



**Office for Standards
in Education**

Inspection report
Onslow St Audrey's School

Hertfordshire Education Authority

Dates of inspection: 11-12 May 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act

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Basic information about the school

Name of school:	Onslow St Audrey's School
Type of school:	Secondary
Status:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 18 years
Headteacher:	Mr S Todd
Address of school:	Old Rectory Drive Hatfield Hertfordshire AL10 8AB
Telephone:	01707 264228
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body, address as above
Chair of governors:	Mr A Willis
Local education authority area:	Hertfordshire
Unique reference number:	117547
Name of reporting inspector:	Mr K Gilbert HMI
Dates of inspection:	11-12 May 2004

Introduction

1. Onslow St Audrey's School is a small secondary school for pupils aged 11 to 18 years situated close to the centre of Hatfield, serving an area with high levels of social deprivation. There are 620 pupils on roll, of whom 31 are students in the sixth form. The school was formed from the merger of Onslow and St Audrey's schools in 1985. The closure of several large manufacturers in the area resulted in dramatic falling rolls as families moved away, and considerable unemployment among those that remained. There is only one other school in the town, that being a girls' school. The majority of the pupils are of white European heritage; however, the number of ethnic minority pupils is increasing. There are 162 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, of whom 14 have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Both of these figures are above the national average. Thirteen per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure just below the national average; several families choose not to take up their entitlement. Several new teachers have joined the school since September. Although the recruitment of staff presents a significant challenge, the school has only three temporary teachers at present.

2. The school was visited in November 2000 in connection with the Schools facing Challenging Circumstances initiative. The inspection raised serious concerns and as a result of this, two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and an Additional Inspector revisited in June 2001. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

3. The governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues from the inspection of June 2001. The school was visited by HMI on seven occasions to monitor the progress being made.

4. In May 2004, four HMI inspected the school, assessing the standard of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of June 2001.

Main findings

5. In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. The main findings of the inspection are:

- the measures taken to raise attainment are beginning to have an impact in all year groups;
 - in 2003 there was a slight rise in the proportion of the pupils achieving five or more grades A* to C in the GCSE examinations. The percentage of pupils achieving five or more passes rose significantly and only two pupils failed to achieve any GCSE or GNVQ passes. The number of A* and A grades achieved was more than twice the corresponding figure for 2002;
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- the percentages of the pupils achieving the expected Level 5 in the statutory tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2003 were broadly similar to the percentages in 2002;
- standards in literacy and numeracy are below average. Weaknesses remain in the pupils' writing, including inaccuracies in spelling, punctuation and grammar. Many pupils write imaginatively although not always at the necessary length to develop their ideas to the full. Skills in speaking, listening and reading are underdeveloped. There have been several changes to the leadership of mathematics, and the scheduled introduction of numeracy across the curriculum has been delayed. There is little evidence, outside of mathematics lessons, of planning for numeracy or the development of mathematical skills across the curriculum;
- the pupils' attitudes to learning have improved greatly over the period of special measures, although on occasions they still depend on the quality of the teaching. The great majority of the pupils show interest in their lessons and are keen to participate;
- the behaviour of the pupils in classrooms and around the site was good. Movement around the buildings was orderly and good humoured. The pupils greet visitors sensibly and warmly, and approach each other and staff with courtesy and consideration. The unit used to support those pupils whose behaviour places them at risk of exclusion functions effectively. There have been no fixed-term exclusions during the past 12 months and only a very small number of pupils have been excluded permanently;
- the quality of teaching has improved significantly since the inspection of June 2001. It was satisfactory or better in 43 of the 46 lessons; it was good or very good in nearly two thirds. Good teaching occurred across the curriculum and there were examples of very good teaching in English, mathematics, geography and art;
- the attendance of the pupils for the academic year to date is close to 90 per cent, a figure depressed by the non-attendance of a few pupils in each year group. Punctuality at the start of the day has improved, but a small number of pupils persistently arrive after the bell;
- the curriculum is broad and well balanced. The 25 hour teaching week for all pupils has been extended by an extra period for Year 11 and by homework clubs and holiday activities. Plans are at an advanced stage to increase the number of vocational courses in Key Stage 4;
- the provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at least satisfactory with several strengths. The pupils gather each day for an assembly, occasions which have helped the school to encourage a strong community spirit. The school is successful in raising the pupils' self esteem and supports their personal growth well;

