

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Brookfield School**

Poulton-le-Fylde

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119895

Headteacher: Mr Ian Thomas

Lead inspector: Charles Hackett

Dates of inspection: 21<sup>st</sup> to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2005

Inspection number: 269288

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	11-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	31
School address:	Fouldrey Avenue Poulton-le-Fylde Lancashire
Postcode:	FY6 7HE
Telephone number:	01253 886895
Fax number:	
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Tony Raymer
Date of previous inspection:	27 <sup>th</sup> November 2000

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

Brookfield is a day special school for boys and girls of secondary age with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. However, since the school opened in 1997 no girls have been admitted. Pupils' attainment on entry is below that expected for their age. Before joining the school pupils have experienced disruptive periods of education and have often been excluded from mainstream education. A few have additional special needs such as speech and language problems and specific learning difficulties. Pupils come from a range of home backgrounds and a small number have long distances to travel to reach the school. All pupils are of a white British background and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.

In recent years recruiting staff has proved difficult and there have been significant staffing changes over the last year. The headteacher has had a number of long absences due to ill health and at the time of the inspection was absent through illness. Presently the deputy head had been asked by the local authority and governors to take on the role of acting headteacher. The school achieved the Investors in People award last year.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21081	Charles Hackett	Lead inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology, religious education, art, music and physical education
31718	Denise Shields	Lay inspector	
19171	Robin Lee	Team inspector	English, science, history, geography, design and technology, personal, social and health education and citizenship.

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL

### EVALUATION

Brookfield school provides an **unsatisfactory** quality of education for its pupils and in accordance with section 13(7) of the School Inspections act 1996 I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school. The quality of leadership and management are inadequate and as a result insufficient attention has been given to ensuring that teaching is of an acceptable standard. Pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory and the school is providing unsatisfactory value for money.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of the headteacher have failed to ensure that the school provides a suitable quality of education; however, during his present absence through ill health, senior staff are covering his duties well.
- There are inadequate systems in place to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of many aspects of the school's work.
- The small governing body is very supportive but have not ensured that all statutory requirements have been met.
- Teaching and learning in English are very good and give pupils the chance to gain GCSEs in language and literature.
- With the exception of English and mathematics and in developing woodworking skills pupils are given insufficient opportunity to achieve to an acceptable standard.
- Care policies are out of date and staff use restraint and temporary exclusions too frequently.
- The school has inadequate arrangements to involve parents in the education of their children.
- Although a few pupils express concern with regard to bullying they also report that they have an adult in school they trust to support them resolve conflicts.

Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory. Overall the quality of education in the school has deteriorated. Although some progress has been made with a few of the weaknesses highlighted in the previous report, pupils' achievements, the quality of teaching and leadership and management have declined.

#### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
<b>Year 9</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>
<b>Year 11</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	<b>Unsatisfactory</b>

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

Pupils' achievements are **unsatisfactory**. Pupils do, though, make very good progress in English and last year pupils achieved success in both language and literature at GCSE. Progress in mathematics is good and the emphasis staff place on pupils being able to achieve external examinations is very appropriate. Pupils also develop very good skills in woodwork, although, their overall achievements in design and technology are unsatisfactory. Pupils' progress in science, information and communication technology (ICT), religious education and in personal, social and health education lessons is unsatisfactory. Pupils have very limited opportunities to achieve in art and music because of weaknesses in the curriculum offered. The personal development of pupils is unsatisfactory overall. Their moral and social development is **satisfactory** because the school encourages pupils to understand what acceptable and unacceptable behaviour is. However, there are inadequate arrangements to support pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Given their previous difficulties pupils' attitudes to education and their behaviour are satisfactory overall, although, currently the behaviour of pupils in Year 7 is poor and a few other pupils frequently exhibit extremely disruptive behaviour. Pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory, particularly in Year 11, where many pupils are poor attenders.

## **THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education in the school is **unsatisfactory**. Teaching and learning are **ineffective** in many curriculum areas because planning for what will be taught is inadequate. Insufficient attention is given to taking into account what pupils have learnt previously. Teaching and learning in English, mathematics and woodwork are the exceptions to this. In these subjects teaching ensures that pupils are making progress. Learning support assistants work very hard to provide individual support for pupils in managing their behaviour. However, their effectiveness is reduced because they are insufficiently involved in the planning of lessons. The monitoring of pupils' progress in English is good and there are clear assessment procedures in place to provide all staff with information on pupils' literacy skills but not all staff make use of this. The curriculum is unsatisfactory overall. In Years 10 and 11 it does not give pupils the chance to study a sufficiently wide range of subjects. Apart from developing skills in making items in wood and the mini-enterprise linked to this, insufficient attention is being given to develop pupils' work related skills. There is also an inadequate range of additional activities to enrich the curriculum. Although staff seek to develop good relationships with pupils the overall quality of care is unsatisfactory. Many care policies are out of date and staff have not received recent training in how to deal with child protection concerns. Staff use physical restraint too frequently when dealing with pupils experiencing behaviour difficulties. In addition temporary exclusions are used too often and without their effectiveness being evaluated. Links with parents are unsatisfactory. The school does not ensure that they know how well their children are doing. Links with the community are also unsatisfactory. Links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory and include the opportunity for pupils to undertake short taster courses at a local college. Pupils are given satisfactory opportunities to make a contribution to the running of the school. Although, there is a shortage of space, the accommodation and the resources available are both satisfactory overall.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are **ineffective**. The headteacher has not ensured that all aspects of the school's work are at an acceptable standard and pupils have sufficient opportunity to achieve to their full potential. During the absence of the headteacher, senior colleagues have managed the school well and shown a good clarity of understanding of what is required for the school to improve the quality of education it provides. Governors are supportive of the school but are small in number and they have not met as frequently as they would have liked to have had an impact on the school's work. They have not ensured that all statutory responsibilities have been met.

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

Because there were no parents who attended the parents' meeting and only five parents responded to the inspection questionnaire, it is not possible to have a clear understanding of parents' views of the school. Pupils express mixed views of the school. Although the majority say they like coming to school many express concern about bullying and the quality of the school dinners.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**The school needs to address the following weaknesses:**

- Improve leadership and management so that it has a greater impact on improving the quality of education in the school by:
  - Developing more effective systems to monitor and evaluate the work of the school.
  - Improving the overall quality of the curriculum and teaching in all subjects where currently these are unsatisfactory.
  - Improving the effectiveness of care policies and procedures, the use of restraint and the management of pupils' behaviour.
  - Establishing more effective systems to involve parents in the education of their children.
  - Putting in place suitable measures to tackle pupils' concerns about bullying.

**And to meet statutory responsibilities:**

- Ensure that the full National Curriculum is available; key policies are up to date and parents are provided with information they should legally be given.

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

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

The overall achievement of pupils is **unsatisfactory**.

