particularly noteworthy in pupils who have emotional problems and who respond very positively to an atmosphere, which is both friendly and challenging. Teachers' expectations are not always high enough. There are occasions when teachers and support staff accept levels of unacceptable behaviour, in particular the use of bad language.
15. Where teaching is strongest, assessment, marking and questioning are used well both to consolidate and to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. In lessons which are otherwise satisfactory, assessment is not being used to identify appropriate levels of challenge on the work set for pupils.
16. Many teachers make good use of ICT to support teaching. It has been identified that there is a training need for staff to ensure that the new electronic whiteboards are effectively used. The use of ICT to support learning in mathematics and science is not well developed but pupils do have good access to computers to draft their writing and to present it in striking and original ways.
17. School-wide strategies for literacy inform the majority of the teaching with an emphasis on keywords and spelling.
18. All pupils have individual educational plans with targets that they know. However, some of these targets are too vague to be able to check on progress, and this is an area for training identified in the development plan.
19. There is no teaching expertise in specific learning difficulties or in speech and language difficulties as required by two of the pupils with additional special educational needs. Some staff use computers as an alternative to handwriting, and this helps, but there is no specific software for pupils with specific learning difficulties or speech and language difficulties.

20. On arrival, as part of their initial assessment, pupils complete a behaviour questionnaire. Targets on the individual education plans that teachers use are mainly about behaviour. There are times when poor behaviour leads to underachievement in lessons, despite good teaching.

Assessment

21. Assessment of pupils' work and progress is satisfactory and improving. The school's developing assessment systems are generating a lot of information about achievement. This information is used to track progress but it is less well developed in setting targets for pupils. Increasingly, teachers are modifying and improving their teaching, as they understand more about how their pupils learn.
22. Marking of pupils' work is good. However, when work is assessed, pupils do not consistently receive written or spoken comments that combine clear evaluation with advice for improvement. There is insufficient detailed dialogue between the teacher and individual pupils, or small groups of pupils, about the quality of work.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Curriculum development, including innovation, is very well managed.
- Preparation for later stages of education and employment is a major strength.
- The match of support staff to the curriculum is very good.
- Provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

23. The curriculum is satisfactory. It provides an appropriate range of opportunities for pupils, which cater for their interests and aptitudes. The curriculum for pupils in Years 8 and 9 is good because it provides a broad range of National Curriculum subjects with a strong emphasis in English, science and mathematics likely to help pupils' reintegration into mainstream education. All pupils have full access to all subjects. Provision complies fully with the policy of the LEA.
24. Preparation for further study and employment is a major strength and careers lessons begin as early as Year 8. Pupils have good opportunities for fully supported work experience in Year 10, besides lessons in work-related learning and a range of experiences planned to extend their career ambitions. They visit a local college for a range of taster courses likely to lead to further education. An individually designed alternative curriculum is envisaged for September for those unlikely to be speedily reintegrated into school at the beginning of Year 10. Planned provision includes extended work experience where pupils are already successfully engaged in the world of work. Activities undertaken as part of the 'Prince's Trust' support pupils' emotional development and enhance their capacity to interact with others socially and in the work place. Girls' emotional development is addressed in a college-based course which ranges from emotional literacy, health and hygiene to 'Baby think it over', which teaches the realities of teenage pregnancy. Although there is some accreditation, the provision of externally accredited courses for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is limited.
25. Opportunities for curriculum enrichment are satisfactory. Strengths of provision are the residential opportunities offered to pupils and opportunities for them to enjoy challenging outdoor activities. The school provides supported distance learning facilities for 12 pupils who are temporarily excluded. This is regarded as an interim measure until more appropriate

curriculum programmes can be put in place for them. Personal, social and health education is satisfactory. Sex and relationships education, and education on the abuse of drugs and alcohol are dealt with effectively as part of the provision.