- the sixth form is small with only 11 students in Year 13. However, the numbers being recruited for September are much larger and will make post-16 provision more cost effective;
- provision is satisfactory for the pupils who have special educational needs. These pupils often make good progress when taught in mainstream lessons, in the learning support base, or in the inclusion unit. This reflects the improvements in the quality of teaching across the school, the increased effectiveness of learning support assistants, the focused support that pupils with poor reading skills receive, and the innovative approaches introduced to support pupils at risk of exclusion. However, there is no coherent strategic management of the development of the provision, or procedures for evaluating its impact on the pupils' achievement;
- the school is developing a good policy for assessment, recording and reporting which is firmly linked to the teachers' short-term planning. The pupils' work is marked frequently by most teachers and developmental comments and short-term targets are now more in evidence in many subject areas. Homework is set regularly but some of the tasks that are set are neither sufficiently challenging or wholly relevant;
- the headteacher has inspired both pupils and staff to bring about the improvements that are now so evident. He provides firm and effective leadership and gives a clear direction for the work of the school. He is well supported by a committed and hard working group of senior managers. School policies are coherent and give guidance to teachers on preferred and agreed practices. There have been several changes to the subject managers over the past two years, on occasions leaving curriculum areas without effective leadership. The school found it impossible to recruit to some subject areas and has had to rely on temporary or supply teachers. This has had an impact on test and examination results. Subject managers continue to demonstrate variable levels of effectiveness in their leadership and skills of monitoring;
- the governing body is actively involved with the school's work. The effective chair of governors has a clear understanding of the school's educational provision. The senior managers are held to account for the school's progress;
- the local education authority (LEA) has more recently provided good support for the work of the school. The strategy for continuing support clearly indicates how the LEA will be providing the time and funds to continue working with the school over the coming years.

Key issues

6. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:

- sustain and intensify their efforts to improve the pupils' progress and raise their attainment, ensuring that this is reflected in improved test and examination results at the end of the key stages;
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- provide a strategic overview at senior management level of all aspects of inclusion;
- ensure that all middle managers have the skills necessary to lead their subject areas or aspects of the work of the school effectively, thereby raising standards and improving the quality of learning;
- continue to improve the pupils' attendance and their punctuality.

Inspection findings

Standards achieved by the pupils

7. Pupils enter the school with standards of attainment that are below average. Although some pupils achieved or exceeded the expected Level 4 in the statutory tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in English, mathematics and science, the attainment overall of the cohorts entering the school has for some years been below national trends. The measures taken to raise attainment are beginning to have an effect in all year groups.

8. In 2003, there was a slight rise in the proportion of the pupils achieving five or more grades A* to C in the GCSE examinations, from 17 to 19 per cent. The percentage of pupils achieving five or more passes, 74 per cent, remained similar to the previous year; 92 per cent obtained one GCSE or GNVQ equivalent pass. Only two pupils failed to achieve any GCSE or GNVQ passes. Eight pupils were not entered for external examinations in 2002 and this number was reduced to one in 2003. The number of A* and A grades in 2003 was more than twice the corresponding figure in 2002. The overall results in the GCSE examinations conceal wide discrepancies between performances in different subjects. Attainment in mathematics was much lower than that in the other core subjects. The failure of a small but significant number of pupils to attain the higher grade passes in mathematics predicted for them depressed the percentage of pupils gaining five or more grades A* to C. In other subjects, performance at grades A* to C ranged from 16 to 74 per cent. The school predicts that around 25 per cent of the pupils will achieve five or more grades A* to C in 2004.

9. Results in the statutory tests at the end of Key Stage 3 were similar in 2002 and 2003. The percentage of the pupils achieving the expected Level 5 or above rose slightly in English to 54 per cent, but fell in mathematics and science by two and four percentage points to 46 and 44 per cent respectively. These results are well below the national figures, but in English they were in line with the results of schools where pupils had similar prior attainment.