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

- Pupils pass examinations in a limited range of subjects.
- Pupils make very good progress in English and as a result last year a few passed both GCSE literature and language.
- Pupils make very good progress in developing their making skills in wood and good progress overall in mathematics.
- Pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory in science, information and communication technology (ICT), religious education, personal and social health education, citizenship and design and technology.
- Many pupils do well in achieving the personal targets set for them but these are not analysed to show what progress pupils are making.

#### **Commentary**

1. A few pupils have been able to achieve success in General Certificate Secondary Examinations (GCSE). Last year four pupils passed GCSE in English literature, English language and science. Two passed short courses in ICT and one passed mathematics. In addition the school runs an award scheme (AQA units) that enable pupils to pass units of work in mathematics and woodwork from Year 8 onwards. Given the very small numbers of pupils involved statistical comparisons with similar schools are not valid and similarly checking on how pupils have progressed from the results of tests taken at the end of Year 9 is not a reliable indicator of pupils' achievements.
2. In English pupils are making very good progress in developing their skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing and this has resulted in the examinations success of the last two years. The teacher responsible for English has identified pupils with reading difficulties, offered appropriate support and records show that these pupils are improving. Pupils make good progress in mathematics because of the emphasis placed by staff on pupils passing externally moderated units of work. In woodwork pupils make many well-crafted items. Pupils are rightly proud of their achievements in this area. However, pupils have insufficient opportunity to design their own items and aspects of the design and technology curriculum are not covered within the school. This means that pupils' achievements in design and technology overall are unsatisfactory.
3. There is insufficient emphasis given in the planning of what pupils will be taught or in the monitoring of the quality of teaching to enable pupils to achieve as well as they should in many of the subjects. As a result their achievements in the other subjects considered during the inspection (science, religious education, personal and social education and information and communication technology), are unsatisfactory.
4. The school sets targets for pupils to improve in literacy, numeracy and their behaviour. Good daily reminders are given to pupils about their behaviour targets and many pupils try hard to achieve these. However, the school does not analyse pupils' success in achieving these targets and therefore is not able to see if this demonstrates whether pupils are making progress. There is no evidence to suggest that pupils with additional difficulties, for example, speech and language difficulties are making any different progress to other pupils in the school.

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



The behaviour and attitudes to school of the majority of pupils are **satisfactory**. Pupils' moral and social development is, also, **satisfactory** but their spiritual and cultural development is **unsatisfactory**. Attendance is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are heavily influenced by the quality of teaching.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are good.
- Pupils in Year 7 behave poorly and have poor attitudes to learning.
- The number of fixed term exclusions is very high and too frequently staff resort to restraining pupils.
- The school does not deal effectively enough with instances of bullying.
- The consequence of their actions is not made sufficiently clear to pupils.

### **Commentary**

5. Throughout the school pupils often respond well to teaching that is interesting and well matched to their abilities and needs. They also respond well in practical activities such as woodwork lessons. Pupils in Year 10 also have positive attitudes towards the tasks that they undertake during their morning at college and Year 11 pupils talk enthusiastically about their time at college during the previous year. In contrast in the lessons where the teacher's introduction is too long, tasks are not well matched to what pupils are able to do, or the subject content is not relevant, pupils show little interest in what they are expected to learn. This is especially so for pupils in Year 11 whose less positive attitudes can be seen in their erratic attendance.
6. Much of the time pupils respond well to the adults who work with them. They can be polite, friendly and happy to talk about their work and what they do in their lessons. Where relationships are very secure there is good-humoured banter between staff and pupils and this means that the atmosphere in the classroom is relaxed. However, this is rarely the case with the pupils in Year 7. Overall their behaviour and attitudes are poor. They often defy teachers' instructions and lessons are repeatedly disrupted.
7. Older pupils state they feel their behaviour has improved whilst they have been attending the school. This is confirmed by the inspection findings. During the inspection the behaviour of the oldest pupils was noticeably better than the youngest. Nevertheless the behaviour of all age groups deteriorated at several points in the week. As a result adults often spend large amounts of time dealing with instances of unacceptable behaviour. They are too ready to use restraint as a means of dealing with even minor non-compliance. Pupils are frequently escorted to the 'time out' room but are returned to their lessons, often within minutes. This overuse of restraint means that it has almost no meaning for pupils and several pupils expressed concerns about the number of times restraint is used.

8. There is no clear consequence of pupils' unacceptable behaviour. The youngest pupils view the 'time out' room as a means to escape from lessons and a place where they can then read a cartoon book or play on the computer. The rate of fixed term exclusion has increased since the previous inspection. Its use does not act as an effective deterrent for unacceptable behaviour and the school has no strategies in place to address this. This very high level of exclusion has an impact on both pupils' achievement and on levels of non-attendance.
9. The school's records and pupils' responses to a questionnaire seeking their views show that instances of bullying do occur. In discussion pupils freely admit to bullying others. They also indicate that whilst bullying is still happening quite frequently, it has reduced. The school in its most recent school improvement plan has identified the need to tackle the issue of bullying but it has been very slow to react to the problem because this concern was also highlighted at the time of the previous inspection.

## Exclusions

### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
34	96	1
1	11	1

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

10. There has been insufficient improvement since the previous inspection in pupils' overall personal development, which remains as unsatisfactory. Pupils, though, have some opportunities for socialising and learning about their place in the community, for instance through taking part in a residential visit and older pupils undertaking work experience placements. However, the lack of any social area or a common room means that there are limited opportunities for pupils to relax informally together. Issues raised at the time of the last inspection related to both spiritual and cultural awareness have not been addressed. Assemblies generally have a good moral theme and pupils raise money for notable charities by taking part in events such as Red Nose Day.

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

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	17.8	School data :	6.5
National data:	11.5	National data:	7.3

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

11. Attendance is below that found in other similar types of school and has not improved since the previous inspection. In 2003/04 whole school rates were 75.3 per cent and authorised absence rose to 17.8 per cent. These figures reflect the very high rate of fixed term exclusion. Attendance is poorest for pupils in Year 11, for example, on the last day of the inspection only 25 pupils were present. The school contacts home if a pupil fails to arrive in the morning. However, this often has little effect as despite parents' and carers' attempts pupils often refuse to get in the taxi and come to school. Attendance registers are not completed accurately

enough at either the start of the day and in the afternoon. As a result there is no accurate record of how many pupils are on the school site.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is unsatisfactory. Teaching is not effective and the curriculum is unsatisfactory. There are very limited opportunities to enrich it with additional activities. The quality of care and support and guidance provided for pupils is unsatisfactory because of concerns about the overuse of restraint and exclusions. The quality of the school's accommodation and resources is satisfactory. There are inadequate links with parents and the local community, although, the links with other schools and colleges are satisfactory.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning in the school is **unsatisfactory** overall.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching in English is very good and provides exemplary practice for other departments in the school.
- Mathematics and skills in making items in wood are taught well.
- In many subjects the planning of lessons is weak and fails to show what teachers want pupils to learn.
- The effectiveness of good quality support staff is limited because they do not always know how they are expected to support pupils' learning.
- Many teachers lack effective strategies to manage pupils' behaviour in lessons.
- Good assessment procedures have been established but these are not being made best use of by all staff.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 24 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	6	6	8	4	0	0