26. Since the last inspection the school has introduced design and technology, music and art and design into the curriculum for Years 8 and 9, although the modern foreign language has been dropped. The curriculum for the younger pupils is now balanced, and that of pupils in Years 10 and 11 diverse and appropriate.
27. There is a satisfactory match of teachers to the curriculum. The teachers of English, mathematics, science and ICT are suitably qualified and well experienced. The match of support staff to the curriculum is very good and is a significant strength. All are well trained for the job they do and make a substantial contribution to the teaching and learning at the school. Accommodation is good. The building, dignified and handsome, is set in imposing gardens. Adaptations provide sufficient classrooms for the full range of subjects. The rooms are well decorated and inviting. There is no graffiti. Accommodation in the main house is supported by additional buildings in the grounds, which are suitable for their purpose. Outdoor games space is, however, inadequate, but the school makes good use of a local leisure centre. Resources for learning are good.
28. Some pupils with statements do not have access to the full National Curriculum that they are entitled to. Some pupils do not benefit from learning how to work collaboratively or relate to others.
29. Pupils' files generally come with them from their 'sending' school and Larches House supplements this with a good range of tests of literacy, numeracy and behaviour. The results are available to all staff. One class, the 'flexi' group, was set up for pupils new to the school who had difficulty settling in. It was intended to be for two or three weeks and had pupils of every age.

Care, guidance and support

The provision of care, welfare and health and safety is very good. Pupils' involvement, through the school's seeking and acting on their views, is good. The support, advice and guidance pupils receive in both personal and educational development, based on monitoring, are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The arrangements for child protection and the health and safety of pupils are very good.
- Although provision for support, care and guidance is good, insufficient use is made of the extensive data that is collected for each pupil.
- Pupils are clear that there are members of staff with whom they have a good enough relationship to be able to trust with any problems they may have.

Commentary

30. Procedures for child protection and health and safety are very good and staff know what to do in the event of an incident. A dedicated member of the management committee oversees rigorous health and safety procedures. This ensures that pupils and staff work in a safe environment that provides effective support for pupils' learning. Records of incidents are kept securely, as are any incidents of bad behaviour. Risk assessments for all educational visits are done by school and vetted by the LEA. The new headteacher instigated an audit of the premises, which has already resulted in significant refurbishment throughout the school, both in terms of décor and equipment. This has significantly improved the learning atmosphere in the school. Pupils basically feel safe in school apart from occasional outbreaks of bullying, which are dealt with promptly by the school. Pupils make extensive use of the Internet on the

ICT facilities and this is protected from access to inappropriate websites by the LEA security system. The ICT staff member can see exactly what any pupil is doing at any time and has complete control over the pupil's computer.

31. Pupils get good support, advice and guidance from their teachers although the monitoring of their progress, using the extensive data on them that is collected, is not done on a consistent basis yet. The process of re-integration into mainstream schools is reviewed on a weekly basis and is a good feature of the school. Induction arrangements for new starters are satisfactory even though records do not always arrive in time to be of most use. Guidance on further studies and career opportunities are good throughout the school.
32. Pupils confirm that they have good relationships with at least one adult in the school, to whom they know they could turn if they had problems, in the safe knowledge that they would get appropriate help. The school seeks out the views of pupils on a fairly regular basis and does take notice of them. The school council plays an active part in this respect and has a real voice in the activities of the school, as, for example, when debating whether or not to have a head boy and girl in the school with prefects/monitors, all of which help to foment responsibility. It also helps to develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
33. All pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans (IEPs). The format of these has recently been improved. Targets are commonly about behaviour; many pupils have similar targets. Some of these are not specific enough; for example, 'will access education in the school'. The new IEPs have not been reviewed yet and it is difficult to demonstrate progress because earlier versions are not on file. For statemented pupils there is not always sufficient emphasis on their very specific needs. There has been no special needs co-ordinator for most of this school year. The new co-ordinator is organising annual reviews and transitional reviews. The school computer network is not used for sharing information.
34. So far there are no behaviour modification programmes, although this is an area the school wants to develop. Pupils complete behaviour questionnaires on entry that can act as a starting point. There is a well-qualified counsellor on the staff.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has created links with the community that are good, whilst the links with parents are satisfactory. Links with other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are good links with the local community.
- The management arrangements for shared provision with local secondary schools and colleges are very good.
- Educational links with other schools are good.
- Mechanisms for the transfer or re-integration of pupils into mainstream education are good.