10. Most pupils enter the school with low levels of oracy and literacy which have a detrimental impact on their attainment. Some pupils speak with confidence and put forward good, relevant ideas in lessons, but a significant minority are reluctant to speak, and answer very briefly. Recent improvements to the teaching are encouraging such pupils to prepare answers and speak at greater length. Many English lessons offer pupils the opportunity to improve their oral skills. This is increasingly the case in other subjects as well; for example, in mathematics and geography as well as in English, pupils were given time to reflect upon and practise their oral answers.

11. Standards of writing vary but overall they require further improvement. The most accomplished writers are able to write at length for a range of purposes in different subjects. They vary their sentence structure and length and use an interesting vocabulary. Too many pupils still produce brief and often unfinished writing which is marred by basic errors of spelling and punctuation. In English lessons, the recent stability in staffing is helping standards to rise as pupils are offered carefully planned written activities, often broken into manageable sections. The use of individual whiteboards, and partners who comment on the work in progress, is leading to improved writing. In other subjects, such as science and history, the pupils were offered helpful frameworks to support their writing, resulting in improved standards.

12. Standards of reading across the school are generally below what is expected for the pupils' ages; for example, many Year 7 pupils are hesitant readers, lacking both the confidence and the strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. Higher up the school many pupils still struggle to read out loud with expression and fluency. However, most are now prepared to try even when, for instance, they are asked to read parts of a challenging poem out loud. More able readers can read challenging texts with fluency, expression and understanding, as was observed in a Year 13 English lesson as pupils read and discussed Pope's poem 'The Rape of the Lock'. Although the library is well stocked and inviting, it is underused and too few pupils read for pleasure.

13. The sensible use of key words in lessons across the curriculum is extending the pupils' vocabulary and making what they read and what the teachers say more accessible to them. Many teachers pick a manageable number of the most useful words for the pupils to know, often relating the meaning to an aspect of the pupils' lives. Some teachers draw the attention of the pupils to unusual letter strings and the provenance of words to help them understand the meaning of words as well as spell them correctly.

14. Standards in mathematics are improving but vary too widely and reflect the unsatisfactory teaching in the past. For some time the school was unable to recruit teachers of mathematics and was without a subject leader. This has been remedied; the department has been restructured and there is now a head of subject; four of the six staff are new to the school. Overall, standards are too low, but a few of the pupils achieve high standards; for example, some of the Year 11 pupils had a good understanding of methods of analysing data and accurately calculated probabilities. Some of the higher-attaining pupils in Year 9 achieved above national expectations when constructing graphical representations of a formula. The pupils' understanding of algebra and mathematical relationships is developing. The mathematics department is working hard to improve the pupils' limited investigative and problem solving skills and now consistently requires the pupils to explain the mathematical reasoning that underpins the techniques they use. At present too little use is made of the school's information and communication technology (ICT) suite for data handling and the varied forms of graphical representations. The scheduled introduction of numeracy across the curriculum has been delayed. There is little evidence, outside of mathematics lessons, of planning for numeracy or the development of mathematical skills across the curriculum.

15. In science, the pupils in Key Stage 3 study an appropriate range of topics. Lessons provide good opportunities for the pupils to explore scientific phenomenon through clearly presented demonstrations and suitable practical learning activities. The more able pupils make good records of their work and most have a clear understanding of scientific investigation. However, the attainment of many other pupils is restricted by their limited

fluency in using appropriate language to explain scientific ideas. This weakness is recognised and suitable measures to address the situation are in place. In Key Stage 4, all of the pupils follow a course that provides a broad experience of science. Many of them acquire good further experience of scientific investigations and they make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress.

16. The pupils' made less progress than expected in some classes. This is in the main because of most weaknesses in the quality of education caused by, for example, changes of teacher or a series of temporary or supply staff. Learning over time for some pupils is also slowed because they have difficulty in retaining their knowledge and understanding due to weaknesses in basic literacy and numeracy. Many pupils show little confidence or independence in their learning, preferring the structure of directed tasks. However, this is being addressed and more frequently teachers are giving the pupils opportunities to work on independent or group tasks. The pupils made good progress when the work was well matched to their ability and the tasks were carefully structured and engaging. Where progress was unsatisfactory, the pace of the work was slow and the teachers failed to capture the interest and commitment of the pupils.