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

12. During the inspection satisfactory or better lessons were seen in most subjects but a scrutiny of teachers' planning and the achievements of pupils fail to show that teaching is effective in the long term. Pupils throughout the school, though, benefit greatly from the structured lessons and the high expectations of the teacher responsible for English. Lessons are very well planned and the teacher uses a range of approaches that successfully encourages pupils to develop and retain an interest in the subject. For example, in a Year 10 lesson pupils were asked to work in pairs to look at the differences between 19th century prose and modern writing. Pupils enjoyed this activity and as a result of such activities are clearly developing very good speaking and listening skills. Pupils are given very positive support to improve their reading and writing and their progress is recorded accurately.
13. The teaching of mathematics is good. From Year 8 upwards pupils can achieve certificates in nationally recognised units of work. The lessons are based around pupils achieving these units, which cover all aspects of mathematics. A very good emphasis is placed on pupils developing their problem solving skills and undertaking investigative work. In both English and mathematic

lessons there is a good emphasis on starter activities, which are effective in settling pupils for the main part of the lesson.

14. There is very good teaching of making skills in woodwork and as a result pupils produce high quality pieces of furniture or items such as bird feeding trays. The teacher insists on high standards of finished products and provides very good advice on appropriate techniques to use. As with English the teacher has very good subject knowledge.
15. In all other subjects of the curriculum there is insufficient attention given to planning lessons. This means that it is not clear that teachers are catering for the different levels of abilities within their classrooms. Too many lessons involve setting pupils tasks to do rather than being part of a long term plan to enable pupils to make gains in their learning. Too much teaching relies on the use of worksheets, some of which are written in language that pupils with poor reading skills find difficult to read. Teachers record pupils' achievements but this information is not well used in the planning of their lessons. Little use is made of ICT in the teaching of other subjects. Pupils show they enjoy using computers through their use of the internet and in playing games and this interest could be used to greater advantage in the teaching of other subjects.
16. Learning support assistants play an important part in supporting individual pupils. In lessons they offer encouragement and play a key role in the management of pupils' behaviour. However, they are not involved in the planning of lessons and are often unsure as to what it is teachers are expecting them to do to support pupils' learning. Many teachers find it difficult to maintain suitable standards of behaviour in lessons and as a result pupils become disruptive and prevent other pupils working. Teachers do not always use a range of suitable strategies to support pupils to remain in class and often resort to asking for a pupil to be removed from their lesson.
17. Assessment is satisfactory. Good baseline assessments in reading accuracy, reading comprehension, and spelling are undertaken by all pupils soon after they join the school. The assessment co-ordinator also administers a test of the cognitive abilities of pupils with additional difficulties. All pupils' complete a piece of independent free writing, which is levelled, and allows judgements about progress to be made. Pupils take a keen interest in their reading and writing scores and take pride in the merits they are awarded for progress. The good assessment conducted in both English and maths ensures that appropriate targets can be set in the pupils' individual education plans (IEPs). These IEP targets are reviewed with the pupils and new literacy and numeracy targets are set each term. This is an effective practice.
18. All teachers submit regular assessments of pupils' National Curriculum level in their subjects. These are recorded in a central file and monitored carefully by the senior teacher. However, because the planning of teachers in many subjects is unsatisfactory and the assessment information not used consistently, lower ability pupils are often faced with topics that are beyond their abilities. The school also has a carefully considered marking policy but the portfolios of pupils' work show clearly that this is not being adhered to consistently. There are many examples of pupils' work not being marked at all.

## **The curriculum**

The curriculum is **unsatisfactory** and there are insufficient opportunities for it to be enriched with other activities. The accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The curriculum is not sufficiently wide or stimulating for the pupils within the school.
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to take courses leading to nationally recognised qualifications.
- The school's programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is unsatisfactory.

- The provision for careers education is unsatisfactory throughout the school.
- There are too few opportunities for the curriculum to be enriched through planned trips and visits to places of interest, or from speakers and visitors to the school.
- The introduction of both English literature at GCSE and sociology for Year 11 pupils are good developments
- The recent link with a further education college for Year 10 pupils is proving successful.

## Commentary

19. Although the school's curriculum policy statement has been carefully considered and describes a wide variety of good intentions, it has not been implemented effectively. The school does not provide a curriculum that meets the interests, aptitudes and needs of pupils. The range of subjects available to pupils in Years 10 and 11 is particularly narrow. As a result of this, the range of subjects in which pupils can achieve examination success is limited. The curriculum for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 does not include careers education and the provision for personal, social, health education and citizenship through the school, although developing, remains unsatisfactory. The school teaches woodwork to pupils instead of the wider aspects of the design and technology curriculum. Even though pupils achieve well and enjoy their woodwork lessons, they are denied their full entitlement in this subject.
20. The school has introduced English literature at GCSE. This is a good innovation and the pupils have responded well to the challenge it provides and take pride in their achievements. Sociology has also been recently included in the Year 11 curriculum, in order to provide additional interest and support the PHSCE curriculum. It is still early to judge its effectiveness, but there is an aspiration to offer an examination in the subject in future years. A strength of the curriculum is the good attention given to meeting the literacy needs of pupils with additional special needs. These pupils are identified early in their school career and their progress is closely monitored.
21. The school has developed a good link with a further education college. Year 10 pupils attend as a group for a morning a week to study vocational subjects. They are currently learning bricklaying skills, having already covered topics on horticulture and motor engineering. They enjoy the practical activities and respond well to the college environment. There are no opportunities for Year 11 pupils to attend a college course, which is unsatisfactory and they have not had a work experience placement, even though they will be leaving school very shortly. In woodwork pupils make items that are sold as part of a mini-enterprise scheme; this successfully gives them an introduction to the world of business.
22. Planned learning opportunities outside school are too few. There are trips on a Friday afternoon as part of the reward system, but these tend to be recreational visits to venues such as the local swimming pool or leisure centre. There has been a study of a nearby business park, as part of the PHSCE curriculum for older pupils, and every year there is a week of outdoor pursuits at an outdoor centre in Cumbria. However, this is not available to all pupils as only the eight pupils with the highest number of merits are selected to attend.
23. There are limited opportunities for curriculum enhancement within the school day. 'Tea and toast' are provided for pupils from 8.30 every morning in each of the class groups. This is described as being part of the PHSCE curriculum and does fulfil an important role in ensuring that all pupils have had breakfast. However, the practice observed during the inspection varied, but overall it proved to be a missed opportunity to prepare pupils for the school day. Visitors to the school, whether to contribute to assemblies or to join lessons, are also infrequent.
24. Overall, there are an adequate number of teachers and support assistants. In the main they have suitable experience to meet the demands of the curriculum. Overall the accommodation is satisfactory and the very conscientious caretaker takes very good care of the internal fabric of the building. The school makes the best use of all available space. Classrooms are adequate in size to cater for the small numbers in each year group. However, there is no provision for older

pupils to have a common room or leisure area. The gym is very small, as is the library area; these points were highlighted at the time of the previous inspection and improvements have not been made. With the exception of mathematics and PHSCE, where resources are unsatisfactory, there are sufficient resources to support the curriculum.