Commentary

35. Links with parents are satisfactory and improving. Parents are generally satisfied with their children's progress. Information to parents is provided by termly newsletter, reports and by regular parent/teacher meetings. The newsletter has no negative messages, just focusing on pupils' positive achievements with the specific intention of raising pupils' self-esteem. Progress reports are sent twice a year to parents; reports give targets for attendance now and will give targets for learning in the near future. They give a clear picture of the pupil's progress. Parents are pleased with the new format of the reports. The prospectus sets out school policies in a clear and concise way, providing parents with sound information and the school's expectations.

36. Parents' views are sought via an annual questionnaire and informally at meetings with staff. This gives parents the opportunity to create or strengthen links with the school which they seem reluctant to do. Homework is not done on a routine basis although some parents think that the school provides an appropriate level of homework for pupils. Complaints and concerns are dealt with mostly by the LEA although there are no problems with parents making appointments with staff to discuss any issues.
37. Links with the community are good, with educational visits outside the school and visitors from the local community to the school continuing to widen and enrich the curriculum well. Outdoor pursuits are a feature of the school, which, together with the school's involvement with the Prince's Trust, endeavour to raise pupils' confidence, and self-esteem.
38. The management arrangements with local secondary schools and local colleges for shared or linked provision are very good, with the headteacher invited to be a part of the secondary schools' headteachers' group. This provides a forum for sharing good experience to improve the quality of school provision. The school enjoys inter-school sporting activities that provide opportunities for enhancing pupils' confidence and self-esteem – it won the LPRS football tournament in 2004. Educational links and relations with local secondary schools and colleges are good, which makes for good re-integration or transition, where appropriate, into further education.
39. For pupils with special educational needs the school has good links with the education psychology service, the child and adolescent mental health service and social services. Relationships with mainstream secondary schools are developing.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, leadership and management are good. The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good and he is well supported by his leadership team and the LEA. The governance provided by the LEA and the management committee is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The vision for improvement and the commitment to inclusion from the headteacher is a particular strength.
- The very good leadership provided by the headteacher and his leadership team motivates and influences staff and pupils.
- There are weaknesses in the leadership provided for special educational needs, design and technology and religious education.

Commentary

40. The headteacher has a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the unit and he has a clear vision of what is needed to raise standards. His strong leadership has motivated and influenced staff and pupils. His calm manner allows pupils to feel very comfortable in approaching and talking to him. In providing leadership and management he is very well supported by his leadership team and the LEA.
41. Members of the leadership team have supported their colleagues well in responding to the changes that have been introduced since the newly appointed headteacher took up post. There is still further work to be done to improve the quality of teaching and learning but much has already been achieved in a very short period of time. The very good leadership provided by the headteacher and senior staff has contributed significantly to raising standards in the school. The headteacher is committed to running an inclusive school and this is reflected by the reduction in the number of exclusions since he took up post.

42. Subject and pastoral leadership are mainly good. There are some weaknesses in the leadership of design and technology, religious education and special educational needs. These issues have been identified in the school improvement plan and are effectively being tackled.
43. Management is good. The well-written and detailed policies effectively identify a clear vision for improvement and raising standards. The school improvement plan for the current year is based on a realistic evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses at the school and is a good framework for raising standards even higher. It reflects the commitment of the headteacher and senior staff to inclusion. The plan identifies appropriate issues for improvement and for each issue there are clear strategies with identified criteria for success. Appropriate timescales for their completion have been clearly identified. The school day runs smoothly. Procedures are clear and are generally followed. Performance management and appraisal are properly established. The school's self-evaluation is very good and action is taken on its findings. Pupils on entry to the school are tested but less well developed is the use of this information to identify individual learning plans for pupils.
44. The professional development of staff is good. The school is strongly committed to improving the expertise of all staff. There are effective arrangements in place for the induction of supply teachers and staff new to the school. Performance management is fully implemented and contributes well to the identification of training needs.
45. Members of the management committee have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They work closely and well with the headteacher. Members of the management committee play a very supportive role in planning for the school's improvement. Some aspects of governance are retained by the LEA and in respect of these aspects governance is good.
46. The school has been without a special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) for most of the year. The recently appointed SENCO is providing good leadership, establishing routines and building up the information that staff have on individual pupils. Confidential records are kept securely and record keeping is well organised by a support assistant. The school's policy for special educational needs is being revised to ensure that the building and the curriculum are accessible to a wide range of special needs.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	£957,574	Balance from previous year	£11,789
Total expenditure	£960,390	Balance carried forward to the next	£8,973
Expenditure per pupil	£14,123		