17. The school has a positive approach to social and educational inclusion and new working arrangements have been introduced to ensure that the learning needs of all pupils are identified and met. Within this context, the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and for those with English as an additional language (EAL) has developed and is now good. A number of factors support the improved provision. There is both a learning support unit and a speech and language base on the school site which provide effective teaching and specialist expertise for pupils withdrawn from lessons. Teaching and non-teaching staff have benefited from training in areas such as EAL, autistic spectrum disorder and dyslexia. The planning by subject teachers has improved and short-term planning identifies how learning support assistants will contribute to the pupils' achievement.

The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. The behaviour of the pupils was satisfactory or better in all but three of the lessons; in three quarters of the lessons it was good or very good. The behaviour around the school and during the school assemblies was also good. The improvement in the quality of teaching has had a direct and positive impact on the pupils' behaviour. In many lessons the pupils were anxious to support teachers and keen to show how well they could behave. The pupils were polite to visitors and happy to talk about their work and the recent improvements to their school. There is very little litter and graffiti around the site and the pupils treat their surroundings with respect. There have been five permanent but no fixed-term exclusions over the last year.

19. The attitude of the pupils to learning was sound or better in almost all lessons and it was good or very good in eight out of ten lessons. A positive learning ethos permeates the school. The pupils generally show great enthusiasm for their work and are keen to succeed. Relationships between the pupils and between adults and pupils are good. The pupils show respect to adults and their peers and greet visitors warmly and sensibly. The pupils make good use of the learning resources centre and the computer suite. Out-of-hours clubs and revision activities are well supported.

20. The school has effective policies and procedures to encourage and celebrate good attendance and to challenge those who do not attend regularly. Most pupils have an attendance rate of above 90 per cent, and a significant and increasing proportion achieve above 95 per cent, the trigger for rewards. However, around 20 pupils have poor attendance because of medical reasons or particularly difficult home situations, which are virtually beyond the power of the school to improve. A delay in the way that the system operates also means that some pupils remain on roll after they have left the school. Both factors depress the overall attendance rate which is running at about 90 per cent so far this year. A group of about 30 pupils whose attendance the school believes it can improve, are the focus of intensive support from school staff and the educational welfare officer. Punctuality has improved but a small percentage of the pupils are regularly late for school. More than 25 pupils were late for school on each of the inspection days. A small number of the pupils arrived late for lessons and were insufficiently challenged by the teachers.

21. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at least satisfactory with many good features. The code of conduct contributes to the pupils' understanding of what is right and wrong. The school provides a number of opportunities for the pupils to take an active and responsible part in its daily life. The older pupils help with the younger pupils in a number of ways, including supervision at various times of the day and by assisting in the learning resource centre and with sporting activities. The school council functions well and gives all pupils an opportunity to voice their views through their representatives.

22. Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is underpinned with the daily act of collective worship when the school meets together, including all teaching and non-teaching staff. The pupils enter quietly, listen attentively and withdraw sensibly. These occasions, when the school joins as one, have contributed to the development of a community spirit. In religious education lessons the pupils study world religions and compare the effect faith has on the lives of believers. Other subjects are beginning to contribute to this wider understanding.

23. Provision for the pupils' moral and social development is good overall. Each pupil is engaged in a programme of personal, social and moral education and sessions on citizenship. The school has worked hard to ensure that behaviour and relationships are good. There is a clear moral code, which is reflected in the school's actions and in the teachers' expectations. The pupils are encouraged to develop the skills of analysis, investigation and decision making, in order to make their own moral judgements.

24. The pupils are given good opportunities to appreciate British cultural traditions. A suitable range of extracurricular activities and visits to places of worship, local interest and cultural importance extend their knowledge and experience. Trips to Europe broaden the understanding of other cultures, but more could be done to ensure that there is a better awareness of the varying cultures found in our larger cities and towns.

The quality of education

25. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the inspection of 2001, when just over a quarter of the lessons were unsatisfactory or poor. During this inspection 43 out of 46 lessons were satisfactory or better; nearly two thirds of the lessons were good or very good. There is now a consistent approach to lesson-planning, which is detailed and

forms a valuable appendix to schemes of work. The plans are word processed which enables them to be modified easily in the future. Learning objectives were explained to the pupils during lesson introductions and the pupils were also reminded about former learning and told about the activities to come. Tasks in most classes are appropriate to the needs of the varying abilities in the group. However, in some classes further thought should be given to the needs of the higher attainers. Teachers more frequently make good use of the concluding part of lessons to evaluate the pupils' learning and to inform them about future lessons. Teachers make more use of pair and group work to involve the pupils and to encourage them to share of ideas, including, on occasions, their evaluations and conclusions.