### Care, guidance and support

The school's arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **unsatisfactory**. Pupils receive **unsatisfactory** support, advice and guidance. There are **satisfactory** opportunities for pupils to be involved in and influence the school's work.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have a good and trusting relationship with at least one adult.
- Health and safety and child protection arrangements are not sufficiently secure and rigorous.
- The use of restraint, exclusion and pupils' general behaviour is not monitored well enough.
- Guidance for individual pupils is not sufficiently targeted so that they know what they must do to improve their learning.
- Links with and advice provided by the Connexions service are good.

### Commentary

25. All adults know the pupils well. In discussion with pupils and an analysis of the school's own pupil questionnaire indicate that pupils feel there is an adult they can turn to for help. For the most part relationships between adults who work in the school and pupils are relaxed and friendly. Pupils state their views are listened to through contributing to the school council meetings, although these meetings take place at irregular intervals. They feel they have been able to influence the school's work, because they now play football matches against other schools and a few pupils have been given simple responsibilities such as distributing the registers each morning. However, the school has been slow to respond to the concerns raised by pupils about the incidence of bullying.
26. Almost all the school's policies are out of date and have not been reviewed for many years. As a result they do not underpin the school's day-to-day practices. There is no evidence to indicate that, for instance through discussion at staff meetings, staff have been made aware of changes that have taken place to child protection arrangements over the last few years. The child protection policy has not been updated for eight years. Although the current 'acting' headteacher is trying to address this, she has not had any training for this role. In line with current guidance, the school has no suitable, clear and up to date protocol for the administration of medication or to deal with pupils' medical conditions. The caretaker works hard to deal with any day-to-day health and safety concerns, but health and safety audits are not routinely carried out. Risks assessments both of pupils with severe challenging behaviour and for out of school visits are not regularly and routinely undertaken. The school's record of its fire drills is patchy. As a result of these weaknesses the governors are not fulfilling their statutory obligation and duty of care with regard to health and safety within the school.
27. The school's assessment information is not used well enough to support pupils. There are no arrangements to monitor whether pupils' behaviour improves during their time at the school. Behaviour and social targets within pupils' individual education plans are often too broad to have the desired effect of helping pupils to develop self discipline. There is a system of pupils earning points for their efforts and having to complete detentions but records and discussions with pupils fail to show how effective these are. The school is unaware that although pupils understand the points reward system many do not value it. There are, also, no suitable systems to monitor the use of restraint and exclusion to establish if these actions are effective.
28. In lessons teachers and teaching assistants generally provide good pastoral support for pupils and relationships are good, but the unsatisfactory PHSCE programme does not effectively

support and guide pupils and the school is not involved in any Healthy Schools initiatives. Although during the previous academic year two pupils returned to mainstream school, there is no well-planned programme to help and support other pupils to reach this goal.

29. The Connexions advisor is a regular visitor to the school and he provides a good input in guiding pupils in Years 9 to 11 on their future options. However, there is no clear link between this advice and the school's own careers education programme. No careers education is provided for Years 7 and 8 and the programme for Years 9 to 11 is not well co-ordinated. The careers library does not contain suitable and relevant material matched to the needs of the pupils.

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

The school's partnership with parents and the community is **unsatisfactory**. Links with other schools and colleges are **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Links with the local college make a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- The school does not do enough to encourage parents to become involved in their children's education.
- The written information provided for parents is irregular and insufficient.
- Not enough use is made of the community to extend pupils' curriculum experiences.

### **Commentary**

30. The inspection team cannot gauge the views of parents because no parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and an extremely low number of questionnaires were returned. However, the school has periodically sought the views of parents on specific issues and the limited returns received have raised no concerns. Nevertheless because the school has no specific initiatives in place to develop a partnership with them, parents play little or no part in school life and as a result are not involved in supporting their children's education.
31. The information provided for parents is unsatisfactory and this is in line with the findings of the previous inspection. Although there is informal contact made with parents by telephone, this is not consistent practice across the school. Newsletters are sporadic and no curriculum information is provided. No information about homework is given. However, school records show that an extremely small minority of parents do hear their children read at home and this has a positive impact on their children's achievement. The school brochure contains the bare minimum of information and lacks practical guidance for parents. The governors' annual report to parents has many omissions and does not meet statutory requirements. Insufficient information is provided for parents prior to the annual review process. This was highlighted at the time of the previous inspection. With the exception of English, the end-of-year subject reports have not improved sufficiently since the last inspection and remain unsatisfactory.
32. Pupils in Year 10 enjoy attending college one morning a week. This opportunity makes a good contribution to their social development as well as giving them the chance to sample possible career options. Pupils, also, play football against other local schools. A recent link with a local secondary school has benefited the development of the mathematics curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to take part in visits to the local and wider community linked to the subjects they study are extremely limited and this restricts their personal and social development. Through the education business partnership (EBP) a small number of links have been made with local business and commerce and in the past this has enabled older pupils to take part in short work experience placements.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are **unsatisfactory**. The leadership of the headteacher and the governance of the school are, also, **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher has given insufficient support and guidance to staff to ensure that the quality of education is of an acceptable standard.
- Arrangements to monitor and evaluate the school's effectiveness and plan for improvements are inadequate.
- Recently the deputy headteacher and the senior teacher have given a greater clarity to the school's understanding of its weaknesses and what it needs to do to improve.
- Governors show a real commitment to support the school but have not ensured that statutory requirements are being met or that the overall quality of education is satisfactory.
- There are good arrangements to manage the school's expenditure but ineffective systems to ensure that money is being spent appropriately to improve the school's provision.