47. Financial control is good. A detailed and critical audit was conducted in February 2003. All of the recommendations contained in the auditor's report have been fully implemented.
48. The principles of best value are applied effectively. For example, it was decided not to continue with the twice a week sweeping of the drive for litter once the contract finished. A gardener has been appointed to sweep the drive daily in addition to tending to the gardens. This represents good value for money as the quality of the service has been increased at a more cost effective price.
49. Larches House School provides satisfactory value for money.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- An inconsistent approach to teaching and learning has led to better provision for pupils in Years 8 and 9 than in Years 10 and 11.
- Support staff are well used to keep pupils on task.
- Lessons are well planned.

Commentary

50. Pupils are making satisfactory achievement in Years 8 and 9 in response to good lessons where interpersonal relationships are very good and elicit a wholehearted response from pupils. They have good opportunities to answer specific questions put by the teacher. They join in the lessons co-operatively and show an interest in learning. Pupils' reading in the lessons seen during the inspection was mainly confined to simple tales, which they were able to annotate and resequence. This led to them making satisfactory progress in writing. Good, careful instruction on punctuation and paragraphing improved the accuracy of what they wrote. Marking is conscientious and pupils know what to do to improve their work.
51. Pupils' progress in Years 10 and 11 has been interrupted by long-term staff absence, but they are now beginning to make satisfactory achievement, particularly in the communication aspect of work-related learning. In a Year 11 lesson they listened carefully to the teacher, read aloud competently and annotated text effectively in preparation for answering questions orally on workplace experience. In this lesson, pupils used a template to construct an acceptable letter of application.
52. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and good in Years 8 and 9. Lessons are well planned in all years, and resources are appropriate to fully support learning for all pupils. Support staff are always well used to keep pupils on task and give well focused help and attention. Class management is particularly good in Years 8 and 9, where learning is better than in Years 10 and 11. Despite the good pace of lessons in Years 10 and 11 and the provision of carefully judged activities, pupils are not always fully engaged with the work in hand as they fail to concentrate for the whole lesson.
53. Leadership and management are satisfactory and have seen the school through a difficult period of staff absence. Now that staffing is stable, departmental provision has been audited anew. Teacher training needs have already been partly addressed by establishing constructive links with a specialist practitioner. A departmental handbook has been prepared to ensure consistency of approach to teaching and assessment. Joint planning meetings, already scheduled, are designed to further support this process. A scheme of work for pupils in Years 10 and 11 has yet to be tackled. The department is aware that joint decisions on the provision of accredited courses have to be taken soon. A programme for the necessary formal monitoring of teaching, learning, delivery of the curriculum and assessment is being urgently prepared.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

54. The school has a whole-school literacy policy, which is regularly monitored. Pupils' standards of literacy are below average. They lack confidence to speak out and be heard in lessons, and some have to be coaxed to do this. When pupils gain confidence, they speak clearly and well. All are capable of careful listening when they are interested in the lesson. In mathematics, they cope well with questions carefully adapted for reluctant speakers. In this subject, learning objectives of the lessons are frequently discussed and this helps pupils to learn. Membership of the school council allows pupils to address others and enter into more formal discussion and debate. Girls have good independent opportunities for group discussion. Pupils make satisfactory progress in reading and writing. Keywords help pupils' reading in a range of subjects including mathematics, English, science, PSHE and citizenship. Word frames and prompts, well adapted to pupils' needs, help the writing process in a range of subjects including English, history and geography. Pupils are encouraged to write in complete sentences in their PSE lessons. They have good access to computers to draft their writing and to present it in striking and original ways.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The newly appointed co-ordinator is committed to raising standards.
- Teaching is good in Years 8 and 9.
- Attitude and behaviour of pupils in Years 10 and 11 are good, particularly in Year 11.
- Opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support learning are limited.