26. The school now has a number of successful teachers who display good humour and establish excellent relationships. They show enthusiasm for their subject, produce stimulating displays and structure their lessons effectively to match the pupils' needs. The teachers in the main manage the behaviour of the pupils well. Homework is set regularly, but some of the tasks that are set are neither sufficiently challenging or wholly relevant.

27. The school has not found it easy to recruit teachers over the past few years, and some have had to be recruited on short-term contracts. There are also a small minority of permanent teachers whose expectations of what the pupils can achieve are too low: tasks are not sufficiently challenging; time is not used effectively; and too little effort is made to meet the school's expectations about lesson-planning, challenge, pace and marking.

28. Many features of the school's assessment policy are having a helpful impact on raising attainment and day-to-day practices. The use of tests is leading teachers increasingly to gauge attainment in terms of National Curriculum levels. The teachers are given details of the pupils' levels at the end of Key Stage 2 and, where applicable, Key Stage 3. In Years 10 and 11, predicted and target grades for GCSE are used. In Key Stage 3, levels are assigned to pieces of work and targets for the year or for the National Curriculum tests in Year 9 are given. Some subjects provide comments in the form of short-term targets to which the pupils respond by modifying their practice as necessary. Some subject areas have progressed well in these areas while others have some way to go. In some classrooms the teachers display criteria for levels of attainment in their subject in order to set standards for pupils. Most of the pupils' work is marked frequently and, increasingly, the teachers give clear guidance on how a pupil may improve standards. In a small number of classes, however, the comments are too celebratory and emphasise only presentation, the quantity of work and whether it is completed.

29. The school provides sufficient taught time for a broad and balanced curriculum, which includes religious education, citizenship and a programme of personal, social and moral education. The day is extended for Year 11 pupils to enhance their opportunities in GCSE examinations.

Leadership and management

30. At the time of the inspection in June 2001, the management systems were insufficiently robust and there were inconsistencies across the school due to the lack of rigour in implementing agreed practices. The present headteacher was appointed soon after. Using his experience as a headteacher, including previously, his leadership of a school in special measures, he has inspired pupils and staff to bring about the improvements that are now so evident. He provides firm and effective leadership and gives a clear direction for the work of

the school. He is well supported by a committed and hard working group of senior managers. School policies are coherent and give guidance to teachers on preferred and agreed practices. A clear management structure is in place; two deputy headteachers and four assistant headteachers line-manage subject and year teams. Roles and responsibilities are clear and lines of accountability are understood and work well in practice.

31. Although it has been difficult to recruit subject leaders for some subjects, for instance mathematics and design and technology, others have developed their management skills and provide effective leadership. The monitoring of most aspects of the work of the school is thorough and extensive. Members of the senior management team observe lessons and give detailed feedback; they monitor homework, lesson-planning, marking and assessment. Heads of subject are increasingly involved in this work and most contribute effectively, although this could be extended further. Line managers are working with those who find it less easy to improve their practice.

32. The staff as a whole has responded well to the headteacher's leadership and has undertaken much additional work in order to improve the quality of their teaching and planning. Many have enhanced their awareness of what is needed to provide a high standard of education in the school and have evolved into a strong team of committed professionals. The school now presents itself as a positive learning environment.

33. Non-teaching and support staff have played their part in the improvements to the school. Be it the teaching assistants, administrative, catering or site staff, they all provide a service in support of the pupils. The greeting of parents and pupils, the fine and varied menu in the canteen, and the cleanliness of the site, all indicate their commitment and care. The pupils respond to this.

34. The provision for special educational needs is effective but there are weaknesses in its overall management. Written policies and guidance documents do not meet all the statutory requirements or provide useful guidance for teachers. While the innovations to meet individual needs appear effective, the procedures for evaluating the impact of the provision on the pupils' achievement and for assessing the value for money of different aspects of the provision, are unsatisfactory. Strategic leadership and management at a senior level do not provide the necessary coherence and co-ordination to the range of inclusive practices currently being developed.