### **Commentary**

33. The deputy headteacher in her current role as acting headteacher is doing an effective job in maintaining good order and positive relationships between staff. However, weaknesses in pupils' achievements and the overall quality of teaching indicate that the quality of leadership and management are unsatisfactory. School documents and the minutes of meetings fail to show that the headteacher has a clear understanding of the school's weaknesses and is taking action to address them. Ineffective monitoring arrangements have meant that unsatisfactory practice has gone unchecked. Many of the school policies are out of date and there are ineffective systems to check how well pupils are achieving. Recent lesson observations have taken place and although the effectiveness of different teachers has been noted there is no evidence of work being undertaken to address weaknesses. The lack of a clear message from the headteacher as to what standards he expects has resulted in unacceptable standards in many aspects of the school's work. For example, in many subject areas there is no clear plan for how the subject will be taught or how pupils' progress is being checked as they move through the school.
34. Management arrangements are ineffective. Senior staff meetings have taken place but the minutes of these show that, although other senior staff have put forward ideas, there has been a lack of ambition from the headteacher to take action to develop the school's provision. Records indicate that the headteacher has a high profile within the authority and is frequently out of school. This has often left the day-to-day management of the school in the hands of the deputy headteacher. As a result of this the deputy has had to relinquish her responsibility for science and this has reduced the quality of the education further because science provision is now unsatisfactory.
35. Plans to improve the quality of education in the school are unsatisfactory. Much of the day-to-day efforts of senior staff involve managing individual pupils experiencing difficulties with their behaviour. This has had an impact on the time they have to strategically manage the school's development. The school development plan is a three year outline of aspects to be considered; it lacks details and does not link to an evaluation of the quality of education currently being offered. Minutes of governors' meetings show that they have recognised this and have previously asked for more detailed plans from the headteacher. Revised school action plans are being produced by the deputy headteacher in conjunction with a very active and supportive governor. These give a much better picture of how the school's provision will be improved and show a greater understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within the school.
36. Although governors are supportive of the school they recognise that they have not been as effective as they would like to have been. They have not had their full complement of members for some time and this has reduced the impact they have had on the school's work. There is a good committee structure and it is clear what the responsibility of each committee is but meetings are not sufficiently regular. For example, scheduled health and safety committee



meetings have not taken place over the last year because it has not been possible to get sufficient governors to attend and similarly the previous staff and resource committee meeting was in September of last year. The absence of regular meetings has had a negative impact on the governors' ability to monitor the work of the school. In addition governors have not ensured that they have met all their statutory responsibilities. Many subject areas do not cover what is expected to meet National Curriculum requirements, policies are out of date and the annual report to parents is missing a number of legally required items.

37. There are good arrangements to ensure that the money the school receives is properly managed and expenditure is recorded appropriately. The school administration officer carries out these duties well and links closely with the county finance department. However, there is no clear plan as to how the money is to be used. This has meant there have been large underspends in the previous two years and that expenditure for the current year is likely to be overspent. It is also unsatisfactory that there is also no link between the school improvement plan and the school budget.

**Financial information**

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

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	524,498	Balance from previous year	69,022
Total expenditure	517,245	Balance carried forward to the next	76,276
Expenditure per pupil	13,980		

**WORK RELATED LEARNING**

The provision for work related learning is **unsatisfactory**.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The planning and organisation of the work related learning curriculum is not sufficiently developed.
- Work experience placements are arranged for pupils whenever possible.
- The recently developed links with a local further education college for Year 10 pupils are good.
- Year 11 pupils do not have the opportunity to attend a college placement in their final twelve months of statutory education.
- A mini-enterprise business scheme provides a good experience for Year 11 pupils.
- Currently careers education is not taught throughout the school.

**Commentary**

38. Although all the subject departments have been audited to see where work related learning can be included in the teaching programme, no coherent cross-curricular plan has been developed. The recent requirement for careers education to be taught to pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 has not been implemented and, this year, it has not being taught to Years 10 and 11 either. A work related learning policy document has been produced, but the governing body has not yet approved it.
39. Work experience placements have been arranged in previous years and have included a variety of opportunities. For example, last year, a pupil was very successful when working with a local hairdressing salon. The arrangements for work experience are now being offered to pupils in Year 10 but as yet the current Year 11 pupils have not had an opportunity to test an area of work and help inform future career decisions.

40. The school is developing links with a local further education college and all the current Year 10 pupils attend as a group on a Tuesday morning. A college tutor is presently teaching them bricklaying skills. They have already completed blocks of work in horticulture and motor engineering. The pupils clearly value this opportunity and look forward to their morning out of school. They talk enthusiastically about their previous courses. At present, there is no accreditation available for the pupils, other than an attendance certificate issued by the college. There are plans to include these opportunities within the AQA award system run by the school. There is no opportunity for Year 11 pupils to attend college either on an individual or group basis.
41. The school has developed a mini-enterprise scheme for Year 11 pupils in woodwork. Pupils advertise a wide range of articles that they can make. These include items such as bird tables and bird boxes, magazine racks, tables, stools and children's toys. Pupils clearly enjoy completing these projects and work with a high degree of skill. They understand the arrangement that the price customers pay includes a share for the cost of materials and a contribution to school funds. It has proved to be an effective link between school and the world of work.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 and 4**

### **ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE**

*It was not possible to observe the teaching of French; however a scrutiny of pupils' work was undertaken. Three English lessons were seen, which represents three hours of observation. Additional evidence was obtained from discussions with staff and pupils and a scrutiny of planning and assessment documents, and work in portfolios and on display.*

#### **French**

42. The deputy headteacher usually teaches the subject but currently a supply teacher is taking the lessons. The school offers pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 one lesson a week in French. A scrutiny of the work completed demonstrates that pupils have covered a suitable range of topics and developed a basic vocabulary by the end of Year 9. Their work shows that a good range of activities has been offered.

#### **English**

The provision for English is **very good**.

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

- The subject leader has a very clear understanding of the subject and what is required for pupils to be successful.
- The opportunity for pupils to take both English language and literature at GCSE is very good.
- The range of topics included within the teaching programme is ambitious, challenging and interesting to pupils.
- Speaking and listening skills are developed well because pupil contributions are encouraged and valued during English lessons.
- The clear focus on developing the reading skills of pupils is successful.

#### **Commentary**

43. Pupils arrive at the school with low levels of reading and writing skills and most make significant progress during their time at the school. They enjoy the subject and achieve well. This represents an improvement on the satisfactory progress noted within the previous inspection report. All pupils take an examination in English (Entry Level) at the end of Year 10 and have the opportunity to go on and take a GCSE in both English language and literature at the end of Year 11. Last year, four pupils achieved passes in both exams. This is very good as

few special schools of this type offer this breadth of accreditation in the subject to their senior classes.