Commentary

55. Standards are below the national average for most pupils but near average for pupils taking GCSE. Achievement and learning are satisfactory over time. In order to raise standards, the curriculum is to include the use of ICT to support learning and a new system of assessment is due to be introduced.
56. The quality of teaching is good in Year 8 and 9 and satisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was observed, where insufficient challenge for the pupils resulted in a lack of progress. The strengths of the teaching in both key stages are planning which takes account of the needs of individual pupils and the dedicated assistance offered by support staff. There is full inclusion in all lessons when teachers use targeted questions matched to pupils' ability to enable all pupils to participate fully. Teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards but pupils do not have the opportunities to use ICT to support learning. The curriculum is currently being reviewed so that this aspect will be fully included.
57. Pupils respond well in lessons and behaviour is mostly good; in Year 11 behaviour is exemplary. Pupils have a good attitude to learning and they are happy to discuss their work. Year 11 pupils have a maturity of approach which has resulted in good progress.
58. Assessment of pupils' progress is satisfactory and well recorded, but pupils are not always made aware of how they can improve. The proposed new system of assessment, using National Curriculum levels, should remedy this deficiency. Day-to-day marking is thorough with encouraging comments but these are not always sufficiently analytical.
59. Leadership in the subject is good. The co-ordinator has a clear sense of direction and priorities for an improvement in standards have been identified. Management of the subject is satisfactory.

Numeracy across the curriculum

60. From lesson observations, there is little evidence that pupils practise numerical skills in other subjects. The only exceptions were in a geography lesson and a form period in Year 9. In geography, pupils examined and analysed a rainfall graph in Brazil and, in a quiz in form period, some questions in the quiz had a mathematical content. The main opportunity to reinforce basic number skills regularly is at the award of points at the end of each lesson. To raise staff awareness of opportunities for pupils to develop numerical skills, a planned policy for numeracy across the curriculum is being prepared.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
- Standards are below average but there is evidence of recent improvement.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Science is not taught in Years 10 and 11.

Commentary

61. At present, standards are below the national average but achievement is satisfactory and is improving. This is as a result of the very good teaching by the newly appointed co-ordinator.
62. The teacher's lesson planning is very good, and particularly appropriate for the needs of pupils whose attention spans are short. Lessons have a variety of activities designed to retain pupils' interest and concentration whilst always keeping focus on the main topic. Pupils respond very well to this approach and to the encouragement and understanding of the teacher. Pupils gain in confidence and ability because of the very good teaching which they receive. They concentrate on their tasks very well and showed how involved they were in the lessons by the relevance of the questions which they asked. The support assistants were fully involved in lessons and made a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
63. The teacher has an effective strategy for extending pupils' scientific vocabulary. Many of the frequently used words are clearly displayed in the classroom. If a pupil hears one of those words during a lesson, he tells the teacher he has noticed and is awarded an extra point. Although most of the work is completed on worksheets, these are pasted into exercise books so that pupils have a permanent record of what they have learned. Systems of assessment are good. Opportunities are taken at the end of each lesson to assess what pupils have achieved. Marking is regular and pupils' work is formally assessed at the end of each unit of work.
64. Subject leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has a clear view of how the subject should develop. This includes developing the use of ICT to support learning and to introduce science in Years 10 and 11. Because of the high standard of his teaching, the co-ordinator, a member of the senior management team, provides a good role model for other teachers in the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject co-ordinator has very good ICT skills.
- The range of up-to-date computers is good.
- External accreditation is available but does not always meet the needs of all pupils.
- Teaching is good and provides a range of challenging activities.
- Very good relationships enable pupils to develop their confidence and skills in using ICT.
- Assessment procedures lack detail.
- In some areas of the curriculum, the use of ICT to support learning is underdeveloped.