35. The governing body is actively involved with the school's work. The chair of governors provides effective leadership and has a clear understanding of the school's educational provision. There is a clear committee structure, with agreed terms of reference and a regular cycle of meetings. Heads of subject meet with the governors to provide information on progress and the raising of standards.

36. The LEA has more recently provided good support for the work of the school. The strategy for continuing support clearly indicates how the LEA will be providing the time and funds to continue working with the school over the coming years.

The sixth form

37. The overall standards of attainment in the sixth form are below national averages. The A-level results in 2003 showed that only 20 per cent of the students achieved the higher grades A or B. Only in fine art, business, geography, history and ICT did students achieve

grades A or B. Across the full range of courses, 40 per cent achieved a grade C or D pass and the remaining 40 per cent achieved only a grade E or were ungraded. The overall pass rate of 74 per cent was well below the national average. The early results from the 2004 module examinations indicate an improvement over the results for 2003.

38. The results in the AS examinations were better than the A level performance. Students gained A and B grades in fine art, business, geography, history and physical education. However, nearly a quarter of the examination entries resulted in no grade being awarded, which is a cause for concern. The results in ICT and chemistry were particularly poor. Those students entered for examinations that led to vocational qualifications, for instance in leisure and tourism and business, did markedly better than those on AS courses. The students who studied courses on-site proved to be twice as successful at the higher levels as their peers who studied courses off-site.

39. The students who enter the sixth form do so with a significant variation in their prior attainment. Some students make good gains in their knowledge and understanding and achieve results that are higher than would normally be expected, given their GCSE results from Year 11. However, others fail to reach the standards they should.

40. The sixth form provision has improved. The breadth and balance of the course provision is improving and joint arrangements exist with a local college. The staff consistently seeks to develop the students' key skills. In Years 12 and 13 there is a steady increase in student numbers, although group sizes on most courses remains small at present. The number of students in the sixth form is growing; more than 50 per cent of the current Year 11 has applied for a place for September 2004. The management of the sixth form is effective; there is also good provision for the students' personal and social development. Overall, the accommodation for the sixth form is poor, in particular that for private study. As numbers increase, further pressure will be put on the limited space available. Links with outside agencies in relation to university placements or for careers advice, are well developed. The school has plans to address many of the issues mentioned above, and these have the potential to lead to improvements. The modified curriculum for next September shows a good combination of courses, both academic and vocational, with an improved focus on key skills.

Implementation of the action plan

41. The inspection report of June 2001 required the school to address three key issues. These principally related to: raising the pupils' attainment; improving the quality of teaching; and improving the quality of leadership and management. Overall, good progress has been made on most of the tasks required, but there is still work to do.

42. The emphasis on raising standards in the core subjects and ICT has mainly been successful. Considerable improvements are evident in English, science and ICT but less so in mathematics. This is mainly due to the difficulties of staffing within the mathematics department. However, even here there is a discernable raising of standards particularly in the earlier years. Predictions for the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9 indicate improvements throughout the core subjects. Test data for other years shows a similar picture. Other subject areas have also played their part in raising standards.

43. Considerable improvements have been made in the quality of teaching. There has been a good balance between monitoring the quality of the teaching and providing the necessary training to ensure improvement. The introduction and consolidation of the short-term lesson-planning format over the past two years provides teachers with the tools to provide at least satisfactory and often good lessons.

44. The appointment of the headteacher was the starting point for the improvements in the school. He has provided inspirational and effective leadership. He is willing to make difficult decisions and then to carry them through. The senior team, who have been with him throughout the time the school has required special measures, have also contributed greatly to the improvements. The new members of the senior team add strength and support. There is an awareness that some middle managers require continuing guidance.

Appendix – Information about the inspection

The school was inspected by two HMI and an Additional Inspector in June 2001. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in January, July and November 2002, in April, July and November 2003 and March 2004 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of June 2001.

In May 2004, four HMI returned to inspect the school for two days.

Forty six lessons or parts of lessons, two assemblies and five registration sessions were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunch times and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff and the chair of governors. Informal discussions were held with other staff and pupils. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was also taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of June 2001 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.