44. The teaching of English is very good. There are clear aims for what pupils will learn and lessons are characterised by high expectations of both behaviour and performance. Often challenging work is presented in ways that make it accessible to pupils with a range of abilities within the group. For example, in a lively lesson for Year 9 pupils on Shakespeare's *'Macbeth'*, pupils were all willing to take part in a classroom performance of the witches' scene at the beginning of the play. They all recognised that this was an interesting and compelling way to capture the audience's attention at a time of widespread belief in witchcraft. Pupils also demonstrate an understanding of how language has changed during the intervening centuries and that the 16<sup>th</sup> century theatre was very different to that of today. Pupils are also encouraged to present their own ideas and produce their own original work. For example, Year 11 pupils are studying a poetry topic. Using an idea based on a poem by Matthew Sweeney, *'Fishbones Dreaming'*, one pupil wrote a very good poem about a broken mobile phone. He was pleased with his completed work and his peers were warmly appreciative of his efforts.
45. Achievements in reading are very good. All pupils have their reading and spelling abilities evaluated when they join the school and at regular intervals from then on. These assessments inform their literacy targets on their individual education plans (IEPs). The pupils are kept informed of their progress and good achievement is recognised by the award of school certificates. Most English lessons begin with a period of individual reading. The less able readers work through structured reading programmes, while independent readers choose their own material, which may be a book, a magazine of interest or a daily newspaper. Pupils respond well to this time and willingly read quietly to themselves. Pupils whose progress is slower are noted by the English co-ordinator and receive additional help during lessons from their teacher and the learning support assistant. During lessons pupils demonstrate a willingness to read texts and passages aloud to the class. Pupils are encouraged to borrow books to read at home, and, if parents confirm that they have done so, gain extra merit points. By the time they leave school, most have basic reading skills, with many reading fluently.
46. Progress in speaking and listening is very good. Pupils' spoken contributions are carefully listened to during English lessons and they gain confidence in putting forward their own views. The use of language is carefully examined during the study of various texts and Year 11 pupils are able to annotate a poem to show how the author has used language to promote an effect or create a mood. Collaborative learning is very effective, with pupils frequently joining together to make groups of two or three, to discuss their work. It is a creative and effective way of promoting their speaking and listening skills and means that the teacher or learning support assistant can more closely support lower ability pupils.
47. Pupils make good progress with their writing skills in English lessons. A piece of free writing from each pupil is kept by the co-ordinator each year to demonstrate pupils' progress over time. Pupils tackle written tasks with enthusiasm and are generally careful with the presentation of their work. There are numerous examples of work being redrafted using one of the computers in the classroom.
48. The leadership and management of English are very good. The co-ordinator has worked hard to develop the subject in the school. Planning of work to be covered is very good and careful consideration has been given to meet the needs of all pupils. Assessment is thorough and is used effectively to produce targets for both individual pupils and for the English department as a whole. The library is currently being redeveloped, but is small and located in an annexe to the IT room, so it is not always accessible to pupils. However, the books are attractive and have been colour coded and classified using the Dewey system, so that pupils begin to understand how to locate a book in a larger library

## **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

49. Training has been given by the co-ordinator to the rest of the teaching staff, to promote literacy in other areas of the curriculum. Examples of pupils being encouraged to read and become familiar with the specialist language of individual subjects were observed during the inspection, but this is not done so consistently in all subjects

## **MATHEMATICS**

*Three lessons were observed in mathematics, which represents three hours of observation. Additional evidence was obtained by a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning documents, as well as discussions with both teachers and pupils.*

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well in mathematics because teaching is based on pupils achieving success in externally moderated tests.
- Pupils are challenged by the activities and tasks set for them and work is well matched to pupils' different ability levels.
- All aspects of mathematics are covered well, with a good emphasis placed on investigative work.
- Work covered is based on national guidelines but lacks sufficient detail as to how this is being adapted to meet the special needs of pupils in the school.
- The subject policy is weak and reports on pupils' progress to parents are very similar and lack detail of pupils' achievements.

## **Commentary**

50. The emphasis on pupils achieving external examination success is the reason pupils achieve well in mathematics. From Year 8 onwards pupils are able to take and pass external units of a nationally accepted course. Accreditation also includes the opportunity to take GCSE, although unfortunately last year, three out of the four pupils due to take the exam decided to leave the examination room shortly after the start of the examination.
51. Pupils make good progress in a range of mathematical activities. The progress of pupils in Year 7 is not as good as for other pupils because many of the pupils are very new to the school and they find it difficult to settle to work consistently in lessons. Nevertheless the temporary teacher currently taking them is giving them good opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of shapes and symmetry and as a result all pupils are able to draw different shapes and work out those that can be rotated. By Year 9 pupils can work out the area of different shapes and the volume of cuboids. Their work has included collecting data and showing this in graph format, as well as using fractions and decimals. Year 11 pupils' achievements include understanding 'Pythagoras' theorem', using long division to work out written problems and understanding aspects of trigonometry.
52. Teaching of mathematics is good overall. Mathematics is taught by the same teacher to pupils in Years 8, 9, 10 and 11. His teaching style places a good emphasis on pupils having to solve problems themselves. The lessons have a clear structure, with a starter activity, main activity and an opportunity to review pupils' achievements at the end. For example, in a Year 10 lesson a very good starter activity involved pupils working out a series of challenges based on number skills up to 20. This activity effectively settled pupils and they were ready to move on to the main activity of the lesson, which involved work on algebra. Good questioning from the teacher meant that pupils had to independently work out answers to the problems set and solve algebraic equations. This resulted in higher ability pupils in the group being challenged and interested by the work.
53. The planning of lessons covers pupils' different ability levels. For example, in a Year 8 lesson all pupils covered the same topic but pupils were given different worksheets, colour coded and based on an identification of their previously acquired skills. This meant that all pupils were working at an appropriate level and had the opportunity to develop their skills further. Good support to help pupils behave appropriately is offered by support staff but it is not always clear what they should be doing to assist pupils with their learning. Marking of pupils' work is up to date and very helpful comments are made to praise pupils for their efforts.
54. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The teacher responsible has developed the provision well in recent years. National guidelines for the teaching of mathematics are being used but these have not been adapted to show specifically what work pupils will cover each year given the special needs of pupils. The subject leader has accepted advice from the local education advisor and bases a lot of his teaching on an appropriate textbook. However, it is unsatisfactory that pupils are not able to have their own individual copy of this. New teaching

strategies, for example, the use of an interactive whiteboard, are being developed. The subject policy, though, is of little use. It is based on a generic set of guidelines and is not subject specific and includes comments such as 'pupils will learn about the past', which are not relevant to mathematics. In addition a scrutiny of reports to parents shows that insufficient information is given on pupils' achievements. The reports are very similar in content, which is disappointing given the small numbers of pupils in each class group.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

55. There has been no planned focus on giving pupils the chance to develop their mathematical skills in the teaching of other subjects. However, in making items in wood pupils are expected to measure accurately and use basic addition and subtraction in their work. The mini-enterprise scheme run in Year 11 as part of this supports the development of pupils' money skills. A little number work is also been experienced in the development of spreadsheets in ICT. Few other opportunities to practice mathematical skills were observed during the inspection.

### **SCIENCE**

*Three lessons were observed in science, which represents two and a half hours of observation. Additional evidence was obtained by a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning documents, as well as discussions with both teachers and pupils.*

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Currently pupils are not making as much progress as they should because the level of expectation of what they are capable of achieving is too low.
- Pupils make the best progress when lessons involve them in practical activities.
- Planning for the subject is unsatisfactory and the marking of pupils' work is inconsistent.
- Pupil attitudes towards the subject are often poor and older pupils are not aware of the examinations they are working towards.

### **Commentary**

56. Pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory because the quality of teaching and learning are currently unsatisfactory. Although teaching of the three lessons observed during the inspection was satisfactory or better, there are significant shortcomings in planning of lessons, the choice of materials and the level of expectation of what pupils can achieve. Pupils are given the chance to complete either a basic certificate (Entry level) or GCSE at the end of Year 11. In 2004, four pupils achieved both awards. However, since last September, there has been a change in staff for the leadership of the subject. The present pupils in Year 11 are unsure of the science exams they will taking in May and most feel that they have not made as much progress in the end of topic tests as they should have done. A scrutiny of the progress files of pupils supports this view. In addition, poor pupil attendance in Year 11 has had a negative impact on the progress pupils make. This means that there has been deterioration in science provision since the last inspection when standards were judged to be satisfactory.