Commentary

65. Pupils are making good progress in their understanding and usage of ICT. Teaching is good and through a combination of very good relationships and interesting challenges, ensures that pupils achieve well. This was illustrated in a good lesson involving the use of hyperlinks. Within the 40 minute lesson all pupils had mastered the applications of using hyperlinks and bookmarks in devising their own interactive quiz. In a lesson characterised by good humour and effective support from the assistant, pupils worked well and with increasing confidence. Some pupils worked well independently and needed minimal support from the teacher. Standards are low in part because until recently there has not being a clear scheme of work for teachers and pupils to follow.
66. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils respond well to the teaching and are clearly interested and motivated to do well in ICT. Most pupils have the confidence to undertake and develop their ICT skills and this is a tribute to quality of the teaching and the support provided. Lessons are well planned. Relationships are good and the teacher sets high standards for behaviour.
67. The leadership and management of ICT are good. The newly appointed co-ordinator clearly understands the need to extend the range of external accreditation and to improve pupils' achievements through the further development of assessment procedures. The co-ordinator has a clear vision of how to raise standards and to improve teaching and learning. Similarly, he is encouraging staff to make more use of computers and the new whiteboard equipment with which the centre is provided. There is good technical ICT support to enable teachers to use ICT effectively. Resources are good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

68. The school is well equipped with up-to-date computers. Some teachers are making some use of ICT to support both teaching and learning, but there are weaknesses in the use of ICT to support teaching and learning in mathematics and science. Some teachers are using the new electronic whiteboards to support their teaching and most are willing to learn to exploit the full potential of using electronic whiteboards. It is too early for the school to have established a consistent approach by all teachers in using ICT but the school improvement plan indicates that this is one of the priorities for the coming year.

HUMANITIES

Provision in humanities is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The topics that pupils study in Years 8 and 9 prepare them well for a return to mainstream school and there are appropriate examinations for Year 11.
- Achievement is held back by poor behaviour in some lessons.
- Humanities, religious education and environmental studies are treated as separate subjects. No one is monitoring any overlap or how one subject could contribute to another.

Commentary

69. Humanities is taught as separate geography and history lessons, one lesson for each per week in all the classes. In Years 10 and 11, pupils have a choice of two extra lessons in environmental studies. Year 10 also have a half day following the Prince's Trust activities, which include some humanities. Topics in geography and history are well chosen to give a breadth of knowledge of both British culture and the wider world. In most cases the topics have relevance to pupils' interests. Humanities makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. While standards are a little lower than in mainstream schools, pupils make satisfactory progress. In some lessons they achieve well owing to the teacher's very good subject knowledge and good matching of work to the needs of pupils with literacy difficulties.
70. By the end of Year 9 pupils have learned a range of skills in history. They can list a range of historical sources that includes looking for historical evidence in paintings, and know the difference between primary and secondary sources. In geography, they study different ecosystems and the way rivers and the sea mould the landscape. They take part in some fieldwork. This all prepares them well for a possible return to mainstream school. By the end of Year 11, in history lessons they have studied the Second World War and the Holocaust, the experience of black people in America, and mediaeval life in England. They have a good grasp of how people can end up mistreating each other. In geography, they cover the retail industry, the growth of towns in developing countries, national parks, fieldwork and a project. Topical subjects are introduced such as the flooding in Bangladesh. Environmental studies in Year 10 is at an early stage of development. Planning for this is still sketchy.
71. Teaching and learning in humanities are satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good in some lessons, poor behaviour can mean that pupils do not learn as much as one would expect. In some lessons in humanities and in environmental studies, because the teaching groups are small, pupils have difficulty coping. They play to the audience, often using bad language. Teachers and support staff work hard to keep pupils motivated and out of trouble. Assessment in humanities is good, with quick-fire questions and answers and quizzes in class, and careful marking of work. Teachers are good at designing materials to help pupils with literacy difficulties, but they do not use their knowledge from assessment to stretch more able pupils. Sometimes too much time is spent on colouring activities or drawing graphs, where it is the content that is important, not the skill of drawing. Computers are used well to give pupils with poor handwriting an alternative that they take to with enthusiasm.
72. Leadership in humanities is satisfactory. The teacher has good knowledge of both subjects but the links to similar subjects need developing; for example, Year 11 undertake outdoor pursuits for a whole day each week and this might naturally add to pupils' opportunities for practical geography. Environmental studies is a free-standing subject although there are many natural links with the humanities curriculum. The day-to-day management of humanities is good, with a constant searching for improved ways of recognising achievement, and development of resources.