57. The planning of what pupils will learn in the subject is unsatisfactory. The work follows plans devised for mainstream pupils too closely and is not being sufficiently adapted to meet the special needs of pupils. This means that much of the work presented is too difficult. In a Year 7 lesson, for example, the aim of the lesson was to be able to describe what neutralisation was. Whilst pupils were capable of understanding the use of litmus paper and universal indicator to measure the PH levels of a solution, they struggled with the written aspects of the lesson and behaved so poorly that it necessitated the removal of several of them. However, as soon as the lesson progressed to a more practical approach, adding boiling water to ice, they quickly settled and were able to predict that a 'neutral' or 'tepid' temperature would result. Similarly in a

good Year 10 lesson, a dissection of an ox's heart proved to be an effective way of engaging pupils' attention. They recognised the heart is a double pump in mammals that circulates blood around the body. They can name the four chambers and describe how the valves work to prevent the blood flowing in the wrong direction. Pupils enjoyed this lesson and behaved sensibly, giving appropriate answers to the teacher's questions.

58. Pupils' portfolios demonstrate that they do not complete work carefully and much of it is inappropriate to their ability. In many files, work has not been marked at all and, where it has been assessed, the system employed is not in accordance with the schools' marking policy and does not indicate clearly how pupils can improve. This evidence points to senior staff not having systems to check on the quality of provision for the subject.
59. The leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. Planning documents are weak and insufficient attention is given to the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress. The quality of teaching is not being monitored closely and there are poor links between the two staff involved in teaching the subject. The science laboratory, though, has been improved since the last inspection and now provides a light and pleasant room in which deliver the subject.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

*Two lessons were observed in ICT, which represents two hours of observation. Additional evidence was obtained by a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning documents, as well as discussions with both teachers and pupils.*

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The new temporary part-time teacher is making improvements to the provision in the subject but it is still unsatisfactory.
- Planning for ICT lessons gives insufficient attention to developing pupils' skills.
- Pupils spend too much time in lessons playing games or downloading inappropriate pictures and screen savers from the internet.
- There is no link to work in ICT lessons and the use of ICT in the teaching of other subjects.

### **Commentary**

60. Pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory despite recent improvements in the teaching of ICT lessons. Pupils are now experiencing a wider range of activities. These include Year 7 pupils producing simple spreadsheets, which involve pupils using a formula to add up the costs of different items. The majority of pupils access the internet and know how to download and cut and paste text or images. Pupils can, also, use computers to word process simple information or complete pieces of work in English.
61. The part-time teacher currently teaching ICT only commenced his duties in January this year. He has inherited a situation where too little emphasis has been placed on pupils developing their ICT skills. Pupils have become used to playing games within lessons. Although their new teacher has made efforts to improve this, the quality of planning for lessons is still unsatisfactory. However, it is good that there is now an expectation that pupils will complete tasks set for them before moving on to play games. For example, for in a Year 8 lesson, all pupils followed instructions and entered data onto a web page, which is planned eventually to be part of their own website. Although many pupils were careful in completing this, there is no evidence that completing the task was extending their ICT skills or understanding. Immediately they had completed the task, pupils without direction from the teacher, moved on to playing games or searching the internet for inappropriate photographs.

62. The teacher responsible for the subject has made improvements to the resources available and ensured that the computer network and all individual computers are working. However, there are insufficient means to monitor and filter the work or the images that pupils are downloading from the internet. For example, this means there are computers with very inappropriate screen savers showing, for example, 'scantily clad' ladies. There is no technician support and given that the teacher responsible for the subject is only in school for two days a week, many computers are not being used effectively throughout the school week. Because there is no co-ordination or planning for how ICT will be developed and delivered in the school, the leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory.

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

63. No systems are in place to monitor how other staff are making use of ICT and therefore there is no link to the development and practice of pupils' ICT skills whilst they are learning in other subject areas. Little use of ICT was seen during the inspection besides the same teacher using an interactive whiteboard in mathematics and sociology and pupils using computers during religious education and English lessons.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **History and Geography**

*No lessons were seen in history and one lesson of geography was observed during the course of the inspection. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on provision, teaching, learning and achievement in either subject. Two lessons were observed in religious education and efforts were made to scrutinise pupils' previous work in the subject and planning documents.*

64. Pupils have one lesson each week in both subjects. There is though very limited planning of what pupils will be taught. There is insufficient evidence to comment on work undertaken in history. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils have completed a good range of work in geography. In the one Year 8 geography lesson that was seen, the teacher had clear objectives, which were stated at the beginning of the teaching session. Pupils had to colour in a map of the different countries making up the United Kingdom and then construct a bar chart, using the appropriate colours, to reflect their respective population size. The pupils worked quietly and developed an understanding of the contrasting population sizes of the different countries and produced accurate and neat work.

### **Religious Education**

The quality of provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

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

- Planning for what pupils will cover in religious education lessons is poor and the curriculum is too narrow.
- Pupils' achievements are not recorded and developed as they move through the school.
- There is no link between the two teachers who teach the subject and the topics they are covering.
- The subject policy is inappropriate and fails to show the rationale behind the teaching of the subject in the school.

#### **Commentary**

65. Pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching are unsatisfactory. There is insufficient planning of what pupils will cover in the subject. The subject is currently delivered to pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 by a temporary teacher. Having taken on the responsibility in January this year, it is poor that he was not given any information as to pupils' previous achievements or on



the curriculum that they had covered. He has appropriately tried to link pupils' interest in ICT to developing their knowledge of different religions. Topics have included the story of Jesus and Buddhism. However, pupils show little interest in the subject and see the tasks set for them as completing exercises as quickly as possible to enable them to play games on the computer for the rest of the lesson.

66. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 are taught by a different teacher and there is no link between the work of the two teachers. The lesson seen for Year 10 pupils was unsatisfactory. Information, which was about Martin Luther King, was presented in an uninteresting manner and much of the content was above the level of pupils' understanding. There were missed opportunities to develop pupils' knowledge of the work of Martin Luther King.
67. There are ineffective arrangements to lead and manage the subject and there is insufficient emphasis given to the subject in the school. As a result pupils have too few opportunities to develop an understanding of religion and the subject does little to extend pupils' cultural understanding. The subject policy document is poor. It is emotive in content and fails to show a clear rationale for work of the subject. It also shows a lack of understanding that work in the subject should link to a locally agreed religious education syllabus.