73. No lessons of **religious education** were observed during the inspection because they were timetabled on other days. Religious education is not a compulsory part of the LEA's curriculum for short stay schools.
74. Year 8 and Year 9 pupils have recently started to have one lesson of religious education each week. Leadership is unsatisfactory because there are two religious education teachers but no agreed subject leader with responsibility for planning.
75. In the short amount of time it has been taught, Year 8 pupils have learned a little about Hinduism and Christianity and been involved in discussions about arranged marriages and beliefs in life after death. Year 9 pupils have studied Sikhism. Pupils' work is well presented and religious education gives an opportunity for them to write longer answers and to be involved in role play. In the future pupils will be studying Islam and will look at emotions such as anger and envy, grieving and reconciliation, using examples from the Bible to learn more about handling their feelings. This will make a good contribution to pupils' moral and multicultural education and support work they are doing in their personal social and health education lessons.
76. The school should ensure that parents are informed of what is covered in religious education lessons and that there is an alternative for pupils who may be withdrawn.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' design and making skills are weak.
- Support assistants provide good support for learning.
- Lessons are well planned.
- Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.
- There are no planned schemes of work to allow pupils to develop and build upon their skills.

Commentary

77. In Year 9, pupils worked well and made satisfactory progress in making models of trainers using fine wire and polystyrene. These pupils had already made their own designs and understood clearly that design briefs have to be modified in the light of practical problems encountered when trying to convert designs into models. Design skills were weak as were practical skills. In the main this is because there is no scheme of work that enables pupils to apply or build upon the skills they have previously learnt. Year 8 pupils showed difficulty in concentrating and gave up too easily when faced with designing and making mobile phone holders.
78. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Non-specialists provide most teaching. Careful selection of the tasks set for pupils is made to ensure that the tasks fully meet pupils' needs. Support assistants provide good support for learning. Some use has been made of ICT to support teaching and learning, for example in designing the faces for clocks. Lessons are carefully planned but the full range of National Curriculum programmes of study is not being offered. A notable feature of the teaching is the sensitive one-to-one help and tuition during practical sessions. Pupils respond satisfactorily to the teaching. In most lessons pupils concentrated well and behaviour was good but on occasions concentration levels and interest in the work were minimal from most pupils.

79. On a day-to-day basis a temporary, non-specialist supply teacher leads the subject enthusiastically. However, leadership and management are unsatisfactory as there are no planned schemes of work to cover the time pupils are in the school.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is well led and managed.
- The curriculum is good and well supports pupils' cultural understanding.
- Teaching and learning are consistently good.

Commentary

80. Overall pupils are achieving very well. Learning in lessons is good in response to practical activities that appeal strongly to pupils. Teaching is consistently good. The teacher is well able to engage the interest of pupils who concentrate intently on the work in hand. Pupils are well managed, so that behaviour is good and time well used. Teaching is highly knowledgeable. Lessons are well planned, and a rich and ambitious curriculum provides good level of challenge as pupils experiment with a number of painting techniques and look at pictures by the artists associated with them. This enabled them to fully engage with the technique of pointillism, for example, in a lesson in Year 10. Learning in this lesson was well supported by a range of pictures by Seurat in which pupils were enabled to see the subtleties of colour in the dots that constitute his work.
81. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development in their study of neo-Impressionism, the architecture and decorative techniques of Gaudi, native American totem poles and styles and images of aboriginal art. Links with the community are fostered by a variety of communal art projects.
82. The leadership and management of this successful department are very good. The requirements of the National Curriculum are well covered and imaginatively adapted to the requirement of pupils. Liaison with the community is very good.
83. **Music** was sampled and not subject to a full report. Provision in music is **satisfactory**.
84. Two lessons, one taught in school and one at a partner institution, were observed during the inspection, in which teaching and learning were satisfactory. Lessons are well planned from a good knowledge of the subject. There are good resources which are well used. Classes are managed well. An appropriate draft curriculum supports provision. The subject has been efficiently introduced, and shows a competent level of leadership and management of resources.
85. **Physical education** was sampled and was not treated to a full inspection report. One lesson of outdoor pursuits for Year 8 was inspected. In this lesson pupils made good progress in developing their rock climbing skills. They were enthusiastic and tried hard to improve their performance. They were well supported by teaching and support staff along with the resident instructor at the centre.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenships is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- To improve standards, the headteacher has used the results of a comprehensive audit to identify areas of development.
- The curriculum is under review so that the subjects may be effectively integrated into other subject areas.
- Good teaching in Years 10 and 11 leads to pupils' learning being recognised by accreditation.
- There is no co-ordinator to lead and manage the subject.

Commentary

86. The programmes of study for both subjects provide pupils with satisfactory learning opportunities. All lesson plans show the link between personal, social and health education and citizenship. These include modules about sex and drugs, as well as providing lessons for pupils to learn about their place in the local and wider community. In Years 8 to 9, some aspects of PSHE, especially those relating to emotions, are taught in religious education lessons. Assemblies offer an opportunity for pupils to reflect on personal issues. Observation of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that achievement is satisfactory.
87. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 8 and 9. Across the school lessons are very well planned, support assistants give dedicated assistance and all pupils are fully integrated into lessons. In Years 10 and 11 teaching and learning are good. A wide variety of learning resources is effectively used to support learning. Topics concerning sexual relationships are treated with sensitivity and pupils' response is good, demonstrating a maturity of approach. Staff have received specific training in this aspect. Assessment in both key stages is satisfactory. A system of self-assessment is to be introduced so that pupils will have a greater awareness of their own attitudes.
88. The subjects lack a co-ordinator but it is planned to make an appointment. Once a co-ordinator is appointed it will enable the subject to develop as planned for in the school improvement plan.

CAREERS

89. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in all lessons. They also make a good level of achievement in response to additional planned curricular experiences that widen their educational horizons and introduce them to the world of work.
90. Teaching is consistently good. Lessons are well planned and clear learning objectives are shared with pupils so they know what is required of them. The teacher is highly knowledgeable, and lessons are well supported with materials such as photographs, which catch pupils' interest and encourage them to learn. Some unwilling and disaffected pupils were seen making a satisfactory level of progress in careers lessons during the inspection because very good class management persuaded them to take an active part in the lesson. In a Year 8 lesson, for example, they showed themselves capable of constructive discussion and a fair degree of concentration as they identified careers illustrated by photographs and spoke about some of the qualities necessary for each job.
91. Leadership and management are very good. There is a very clear vision of what is required. Excellent liaison across a number of agencies, colleges and places of work has provided a wide curriculum of very good quality. Accreditation is a notable feature of all courses on offer to pupils. Work-related learning is a strength. The very good extended curriculum encompasses work experience, visits to places of work, and opportunities to learn

entrepreneurial business skills. Work place courses have included motor vehicle maintenance, specialist army training, motor sports, problem solving in engineering and the opportunity to assist in the sports training of younger children provided by the local professional football club. Pupils have very good opportunities to use the good specialist software available to find out more about careers independently. All pupils are helped to make the best of their talents in their individual careers action plans provided by a specialist agency.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	5
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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