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

*There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the provision for music, art and physical education. Parts of two physical education lessons and two lessons of woodwork were observed. Additional evidence was obtained through discussions with the pupils and teaching staff, and an analysis of finished pieces of work and photographic records.*

### **Music**

68. Music is offered for one lesson a week for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 and is taught by a part-time teacher. Plans for music lessons for this term are very limited and it is unsatisfactory that they are the same for each year group. Pupils have the opportunity to listen and appreciate a range of music, for example this term they have studied Beethoven, the Beatles and Blues music. Pupils are expected to record basic information about the different forms of music and then for the second part of each lesson have the opportunity to play keyboards or percussion instruments. These arrangements fail to ensure that pupils receive their full entitlement of the National Curriculum for music.

### **Art**

69. The school has been unable to appoint a teacher of art for a number of years. A learning support assistant is presently covering one lesson each week for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. These arrangements give pupils opportunities to explore a limited range of activities in art. There is no school specific planning for art lessons; the learning support assistant uses the planning for the subject from a local secondary school. In the satisfactory lesson that was seen during the inspection, Year 8 pupils were able to copy a design of a variety of drink cans and then develop their own designs. As part of the lesson, they were also looking at how the shape of the can changed after it was crushed. Two support staff provide very good support for individual pupils to enable them to complete the tasks. However, pupils' progress is not being recorded and there is insufficient emphasis placed on how pupils' skills and opportunities in art will be developed as they move through the school. These arrangements mean that pupils are not given the opportunity to follow a satisfactory curriculum, explore their artistic talents or receive accreditation for the work.

### **Physical Education**

70. The two lessons that were observed were both part of a group of lessons introducing pupils to rugby. The first of these was with Year 7 pupils. The lesson was unsatisfactory because of the ineffective strategies used by the teacher to manage pupils' behaviour. As a result of this pupils

did not remain on task and a number of pupils had to be removed from the group. Pupils did not develop skills during the lesson and were unable to behave in an acceptable manner to take part in a game. However, in the second lesson for Year 8 pupils, much better progress was made. This good lesson featured an appropriate preparation with the teacher explaining what would happen before pupils went into the gym. Good use of indoor facilities for the warm up was very appropriate given the extremely cold conditions outside. The skills of catching and passing a rugby ball were taught well and equipment needed to play a game outside was well prepared by a learning support assistant. The newly qualified teacher who has responsibility for physical education is very enthusiastic and keen to develop the quality of provision in the subject. He requires, though, support from experienced colleagues and senior staff to enable him to bring his plans to fruition.

## **Design and Technology**

The provision for design and technology is **unsatisfactory**, but the provision for woodwork is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' very high levels of achievement in woodwork result in them making very high quality finished products.
- Woodwork is taught almost exclusively, depriving pupils the opportunity to experience other aspects of the recommended design and technology curriculum.
- External certification (AQA units) is used effectively to record pupils' achievement, but there are no opportunities to gain Entry Level or GCSE accreditation.
- Work produced as part of the mini-enterprise scheme provides good motivation for Year 11 pupils.

### **Commentary**

71. Pupils' achievements in design and technology are unsatisfactory. Although achievement in woodwork is very high the teaching programme does not allow pupils opportunities to develop their skills in the other aspects of the expected design and technology curriculum. The school has decided that to boost the self-esteem of pupils it is better to concentrate on teaching woodwork, rather than the wider design and technology curriculum. A limited number of pupils do a little food technology with a learning support assistant as part of the Friday afternoon programme to reward merits they have achieved. However, this does not fulfil the requirements of a food technology curriculum and does not give pupils the chance to gain GCSE.
72. All pupils enjoy their woodwork lessons and the results they achieve are impressive. They learn basic skills as they move up through the school. Pupils make rapid progress and quickly become familiar and confident with a wide range of techniques and skills. They work accurately and take a pride in the finished product. The articles they complete include magazine racks and tables, cabinets, children's toys, bird boxes and miniature wheelbarrows as garden ornaments. The skills they master are fully recorded in AQA certification and their work is photographed to provide a comprehensive record of their progress.
73. In Year 11, pupils take part in a mini-enterprise scheme. This is a useful motivation for pupils in their final year. Pupils fulfil orders for items and have a percentage of the cost as a reward for their efforts. In the lessons observed, the woodwork room more closely resembled a commercial workshop than a classroom, which is the intention of the teacher. These older pupils prove themselves able to remain focused and work independently. Although the teacher and the learning support assistant are available to support and guide where necessary, pupils prove adept at working quickly, accurately and skilfully.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP (PSHCE)**

*Three lessons were observed. Additional evidence was gathered from discussions with pupils and analysis of planning files and portfolios of pupils' work.*

The provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is **unsatisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teaching and learning in the subject does not make a sufficient contribution to pupils' personal and social development.
- The curriculum policy and programme is not effective in meeting pupils' needs.
- The teaching and learning of the subject are not being checked and supported by senior staff.
- Resources for the subject are limited.

### **Commentary**

74. Until a new subject co-ordinator was appointed in September 2004 work in PSHCE has been given a low priority. There are no examples of pupils' work, planning documents or assessment records from before this time. Pupils' progress has been unsatisfactory because teaching has been unsatisfactory. The standard of teaching, though, is now improving and the new co-ordinator has made a good start in trying to establish a better level of attitude and performance from the pupils. However, the planning for the subject has not reached a satisfactory level. The co-ordinator has started to compile a whole-school programme of work, but this still needs further development in order to be appropriate for the needs of all the pupils. Until this has been completed, the other teachers teaching the subject will not be offering a consistent programme that builds on previous achievement. These weaknesses mean that overall the leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory overall.
75. Many of the older pupils still prove to be resistant to PHSCE lessons and are disinclined to take much interest in their work. In a Year 11 lesson, examining the need for a police force, they were expected to use a highlighter pen to complete written work and write on scraps of paper. Pupils were reluctant to take any part in the lesson, even though they had a good relationship with the teacher and the learning support assistant. The absence of any form of accreditation is undoubtedly a reason why they lacked motivation. In contrast, in another Year 11 lesson, this time about different forms of contraception available and the advantages and disadvantages of each method, they worked diligently. They used the internet to complete their research and then carefully recorded their answers.
76. Year 8 pupils, however, where poor responses to PSHCE are not so deeply entrenched, are making more substantial progress. A lesson about improvements that could be made to the school, which would also benefit the community, stimulated both interest and positive attitudes. The brainstorming session at the beginning produced many ideas and the teacher made a good use of humour when encouraging and praising the pupils. They responded well to the task and produced good work.
77. The curriculum is unsatisfactory. There have been too few visits made outside school and too few representatives from the community have been invited into the school to speak with pupils to add interest and variety to the curriculum. It is also asserted within the subject documentation that the practice of 'tea and toast' at the start of the school day is part of the PHSCE curriculum. In practice it is not a structured teaching time and, although it has some benefit as a time for social exchange, it is presently a lost chance for achieving something more worthwhile from the curriculum. The co-ordinator has, however, presented the subject to a governors' meeting to demonstrate his ambitions for PHSCE within the school. He will need support to achieve these aims.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfac*

(4);  
*unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*

\* In a special school such as this, 'standards achieved' are judged in relation to pupils' individual targets and not in relation to national standards.